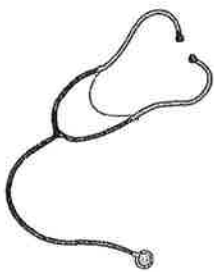


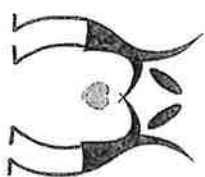
School District 148
Induction/Mentor Program Meeting
February 8, 2022

- 1) Welcome and thank you for your support
- 2) Taking the Pulse of the Protégé/Mentor Relationship
- 3) Rehire, resign, dismiss
- 4) Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR)
 - a. Celebrate the time and effort with your students!!!!
 - b. Check the technology
 - c. IAR Administration manuals; consider a testing log during administration
 - d. Test material security
 - e. Check with support staff to plan IAR testing for students with IEPs
 - f. Text Dependent Prompts and Routines – Digging into the text
- 5) Motivating students
 - a. “No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship” - Comer
 - b. Pythagoras
 - c. Charlotte Danielson- 1b, 2a, 1e
 - d. Fun in the Classroom
- 6) Engagement vs. “time on task”
 - a. Research on engagement – Charlotte Danielson
 - b. Bonanza Activity & Mystery Matter (Science) at <https://www.district148.net/mentor/imp-teacher-resources>.
 - c. Teacher examples - <http://aam.govst.edu/> and <http://www.district148.net/hpgrant>.
- 7) IMP Activities - all activities due at the April Meeting, submit through TEAMS, as pdf files through email, or in written form, coordinator observations,
- 8) Share shop – workshops available
- 9) Workshop evaluation and evidence of completion

Indicators: IF05, IF08, IIC03



Taking the Pulse of Your Mentor/Protégé Relationship



Strengths of Our Relationship

Opportunities for Improvement

Give One - Get One



Text-Dependent Questions

- Answers must be based on what has been read, not opinions or experience.
- More time must be spent on text worth reading and rereading carefully.
- *Recent study found that 80% of the questions students were asked when they are reading are answerable without direct reference to the text itself.*

Bringing the Common Core to Life" David Coleman · Founder, Student Achievement Partners
Chancellors Hall · State Education Building · Albany, NY April 28, 2011

Non-Examples and Examples

Not Text-Dependent

- In "Casey at the Bat," Casey strikes out. Describe a time when you failed at something.
- In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King discusses nonviolent protest. Discuss, in writing, a time when you wanted to fight against something that you felt was unfair.

Text-Dependent

- What makes Casey's experiences at bat humorous?
- What can you infer from King's letter about the letter that he received?
- "The Gettysburg Address" mentions the year 1776. According to Lincoln's speech, why is this year significant to the events described in the speech?

- In "The Gettysburg Address" Lincoln says the nation is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Why is equality an important value to promote?

Resource: Achievethecore.org

Key Characteristics of Text Dependent Prompts

Good text dependent questions cause students to do at least one of the following:

- Analyze paragraphs on a sentence by sentence basis and sentences on a word by word basis to determine the role played by individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words
- Investigate how meaning can be altered by changing key words and why an author may have chosen one word over another
- Prove each argument in persuasive text, each idea in informational text, each key detail in literary text, and observe how these build to a whole
- Examine how shifts in the direction of an argument or explanation are achieved and the impact of those shifts
- Question why authors choose to begin and end when they do
- Note and assess patterns of writing and what they achieve
- Consider what the text leaves uncertain or unstated

Four Types of Text Dependent Questions

Type 1: Find it

What is...?
Where is...?
Who is...

Compare and contrast...

Identify main idea...
Draw conclusions...
Make predictions...
Make inferences...

Type 2: Look Closer

The first paragraph is important because...

How has the author organized the information? (cause/effect, clues/evidence, chronological, etc.)

Why does the author use a chart, an illustration...?

The author uses description to tell... Give an example from the text.

Type 3: Prove It

Type 4: Take it Apart

BLACK BELT
CERTIFICATION

Three Types of Text-Dependent Questions

- When you're writing or reviewing a set of questions, consider the following three categories:
- Questions that assess themes and central ideas
- Questions that assess knowledge of vocabulary
- Questions that assess syntax and structure

7 Steps to Creating Text Dependent Questions

- **Step 1:** Identify the Core Understandings and Key Ideas of the Text
- **Step 2:** Start Small to Build Confidence
- **Step 3:** Target Vocabulary and Text Structure
- **Step 4:** Tackle Tough Sections Head-on
- **Step 5:** Create Coherent Sequences of Text Dependent Questions
- **Step 6:** Identify the Standards That Are Being Addressed
- **Step 7:** Create the Culminating Assessment

Evaluating Question Quality

=HANDOUT=

Checklist for Evaluating Question Quality

Text Under Review (include page #s): _____

✓if yes	Criteria:	Comments/Questions/Fixes (refer to specific questions!):
A	C. Text Specific:	
	C1. Are the questions specific enough so they can only be answered by reference to this text?	
	C2. Are the inferences students are asked to make grounded logically in the text (Can they be answered with careful reading rather than background knowledge)?	
B	D. Organization of the Questions:	
	D1. Do the early questions in the sequence focus on specific phrases and sentences to support basic comprehension of the text and develop student confidence before moving on to more challenging tasks?	
	D2. Are the questions coherently sequenced? Do they build toward gradual understanding of the text's meaning?	
	D3. Do the questions stay focused on the text and only go beyond it to make other connections in extension activities after the text has been explored?	
	D4. If multiple texts/different media are under consideration, are students asked to examine each text closely before making connections among texts?	
	E. Culminating Activity or Writing Prompt:	
C	E1. Does the culminating task call on the knowledge and understanding acquired through	

Question Stems for Close Reading of Informational Texts (Adapted from Race to the Top/Strategies for Close

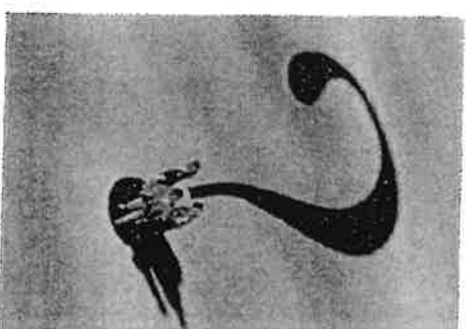
Reading)

- What clues show you ...
- Point to the evidence ...
- How does the author describe X in paragraph X? What are the exact words?
- What reasons does the book give for X? Where are they?
- Share a sentence that (tells you what the text is about, or describes X, or gives a different point of view)
- What is the purpose of paragraph X? What are the clues that tell you this?
- What does the author think about X? Why do you think so — what is your evidence?
- What do you predict will happen next? What are the clues that make you think so?

Source: Reading Rockets

Pause and Reflect

Based on the definition you were just given of a text dependent question, can you think of one or two text dependent questions that you have posed to your students recently? Using your Learning Journal, write them down.





PYTHAGORAS (*pi-THAG-uh-rus*) of Samos (c. 560–c. 480 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher and religious leader, responsible for important developments in the history of mathematics, astronomy, and the theory of music. Pythagoras is most famous for the theorem on right triangles that bears his name.

The Teacher Who Paid His Student

"Psst! Young man! Over here!"

The ragged Greek boy stopped in his tracks. Had he really heard someone calling him from behind that vegetable cart?

"Here! Here I am! Come here. I have an offer for you."

The boy, whose name was Philocrates, bent over to look around the wagon. The eyes he saw peering back at him looked a bit wild, but kind.

"What do you want with me?" answered Philocrates. "Surely you can see that I have no money to buy your wares! I'm just a poor street boy, trying to make a living doing odd jobs for anyone who will hire me."

"I have no wares to sell, except the truth," the stranger said. "Wouldn't you like to learn it?"

Philocrates scratched his head. He had met some unusual people, but this fellow seemed really different. The man's eyes

MATHEMATICIANS ARE PEOPLE, TOO ♦ 9

THE TEACHER WHO PAID HIS STUDENT

parked, and his manner seemed friendly enough. But truth? How could truth fill one's stomach?

"Sorry, friend," he replied. "I have to keep working the streets so that my mother and sisters and I can eat each day. Perhaps you can sell your truth to someone more wealthy than I."

He picked up his roughly woven sack of tools and waved a quick farewell.

"Wait! Please wait," the stranger called. "Let me introduce myself. My name is Pythagoras and I was born here on the island of Samos. But I have traveled to Miletus and Egypt and was even captured and taken to Babylon for seven years. The things I have learned in these travels—oh, my son, you would be thrilled to learn them!"

"I'm sure I would, sir, but you don't understand my problem. I have no money, so I must work. It's that simple."

"All right," Pythagoras offered. "I'll make you a deal. If you will let me teach you, I will pay you what you would normally earn at your other work." He paused to let his unusual proposition sink in. "Well, what do you say? Shall we start tomorrow morning? You can meet me here by this bench."

Something drew Philocrates towards this odd teacher, but his practical nature made him resist. Finally he decided he would give it a try. If the stranger didn't really have any money to pay him for being a student, he could always quit and go back to his odd jobs. What did he have to lose?

"All right. We'll start tomorrow. But remember, I need daily wages."

The next day the strange pair began their first lesson in the alley where they had met, amidst the cries of merchants and the min-

The Teacher Who Paid His Student

gled smells of fish, freshly baked honey cakes, and sweating donkeys carrying goods to sell. While the townspeople shopped and gossiped, Pythagoras and his student squatted in the dirt. The eager teacher drew shapes and figures on the ground. To Philocrates, it was all new but intriguing. And, just as he promised, at the end of the day Pythagoras paid.

Day after day it was the same. Each time Philocrates learned a new lesson Pythagoras paid him three oboli, about a penny. Soon he was making far more money than he could have made doing errands and odd jobs. He was an excellent student and quickly built up quite a savings account.

Pythagoras loved the arrangement, too. It was exhilarating to have an eager young mind absorb his ideas. Unfortunately, Philocrates learned so quickly and well that Pythagoras was soon out of money.

"I'm sorry to tell you this, Philocrates, but today will be our last lesson. I have no more money to pay your wages, so you will have to find other ways to support yourself."

"But Pythagoras, you can't quit teaching me now," the boy protested. "I'm just starting to understand arithmetic and you were going to teach me astronomy and geometry, too."

"I'm sorry, young man, but I see no other choice."

Philocrates hung his head and thought. In a moment he came up with an idea.

"I know! You have been paying me to learn; now I will pay you to teach."

So for the next several months the two continued to meet, but this time the student paid the teacher. By the time the lessons were completed, Pythagoras had become an experienced teacher, and

Philocrates had gained an excellent education!

Pythagoras's first "school" with Philocrates may have had only one student. But several years later he founded a real school at Croton, a Greek colony in southern Italy. This school became so influential it changed even the way people thought about knowledge. During his many travels, Pythagoras had gained quite a reputation. Some people even thought he was divine, or the son of their god Apollo. When he called together a group of wealthy scholars to form a school, no wonder many responded enthusiastically.

The students in Pythagoras's school were all adults. He divided them into two grades depending on their knowledge. The first grade was called the *acoustici*, or the listeners. They were invited to listen to Pythagoras lecture but were not allowed to see him—they had not yet proven themselves worthy. He stood behind a curtain, where only the second grade, the *mathematici*, could see him.

After three years of listening to their teacher's voice, the *acoustici* were admitted into the inner circle of learners. Seeing Pythagoras must have been worth waiting for. He had a flair for the dramatic and dressed like a stage performer. While the students waited for Pythagoras's entrance, musicians played popular music. Finally the curtain was drawn back and Pythagoras, stately in his white robe, appeared before the learners. His feet were strapped with gold sandals, and his head was crowned with a golden wreath. No wonder people suspected him of having gods for ancestors.

Pythagoras worked most of his problems in the sand. His classroom always had a good supply of sand on the floor, and his

attendants stood by with a selection of differently-colored sand in containers. When Pythagoras wanted to show one part of a geometric shape, for instance, the attendants would fill that part with blue or green sand so that students could see it more easily.

Pythagoras gave lectures on "mathemata," which in his language meant studies of all kinds. Because Pythagoras emphasized arithmetic and geometry, the word came to mean mathematics as we know it today. He also taught astronomy and music, but he believed that everything in the universe depended on numbers. Pythagoras and his followers chose the motto "All is Number." They were convinced that if they understood numbers, they would hold the key to life itself.



Because Pythagoras and his students believed that knowledge was powerful, they wanted to control it. They became secretive about what they knew. The school was a "Secret Brotherhood," and everyone who joined had to promise never to tell outsiders about their discoveries. If anyone did tell, the results could be disastrous for him or her.

"Have you heard about Hippasus?"

The question hummed throughout Croton.

"Yes. Isn't it horrible? Just because he broke the code of the Brotherhood. It doesn't seem fair."

"But the gods are always fair. He knew better than to tell about the discovery of irrational numbers."

"He must have known he would be expelled from Pythagoras's Secret Brotherhood. Do you suppose he thought that would be his only punishment?"

"I don't know. But there's something suspicious about the way he drowned, falling off that boat in such calm weather."

People were always talking about the Secret Brotherhood, also known as the Pythagorean School. Schools of adults were common, but this group had some unusual ideas. They became a kind of religious order with their own set of initiations and rites.

The 300 members of the Brotherhood shared whatever they had with each other. They were unusually kind to animals because they believed that human souls might come back after death for another life in an animal body. They were vegetarian and would not even wear wool because it came from sheep. If they could choose, they always took a low road instead of a high road, to show their humility. They would not poke a fire with iron because fire was the symbol of truth. They would not touch white roosters

or eat beans, because both roosters and beans symbolized perfection. On their clothing they each wore their sacred symbol—the pentagram, a five-pointed star.

In one way the Brotherhood was unusually progressive. During Pythagoras's day, women were forbidden to attend public meetings of any kind, but Pythagoras welcomed them to his school. Of course, they had to prove themselves just as the male students did. Nevertheless, at one time the select *mathematici* class included at least 28 women.

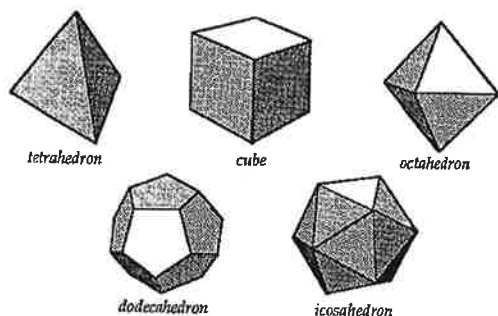
Because the Pythagoreans shared everything, it is hard to separate Pythagoras's discoveries from those of his followers. Much of modern mathematics is based on their work. Like Thales before him, Pythagoras insisted on mathematical proof. It was not enough to say that two angles were equal because they looked equal. One had to prove it. Pythagoras is most famous for providing the first logical proof of this theorem:

In a right triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.

The common formula for this theorem, if c is the length of the hypotenuse and a and b the lengths of the other two sides, is

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2.$$

The Pythagoreans were also the first to divide all numbers into even and odd. They learned to construct the five regular solids, the only solids whose faces are all the same shape and size: the tetrahedron (four sides), the cube (six sides), the octahedron (eight sides), the dodecahedron (twelve sides), and the icosahedron (twenty sides). The first two had been known from ancient times, but the others had never been constructed.



The Pythagoreans learned to construct the five regular solids.

Great thinkers are not always appreciated in their own times. The Pythagoreans were often misunderstood. Many of their ideas and practices seemed strange to their countrymen. Some townspeople suspected the Pythagoreans would try to take over the local government. They blamed the Pythagoreans, who were quite wealthy, for trying to keep them poor. One day in about 500 B.C., an angry mob set the Pythagoreans' meetinghouse on fire during a lecture. Only a few members survived, and Pythagoras himself was killed. Some say that his students formed a human bridge over the fire so that he could escape—but when he reached a field of beans, he surrendered to his enemies rather than trample the sacred bean plants.

By this time chapters of the Brotherhood had spread throughout Sicily and southern Italy. For many years men and women continued to discuss the ideas Pythagoras had introduced. Today, all students of geometry and higher mathematics work with concepts

that Pythagoras discovered. The search for knowledge and truth continued long after Pythagoras's death and the end of the Brotherhood. It continues today wherever people are willing to pursue it.

Research on Engagement

Research tells us that the teachers who are most successful in engaging students develop activities with students' basic psychological and intellectual needs in mind (Ames, 1992; Anderman & Midgley, 1998; Strong et al., 1995). In general, students need work that develops their sense of competency, allows them to develop connections with others, gives them some degree of autonomy, and provides opportunities for originality and self-expression (Anderman & Midgely, 1998; Strong et al., 1995). The challenge teachers face, then, is to create a learning environment that attends to all or most of these needs.

Following is a list of suggestions for designing more engaging in-class activities and increasing the amount of time students spend on task.

1. *Ensure course materials relate to students' lives and highlight ways learning can be applied in real-life situations* (Lumsden, 1994; Skinner & Belmont, 1991). Schoolwork should be meaningful to students outside the school building, as well as within. Students are more engaged in activities when they can build on prior knowledge and draw clear connections between what they are learning and the world they live in. They also need to feel that "school work is significant, valuable, and worthy of their efforts" (Policy Studies Associates, 1995).
2. *Allow students to have some degree of control over learning* (Brooks et al., 1998). This can be done in any number of ways, from giving students choices between different assignments, to minimizing adult supervision over group projects, to letting students monitor and evaluate their own progress (Anderman & Midgley, 1998; Dev, 1997; Policy Studies Associates, 1995). Anderman & Midgely (1998) note that this doesn't mean teachers must relinquish control of the classroom: "Even small opportunities for choice, such as whether to work with a partner or independently" (p. 3) give students a greater sense of autonomy.
3. *Assign challenging but achievable tasks for all students, including at-risk, remedial, and learning disabled students.* Tasks that seem impossible easily discourage learners, as do those tasks that are rote and repetitive (Dev, 1997; Policy Studies Associates, 1995). Remedial programs that limit students to repetitive basic skills activities actually "prompt students' lack of engagement in their schoolwork and frequently result in limited achievement" (Policy Studies Associates, 1995). Students need to feel successful and that they've earned success.

4. *Arouse students' curiosity about the topic being studied.* Strong, Silver, and Robinson (1995) suggest using the "mystery" approach, in which students are presented with fragmentary or contradictory information about a subject and are then asked to examine available evidence to develop their own hypotheses. This kind of activity also builds on students' needs for competence and autonomy, giving students an opportunity to direct inquiry and "discover for themselves."
5. *Design projects that allow students to share new knowledge with others.* Strong, Silver & Robinson (1995) observe that when students do assignments that only the teacher will read, they are entering into a nonreciprocal relationship. More often than not, the teacher already knows and has no real need for the information the student is providing him or her. Projects are more engaging when students share what they are learning in reciprocal relationships, as in collaborative projects where each student's knowledge is needed by others in the group to complete an assignment.

It is also important to note that, in addition to instructional practice, certain elements of the classroom environment, such as seating arrangements and student behavior, will influence how long students remain on task and engaged in their work. Bonus and Riordan (1998) suggest teachers consider the goals of individual activities when determining how to arrange seats in the classroom. In their research into on-task behavior in second- and third-grade classrooms, they found that students remained engaged in learning longer when desks were arranged appropriately for the task at hand: U-shaped arrangements for class discussions, rows for test taking, etc. (Bonus & Riordan, 1998).



Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation: From Time-on-Task to Homework

CORI BREWSTER & JENNIFER FAGER

OCTOBER 2000

NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

3c

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LEARNING

Student engagement in learning is the centerpiece of the Framework for Teaching; all other components contribute to it. When students are engaged in learning, they are not merely “busy,” nor are they only “on task.” Rather, they are intellectually active in learning important and challenging content. The critical distinction between a classroom in which students are compliant and busy, and one in which they are engaged, is that in the latter students are developing their understanding through what they do. That is, they are engaged in discussion, debate, answering “what if?” questions, discovering patterns, and the like. They may be selecting their work from a range of (teacher-arranged) choices, and making important contributions to the intellectual life of the class. Such activities don’t typically consume an entire lesson, but they are essential components of engagement.

A lesson in which students are engaged usually has a discernible structure: a beginning, a middle, and an end, with scaffolding provided by the teacher or by the activities themselves. Student tasks are organized to provide cognitive challenge, and then students are encouraged to reflect on what they have done and what they have learned. That is, the lesson has closure, in which teachers encourage students to derive the important learning from the learning tasks, from the discussion, or from what they have read. Critical questions for an observer in determining the degree of student engagement are “What are the students being asked to do? Does the learning task involve thinking? Are students challenged to discern patterns or make predictions?” If the answer to these questions is that students are, for example, filling in blanks on a worksheet or performing a rote procedure, they are unlikely to be cognitively engaged.

In observing a lesson, it is essential not only to watch the teacher but also to pay close attention to the students and what they are doing. The best evidence for student engagement is what students are saying and doing as a consequence of what the teacher does, or has done, or has planned. And while students may be physically active (e.g., using manipulative materials in mathematics or making a map in social studies), it is not essential that they be involved in a hands-on manner; it is, however, essential that they be challenged to be “minds-on.”

The elements of component 3c are:

Activities and assignments

The activities and assignments are the centerpiece of student engagement, since they determine what it is that students are asked to do. Activities and assignments that promote learning require student thinking that emphasizes depth over breadth and encourage students to explain their thinking.

Grouping of students

How students are grouped for instruction (whole class, small groups, pairs, individuals) is one of the many decisions teachers make every day. There are many options; students of similar background and skill may be clustered together, or the more-advanced students may be spread around into the different groups. Alternatively, a teacher might permit students to select their own groups, or they could be formed randomly.

Instructional materials and resources

The instructional materials a teacher selects to use in the classroom can have an enormous impact on students' experience. Though some teachers are obliged to use a school's or district's officially sanctioned materials, many teachers use these selectively or supplement them with others of their choosing that are better suited to engaging students in deep learning—for example, the use of primary source materials in social studies.

Structure and pacing

No one, whether an adult or a student, likes to be either bored or rushed in completing a task. Keeping things moving, within a well-defined structure, is one of the marks of an experienced teacher. And since much of student learning results from their reflection on what they have done, a well-designed lesson includes time for reflection and closure.

Indicators include:

- Student enthusiasm, interest, thinking, problem solving, etc.
- Learning tasks that require high-level student thinking and invite students to explain their thinking
- Students highly motivated to work on all tasks and persistent even when the tasks are challenging
- Students actively “working,” rather than watching while their teacher “works”
- Suitable pacing of the lesson: neither dragged out nor rushed, with time for closure and student reflection

UNSATISFACTORY • LEVEL 1

The learning tasks/activities, materials, and resources are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, or require only rote responses, with only one approach possible. The groupings of students are unsuitable to the activities. The lesson has no clearly defined structure, or the pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed.

CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES

- Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- Learning tasks/activities and materials require only recall or have a single correct response or method.
- Instructional materials used are unsuitable to the lesson and/or the students.
- The lesson drags or is rushed.
- Only one type of instructional group is used (whole group, small groups) when variety would promote more student engagement.

POSSIBLE EXAMPLES

- *Most students disregard the assignment given by the teacher; it appears to be much too difficult for them.*
- *Students fill out the lesson worksheet by copying words from the board.*
- *Students are using math manipulative materials in a rote activity.*
- *The teacher lectures for 45 minutes.*
- *Most students don't have time to complete the assignment; the teacher moves on in the lesson.*
- *And others...*

BASIC • LEVEL 2

The learning tasks and activities are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students and little opportunity for them to explain their thinking, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The groupings of students are moderately suitable to the activities. The lesson has a recognizable structure; however, the pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged or may be so slow that many students have a considerable amount of "downtime."

- Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.
- Student engagement with the content is largely passive; the learning consists primarily of facts or procedures.
- The materials and resources are partially aligned to the lesson objectives.
- Few of the materials and resources require student thinking or ask students to explain their thinking.
- The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.
- The instructional groupings used are partially appropriate to the activities.

- *Students in only three of the five small groups are figuring out an answer to the assigned problem; the others seem to be unsure how they should proceed.*
- *Students are asked to fill in a worksheet, following an established procedure.*
- *There is a recognizable beginning, middle, and end to the lesson.*
- *The teacher lectures for 20 minutes and provides 15 minutes for the students to write an essay; not all students are able to complete it.*
- *And others...*

PROFICIENT • LEVEL 3

The learning tasks and activities are fully aligned with the instructional outcomes and are designed to challenge student thinking, inviting students to make their thinking visible. This technique results in active intellectual engagement by most students with important and challenging content and with teacher scaffolding to support that engagement. The groupings of students are suitable to the activities. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing most students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.

- Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.
- Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.
- Materials and resources support the learning goals and require intellectual engagement, as appropriate.
- The pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.
- The teacher uses groupings that are suitable to the lesson activities.

- *Five students (out of 27) have finished an assignment early and begin talking among themselves; the teacher assigns a follow-up activity.*
- *Students are asked to formulate a hypothesis about what might happen if the American voting system allowed for the direct election of presidents and to explain their reasoning.*
- *Students are given a task to do independently, then to discuss with a table group, followed by a reporting from each table.*
- *Students are asked to create different representations of a large number using a variety of manipulative materials.*
- *The lesson is neither rushed nor does it drag.*
- *And others...*

DISTINGUISHED • LEVEL 4

Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content through well-designed learning tasks and activities that require complex thinking by students. The teacher provides suitable scaffolding and challenges students to explain their thinking. There is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry and student contributions to the exploration of important content; students may serve as resources for one another. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed not only to intellectually engage with and reflect upon their learning but also to consolidate their understanding.

- Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.
- Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.
- Students take initiative to improve the lesson by (1) modifying a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs, (2) suggesting modifications to the grouping patterns used, and/or (3) suggesting modifications or additions to the materials being used.
- Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.

- *Students are asked to write an essay in the style of Hemmingway and to describe which aspects of his style they have incorporated.*
- *Students determine which of several tools—e.g., a protractor, spreadsheet, or graphing calculator—would be most suitable to solve a math problem.*
- *A student asks whether they might remain in their small groups to complete another section of the activity, rather than work independently.*
- *Students identify or create their own learning materials.*
- *Students summarize their learning from the lesson.*
- *And others...*

15-Minute Task Lifts African-Americans' Grades



PROBLEM AREA:

EDUCATION

Problem

Students of color lag behind their European-American counterparts at every level of education.

Solution

Writing about a personal value for just 15 minutes at the beginning of the semester elevates African-Americans' grades, closing the gap between European-American and African-American students by 40 percent.

The Details

At the beginning of the fall semester, social psychologist Geoffrey Cohen and his colleagues randomly assigned African-American and European-American seventh-graders to complete one of two 15-minute writing assignments. In the treatment condition, students named their most important value and explained why it was important to them. In the control condition, students named their least important value and explained why it might be important to someone else.

African-American students who wrote about their most treasured value had higher grade-point-averages at the end of the semester than did African-American students who wrote about their least important value. The intervention did not affect European-American students meaning that European-American students in the two conditions had the same GPAs.

Why This Works

People like to feel good about themselves. A positive self-image is like a psychological immune system: it protects us from hardships. By helping students feel better about themselves, the self-affirming writing assignment shielded African-American students from negative stereotypes about their group, and helped them work to their potential.

When This Works Best

Self-affirmation techniques work best when people feel their identities are under fire, such as when people feel others are viewing them through stereotypes.

The Original Study

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., & Master, A. (2006). Reducing the racial achievement gap: A social-psychological intervention. *Science*, 313(5791), 1307-1310.

Replications

Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009). Recursive processes in self-affirmation: Intervening to close the minority achievement gap. *Science*, 324(5925), 400-403.

Credits

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