

The Energy to Teach: Matching Instruction to our Beliefs

Literacy Lifts Lives

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- What core beliefs do you hold to when it comes to teaching and learning?

Teaching Beliefs:

- Student engagement is more important than content coverage.
- There is more to teach than time to teach it. Therefore I must be thoughtful about what I give my instructional time to.
- The world is an interesting place and the standards are connected to the real world. My job is show students how the two are connected.
- The “need to know” drives engagement.
- Interesting text exists but sometimes it takes time to find it.
- I need to know what my students know so that I can plan for the next day.
- Doing what I ask my students to do helps me to find glitches in planning.
- Students need time to read, write, and think if they are going to better at reading, writing, and thinking.

Tovani 2013

“Bureaucracy/3”

...at a barracks in Seville, in the middle of the courtyard of that barracks was a small bench. Next to the small bench, a soldier stood guard. No one knew why the bench had to be guarded. It was guarded around the clock-- every day, every night, and from one generation of officers to the next the order was passed on and the soldiers obeyed it. No one expressed any doubts or ever asked why. If that's how it was done, there had to be a reason.

And so it continued until someone, some general or colonel, wanted to look at the original order. He had to rummage through all the files. After a good bit of poking around, he found the answer. Thirty-one years, two months and four days ago, an officer had ordered a guard to be stationed beside the small bench, which had just been painted, so that no one would think of sitting on wet paint.

From: *The Book of Embraces*

By: Eduardo Galeano

- What benches will I fight to guard?
- Which ones will I consider abandoning?
- Which ones must I stop guarding?

Number One Teaching Belief:
“Whoever is doing the reading, writing, and talking is the one who is getting smarter.” *Tovani/Bennett Literacy Lab Mantra*

Practices I believe matter to student learning:		Core belief that drives this instructional practice:
Model Strategy Instruction		In order for my students to access difficult text, write clearly, and think critically, I need to explicitly teach strategies that will help them interact with content and curriculum.
Provide Accessible, Engaging Text		In order for students to pursue rigorous reading, they must have engaging, readable text.
Collect Formative Assessments		In order to differentiate instruction, I must know my students well. I must provide daily formative assessment opportunities so that I can see what they know and need to learn.
Organize Systems and Structures for Planning, Instruction and Assessment		<i>Workshop Model</i> is a planning structure that makes it possible for my students to do the majority of the work. I have to intentionally make time for students to do the reading, writing, and thinking during class time, if I want them to grow as learners.

“We are most powerful as teachers when our core beliefs align with our instructional practices.” Sam Bennett author of *That Workshop Book*

Thinking Strategies Used by Proficient Readers

(Based on the research synthesis of P. David Pearson and Janice A. Dole)

A strategy is an intentional plan that is flexible and can be adapted to meet the demands of the situation.

Proficient Readers:

- **Activate background knowledge** and make connections between new and known information.
- **Question the text** in order to clarify ambiguity and deepen understanding.
- **Draw inferences** using background knowledge and clues from the text.
- **Determine importance** in order to distinguish details from main ideas.
- **Monitor comprehension** in order to make sure meaning is being constructed.
- **Reread and employ fix-up strategies** to repair confusion.
- **Use sensory images** to enhance comprehension and visualize the reading.
- **Synthesize** and extend thinking.

Rigor is...

Teachers are frequently asked to raise the “rigor” in their classrooms. However the term “rigor” doesn’t always mean the same thing to all people. In order to make sure students are receiving a rigorous academic experience, we must define for ourselves what rigor is.

- What makes reading hard?
- How is *rigorous* reading different from *hard* reading?
- For me rigor is...

Redefining Reading

1. What is your role as a reader? How does your role change as you help students become better readers of your text?
2. List the types of text that students might encounter in your class. At what grade level should students first be taught how to read these texts?
3. Select a text that you want your students to be able to read and comprehend. Carefully think through how you would construct meaning if you were to encounter this particular text structure for the first time.

Workshop Model as a Structure for Assessment:

Creating & Collecting Data to Figure Out What Students Know and Need EVERYDAY

Mini-lesson link to best practices in assessment: Should be based on students' work the previous day – targeted specifically to patterns of student understanding – what they need next to go deeper or to clarify misconceptions and clear up confusion. Teachers show students HOW to meet learning targets by:

- Sharing examples of strong and weak work so students can build a vision of what they will produce
- Focusing on one point of instruction so students can hone in to create higher-quality work
- Periodically slowing down and focusing on practices of self-assessment: reflection and goal setting
- Modeling focused revision for students so they can close the gap between their own work and a strong model

Opening link to best practices in assessment: A routine to share and ensure students understand the daily learning target.

Student created assessment data can include:

- Conversation calendars (see Ch. 2)
- Short response to topic or target of the day

Worktime link to best practices in assessment:

Students create "work;" – i.e. assessment data that shows progress towards meeting the learning targets. In my class, evidence can include:

- Inner-Voice sheet
- Double-entry diary,
- Graphic representation of thinking
- Just Ask Surveys
- Annotations (on sticky notes or directly on texts)
- Journal responses
- Quiz
- Essay drafts
- Long-term product/project/performance based work (video scripts, letters to the editor, commentaries, etc.)

Teacher confers and targets instruction to individuals and small groups to help every student get smarter everyday. During conferences teachers can:

- Clarify learning targets
- Use examples of strong and weak work
- Offer descriptive feedback
- Teach students to self-assess and set individual learning goals
- Focus on one point of instruction at a time
- Teach students focused revision
- Engage students in self-reflection and help them keep track of and share their learning

Teacher created assessment data:

- Conferencing notes,
- Group Observation Form

Debrief link to best practice assessment: During debrief the teacher gains a sense of patterns of understanding, confusion, and/or growth of the whole class that she uses to plan the next day to:

- Determine the next learning target
- Focus on one point of instruction to help students get smarter tomorrow
- Use an example of strong student work from today to motivate and engage other learners tomorrow
- Teach students focused revision to produce higher quality work
- Help students see where they are in relation to the target

During the debrief students can:

- Synthesize their thinking to help the teacher figure out next steps
- Self-assess to the learning target and set goals for future learning
- Keep track of and share their learning

More Work time (release) link to best practice assessment: more time to create "work" – i.e. data that helps us know students' strengths, weaknesses and needs to better target instruction.

Catch linked to best practice assessment: Many times the catches are **unplanned**, based on patterns of understanding or confusion the teacher notices as she confers with individuals and groups. This allows a teacher to:

- Offer descriptive feedback based on student performance during work time

Teachers can build in **pre-planned** catches connected to the learning target to re-engage learners with points of access. These may include: sharing a new text(s), or new task(s) (i.e. first read, then write, then talk). This allows learners to:

- Focus on one point of access to re-engage, deepen thinking, or build stamina
- View models of strong or weak work to clarify the vision or offer another option to re-engage

Bennett/Tovani 2010

From: *So What Do They Really Know* Tovani 2011

Number One Teaching Belief:

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**Practices I believe
matter to student
learning:**

Core belief that drives this instructional practice:
