

How to Reach the *(sometimes) Hard-to-Reach*

Practical Classroom Strategies for Educators



Dr. William T. Noel, Sr.
Education Consultant & National Speaker

~~Plan A~~

Plan B

*The two most important days
of your life are the day you
are born, and the day you
find out why.*



Topics

#DiscoverYourWhy!

- Old Approach vs. New Approach
- Relationships
- Discipline, Not Punishment
- Emotions & Feelings
- Our Mindset
- Cultural Responsiveness
- What Motivates Students?



Old Approach *vs.* New Approach

Old Approach

New Approach



Reactive

Proactive

Zero Tolerance

Equitable Discipline

**Traditional Mindset
(Punishment)**

*Instructional Mindset
(Discipline)*

Teaching behavior as relentlessly as we teach reading or other academic content is the ultimate act of prevention, promise, and power underlying preventative interventions in America's schools.

When a child . . .

- does not know how to read - we **Teach!**
- does not know how to multiply - we **Teach!**
- does not know how to write - we **Teach!**
- does not know how to behave - we ~~**Teach!**~~

Change Seats

Reassign

Suspend

Expel



#DiscoverYourWhy!


Relationships



*No significant learning occurs without a significant **relationship**.*

*Show me a school where **relationships** do not exist and I'll show you an underperforming school.*

*It is still incumbent upon you to take the initiative to learn about your students' lives **outside of school**, as it has direct implications for what they do **inside of school**.*

A photograph of Dr. Rita Pierson, a Black woman with short grey hair, wearing a bright red blazer over a black top. She is speaking passionately, pointing her right index finger towards the right side of the frame. She is wearing a silver watch on her left wrist and a gold bracelet on her right wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

*Every child deserves a
champion, an adult
who will never give up
on them, who
understands **the power
of connection**, and
insists that they
become the best that
they can possibly be.*

Dr. Rita Pierson

*Rita Pierson: Every kid needs a champion,
TED Talks Education*

Connect Through Relationships

Some educators have **IT**, that ability to create relationships that lead to a **welcoming & equitable** learning environment.

How do we reproduce **IT**, so other educators can recreate that learning environment?

How to get the **IT**-ability!!



Be a “Popular” Teacher

Teachers become “popular” when they establish genuine relationships by:

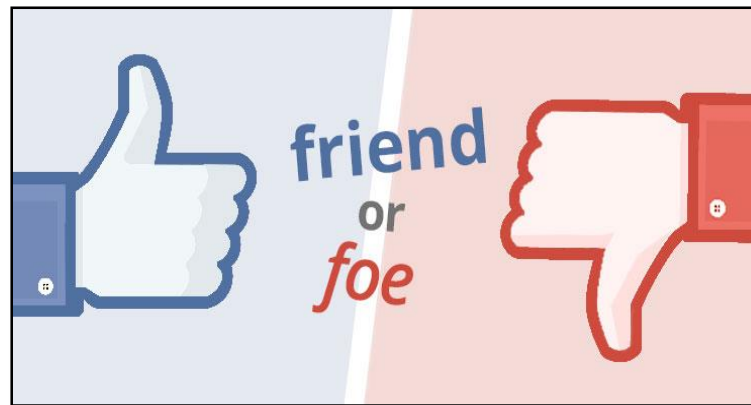
- treating students with **respect**;
- not talking down to, or lecturing students;
- offering **positive** reinforcement;
- listening;
- **PASIYV** & smiling.



Know Your Students

As Individuals

- discover & discuss students' **out-of-school** interests;
- when we show interest in our students, they begin to view us less as one of **"them"** and more as someone who genuinely **cares**.



Protect Students' Self-Esteem

Despite the façade, students are **fragile & emotional** beings with many insecurities.

Acceptance by peers is key to a their self-esteem; so some students may “*go down swinging*” in order to *save face* in front of their friends.

A number of our male students seem *hard-to-reach* because of *the mask they live in* due to society's archaic definition of what it means to be a man.

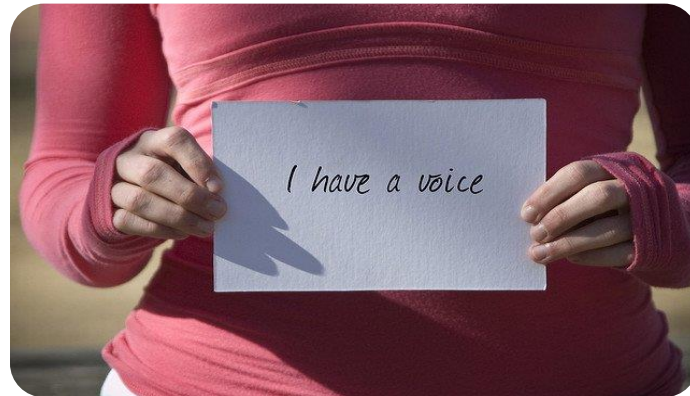
#DiscoverYourWhy!



THE
MASK
YOU
LIVE
IN

Listen to Students

Students like to feel valued, and want to have some “*say*” about what goes on in class and/or school.



Listening to students contribute to:

- rich, two-way dialogue;
- trust and respect between students & educators;
- an environment that fosters teaching & learning.

#DiscoverYourWhy!



#DiscoverYourWhy!

Be Transparent

Share some of the **GOOD**, the **BAD** and the **UGLY** about our past.

Discuss our own failures to show students that we fail, and so can they . . .



#DiscoverYourWhy!

*Failure Should Be Our
Teacher,
Not Our Undertaker.*



#DiscoverYourWhy!

*Failure Is Delay,
Not Defeat.*



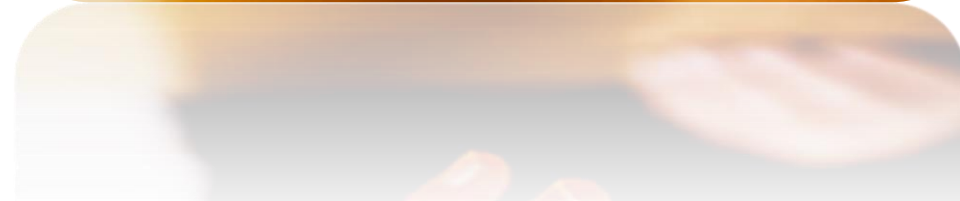
#DiscoverYourWhy!

*Failure Is A Detour,
Not A Dead End.*



#DiscoverYourWhy!

Discipline, Not Punishment



*Discipline is the
bridge between goals
and accomplishment.*

Jim Rohn



Discipline, Not Punishment

Punishment . . .

- inflicts discomfort, disapproval, and humiliation.
- causes student to focus anger on an **unfair** adult, and not on **learning** to be responsible.
- creates a final consequence with the adult acting as *judge, jury* and *executioner*.
- leaves student feeling emotionally abandoned.



Discipline, Not Punishment

Discipline . . .

- **teaches** students how to self-regulate, and deal intelligently with their **emotions & feelings**.
- **teaches** students to learn from their mistakes and find better ways to problem solve in the future.

Discipline, Not Punishment

Discipline . . .

- **teaches** students how to self-regulate, and deal intelligently with their **emotions & feelings**.
- **teaches** students to learn from their **decisions** and find better ways to problem solve in the future.
- creates open & meaningful dialogue between students and teacher.



#DiscoverYourWhy!

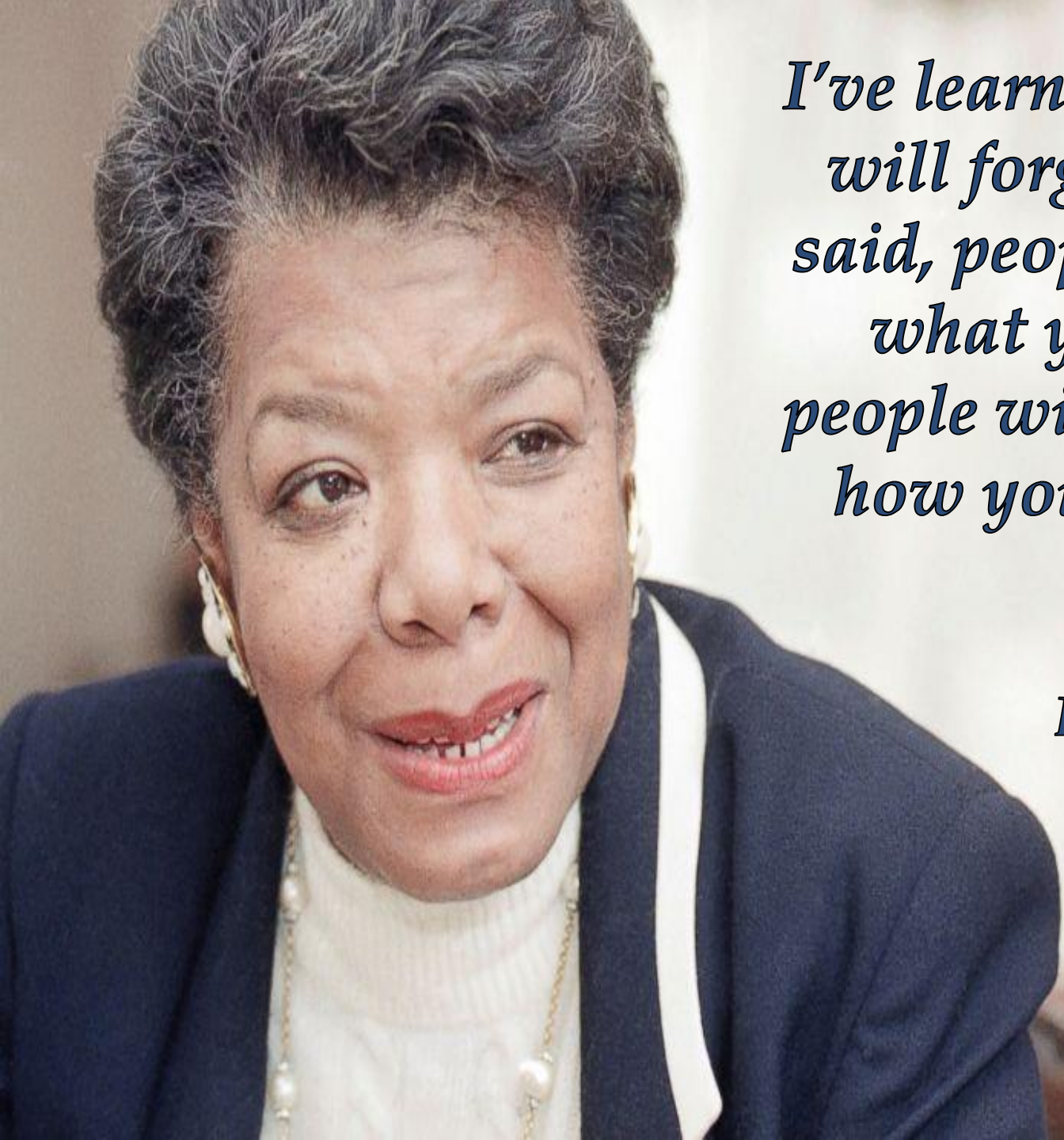
Emotions & Feelings



*A person who feels **appreciated** will always do more than what is expected.*

*The more socially intelligent you are, the happier, more robust and more enjoyable your **relationships** will be.*

***Emotional intelligence** begins to develop in the earliest years - all the small exchanges children have with their parents, teachers, and with each other carry emotional messages.*



*I've learned that people
will forget what you
said, people will forget
what you did, but
people will never forget
how you made them
feel.*

Dr. Maya Angelou

#DiscoverYourWhy!

Why are Emotions & Feelings Important?



Emotions matter: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Emotions & Feelings

Emotionally intelligent students are better prepared to manage their emotional lives.



Develop an *emotional awareness* of our students' needs and especially, their "*story*".

#DiscoverYourWhy!



"IF YOU HAD KNOWLEDGE
OF THEIR EXPERIENCES"

Emotions & Feelings

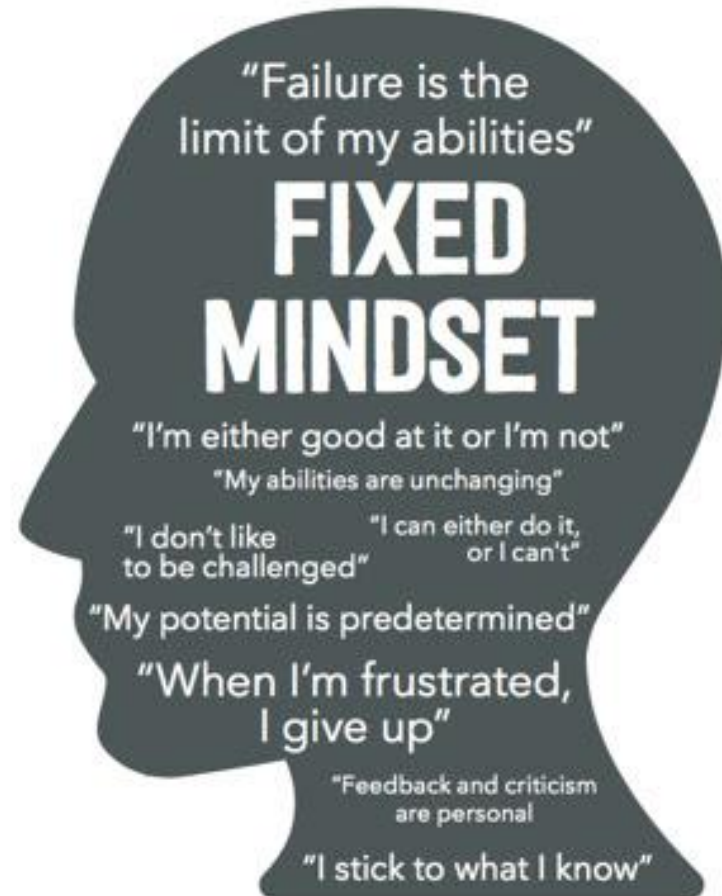
How students **feel** impact their learning, how they treat others & their ability to make wise decisions.

Emotional Intelligence, the ability to monitor our own emotions, and that of others.

Our **mindset** will have a negative or positive impact on the emotions & feelings of our students.



Why Our Mindset?



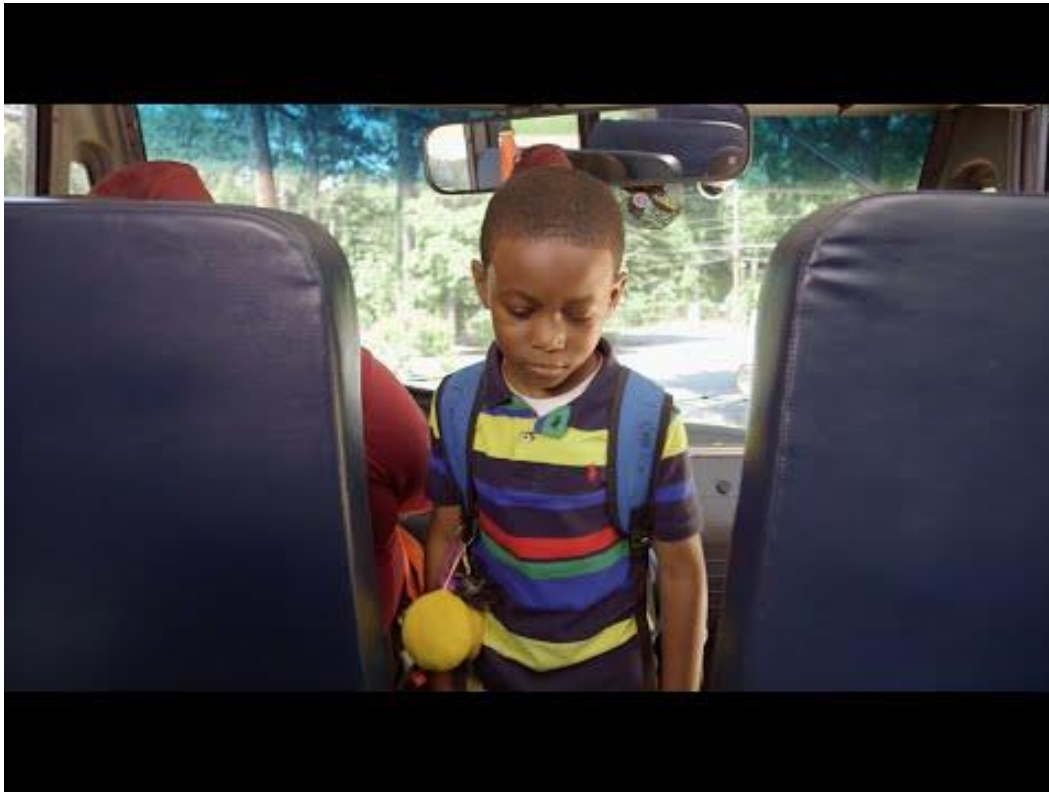
*Deficit thinking results in educational practices that **deter** some students from receiving an **equal** and **equitable** education* (Ladson-Billings, 2007).

*The single most important factor in the academic achievement of minority students is the **explicit rejection** of deficit thinking by the school-based administrator* (Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999).

*A transformative leader is rooted in **moral** and **ethical values** . . . their approach enhances equity, social change and quality of life for students who are marginalized*

(Astin & Astin, 2000; Shields, 2010).

*Our mindset can make
everything possible or make
everything impossible.*



Why Our Mindset?

Students who are suspended just once are...

- **3 times** more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.
- **5 times** more likely to drop out of school; &
- **6 times** more likely to repeat a grade.



The Achievement Gap and Discipline Gap: Two sides of the Same Coin?

Why Our Mindset?

Because . . .

- **1.2 million** African-American students were suspended in a single academic year.
- African-American students are suspended **more than three (3) times** the rate of Caucasian students.

Criminalized Discipline: punitive-based measures like suspension, expulsion, or referral to law enforcement.

Medicalized Discipline: solution-based measures like medical attention and/or psychological intervention.



Why Our Mindset?

Violations by minority students are viewed as conditions that warrant *Criminalized Discipline*.

Violations by non-minority students are viewed as conditions that warrant *Medicalized Discipline*.

School-to-Prison Pipeline - a system that pushes minority students out of school & into the criminal justice system.



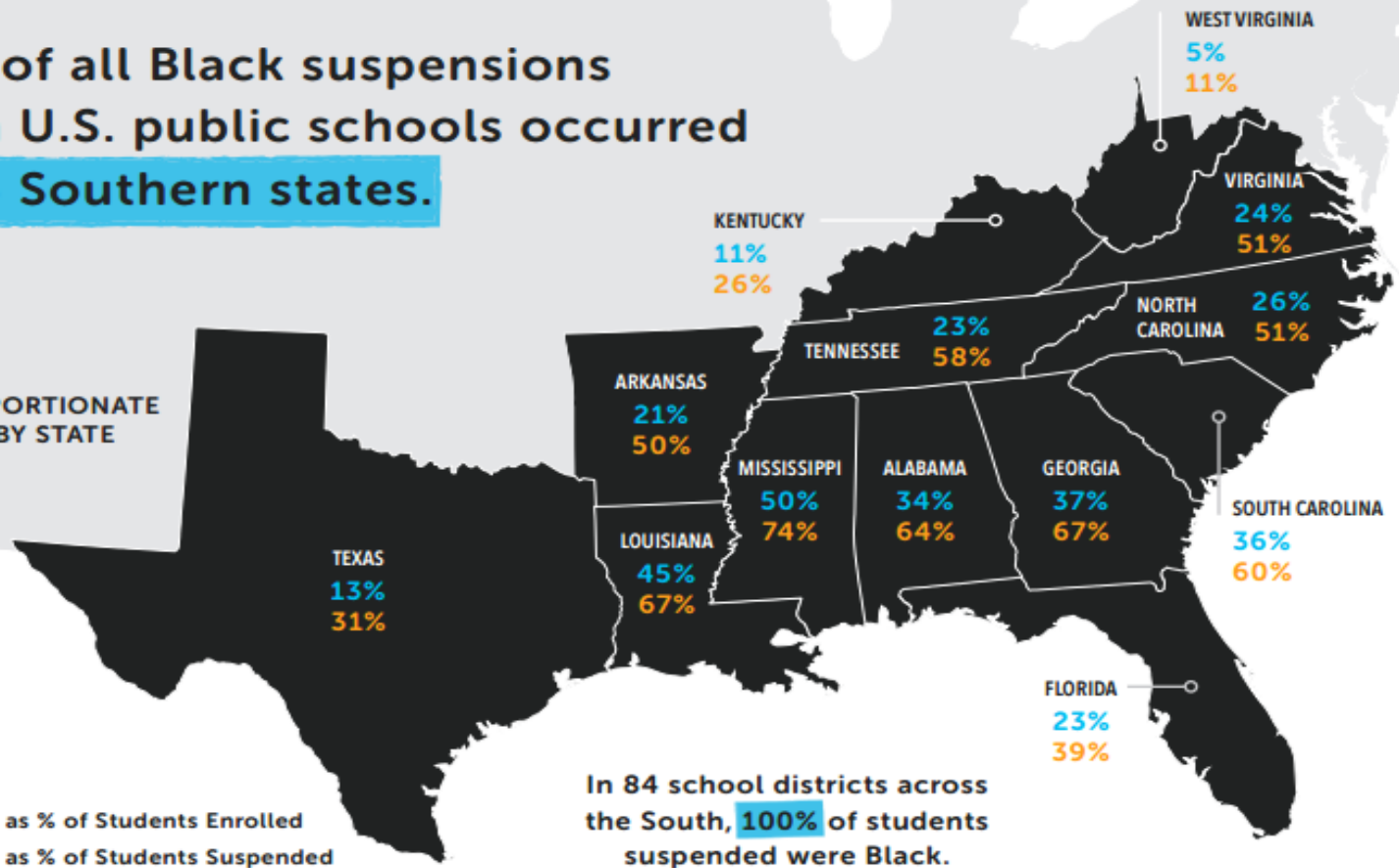
BLACK STUDENT SUSPENSION RATES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

BASED ON A REPORT BY EDWARD J. SMITH AND SHAUN R. HARPER

55% of all Black suspensions from U.S. public schools occurred in **13 Southern states.**

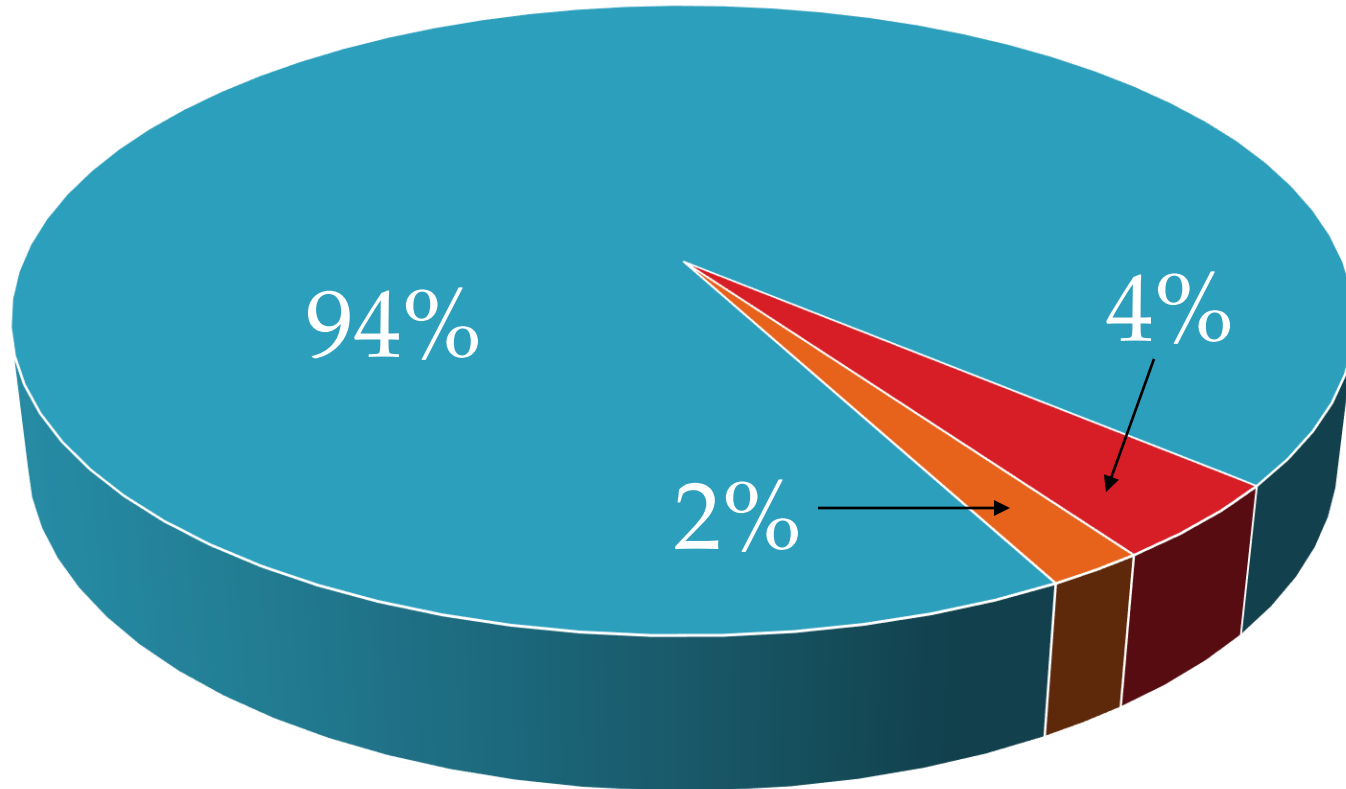
DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT BY STATE

- Blacks as % of Students Enrolled
- Blacks as % of Students Suspended



In 84 school districts across the South, **100%** of students suspended were Black.

OSS Data



■ No OSS ■ 1 OSS ■ 2+ OSS

2017 Magna Award



Over 20,000 Enrollment

Rethinking Discipline

Henrico County Public Schools, Henrico, Virginia



administrators more flexibility to take into consideration students' behavioral history and other circumstances. The goal is to help students learn to meet the school division's behavioral expectations.

The Code of Student Conduct is the guiding document for behavioral expectations. Students, parents, and guardians sign the Code annually, signifying that they have read and understand it. HCPS began a two-year conversation with the community about improving the document. This involved public input sessions in each of Henrico County's five magisterial districts, hosted by various board members and HCPS staff members. The Student Support and Disciplinary Review Office, along with the Department of Instructional Support, played central roles in creating the document's

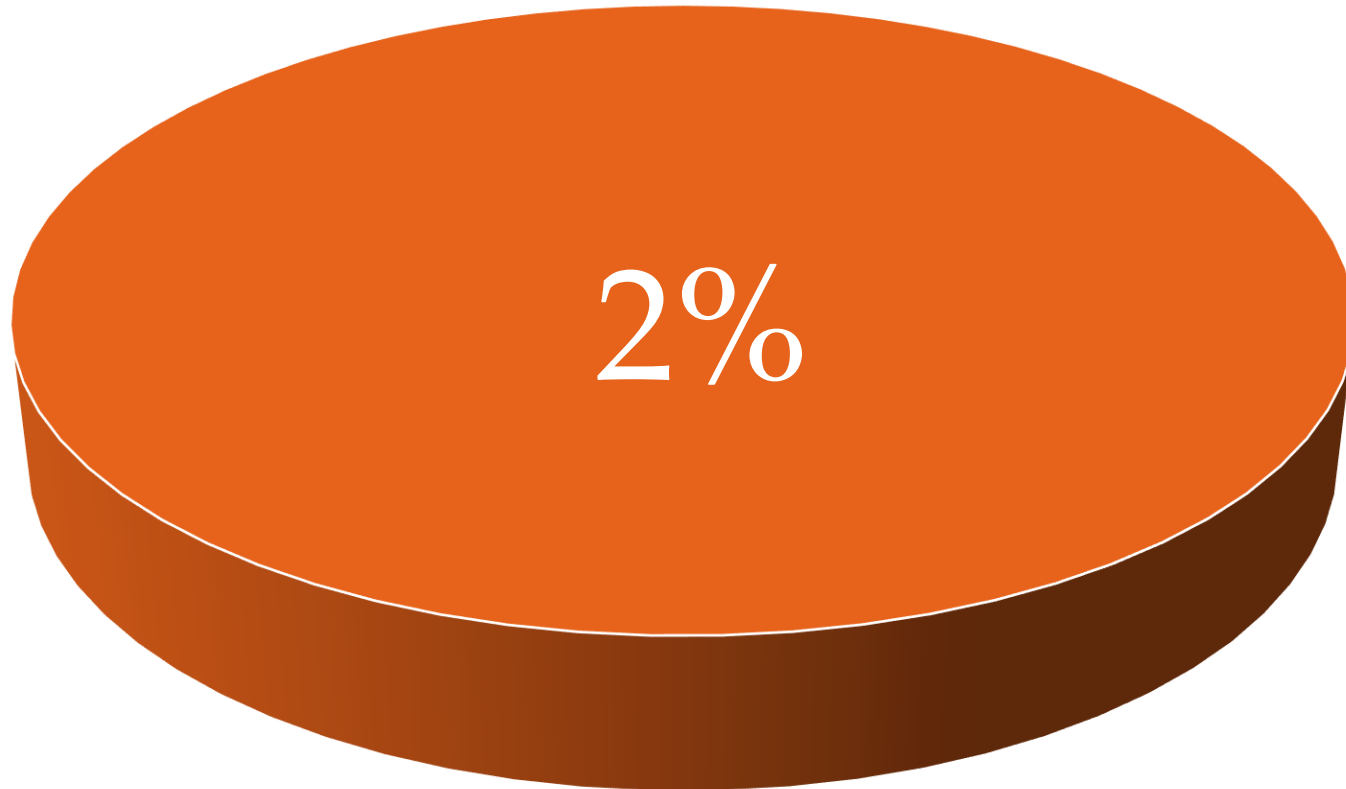
THE BOARD'S INVOLVEMENT

The HCPS School Board has been instrumental in guiding and supporting the new philosophy of student behavior. Remaking the Code of Student Conduct required consistent leadership over several years. Board members attended public input sessions throughout the county to solicit stakeholder feedback. They then worked with HCPS staff members to continually revise the proposed Code as they processed community feedback. From the start of the process, the board has worked to solicit recommendations for behavioral supports and interventions from staff members, and to find funding for those proposals.

RESULTS

HCPS is seeing some encouraging signs when data are compared with the years

OSS Data

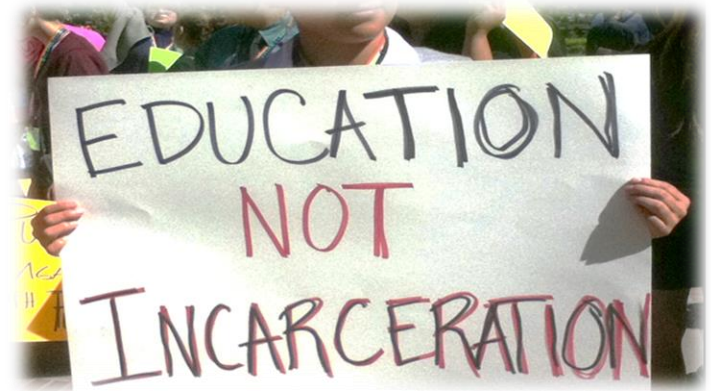


■ 2+ OSS

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- African-American students are suspended **more than three (3) times** the rate of Caucasian students.
- “D-Code” offenses are the most subjective; yet the most common cause of suspensions, & the **only** code that shows a significant disparity.



Competing Mindsets

- *Blind vs. Aware*
- *Equality vs. Equity*
- *A-Contextual vs. Socio-Cultural*
- *Categorical vs. Inter-Sectional*
- *Deficit vs. Asset*

The Choice Is Yours

Blind vs. Aware

Blind Mindset

- Acknowledging the ethnic background of students might offend others.



- Educators blindly operate **without considering** how ethnically diverse students experience school.

Blind vs. Aware

Aware Mindset

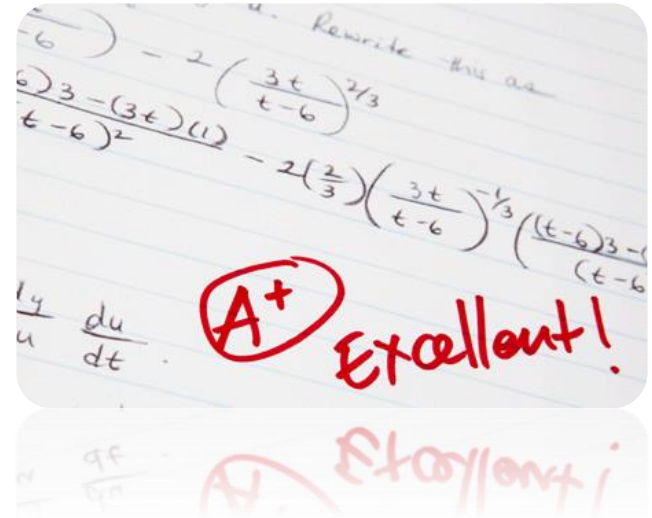
- It is **important to understand** how the background of students & teachers influences teaching & learning.
- Educators are able to understand the educational journey from **multiple & varied** perspectives.



Equality vs. Equity

Equality Mindset

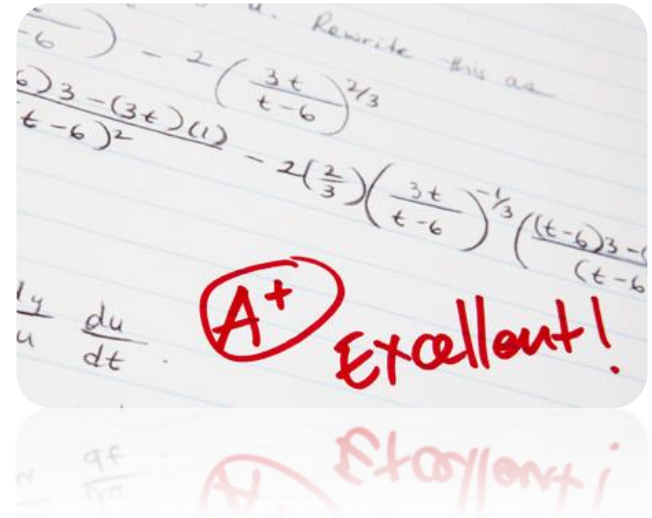
- Academic achievement is **not related** to broader social realities or societal arrangements.
- Educators do not consider ways that a system **disadvantages some**, while **privileging others**.



Equality vs. Equity

Equity Mindset

- Academic achievement **must be viewed** in relation to broader social realities.
- Educators consider larger **issues in society** to help address low student academic performance.



A-Contextual vs. Socio-Cultural

A-Contextual Mindset

- Educators **do not need to understand** parents or the community in order to educate children.



- Educators **miss opportunities** to build partnerships and make lessons meaningful for students.

A-Contextual vs. Socio-Cultural

Socio-Cultural Mindset

- What happens **outside** of school is directly related to the learning experiences **inside** of school.
- Educators seek to **build bridges** between the school and the community in order to make content meaningful & relevant.



Categorical vs. Inter-Sectional

Categorical Mindset

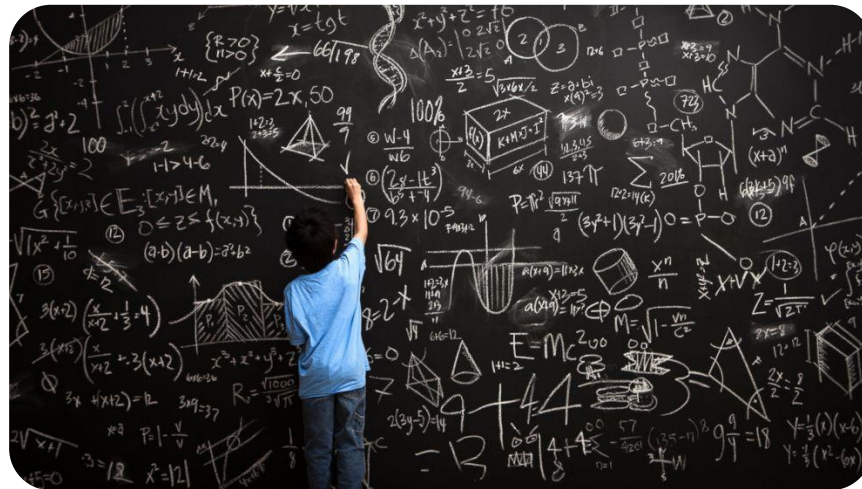
- It is **easy to predict** a student's academic performance once we know a little bit about them.
- Educators primarily think of ethnic origin or socio-economic class, as “**cultures**” that impact academic achievement.



Categorical vs. Inter-Sectional

Inter-Sectional Mindset

- Each student is complex, with a mixture of many types & layers of **different cultures & influences**.
- Focus on how students may **resist certain educators**, but not reject education or learning in broad sense.



Deficit vs. Asset

Deficit Mindset

- All students **must conform** to traditional school culture & teaching approaches.
- Students who do not conform are **excessively referred** for disciplinary action and/or ExEd.



Deficit vs. Asset

Asset Mindset

- Successful teachers **find ways** to draw on students' home culture & language assets.



- Reduces the number of students from **marginalized groups**, who are referred for disciplinary actions and/or ExEd.

“Disparity in achievement mirrors the disparity in discipline . . . because we disproportionately punish the kids with the greatest need.”

Dr. Pedro Noguera

Consider & Ask

Relationship with Students

- *Do I know them?*

Environment for Learning

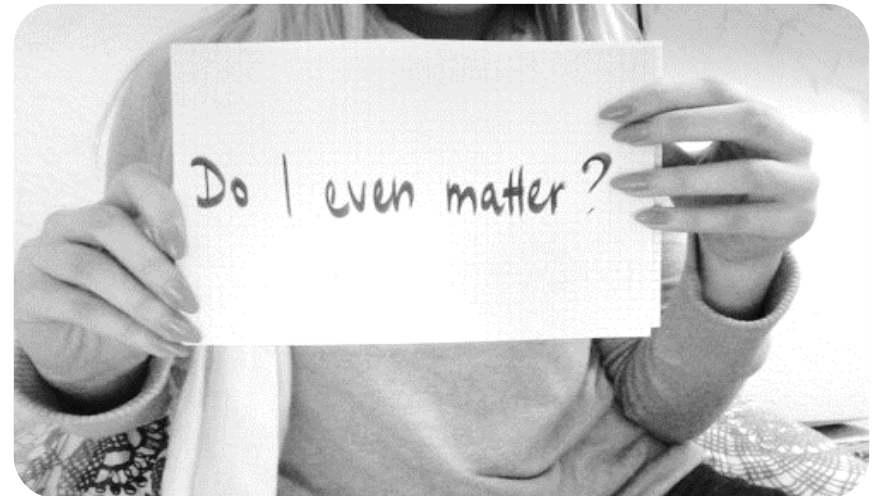
- *Do I provide a learning environment of excellence?*

Compassion for Students

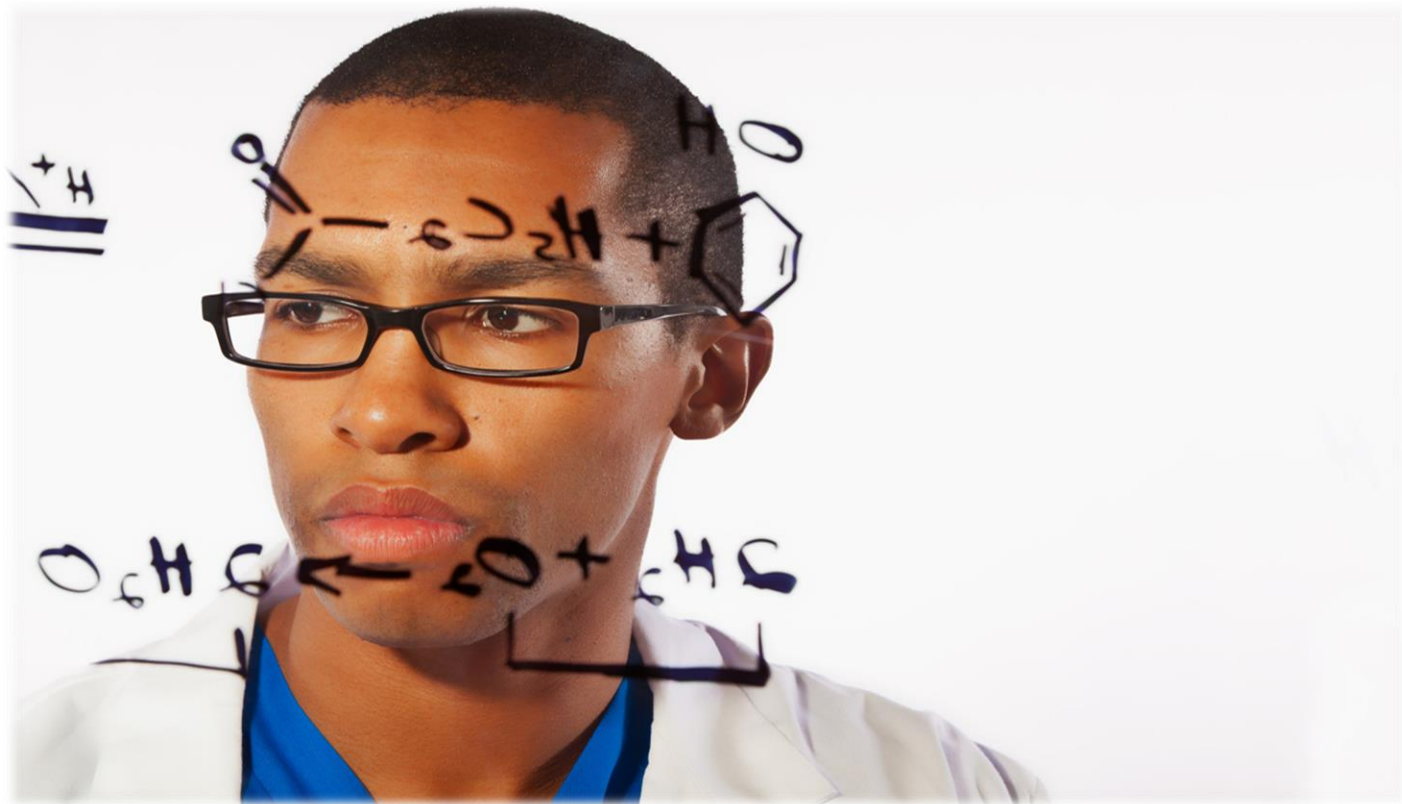
- *Do I care about them?*

Attitude toward Students

- *Do I believe in them?*



A major obstacle in reaching & teaching the Hard-to-Reach or disadvantaged student, is the “soft bigotry of low expectations”.



Cultural Responsiveness



"As teachers of culturally diverse students, we need to educate ourselves about the realities of structural racialization in society and recognizing how colorblindness is just another a form of implicit bias."

- Zaretta Hammond in Education Week Teacher

Week Teacher

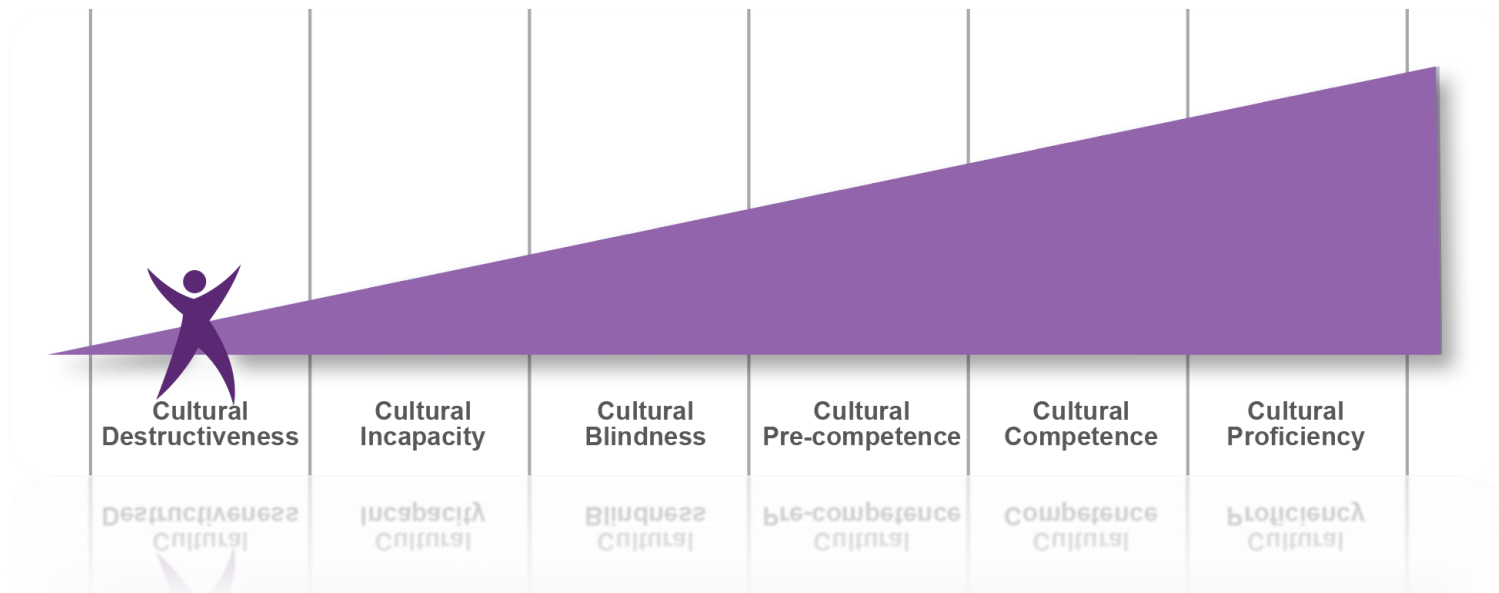
#DiscoverYourWhy!

C.H.A.N.G.E.S.

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Cultural Competency is a Journey for All Educators

- Cultural Competency Continuum vs. Diversity Training
- Obtain Knowledge of Cultural Competent Language
- Identify Your Social Construct
- Define or Not - Race, Gender & Culture



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Hierarchy of Privilege & Power Requires Reflection

- Understand the Manifestations of Privilege
- **Acknowledge Privilege & Power in Schools**
- Address the Manifestations of Power & Privilege
- Reflect on Authority & Legitimacy in the Context of Culture



C.H.A.N.G.E.S.

Assessing the Impact of Bias in our Schools

- Identification of Implicit Bias
- Understand the Impact of Bias on the Brain
- Widen Your Interpretation Aperture
- Listen to and Learn from Others
- What Do I Do Now that I Know?



C.H.A.N.G.E.S.

KNowing Societal Factors that Impact Students

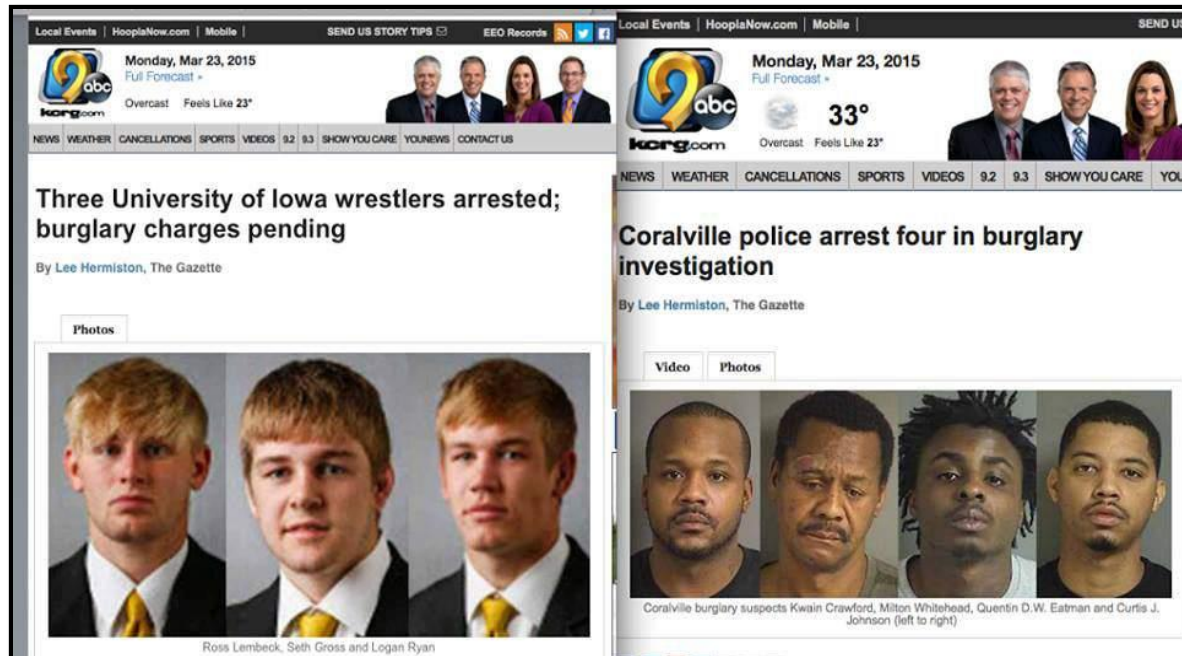
- Understand that Poverty is not a Culture
- Recognizing the Structure of Opportunity
- Acknowledge Differences due to Deficits & Assets
- Recognize the Implicit Power of Media
- What Do I Do Now that I Know?



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C.H.A.N.G.E.S.

Garnering the Cultural “Know-How” to defeat Deficit Mindset

- Validate Lived Experience: Recognize & Nurture Personal Resilience
- **Recognize Deficit Dialogue**
- Build on their Strengths “Become Strength-Finders”
- Use Deliberate Dialogue as a Critical Tool for Change
- Use Agency as a Tool for Balancing Power



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Engaging in Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices

- Recognize the Importance of Including
- Changing Consciousness about Student Motivation
- **Know the Four Conditions Necessary for Culturally Responsive Teaching**
- Working in Tandem with Families to Build & Strengthen Students Ability



Real World Issues



C.H.A.N.G.E.S.

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Strengthening Student Engagement is a **Never-Ending Journey**

- Identification of the Map for the Journey: Ethnographic Interviewing, Learning Style Assessment, Archetype Identification
- **Identification of the Tools Needed to be Successful on the Journey: Differentiated Lessons, Culturally Relevant Tools & Material**
- Identification of Progress on the Journey: Culturally Competent Practice Check-Ins & Look-For Sheets

What Motivates Students?

A green rectangular sign with rounded corners and a white border, mounted on two wooden posts. The word "Motivation" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the sign. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Motivation

What Motivates Students?

The “**Carrot-on-a-Stick**” no longer motivates students to engage in meaningful work.

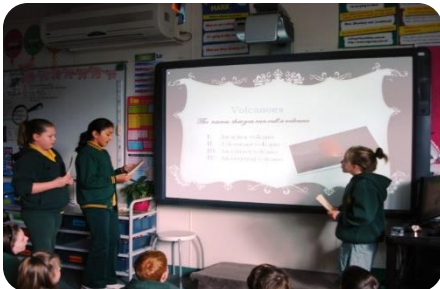


Students' motivation is **not** reward; but rather *Autonomy, Mastery & Purpose.*

What Motivates Students?

Autonomy gives students ownership to make some educational choices about the lesson's assessment.

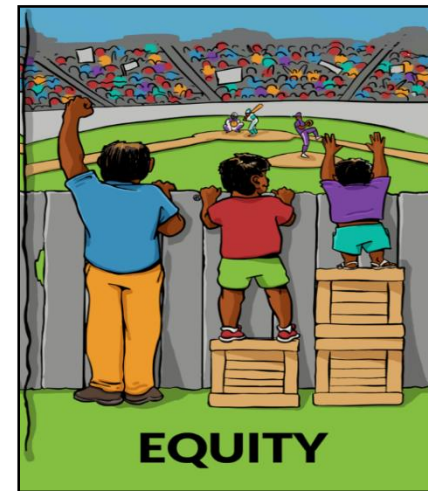
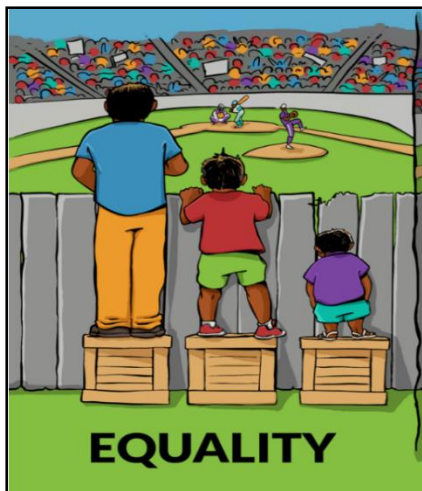
- Provide students **options** for how they demonstrate learning & understanding.



What Motivates Students?

Mastery means the student has a complete understanding of the lesson.

- Students must be able to demonstrate learning through a variety of assessments.
- Not every student will master the lesson at the same pace - *EQUITY* over *equality*.



What Motivates Students?

Purpose - Why do I have to do this? When am I ever going to use this? How is this going to help me?

- Educators must be *intentional* in showing students how the lesson *connects* to their current & future lives.
- CONNECT learning to *what matters* and/or to *what makes sense* to our *hard-to-reach* students (relate poetry to popular music, and history to social movements, etc.).



Some of us look at the Negro community in the South and say that these kids have no capacity to manipulate language. Well, these are not the Negroes I know. Because I know that the wordplay of Negro kids in the South would make the experimental poets, the modern poets, green with envy. I don't mean that these kids possess broad dictionary knowledge, but within the bounds of their familiar environment and within the bounds of their rich oral culture, they possess a great virtuosity with the music and poetry of words. The question is how can you get this skill into the mainstream of the language,

- Ralph Ellison

A photograph of Rita Pierson, an African American woman with short, styled hair, wearing a bright red blazer over a black top. She is captured in a dynamic speaking pose, pointing her right index finger towards the right side of the frame. Her mouth is open as if she is in the middle of a sentence. She is wearing a silver watch on her left wrist and a gold bracelet on her right wrist. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a stage or auditorium setting with some blurred lights.

Make Connections

*Rita Pierson: Every kid needs a champion,
TED Talks Education*

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Coming Soon