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# Rachel E. Terlop Resume

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## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Aspiring Early Childhood educator passionate about helping students achieve academic success through making use of multiple intelligences; demonstrates success with differentiated instruction and assessment; ability to establish positive and meaningful rapport with students, parents and staff.

## TEACHING LICENSURE

**Early Childhood Education, Grades K-3**

**Generalist Endorsement, Grades 4-5**

**Praxis Endorsements:** Reading Specialist, ECE Special Education, Special Education K-12

## GRADUATE EDUCATION

**Trinity Washington University**, Washington, D.C.

**Masters in Early Childhood Education**, May 2017

## UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AND HONORS

**Baldwin Wallace University**, Berea, OH

**Major:** Early Childhood Education

**Bachelor of Science**, May 2013

**Endorsement:** Generalist

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**First Grade Inclusion Teacher, Early Childhood** – August 2015 – Present

**Amidon-Bowen Elementary School**, Washington, D.C.

- ❖ Highly-Effective Teacher, as determined via IMPACT Evaluation
- ❖ Daily differentiated lessons for Guided Reading, Close Reading, and Mathematics (Eureka)
- ❖ Differentiated center activities, ELA and Math, for students based on data collection
- ❖ Collaborated with grade level partner teachers, and Special Education teachers, during weekly Professional Development (LEAP)
- ❖ Co-Chair of Culture and Climate, Hospitality Committee and STEM Night
- ❖ Afterschool tutoring sessions for students significantly below grade level
- ❖ Professional development for City Year Corp members on teaching to multiple intelligences

**Self-Contained Autism Teacher, Early Childhood** – June 2016 – July 2016

**Amidon-Bowen Elementary School**, Washington, D.C.

- ❖ Planned center activities for students based around IEP needs
- ❖ Collaborated with five paraprofessionals to ensure IEP goals were used to drive instruction, and data was collected on a daily basis

**Year 3 Form Teacher, Early Childhood** – August 2014 – July 2015

**Kenton College Preparatory School**, Nairobi, Kenya

- ❖ Planned and carried out lessons for all major subject areas, including Art and Social Skills, whilst aligning to IAPS Standards and British National Curriculum
- ❖ Differentiated instruction within lessons, accommodating all documented needs
- ❖ Participated in weekly Professional Development meetings with Year 3 and Junior School team members to enhance learning experiences
- ❖ Planned and carried out Junior and Senior school activities; ballroom dancing and singing
- ❖ Co-lead of props in the Senior School production of *Bugsy Malone*

**Long Term Substitute, Early Childhood, Grade 5** – April 2014 – June 2014

**Liberty Elementary School**, Frederick, MD

- ❖ Planned and carried out lessons for all major subject areas using the Common Core Curriculum
- ❖ Participated in weekly Professional Learning meetings with Grade 5 team members

**Teacher, 4 Year Old Kindergarten** August 2013 - March 2013 *Green Bay, WI*

**Howard Suamico School District Partnership Program, Good Shepherd Preschool**

- ❖ Implemented the Gradual Release of Responsibility teaching model for student independence
- ❖ Collaborated on a regular basis with a co-teacher and team of 4K teachers within the school

- ❖ Participated in PLCs with surrounding schools to build foundation skills for the Creative Curriculum
- ❖ Communicated with parents about student progress through weekly newsletters, social media, e-mails and personal conferences

**Teacher Candidate, Early Childhood, Grade 3** – Spring 2013  
**Liberty Elementary School, North Ridgeville, OH**

**Teacher Candidate, Early Childhood, Grade 5** – Spring 2013  
**Liberty Elementary School, North Ridgeville, OH**

**Methods Experience Teacher Candidate, Early Childhood, Grade K** – Fall 2012  
**Independence Primary School, Independence, OH**

**Methods Experience Teacher Candidate, Generalist Endorsement, Grades 4/5** – Spring 2012  
**Olmsted Falls Intermediate School, Olmsted Falls, OH**

#### RELATED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Tutor**, Winter 2012 - Spring 2013 Self-Employed, Berea, OH

- ❖ Provide one-on-one tutoring sessions for an Elementary student diagnosed with ADHD, ED, and juvenile diabetes.
- ❖ Receive regular weekly progress reports from classroom teacher and tailor instruction to meet needs.

**Childcare Provider**, Summer 2009 - 2013 Self-Employed, Powell, OH

- ❖ Full time childcare provider during summer and winter months, for girls ages 3 and 6

#### LEADERSHIP

**Maryland Association of Teacher Educator (MATE)**, April 2017

- ❖ Winner of the 2017 Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award via Trinity Washington University

**The Learner Research Network**, July 2017

- ❖ Speaker at the conference in Honolulu, HI
- ❖ Leading Focused Discussion, "The Effect of Gross-Motor Movement on Decoding Ability: Using The Wilson Language Foundations Phonics Curriculum"

**Panelist for National Early Childhood Workforce**, September 19, 2016

- ❖ Spoke with five professionals on a panel about the state of Early Childhood Education in the Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland area
- ❖ Represented the public school sector in the dialogue

**Speaker at ACEI Global Summit on Childhood**, March 2016

- ❖ Traveled to Costa Rica to present at the ACEI Global Summit on Childhood
- ❖ Presented for 90 minutes on the importance of utilizing nature in the education of children

**Nominee for Life Changer of the Year**, September 2015 & 2016

- ❖ Nominated two consecutive years for Life Changer of the Year award

**Donor's Choose Grant Writer**, September 2015 - Present

- ❖ To date, raised over \$11,000 for innovative classroom materials

**Finalist in Steve Spangler's Teacher Passion Project**, October 2014

- ❖ Nominated and received 3<sup>rd</sup> place in competitive teacher competition earning funding for Science education.

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**LEAP Weekly Professional Development** Washington, DC

2016-2017

- ❖ Attend and participate in weekly collaborative professional development sessions
- ❖ Participate in classroom observations, and debrief with LEAP coach to create intentional next steps, based on data, to promote student growth

**Steve Spangler Science - Science in the Rockies** Denver, CO

Summer 2013

- ❖ Attended three-day intensive hands-on Science training, centered around inquiry and standards-based activities.
- ❖ Developed and discussed activities to encourage investigation and strengthen critical thinking skills.

**Group's KidMin Conference, Children's Christian Ministries**, Columbus, OH

Fall 2013

- ❖ Attended three-day conference focused on Christian education.
- ❖ Focused on promoting a classroom environment, centered around Christian values, by focusing on relationships, conversation, relevance and innovation.

## **Philosophy of Education to the Tune of “*We Didn’t Start the Fire*”**

Everyone is worthwhile and capable of learning.

Learning comes from problem solving and experiences.

Howard Gardner says that we learn through multiple means;

Kinesthetic, visual, nature-based, logical.

Human potential lies in the fact that people have a

Unique blend of capabilities and skills. (“Multiple Intelligence Theory”).

Using each one of these, multiple intelligences

When I teach, to unique children, they are engaged.

Any student can learn.

When I scaffold lessons, and do weekly check-ins.

Any student can grow,

In their math or reading, if I assess what’s needed.

Classroom atmosphere is key; feeling safe and loved when we

Listen to our peers and share our goals for the week.

“When significant people use significant words

And actions, they increase the likelihood

Of eliciting positive behaviors from other people,” (Wong & Wong, pg 75) and

Then children feel heard, loved and cherished, understood and cared for.

Feeling valued in my classroom starts when you come in the door.

To lead my students to success,

I have to know them, and their motivations.

“Learning is an active process,” (Yilmaz, pg. 167)

I do acknowledge student’s prior knowledge.

Pre-assess, making goals, checking in on how we grow-

“Harvest student data to improve student achievement,” (Wong & Wong, pg.30).

Data in reading and math, tracking student’s learning path

Leads to intervention that has deep intention.

Facilitating learning as the instructor,

Children work and navigate as the constructors.

“Students can freely build their deep understanding

of the subject matter,” (Li & Gou, pg. 4) – a meaningful experience!

“The more time students work

Together and the more responsibilities

Students take for their work,

The greater the learning that takes place,” (Wong & Wong, pg. 212).

The constructivist approach I take has made my class

Environment a haven for learning.

Scaffolding, movement breaks, work that student’s undertake,

Bite sized feedback for students to then unpack.

Social stories teach respect, children thriving - the effect

Thoughtful teaching, every day, what else do I have to say?

## References

D. (Director). (2009, April 4). *[Instrumental] We Didn't Start the Fire* [Video file]. Retrieved January 27, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnhmOvXxUYU>

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2015, from [http://moodle.trinitydc.edu/pluginfile.php/446169/mod\\_resource/content/1/howard\\_gardner\\_theory\\_multiple\\_intelligences.pdf/](http://moodle.trinitydc.edu/pluginfile.php/446169/mod_resource/content/1/howard_gardner_theory_multiple_intelligences.pdf/)

Li, L., & Guo, R. (2015). A student-centered guest lecturing: A constructivism approach to promote student engagement. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies, Volume 15*. Retrieved November 10, 2015, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1060070.pdf/>

Wong, Harry K., and Rosemary T. Wong. *The first days of school: how to be an effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications, 2009. Print.

Yilmaz, K. (2008). Constructivism: Its Theoretical Underpinnings, Variations, and Implications for Classroom Instruction. *Constructivist Suggestions*. Retrieved January 27, 2017, from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ798521.pdf/>

S. (n.d.). Multiple Intelligence Theory. Retrieved January 31, 2017, from

[https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/afc3/92e9da40d82a596076ea2417163e2a2a8592.pdf?\\_ga=1.88857682.873991474.1486070764](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/afc3/92e9da40d82a596076ea2417163e2a2a8592.pdf?_ga=1.88857682.873991474.1486070764)

**Position Paper: Classroom Management**

Rachel Terlop

Trinity Washington University

Dr. Tamyka Morant

EDTE 689

April 27, 2017

## **Position Statement**

An appropriate behavior management system in an Early Childhood Education classroom setting begins with a positive and nurturing environment. To set up this positive classroom environment, teachers must support the creation of appropriate classroom rooms, model the expected behavior, and then reteach and reinforce the expected behavior consistently. In addition to this technical side of behavior management, teachers must align the physical environment of the classroom and the daily schedule in a way that supports students' social-emotional growth. Hemmeter et. Al. (2008) suggests teachers should spend time "Designing a schedule that minimizes transitions and maximizes the time children spend engaged in developmentally appropriate activities is the first step in decreasing challenging behavior" (p. 1). By designing such a schedule, reinforcing and reinforcing and re-teaching expected behavior, and creating a physical environment that is comfortable for students, a classroom can be positively managed.

## **Support**

Over the course of the school day, there are less-structured periods of the day that fall between learning. When one activity is ending, and another activity is beginning, the expectations for children must be as clear as all other moments in the day, or else challenging behavior can creep in. "Children's challenging behavior during transitions may be related to how program staff structure, schedule, and implement transitions," (Hemmeter et. Al, 2008). First, staff should look at the schedule and see if there are any unnecessary transitions from one activity to another, and assess how students are moving from one activity to the next. Do all students have to move at the same time? Where do

students *have* to be for this instruction? By assessing the routines of the classroom, teachers can subtract excess transitional periods. Once a schedule is set, teachers can make children feel secure by utilizing the time for academic or social-emotional learning, during transitional periods. If children must move in small groups at a time, the other portion of the class must be supported and have expectations, as to not waste precious learning time. Hemmeter et. Al (2008) suggest, “While one teacher calls a few children at a time to wash their hands, another teacher could lead an activity that allows for children to flow in and out easily, like singing songs or reading familiar books,” (p. 4). Maximizing educational time, and minimizing less-structured transitions in a classroom supports a positive learning environment, because all children will be actively engaged in their learning and routines at all times.

After creating a schedule with minimal transitions, teachers must positively reinforce the expected behavior, as well as modeling and re-teaching the behavior on a consistent basis. To support the positive classroom environment during centers, recess, or when the teacher is occupied, teachers can utilize a classroom Problem Solver job. Webster-Stratton & Reid (2004) assert that the top way to reinforce “children’s social and emotional competence is to directly train them in social, cognitive, and emotional management skills such as friendly communication, problem solving, and anger management, (eg, Coie & Dodge, 1998; Dodge & Price, 1994)” (p. 98). Keeping that in mind, Whitchurch & Sprague (2012) state, “Appointing a Problem Solver for the day is a child-centered and child-directed method of resolving conflicts with long-term benefits for all the children,” (p. 8). To ensure that the daily Problem Solver is effectively resolving peer conflicts, teachers can provide cue card suggestions for solutions on how

to solve the problem. The cue card could feature a picture of the solution, along with a familiar phrase the child can duplicate independently. For instance, if the classroom has a quiet space for calming and reflection, the cue card would feature a picture of that place, so the Problem Solver could recommend the quiet space. Having the Problem Solver job rotate on a daily basis helps all students take ownership of the classroom environment, and develop relationships with peers. Whitchurch & Sprague assert that having a Problem Solver “helps children build skills needed for social-emotional development,” (2012, p. 9).

After training students to become active members in classroom management, teachers can support students by adapting the physical environment to meet the emotional needs of their diverse students. Koralek (2011) suggests that teachers, “Create several personal spaces where children can spend time alone for a while,” and “Offer plenty of space for indoor and outdoor movement activities,” (p. 8). Since all students enter the classroom with varying levels of social-emotional competence, allowing children to use the classroom space to process their feelings is crucial; some students prefer isolation, while others prefer large open spaces, as to not feel overwhelmed. By creating spaces in the room for each unique child to have the space they need to move, and work through feelings, teachers are supporting independent emotional processing.

## **Conclusion**

Teachers are charged with the task of managing many young children, all of who come into the classroom with fluctuating emotions, and different levels of social-emotional regulation. By structuring the day in a way that eliminates unstructured time, encouraging peers to be Problem Solvers, and allowing children different spaces to work

through their emotions, teachers are creating a welcoming, and diverse environment for the diverse learners in the room. These three additions, to the consistent modeling and re-teaching of expectations promote a positive learning environment.

## References

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Koralek, D. (2011). *Adapt the environment to meet differing emotional needs*. Retrieved April 21, 2017, from [http://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/TYC\\_V4N2\\_Koralek.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/files/tyc/file/TYC_V4N2_Koralek.pdf)

Saphier, J., & Gower R. (2008). *The skillful teacher: building your teaching skills*. (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) MA: Research for Better Teaching Inc.

Webster-Stratton, C., & Reid, M. (2004). *Strengthening social and emotional competence in young children—the foundation for early school readiness and success*. *Infants and Young Children*, 17(2), 96-113. Retrieved April 21, 2017.

Whitchurch, S., & Sprague, J. (2012). *The problem solver job peer-mediated conflict resolution*. Retrieved April 21, 2017, from <http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/files/tyc/file/V5I2/Problem%20Solver%20Job.pdf>

**Position Paper: Equity and Diversity**

Rachel Terlop

Trinity Washington University

Dr. Tamyka Morant

EDTE 689

April 27, 2017

## **Position Statement**

Teachers and administration may join the education field for a plethora of reasons, but their work collectively revolves around children. Despite best interests, each stakeholder that enters a school building brings his or her personal history, culture, and previous experiences with them. Additionally, these stakeholders also enter the school with implicit biases, or ideas that are unconscious. Implicit biases affect how educators view, and interact with children, both positively and negatively. Saphier, & Gower (2008) state, “As we move towards the year 2020, when fully half of all children in the United States will be of color, it is important to be creating schools that acknowledge and value the culture of all students,” (p. 351). In order to be an effective and respectful teacher, it is crucial for teachers to reflect on and address their personal biases and privilege, become knowledgeable about how students in their care are being perceived based on culture, race, or disability, and then actively work to create an educational environment that does not isolate students, but rather highlights diverse backgrounds and allows for an equitable learning environment.

## **Support**

Before teachers can successfully teach and form strong rapport with their students, it is critical that time is taken from self-assessment and reflection on personal biases. Montgomery (2001) asserts, “Many teachers are faced with limited understanding of cultures other than their own and the possibility that this limitation will negatively affect their students’ ability to become successful learners,” (p. 1). Following this assertion, Montgomery (2001) provides a list of questions that ask teachers about their definition of diversity, perceptions of students who come from different racial, and

cultural backgrounds, and how an educational environment can be responsive to the backgrounds and experiences of the students in the classroom (p. 1).

After teachers have assessed their personal biases, and understand that their personal upbringing, culture, and privileges affects their personality, classroom environment and instructional expectations, they then must look to their students and understand how *they* are perceived. “Data from the Office of Civil Rights reveal that African-American and Hispanic-American students, particularly males, are overrepresented in terms of their identification in the disability categories of serious emotional disturbance and mental retardation (Oswald, Coutinho, Best, & Singh, 1999),” (Montgomery, p.2). Taking this data into consideration, concern is raised as to why these minority males are overrepresented. The National Council on Disabilities (NCD) article, *Breaking the School-to-Prison Pipeline for Students with Disabilities*, shares, “The various special education processes, including child find, assessment, and IEP development, are similarly susceptible to implicit racial biases” (2015, p. 48). This quote suggests that students of color are being identified for special education services due to the implicit bias of those stakeholders who are carrying out formal assessments. Thus, teachers are imposing their biased interpretations of student behavior on the special education system, and causing children to be misidentified.

With such exceptional evidence to suggest that school personnel hold biases against African-American and Hispanic students, teachers must actively work to create an environment that does not promote inequality, or acceptance. The NCD has contributed comfort; “Fortunately, research suggests that it is possible to recognize implicit bias in oneself and learn techniques to overcome such perceptions and increase positive social

interactions,” (2015, p. 48). Teachers should aggressively seek out professional development, or peer-reviewed literature, to educate themselves in how to appropriately, and respectfully, address behavior, cultural and socio-economic differences in the classroom. This professional development can create cultural competency in school personnel, and allow all stakeholders to become aware, and sensitive, to what they are saying and doing, and how it affects the educational environment.

### **Conclusion**

By understanding the biases that we, as humans, hold subconsciously, and addressing them, teachers and educational stakeholders can better create a culturally relevant environment that equitably supports all students; despite culture, race, or ability level. By self-evaluating and actively seeking out resources to become a more informed, and equitable, when it comes to teaching to a diverse population, teachers will create a more encouraging learning environment. “Culturally relevant teaching does not mean teaching about other cultures,” Saphier & Gowler (2008) admit, and then proceed to explain, “It means validating the culture of students by including in-school learning experiences, topics, scenes, and knowledge that derive from the culture of the students themselves,” (p. 351). To understand what topics, scenes, and knowledge students find valuable from their culture it is crucial to start by getting to know students through individual conversations, or interest surveys. Once teachers open the doors of communication with their diverse students, only then can they begin to implement all of their newfound knowledge on how to make the classroom equitable.

## References

Montgomery, W. (2001, March & April). *Creating culturally responsive, inclusive classrooms*. Retrieved April, 15, from [http://www.papamontes.com/INDEXH~1/EDUC\\_LINKS/ARTICLE\\_CRP\\_Creating%20Culturally%20Responsive%20Classroom.pdf](http://www.papamontes.com/INDEXH~1/EDUC_LINKS/ARTICLE_CRP_Creating%20Culturally%20Responsive%20Classroom.pdf)

National Council on Disabilities (NCD). (2015, June 18). *Breaking the school-to-prison pipeline for students with disabilities*. National Council on Disability, 1-93. Retrieved April 15, 2016, from [http://www.ncd.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/NCD\\_School-to-PrisonReport\\_508-PDF.pdf](http://www.ncd.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/NCD_School-to-PrisonReport_508-PDF.pdf)

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**Position Paper: Curriculum Strategies**

Rachel Terlop

Trinity Washington University

Dr. Tamyka Morant

EDTE 689

April 27, 2017

## **Position Statement**

When presenting the curriculum to students, teachers have the ability to showcase the material in a variety of ways. In order to make the material meaningful to students, and ensure that they understand and connect with the content, teachers must take the necessary steps to prepare. Although all students absorb and understand content differently, teachers must strive to incorporate curriculum strategies that engage learners. When presenting the curriculum to students, teachers should ensure that the material has personal relevance to the students, activates multiple sensory channels, and is aligned to the students' preferred learning styles. By utilizing strategies to make the curriculum personalized and meaningful to the students, then teachers are ensuring that learners will be engaged in the content.

## **Support**

As teachers begin to present the curriculum content, the material can be reinforced in an abstract manner, or through a learning experience that children are invested in. "Many educators believe it is important that as many learning experiences as possible connect to students' real world of meaning - their world of experience outside school," (Saphier & Gower, 2008). If a student has personal context in which they can transfer new information to, it becomes worthwhile, and the scholar will be more likely to participate. Saphier & Gower (2008) elaborate, "This then guarantees a level of involvement on the part of the student with the learning experience that will maximize learning," (p. 414). By connecting new

information to something students value, teachers are forming a valuable connection to engage students in the content.

After organizing the content in a relevant fashion, teachers must then assess how material will be experienced through the students' sensory channels. Students can experience information in the visual, auditory, or kinesthetic sense. "Matching students' optimum input and output channels is often cited as one way to individualize learning experience for different students," (Saphier & Gowler, 2008). Observing students during lessons, and interviewing them, can allow teachers to make critical choices on how students will absorb, or engage with content during instruction. Teachers can present information visually in written or picture form, read it aloud, let students read for themselves, and then let students write, draw, build, manipulate, or act it out. Thompson & Raisor (2013), in their article *Meeting the Sensory Needs of Young Children*, reaffirm that material should be presented in a variety of ways because children "react in different ways because they integrate the information obtained through their senses from the environment differently," (p. 35). When students experience and demonstrate understanding of the material through their preferred sensory channel, the learning becomes personalized and meaningful.

A final strategic step teachers should take to make the curriculum meaningful and personalized is to incorporate students' preferred leaning styles into the delivery of content. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that all humans have preferred learning styles; musical, logical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, verbal, visual, naturalistic. When material is presented

in each learner's preferred method, Gardner's Theory suggests that learning is understood on a deeper, more personal level. "Instruction which is designed to help student develop their strengths can also trigger their confidence to develop areas in which they are not as strong. Students' multiple learning preferences can be addressed when instruction includes a range of meaningful and appropriate methods, activities, and assessments" (Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, pg. 1). In order to pick the most suitable learning style to deliver the curriculum in, teachers should conduct learning surveys at the beginning and middle of the year to assess student interest and preferred delivery method of instruction.

### **Conclusion**

By ensuring that the curriculum material has personal relevance to the students, activates multiple sensory channels, and is aligned to the students' preferred learning styles, teachers personalizing the learning experiences in the classroom to meet the needs of the students. Customizing the learning experiences in the classroom will make students feel supported, and like the learning has special relevance to their lives.

## References

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[http://moodle.trinitydc.edu/pluginfile.php/446169/mod\\_resource/content/1/howard\\_gardner\\_theory\\_multiple\\_intelligences.pdf](http://moodle.trinitydc.edu/pluginfile.php/446169/mod_resource/content/1/howard_gardner_theory_multiple_intelligences.pdf)

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**Position Paper: Building Meaningful Relationships**

Rachel Terlop

Trinity Washington University

Dr. Tamyka Morant

EDTE 689

April 6, 2017

## **Position Statement**

When students enter a classroom, they are being held to the expectations of an educational professional who has learned best practices to implement; but who also holds lifetime of experiences that have shaped their personality and teaching style. As teachers build meaningful relationships with students in a classroom, they must begin with the understanding that every human has a unique personality and upbringing, and that showing respect towards individual traits, and assets, is what builds personal connections. Although children are young, they carry their experiences and temperament to school with them, and value being heard and respected. Saphier & Gowler (2008), authors of *The Skillful Teacher*, explain that personal relationships with students are important because “they impact the climate and management of a classroom,” and “they inform instructional design and delivery,” as well as having the ability to “influence student effort and academic engagement,” (p. 318). Building positive relationships with individual students encourages effort in the classroom, helps teachers plan relevant and engaging lessons, and builds a community of learners.

## **Support**

When students feel cared for, and know that their contributions to the classroom matter and have value, they are more likely to put forth effort socially and academically. Additionally, when it comes time for students to grapple with a challenge, they feel secure and comfortable in their environment, which provides an appropriate atmosphere to take risks in. When children feel that their voice is heard, and can affect a lesson through questioning and contribution, they find value in the lesson due to their impact. The lesson has become something that the student is an integral part of, and teacher

guidance is welcomed and revered, as opposed to being considered as critical or off-putting. Sanchez, Steece-Doran, & Jablon (2013) offer, “Children experience your attention and guidance as a caring embrace holding everything together. They know you’re on their team,” (p. 8). Once students feel like an essential part of the classroom, only then does effort and academic engagement become a priority. Saphier & Gowler (2008) offer, in reference to teacher/student relationship, “The relationship can serve as a vehicle for influencing academic identity, convincing students that they are capable of performing at high levels, and getting seemingly unmotivated students to come to school, stay in school, and complete assignments, participate in class, and persist in the face of academic challenges,” (p. 319).

Although teachers can make students feel valued through acknowledgement of effort, taking the time to appreciate student’s interests and preferred learning styles allows teachers to design lessons that will truly demonstrate respect of student’s individuality. Saphier & Gowler (2008) state, “The better we know our students as individuals, the more information we have with which to make instructional decisions: how to make the content relevant and personally meaningful, how to hook student interests, how to group students for academic tasks, how to intervene or offer support, and so on,” (p. 318). Understanding and responding to student strengths, preferences, areas for growth, and preferred styles helps to create a harmonious learning environment where students are able to participate in a way that motivates them, without changing the rigorous demands of the material, or learning outcomes.

When students feel that their individual strengths are valued, and that the teacher and classroom value their individuality, the classroom climate becomes a symphonic

community of learners. Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson (2011) offer, “The things you say and the things you do when you interact with children each day make a big difference in their lives,” (p. 12). Within in a supportive learning community, children feel comfortable sharing their interests, are able to observe limits, can be pushed to grapple with difficult content, and make connections between experiences in their lives. Saphier & Gowler (2008) state, “The quality of relationships between teachers and students is a deep and constant backdrop to all that is transpiring in classrooms,” (p. 326). When teacher and student relationships are built on a solid foundation of value and respect for one another, students can then begin to build positive relationships with peers; thus strengthening the classroom community of learners.

## **Conclusion**

As teachers build positive relationships with individual students, by demonstrating respect for differences, by tailoring instruction to meet the needs of scholars, children put forth effort into their learning experiences, and a community of learners forms as a result. Teachers can learn more about their students through interest surveys at the beginning, middle, and three-quarter mark of the year; serving as a pulse check in the classroom, and gathering information on how to make instruction more engaging. Additionally, teachers can get to know students on a deeper level through conversation. By spending a mere two, uninterrupted, minutes a day talking to a particular student, teachers can learn a lot about the scholar, and also make the student feel valued and cared for. Doing this, each day, with the students who are most disengaged from the classroom community can help build the positive relationship necessary for any student to be successful as a contributing member of the classroom.

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**Position Paper: Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

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## **Position Statement**

When teaching children how to read, the Jan Richardson Guided Reading protocol provides a structured pathway to lead readers in developing their literacy skills. “Guided reading is strategic, differentiated small-group reading instruction,” (Richardson, 2016, p. 222). Jan Richardson’s *Next Step Guided Reading in Action: Grades K-2* (2013) outlines the specific steps in teaching children how to read. Jan Richardson’s *Next Step Guided Reading in Action: Grades K-2* (2013) provides structured lesson plan templates for Pre-A Readers, Emergent Readers, Early Readers, Transitional Readers, and Fluent Readers. Each lesson plan template features vocabulary instruction, reading, word study, and writing. By focusing on these four aspects of literacy, children are supported in not only their ability to read and decode, but also understand the book, and respond to it at their ability level.

## **Support**

When deciding what small group to place children in, teachers want to ensure that the students are being provided a book that can be decoded, and comprehended. After teachers pre-assess students, and determine their reading level, only then can strategic small groups be formed. “Teachers match students with challenging books that are at their instructional reading level and support their next reading goal,” (Richardson, 2016). Books that are at students instructional level are slightly more challenging than what students can read independently, but still within range of understanding and decoding ability. As teachers choose books that push student’s reading abilities, they are carefully organizing “their interactions with children to move them forward in concept development through

understanding of what Vygotsky (1978) termed the *zone of proximal development*" (Seefeldt, Galper, & Jones, 2012). The zone of proximal development being knowledge that students can access with support and scaffolding. Once choosing a book, teachers must then preview the book to pull out one to two vocabulary words that need to be highlighted before students begin reading. Featuring one or two unique words, with definition or spelling pattern unknown, will allow children to get a sense of what the story will be about. Giving away more than a few vocabulary words provides too heavy of a scaffold for students, and does not allow them to grapple with the new story. After allowing students to read their guided reading book for four to five minutes, teachers may stop the children and ask clarifying questions, or inferences about the story. During this time, teachers can check for comprehension, and clarify any confusion from the text.

Following the reading of the story comes time for word study. During this portion of the guided reading protocol, the teacher explicitly teaches a sight word, vowel pattern, or welded sound for children to apply in writing. Richardson suggests the use of sound boxes; small rectangles in a horizontal row, in which students write each sound of the word. Sound boxes can be used "to organize information graphically," and help students "become visual learners," (McDermott, p. 30). When teaching a vowel team, for example, the teacher would explicitly teach the team and demonstrate its use within *one* sound box before encouraging children to apply the vowel team in their sound boxes independently. Students participating in all ability level guided reading groups can utilize sound boxes. Richardson (2013)

states that all “Students will use this template for segmenting words during word study,” (Richardson, p. 23).

In the writing portion of Jan Richardson’s guided reading protocol, teachers can choose to apply new word study knowledge, or ask higher-order thinking questions and allow students time to reflect on the reading, make inferences, or provide text-based evidence to a question. This is an opportunity for teachers to hold individualized writing conferences and speak directly to students about their personal writing goals, and give specific feedback on how to improve writing.

### **Conclusion**

Jan Richardson’s guided reading protocol allows teachers to teach specific reading skills to learners who are approximately on the same reading level, whilst all sharing a common text. “The small-group model allows teachers to target specific learning needs, provide appropriate scaffolding, and gradually reduce support to promote independence,” (Richardson, 2016). As each lesson features vocabulary instruction, reading, word study, and writing, teachers are supporting students in not only their ability to read and decode, but also comprehend and respond to a story at their instructional level.

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