Helping Students Become the Leaders of their Own Learning

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

- Rita Pierson, Educator

Who was your champion?
About Me...

• Former writing teacher

• Equity-focused school coaching and support

• Supporting leaders, instructional leadership teams, and teachers
Equity is….

- Reducing the *predictability* of who succeeds and who fails

- Interrupting *reproductive practices* that negatively impact vulnerable and marginalized students

- Cultivating the *unique gifts and talents* of every student

--- National Equity Project
Culturally Responsive Teaching

Deep Learning that Produces Higher Achievement Has to Embrace the Affective and Cognitive Learning for Understanding

- High Trust and Low Stress Environment
- Information Processing Ease

Learning for Understanding
Achievement of Results

Antecedents of Excellence

Lucky
High results, low understanding of antecedents
Replication of success unlikely

Leading
High results, high understanding of antecedents
Replication of success likely

Losing
Low results, low understanding of antecedents
Replication of failure likely

Learning
Low results, high understanding of antecedents
Replication of success likely
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Collectivism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Pull yourself by your bootstraps.”</td>
<td>“I am because we are.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused on individual achievement</td>
<td>Focused on interdependence and group success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual contributions and status are important</td>
<td>Group dynamics and harmony are important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Relational</td>
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Ready for Rigor Frame Guides
Culturally Responsive Practice

Awareness

Learning Partnerships

Information Processing

Community of Learners
Learning Partnerships
Community of Learners
Information Processing
Awareness
Awareness

“The real voyage of discovery consist not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

-- Marcel Proust

• We have to systematically interrupt deficit thinking that sees Alaskan Native students as “less than”.

• The non-native teacher must learn to be bi-cultural
The Four Horsemen of Deficit Mindset
What is Deficit Mindset?

The core of deficit “ideology” is the belief that educational and economic inequities result not from social conditions such as structural racialization or systemic injustice, but from intellectual, moral, cultural, and behavioral deficiencies assumed to be inherent in disenfranchised individuals and communities.

(Brandon, 2003; Gorski, 2008a, 2008b; Valencia, 1997; Yosso, 2005)
The Culture of Poverty
a framework for UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

The Leading U.S. Expert on the Mindsets of Poverty, Middle Class, and Wealth

A MUST-READ FOR EDUCATORS, EMPLOYERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS
“Poor Baby” Syndrome
The Myth of Meritocracy
The American Dream Game

Are you just slow or what?

Start

Black

White

Free land from Indians
Jump 2 spaces

Free labor from slaves
Take another turn

Slavery
Jim Crow Laws
Segregation
Civil Rights Era

Denial of voting rights
Lose 10 turns

Lynchings
Jim Crow laws
Lose 5 turns

KKK
Lose 3 turns

Poor schools
Lose 9 turns

Subprime mortgage scams
Lose turn

Wealth gap
Subprime

Affirmative action
Free turn

Redlining
Lose 7 turns

PRO
Move to turn 1

Gang culture
Lose 5 turns

PRO
Move to turn 1

Biased courts & cops
Lose 6 turns

PRO
Move to turn 1
Learning Partnerships

Awareness

Information Processing

Community of Learners
TRUST
The Amygdala Hijack

Reticular Activating System

Amygdala
The Learning Partnership

Rapport  Alliance  Cognitive Insight
Levels of Student Engagement

Engagement
High Attention + High Commitment

Strategic Compliance
High Attention + Low Commitment

Ritual Compliance
Low Attention + Low Commitment

Retreatism
No Attention + No Commitment

Rebellion
Diverted Attention + No Commitment

based on P. Schlechty and visualization by R. Rios
Building Authentic Connection is Foundational

Students will not risk the kind of failure necessary for learning **unless they feel safe** and trust the one leading them to the edge of their own learning.
This is Your Brain on Trust

Sympathetic
Avoid Cortisol

Parasympathetic
Approach Dopamine & Serotonin

Polyvagal
Connect Oxytocin
Truth Bomb…

Culture is the software to the brain’s hardware.
COMPONENTS OF ACADEMIC MINDSET

I can succeed at this. 
The degree to which students believe they are “good” at a particular kind of task or field of study is strongly associated with academic perseverance.

My ability and competence grow with my effort. 
The degree to which students have a growth-mindset means they are more likely to interpret academic challenge or mistakes as opportunities to learn and develop their brains.

I belong to this academic community. 
A strong sense of academic belonging where students see themselves as members of not only a social community, but an intellectual community.

This work has value for me. 
The intrinsic value placed on academic tasks and topics that connect in some way to students' lives, future educational pursuits, or current interests.

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We have to help students counter-act the brain’s *negativity bias*.
...YET

THE MOST
I don't get it

POWERFUL
yet

ADDITION
Optimism

I can't do this

yet

yet

Perseverance

I can't do math

yet

yet

Growth Mindset
Teacher and Student Must Build an Alliance

• Students need both care and push from the teacher

• Teacher uses the trust developed during the rapport stage as fuel

• Result: Students give you permission to push
“Children grow into the intellectual life around them.” – Lev Vygotsky
The learning pit

Learning this Way

I don't understand
It's too hard
I want to quit

I was right not to give up
Ah! I think I'm getting it
Maybe my LP can help
I'll try again

"This is what learning feels like."

"If you can leap over the pit, you're probably not learning!"
Make Learning Sticky
The Information Processing Cycle

Attention
Elaboration
Consolidation
“Processing that doesn’t proceed to the elaboration stage…fails to make the connections that build understanding.”

-- Kevin Washburn
The Architecture of Learning: Designing Instruction for the Learning Brain
Culturally responsive teaching means teaching from native ways of knowing.
Common Cultural Learning Tools

Memory

Puzzle & Patterns

Talk & Word Play

Perspectives
Consolidation = Dendrite Growth Protection

Before Learning
During
48 Hours After

Consolidation = Dendrite Growth Protection
Studies by indigenous peoples from places such as New Zealand, Canada, and Hawai’i show that students perform at higher levels when they are provided with contextual points of reference that they can relate to in a meaningful way.
“Education is the key to overcoming many of the barriers Alaskan Natives face. Yet, it must be an education that is sensitive to native ways of knowing. Children must be grounded in their cultures and beliefs in order to be successful.”

Bernice Joseph
Alaska Federation of Natives Convention
October 20, 2005
Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard
By Chip and Dan Heath
Core Actions to Build Capacity

1. Require non-Native teachers need to build their bi-cultural lens.

2. Re-imagine teachers’ professional development using native “ways of knowing” not as an exotic “add-on” but as foundational way of educating them even at the pre-service level.

3. Require that content should be “decolonized” and contextualized, not just diversified. Have teachers engage in lesson study to ensure it is done correctly, not at a superficial level.
“Better is possible. It does not take genius. It takes diligence. It takes moral clarity. It takes ingenuity. And above all, it takes a willingness to try.”

--Atul Gawande, Surgeon and Author