



Southern Regional Meeting 2008 Recap



From the Editor...

The Association for Curriculum and Development (ASCD) began an initiative in 2006, which culminated in 2007 in the report, *The Learning Compact Redefined* (online at www.ascd.org). It called for a shift in focus from a strictly academic and teacher-centered point of view to one centered on students and the education of the “whole child.” Subsequently, many articles have been published in *Educational Leadership* and a website of resources created (www.wholechildeducation.org). Likewise, in the last issue of this newsletter, the concept of the “whole” unified, in one way or another, the articles that appeared in it. Continuing this theme, many of the articles submitted by presenters at the



Top: Brian Woods from Campbell Hall on “Smart Boards: Meaningful, Interactive, and Fun!”

2008 Regional Meeting speak to this theme as well. We begin with two articles by artists, followed by one on student-led discussions written by a teacher who is also a published and practicing author. The global curriculum is represented by a teacher who had a desire to do volunteer work in Africa, and a belief in the importance of opening student eyes and minds to the lives of peers in other countries, and found herself creating a global project that has impacted hundreds of lives. Another teacher found a “hidden curriculum” when she became the school archivist.



Left: “Dance Dance Revolution”- a Physical Education workshop from Brentwood School

Bottom: “From Page to Stage” Jonas Basom from the Drama Education Network



While most of our presenters are you wonderful teachers from our CAIS community, as usual, we had a few presenters from “outside” CAIS. They share their special expertise with us about how children’s imaginations can heal, and how anxiety can be confused with ADHD in our students. Finally, the Southern California coordinator for the Positive Coaching Alliance shares stories and tips on how to take the focus off the scoreboard while still building a winning team through “Double-Goal Coaching.” Thank you to all presenters for a strong and substantive program of workshops.

Many thanks, also, to the Committee of the School at Campbell Hall for a spectacular job in organizing all the many logistics, big and small, that go into hosting the Regional Meeting. Next year we will be in Northern California, and our host will be Head-Royce School in Oakland. The date will be Monday, March 9, 2009. Mark your calendars!

Have a wonderful summer, and see you next year.

- Sandee Mirell

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Winning Through Life Lessons

Art teacher shares her passion for sketching with her students engaging reflection, imagination, and heightened awareness of their own aesthetic.



Sketchbooks: Some Thoughts for Artists and Art Teachers

by Robin Miller, Visual Art teacher
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Buried in a dimly lit corner of Tashilhunpo Monastery's library in Shigatze, Tibet, I had faith that the tour guide was saying something enlightening. The trouble was, I could barely see or hear him in the cramped, smoky space. My own

travel fatigue and altitude sickness didn't help. But for my sketching, my companions might have found me a few hours later passed out in a dark corner - at any pause during the previous two week tourist marathon around China, as my attention to guides' speeches waned, as it did now, I found drawing a useful focusing tool, forcing my eyes deeper into the gloom, urging my mind to make sense of elusive forms hiding there. If I couldn't hear or understand the guide, if my feet hurt, or my body begged to collapse, at least I could draw.

I have often found that sketching during a trip gives me deeper insight to a place, burning images into my memory. While tracing the contour of a form with eye and pen I am

rewarded with detail that otherwise would never have met my eye (or mind). On a recent trip to New Orleans, sketching the elaborate façade of the United Fruit Company on St. Charles Avenue I noticed with delight real plants growing out of the stone cornucopia over the door. And back in Tibet, monks on at least two occasions silently watched my paper and pen from over my shoulder, engaging us in a dialog beyond words.

When I have been sketching regularly the ideas flow more smoothly from eye to hand to paper, and from mind to hand to paper. Your hand can't tell if the ideas are originating from out there, or from inside, but it becomes a more responsive tool with practice. Thus the sketchbook and sketching are very good for facilitating the flow of ideas in preparing a work of art, as well as being a place for invention and brainstorming. Sketching and writing make the ideas in one's head visible, objectifying them, subjecting them to scrutiny. Often this is also a low-key way to simply get started on a piece.

The sketchbook also provides a place for reflection. In one physical location drawings, clippings, artifacts, manipulations can be viewed as a collection, a record shouting a partial, unique answer to the mystery "Where have I come from? Who am I? Where am I going?"

What of the value of a sketchbook to the art student? If the sketchbook is valuable in the practice of a teacher of art (who is simultaneously its student) then the same holds true (and at least my own experience validates it) for the student of the teacher of art. This begs an obvious question: How can an art teacher encourage students to integrate sketchbook use into their practice? How can an art teacher, in an age of shrinking budgets, give any time or thought to an exercise that could easily be considered ancillary or peripheral? What follows is an attempt to answer that question in practical ways.

In my own classroom this past year I have integrated the sketchbook into almost every class project in order to encourage students to draw and doodle, engage their imaginations, critically engage the world around them, and heighten awareness of their own aesthetic in their work. The sketchbook we used was the Canson "Sketch." The 65 lb. paper stands up well to cutting, gluing, drawing, even a bit of watercolor, and there are 100 pages that for most students is more than enough. I have had two students out of about 50 run out though. At 5-1/2" x 8" it is easily stuffed into a backpack.

The first thing we did was make a cover out of paste paper (see www.sdmart.org/pix/pastepaper.pdf for a great recipe). Among other benefits, when students collage a cover with paper the book is immediately personalized. The sketchbook is the only book of all the student's subjects that has a cover that they made. Art is friendly and personal.

The first homework was assigned on the first day of class. A business-size envelope, cut in half, was presented to each student. Half the envelope was glued on the first page, the other half glued on the last page. The student also received a slip of paper small enough to be folded once and placed inside the front envelope. Their assignment was to write on the paper an accomplishment, artwork, or adventure of which they felt proud. Then on the outside of the envelope and onto the page they were to illustrate it in any way they wanted.

The purpose of this exercise was to reinforce feelings of accomplishment among the students, help them understand that they are capable of representing visually and verbally something significant to them, and subtly letting them know (they are 7th graders) that what is important to them is important in class. Students were given the weekend to do the assignment, and when they returned their work was placed on a crit rail for all to see. Anyone who wanted to discuss their own, or another's work was encouraged to do so. Alternately, students place their work on the crit rail when they enter the class, everyone looks at each other's for a couple of minutes, then sits down with their own sketchbooks in hand. You, as the teacher, can then collect the books and write comments on stickie notes (I like to do this because it makes your comments noticeable to the student, but does not mark their book directly). And what of that other half of the envelope? During the final week I will ask students to write the thing of which they felt most proud during their first year in school as 7th graders.

One of the exercises we do to get to know students is to give them an art questionnaire in the form of a handout. I type it in a horizontal 11" x 8-1/2" format so it may be cut in half and pasted into the sketchbook. Some of this year's questions are:

- What is your favorite kind of art to make?
- Who is your favorite writer/musician/artist? Describe your favorite piece and why you like it.
- Describe something beautiful that you have seen in the last five days. Why was it beautiful to you? (the answers to this question may surprise you)
- What is something you wish people knew about you?
- What makes good art?

All the brainstorming for each project is done in the sketchbook. Students are often asked to conjure at least three different ideas for a project, so these ideas will be recorded in the sketchbook.

We had a PowerPoint presentation on texture, line and shape, and students were asked to draw thumbnail sketches of each example. The slides went fairly rapidly so each sketch was about the size of a postage stamp.

More uses for the sketchbook...

Gesture studies. Done in ten, thirty, and one-minute segments as warm up exercises and explorations in compositional design, students then make larger more formal drawings on higher quality drawing paper.

Blind contour hand drawings. We place the sketchbook in a brown market bag so it's hidden away while students explore the intricacies of their left (or right) hands.

Negative space exercise. First we draw a classroom stool very lightly, then trace around the contour, then erase the inside drawing. Students take their drawings home and fill in the "negative" space with their own design; ultimately they have a silhouette of the stool complemented by a bold pattern.

The color wheel may be painted in gouache, or drawn with color pencils in the sketchbook.

The lecture on one-and two-point perspective used to be recorded on large sheets of drawing paper. Now we turn the sketchbooks horizontally and do the lecture framework drawings in the book. Students can compare both types of perspective and easily refer to them when executing a larger work.

Also done in the sketchbook are value studies and value scales, so again easy reference may be made when making a larger value drawing; and we do a schematic of facial proportions before the self-portrait exercise.

Andy Goldsworthy's "Rivers and Tides" video is great to show before a unit on assemblage. Students take visual and verbal notes during the film, recording not only the sculptures, but also the comments made by the artist, as well as their own responses to the film. Another video we use is the video "Behind the Scenes" with David Hockney, and Penn and Teller. Students take visual and verbal notes on the video in their sketchbooks. They also receive a worksheet of questions about the video that they subsequently paste into their books.

Teachers often say that they have no time in the classroom for sketchbooks, or that students are not motivated to do the homework. In my experience, (granted, I teach very highly motivated students) when I check that students have done the homework, and take pains to look at it/read it/ comment on it, students respond by doing their part. When they see me put a check next to their names for doing the work they know I care that they did it. The times I have failed to do this resulted in much lower responsiveness by my students.

As artist-teachers, our own practice and experience inspires much of we teach in the studio classroom. We give our students what is useful to us as artists; we try to provide them with a solid foundation upon which to build their own art practice and a lens through which they can reliably view the work of others. If students finish the course with a sketchbook rich with notes, ideas, doodles, and reflections they will have a source of inspiration and reference, as well as an initiation to a good habit. The sketchbook is a challenge to them to think beyond the first idea that enters their minds. Although art can come from spontaneity, it also develops as a product of circumspection that can be nurtured in the sketchbook. By encouraging students to work on their sketchbooks outside of class I have found that they actually extend rather than diminish the amount of time that they spend thinking about, and even making art if only on the humble hidden pages between the paste paper covers.

It is my hope to inspire teachers to continue and even expand their use of this wonderful tool in the studio classroom. If you have methods that work well for you, please share them with me and I will pass them on!

Some websites for fans of sketchbooks:

www.sketchbooks.org

www.jonkeegan.com

www.moleskinacity.com

<http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/sketchbooks/html/introduction.html>

Weekend Challenges

These are exercises designed to engage students with their sketchbooks in ways that are both verbal and visual, artistic and literary. I like to call them challenges to stimulate a sporting sense in those less artistically inclined.

#1 - Weekend artifact: paste an actual object from your weekend in your book and write a few sentences about it alongside it.

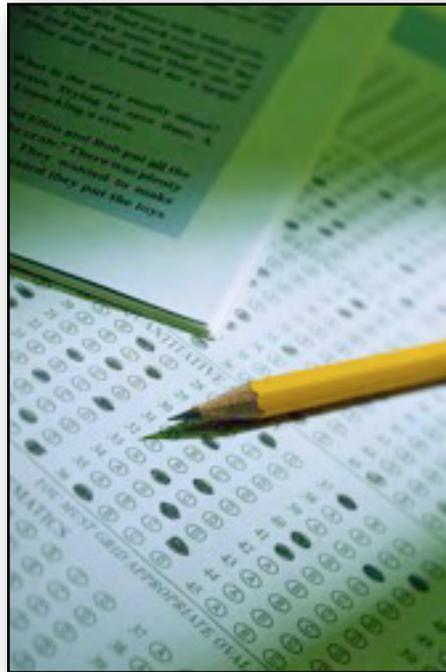
#2. Draw something in your home as fast as you can.

#3. Draw, or write about a physical location on the school campus that you really like.

#4. Pick an article of clothing of yours that has a pattern or design on it and draw it in your sketchbook. This can be a t-shirt with a great logo, or a skirt with a beautiful pattern.

#5. Look at the opening page of your favorite magazine, newspaper or website and draw it in graphic shorthand (this after we have discussed the grid layout).

Art consultant makes a case for the academic value of the arts



The Importance of Creativity in the Age of Accountability

by Tracy Cheney
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Imagination is more important than knowledge. I never came upon any of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking.

- Albert Einstein

Should it be of any great interest to educators that the first National Conference on the Creative Economy was held in October 2007? To me, it heralds that some much-needed changes in our education system will begin coming our way. Although that conference focused on strategies to create a culture of creativity in the workplace, one has to wonder why it was necessary in the first place.

It reminds me of the cry that once (rightfully) came from the business community pushing for basic literacy skills, since they were spending significant sums to provide remedial skills to workers. Now big companies are spending millions trying to spark imaginative thinking within their organizations. There is great concern that the American economy is falling behind other countries. Apparently, we are experiencing a "creativity gap."

This doesn't come as any surprise to the throngs of art educators idled for a quarter of a century since the 1983 report "Nation At Risk" was issued. The drive for accountability and "real" academics discarded most of what wasn't quantifiable on standardized tests. What's happened is that the old system was

reinforced, while curriculum emphasizing the production of creativity was eliminated.

Creative Education To Rescue the US Economy

A report issued in 2006 by the National Center on Education and the Economy warned that American students were not gaining the skills needed to compete in the new global economy. This echoed the 2005 Skills Gap survey conducted by the National Association of Manufacturers, with 81% of respondents unable to find qualified workers. Spokeswoman Phyllis Eisen commented, "The future of American innovation and our country's prosperity hinges on our students' ability to develop skills and abilities to be imaginative and creative."

More than two decades of educational "reform" has led to the short-sighted elimination of creative education in American schools. My prediction is that the business community will begin pushing for school reform that provides the kind of creative thinkers in demand for the 21st century. Once parents and the public realize the current system has failed in this respect, schools will be able to address creativity.

In fact, a ripple of this recognition was uncovered in a survey conducted among 1000 voters in December 2007. An emerging voting constituency nicknamed the "Imagine Nation"

indicated a passionate feeling about this issue for 21st century learning. According to pollster Celinda Lake, “A significant number of voters believe that today’s educational approaches are outdated, impair critical capacities of the imagination, and stifle teachers and students alike.” A sample of the poll findings reveals that 91% of voters believe that education in and through the arts is essential to building capacities of the imagination; to 73% of voters, this is just as important as the so-called “basics.” When compared to other nations, 56% of voters believe America devotes less attention to developing the imagination and innovation than other countries. Only 19% of respondents feel the US is ahead.

My workshop at the 2008 Regional Meeting focused on ways that teachers can develop creative thinking in their classrooms even while dealing with intense pressure to prepare students to perform well on standardized tests. Many independent schools, freed of numerous government and bureaucratic constraints, are already leading the way.

What Exactly is Creativity?

Creativity is “connectivity.” It’s the ability to look at what already exists and make new combinations, sometimes looking at what everybody else looks at and seeing something different. That’s an outlook, or attitude worth cultivating. The creative process sees, thinks, and seeks to understand in “wholes” (synthesis), quite the opposite of breaking things apart (analytical).

Inherent in creative thinking is the understanding that there may be many ways to solve problems – and the ability to make choices from those numerous possibilities. It’s obvious why this suppleness of mind is so desirable in the business world today. Divergent thinking is the key to problem solving, innovation, and invention.

What’s Happened to Imaginative Thinking?

In a classic study titled “Loss of Genius” (Land and Jarman 1968), 1600

preschool children were given eight tests that NASA used to evaluate divergent thinking. 98% scored at the genius level. The same children took the identical tests five years later around age 10, and only 32% scored at the genius level. Five years later around age 15, only 22% scored at the genius level. 200,000 adults age 25+ have taken the identical tests, and only 2% score at the genius level. Is creative thinking getting harder

Bloom’s Taxonomy

<p>Left-brain modality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge (remember) Comprehension (understand) Application (practice) Analysis (examine) 	<p>Right-brain modality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesis (create) Evaluation (assess)
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or do students practice it less?

There’s much hand-wringing over what’s happening to kids’ creative thinking ability. Blame is cast on a host of sources. The hours spent at school don’t promote it either, if:

- students spend a great deal of time on workbooks and worksheets.
- instead of being given time to create their own pictures, they are made to color in adult-prepared materials and pictures – this has permeated all the way down to the nursery school level.
- teachers stick to the text, giving few appropriate extension activities.
- the classroom isn’t set up for innovation, as the primary instruction method is whole-class lecture, and the majority of assignments are one-size-fits-all.
- students aren’t given authentic, hands-on projects to develop creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Our Magnificent Divergent Thinking Processes

Both hemispheres of the brain are involved in enormously complex functions, but they embody entirely different modes of thinking to solve different kinds of problems. There are many models developed to elucidate thinking processes. For this discussion, I’m using terminology popularized by art educator Betty Edwards 25 years ago

(author of *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*). The purpose here is to give teachers a helpful device for evaluating the kinds of activities they plan for the school day – striving for balance in developing both types of thinking.

Left-brain modality

School cultivates the logical, verbal, numerical, and analytical habits of the left-brain modality. This type of thinking is methodical. It’s thinking in words. Information is categorized and associated with the past, or projected into the future. A great deal of time is spent teaching students numerous techniques to access this type of thinking. It’s the province of the correct answer, time, most forms of math, spelling, writing, talking, reasoning, gathering data, rational, deductive, and analytical thinking. It’s the knowledge base.

An important function of this modality is imitation. Students are taught effective methods to learn skills that don’t require original thought. It’s far easier to test for this type of thinking than it is for creativity. This is what’s measured on standardized tests. That’s why so much of the school day is devoted to it. Proficiency in this area used to be good enough for most jobs.

Right-brain modality

This is the province of innovation – not imitation. Because it’s spatial, it’s thinking in pictures using visual logic, and learning through movement. This nonverbal intellect is holistic, perceptual, visual, auditory, emotional, intuitive, and connective. It “sees” the whole picture and works through complex solutions. It is not linear or sequential, or subject to deadlines. It exists in the present moment – the here and now.

The school day is not setup to cultivate innovation. This modality requires different thinking processes which school doesn’t have time to address often enough. That’s why “doing” imaginative thinking seems vague to most students. However, it’s this area that educators will have to address with more urgency so US

students can succeed in the 21st century economy.

How Does the General Classroom Teacher Teach Creativity?

Teachers must plan for right-brain instruction just as carefully as they do for the opposite modality. Educators already have a well-tested, 50-year-old model describing cognitive thinking in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. By ensuring that lessons are extended fully through the highest level, Evaluation, teachers develop the whole of thinking. If the bulk of classroom time is spent merely learning the material, not moving past Application or Analysis, students don't move into the right-thinking modality.

As I interpret Bloom, creative thinking doesn't occur until you reach Synthesis. If lessons fall short, it's no wonder students don't practice it. Yet, the higher order thinking skills are the epitome of academics. Bloom's Taxonomy clearly illustrates that learners can't springboard to creative thinking without knowing a subject well. Innovation doesn't take place without a solid foundation. It's the teacher's task to figure out how quickly students should move through each lower level of Bloom's so they have ample opportunity to work with the material transformatively.

When we don't give students opportunity, or techniques to practice the creative process they either come to believe they can't do it, or that it's not a worthwhile pursuit. As educators, we wouldn't dream of doing that in spelling or math, but we may take for granted

that students can accomplish a creative activity without instruction. It takes practice for teacher and students. Using Bloom's guide in its entirety, teachers go far in closing the "creativity gap."

Creativity = Doing

Help students recognize when they're using creative thinking. Quite the opposite of learning analytical rules to find the correct answer, the "rules" of the right-thinking modality are expansive:

- **Fluency** – generate many ideas
- **Flexibility** – generate many different ideas
- **Transformation** – link ideas together to form a new concept
- **Originality** – give it a unique or special twist

The creative act is active problem-solving. Thinking, discussing, planning, and analyzing are not taking action – these are merely preparation. Things haven't yet moved from word-thinking in the left modality. The formula for creative success is taking action of some kind. Students and teachers often wonder why nothing seems to be happening. It's because they sit waiting for an idea to hit. They must do something to activate it!

To stop the paralysis of analysis and "I don't know what to do," instruct students to do one simple thing. Then do something to it, then do something else to it, and creative thinking will kick in. Or they can ask "what if?" or "how can I?" when they get stuck.

Reassure students that almost nobody knows exactly how they're going to do a new project when they first start. Rarely, if ever, is a visual problem solved with the first try. And changes can happen right up to the deadline. Students will be trying something that may or may not be successful. To maintain confidence in the process, teach students that "failures" provide feedback. We're all educated as to what "wrong" is, but in this modality, goofs are part of the process. Think of Thomas Edison, who learned 9,999 ways how not to make a light bulb first.

Learning to let the work "speak," and making choices based on that is the kind of knowing experienced in the right-brain modality. Creativity is not happenstance. It's just that those "a-ha" moments of clarity come on their own



timetable sometime during the process – they can't be scheduled like a test.

Easy Ways to Integrate the Creative Process

Since I'm an art educator, it's no surprise that I'd recommend drawing. Drawing is a simple, valuable tool at your disposal. Why is drawing important? It

- is a direct quick-link to the right-brain thinking modality;
- is how children sort out the world;
- jumpstarts the creative process and spurs originality through observation, experience, and imagination.

Drawing is visual thinking; it gives an immediate insight into, and record of, a child's thinking process. It is possible to determine the child's stage of development, and plan accordingly. Drawing helps move a child's development forward. The sequence of learning for young children is draw – read – write. They can't skip over any development stage.

But don't feel you have to "teach" drawing – just carve out some time so students can contemplate their school subjects in right-brain modality. This works! Simple applications can range from allowing them to draw sequential scenarios of a story from literature to drawing pictorial timelines for social studies units to examining science phenomenon closely and recording observations on paper. Use this as a habitual means to help you rectify lopsided thinking development.

Additionally, you can:

- plan cross-curricular opportunities to apply learning between subjects and content areas;

*If everyone
is thinking alike,
then somebody
isn't thinking.*

- George Patton

- tie learning to real-world applications;
- pair a left-modality warm up activity like D.O.L with a right-modality activity like drawing a quick line transformation;
- engage students with puzzles, pattern recognition, humor, singing, movement;
- use techniques such as mind mapping, storyboarding, and metaphorical thinking
- change at least one thing on the classroom walls weekly - rotate bulletin boards monthly.

Reduce worksheets! The pressure to be more academic has resulted in less originality, and mountains of making copies – even for preschoolers. Worksheets are a backward, anemic interpretation of what’s academic because they

- represent the lower level of Bloom’s taxonomy;
- don’t target right modality skills that facilitate students moving forward to the next stage of development;
- sap inventiveness and discovery;
- are regimented, not differentiated;
- rob students of the opportunity to make their own decisions.

Have fun nourishing the creative outlook in your students, instead of educating it out of them! Closing the creativity gap is how schools will prepare students for the expanding creative economy of the 21st century.

Creative Anxiety in the Classroom - A Case Study

Right-brain modality activities shift the dynamics in the classroom. When you shift gears from the predictable to an open-ended creative project you alter relationships and motivations in the classroom. Don’t let the contemplation of this send a shiver down your spine! When you plan for it, and teach students the appropriate skills and behavior, it doesn’t have to feel chaotic. Most students will enjoy the change of pace. However, some may have intense reactions. Consider the experience of a 6th grade teacher who assigns her class a poster project for a social studies unit.

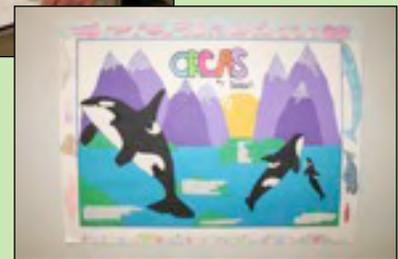
Mrs. J feels rather anxious about this activity, but her principal is encouraging staff to incorporate more authentic learning into the curriculum. Mrs. J is known for running an orderly, productive classroom. She believes herself to be uncreative outside of the classroom, so the discomfort of pushing past personal limitations to demonstrate in front of students is acute. She’s concerned about helping her students during the process, and how to grade them. The couple of times she’s tried an “artsy” project in the past, she was heard muttering words in the teacher’s lounge such as “disaster,” “frenzied,” and “never again.”

Artistically-inclined Abby seems to flit from one topic to the next, she’s so full of ideas, and very energized by them. This should be the perfect opportunity for her, but she can’t settle on one thing. Since time and deadlines may not exist for some very creative thinkers, she has trouble pulling the project together. Brynne is another artistic-type, who doesn’t fit in with the ruling social crowd. Because she prides herself on her artistic ability, she expects to be good at this. Such kids demand perfection of themselves, and their frustration levels can run high. Brynne crumbles when her skills fall short, and she can’t make her project match the vision in her mind.

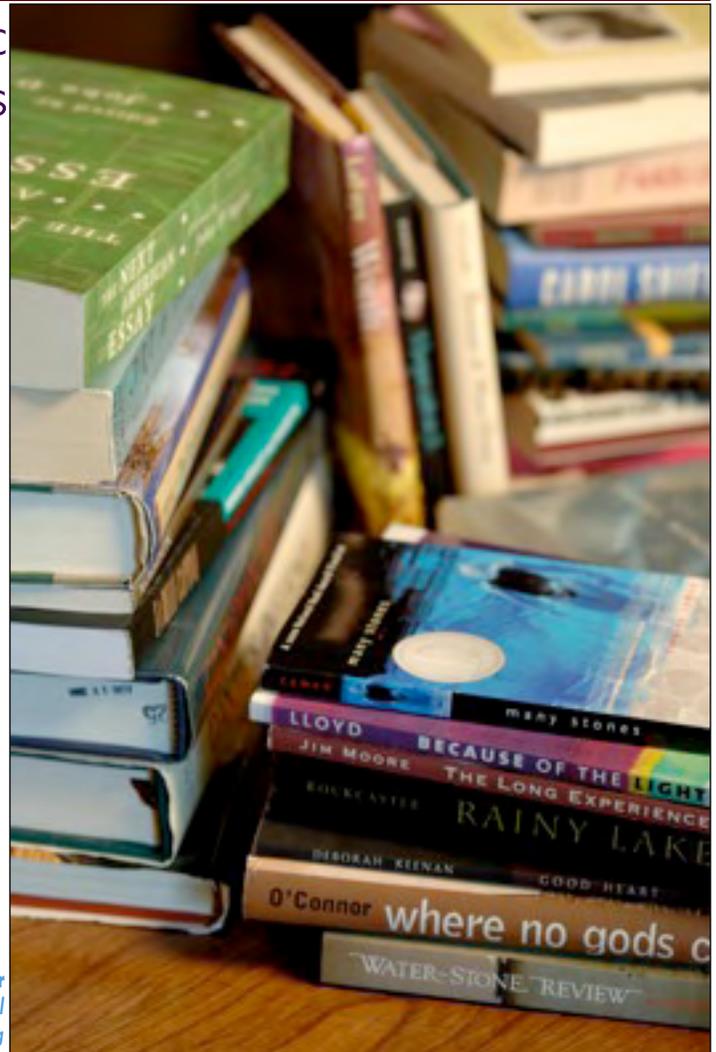
Math and computer boys like Carlos and David have a tough time with art projects. Their fine motor skills may not be fully developed since they don’t practice drawing much. David, in particular, has trouble holding his pencil correctly, and his handwriting is painstaking. Neither is fluid in visual picturing. They’re short on desire and ideas. Being uncomfortable with ambiguity, they want to be told exactly what to do. They tell the teacher repeatedly how much they hate art.

“A” students like Ellie, Frank, and Giselle mastered “the how” of school back in kindergarten. The problem comes when they can’t perform well on occasional creative experiences. Gaining creative ability takes much practice; they can’t let their guard down to look foolish or get less-than-perfect grades. They’re fragile; they have become paralyzed, or clingy. Mrs. J is completely surprised by their whining, even anger, when she gives less than a top grade. This group requires much handholding; they expect the teacher to make their artwork look good.

Boys like Howie and Ian have spatial intelligence. In the normal routine of a left-brain classroom many boys give up the way they learn best because material is not presented spatially. These students, who have fallen through the cracks because their learning style is disregarded, are thrilled to get the occasional art project. Howie and Ian have struggled in Mrs. J’s classroom; but switching intellectual gears gives them an opportunity to shine. While Mrs. J’s attention is being demanded by other kids who usually don’t need her help, these boys are working independently without prompting. For the time being, they love class. They produce superior work, which alters their relationships with teacher and classmates. Mrs. J wisely lets them show off, and hopes this feeling of success transfers back to the subjects the boys don’t enjoy so much!



Balance authentic learning with academic rigor through student-led discussions



Student-Led Discussions: An Authentic Learning Experience

by Melody Mansfield, English teacher
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Student empowerment. Student-centered learning. Authentic assessment. You know all the buzz words. But you work in a college-prep school. You have a demanding curriculum that cannot be set aside for more (arguably) nebulous goals. *Student-Led Discussions*, a technique based on the belief that one of the best ways to learn about a text is to teach it, just might be the missing link that connects your rigorous standards to your students' real needs.

Think back for a moment to the very first time you stood before a class, eager and idealistic. You wanted to give them the world! But you may have found yourself instead, unable to fully articulate the lessons that you, yourself, had "mastered." Though you'd always earned "A"s on your own essays and loved nothing better than to dive into literature and root around, reveling in the miraculous complexities of the human condition, you found that you had no real answer when a student asked you what, exactly, is a thesis? Or, what makes an essay interesting? Or, how do you find all that imagery and symbolism and stuff? So, you took a step back, saw your subject with new, more analytical eyes, took it all apart, and then put it back together again in a way that might enable your students to disentangle the braided mysteries of reading and writing. In short (to subvert that weary adage), you became one of those people who not *only do*, but who, more importantly, figured out

how to *teach others to do* what you do. And through this process of analysis/synthesis/explanation you, yourself, *learned* a great deal more about the subjects you taught.

Student-Led Discussions build on this understanding, while also integrating two key components of authentic learning: empathy and ownership. Helping students develop *empathy*—for their peers, their teachers, their texts and authors—will serve not only in their immediate academic needs, but will prepare them to be life-long learners as well. Similarly, giving students *ownership* of their own learning processes will bump their educational experiences up from the mere acquisition of knowledge (cramming for a test and then forgetting it immediately after) into an authentic and fully integrated understanding of the material.

To put it another way, students, like most of us, are selfish and self-absorbed creatures. It may be only natural, therefore, to regard the information that we, ourselves, discover, as being more "relevant" and "interesting" than that which is foisted upon us.

So what, exactly, is a *Student-Led Discussion*? It is an activity in which a small group of student co-leaders (three is optimum) *collaborate* to plan and lead a text-based discussion. It differs from a "student presentation" in that

1. all of the students have read/annotated the text prior to the discussion
2. the co-leaders guide, but do not dominate, the discussion
3. all of the students are expected to be active participants in the activity.

The objectives of a *Student-Led Discussion* are:

- to improve skills in *analytical reading* (including increased sensitivity to authorial purpose and audience, diction levels, connotative language, form, rhetoric, etc.)
- to improve skills in *analytical* and *active listening*
- to engender *empathy*: for peers, for teachers, for texts, for authors
- to improve skills and confidence in *verbal expression*
- to see the importance of using *textual evidence to support a claim* (transferable to *writing skills*)
- to gain skills in *collaborating* with (vs. competing against) peers
- to “own” and master the text on a more *profound and authentic level* through the thrill of first-hand discovery
- to take responsibility for one’s own learning experience

The basic set-up is as follows:

Student co-leaders work in groups of 3-4 to

- Read/annotate/study their portion of the text.
- Agree on a common writing prompt for the student audience.
- Create open-ended discussion questions (at least 3 per leader).
- Decide on discussion strategy. (Who speaks first? Who writes on board? How will the questions be ordered? What to do if discussion veers off course? ...)
- Fill out “Worksheet: Co-Leaders.” (hand-out*)

Student audience members, individually

- Read/annotate/study assigned text in advance of discussion.
- Arrive in class with “Worksheet: Audience Members” (WWWWWH hand-out*) filled out in advance of discussion.
- Help your classmates by listening carefully and participating actively.
- Use textual evidence to support your ideas and explain how that evidence supports your ideas.

Teacher’s role

- While students are writing on the initial prompt, check to see that every audience class member has their WWWWH form filled out and ready.
- Make it clear in advance that you are there to observe the discussion only. (You may want to share with them the criteria list you will use for evaluation.)
- Once the leaders begin, sit in the back of the classroom and take notes on the “evaluation” hand-out*. (This is to (1) give you useful and specific feedback to share with students in the recap, and (2) keep your hands and minds busy to keep yourself from intervening!)
- Do NOT engage in the discussion for any reason. (If you begin answering questions, correcting facts, or

involving yourself in disputes, you will rob the co-leaders of their authority.)

- Honor the students’ efforts with your full attention.

So there you have it. And of course, you’re probably doing some form of this activity - student research, student sharing, student presentations - already. But give that research an authentic purpose, raise the stakes on the information shared, and hammer the presentations into something that involves both speaker and listener, and you are closing in on a surprisingly effective, and mutually rewarding, classroom strategy.

* Sample worksheets/hand-outs can be found on the CAIS website under the 2008 Regional Meeting Entry in Past Events. Click on “Event Resources.”

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Potential pitfalls and how to avoid them

What if students miss, or misunderstand the “important” parts of a text?

- Fill in before (during initial unit preparatory classes) and after the discussion (during recap), in a way that does not undermine or devalue the students’ own discoveries.
- Remind yourself that what we give students is not necessarily what they take (and the excitement of discovering information may tip the balance).
- Consider the many forms of peripheral learning also experienced during this activity.
- Reconsider where our own ego-needs (“How can they possibly digest this material if we, with our superior wisdom, don’t chew it up and feed it to them?”) may sometimes actually impede the needs of our students.

What if the student co-leaders do not work collaboratively?

- Remind the student co-leaders that their shared grade will depend partly on evidence of collaboration, both in preparation and during the discussion itself. In other words, if a dominant student dominates, or if a shy student reneges on his responsibilities to the group, their shared grade will suffer accordingly. (This shifts the responsibility back onto each individual—in being both self-monitoring and supportive of one another.)
- Remind co-leaders that you will also be evaluating markers of collaboration, such as equitable sharing of tasks, and the frequency with which each leader helps her colleague.
- Consider dedicating some pre-discussion class time to group preparation of their discussions. (You can circulate to make sure students understand their objectives.)

What if the audience members do not participate?

- You have already anticipated this problem by making sure each class member comes prepared with (a) annotated text, and (b) WWWWH form filled out.
- Remind the class that the co-leaders’ grade will partially depend on their participation (and that today’s “audience” will be tomorrow’s “co-leaders”).

A teacher's interest in global partnerships (and a trip to Africa) expands into a whole new calling.



Pen Pals, Backpacks - and Smiles

by Porcha Dodson, Diversity Coordinator and 3rd grade teacher
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I believe that it is important for American students to learn about the issues that face their peers in developing countries, and at the Regional Meeting at Campbell Hall, I spoke on forming global partnerships, in theory and practice. Project Knapsack grew out of this. My original intention was to simply take a leisurely trip to Africa and volunteer in a few schools, which is something I have always wanted to do. When I shared the idea with my partner, Jamal, who lives in Africa, he replied, "Well, you better come with some pencils and paper because these kids have nothing." At that point, I literally went on a manhunt to get school supplies. Staples was so inspired by the idea that they donated over 25,000 school supplies to this initiative. The next thing I know, I am shipping over 400 backpacks and school supplies to the students in Zambia. I didn't find Project Knapsack, it found me!

Project Knapsack is a non-profit organization that provides children in developing countries with backpacks and school supplies, and launched a global pen pal exchange between students in the United States and Lusaka, Zambia. Over three hundred students from several independent and public schools across the country were invited to participate in the pen pal exchange. Some of the CAIS schools that were involved were Oakwood School, Campbell Hall, and Curtis School in Los Angeles, California. The Hunter McGuire School and The Hill School in Virginia also participated in the exchange. Sherman Oaks Elementary was chosen to host the United States launch.

Students were encouraged to write about anything from what their typical school day was like, to their families and

favorite sports, or past times. In addition to their native language, Bimba, the Zambian students are able to speak and write in English, clearly enabling the communication between pen pals to be both fun and easy.

In the age of technology, where instant message and cell phones are a popular form of communication, I felt that this would be a great opportunity for students on both continents to engage in good ole' fashioned letter writing. Jamal, who is the executive director of Project Knapsack said, "It has been wonderful for the students in Zambia to learn about their new friends from The United States."

During spring break, I traveled to Zambia and hand-delivered the letters to the students in Zambia. Additionally, along with its sponsor, actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's organization, The Rock Foundation, Project Knapsack was able to ship over 350 backpacks and school supplies to Zambia. These knapsacks were given to the children in Zambia on behalf of their pen pals in Los Angeles and Virginia. Last month, Project Knapsack was highlighted at the feature article in *Scholastic News*. You can read the article at www.scholastic.com.

I will be leaving Curtis this year to devote more time to Project Knapsack, which will launch again in the fall. I am proud to announce that we will expand this season's pen pal exchange to Tanzania. Zambia will always be our focal point as we continue to work throughout various regions in Africa. If you, or your school would like to participate in Project Knapsack's pen pal exchange in the fall, please email Porcha Dodson at projectknapsack@yahoo.com, no later than Tuesday, July 29.

Archival material hidden in plain sight tells what it means to be at a school



**School Archives:
Part of a Hidden Curriculum**

by Lisa Merryman, Archivist
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Besides being a repository of things of endearing value to the school, an archive serves as a valuable resource to every constituency in the school. Photographs, yearbooks, uniforms, videos, programs, and school memorabilia can be used to create timely and informative media displays. Such presentations and displays put together from archival material are part of the hidden curriculum in a school. This curriculum is what it means to be there.

Most schools have some kind of an archive, whether it has been formally established, or is just a closet with lots of boxes. To make an archive come alive and serve the school is not difficult. There are some simple steps. The first one is to give someone the task of overseeing the archive. Depending on the size and age of the school, and the need to establish an orderly arrangement, a part time person might be best. Once a person is in place a plan needs to be made.

The second step is deciding how you will efficiently organize the contents so that they are easily accessible. Archival cardboard boxes, bookshelves, some locking file cabinets, media storage, and a cupboard for artifacts, plus a desk, table, computer, scanner, printer, and chairs are the basic materials needed.

The third step is producing an archive map and creating a catalogue system, so that you, and everyone who uses the

archive, can find things. There are many types of archive maps. Consider the needs of your school and the right one will unfold. St. Margaret's Episcopal School is 29 years old, and has students from preschool through grade twelve. There have been 23 graduating classes. The organization system for SMES archive would be different from a school serving only high school, or a K-8 school. Today everything is digital. If your archive is going to serve your school well then it will need a digital component as well.

So, once you have a person in charge, some storage containers, and a plan you can begin. People who put together class reunions, people involved in annual funds and capital campaigns, and people who plan retirement events are traditionally frequent users of archives. However, at SMES we have seen each school division benefit from the archive. At all school assemblies not everyone may exit the gym at the same time. Half the school has to wait while the other half leaves. The SMES archive makes frequent short videos for the waiting students to watch while they are waiting. These always contain photographs of students and the school, sometimes, depending on the assembly, tied to a theme.

For example, *Face of Sport* is a video that portrays Tartan varsity athletes in action. This video is not about the best athletes, but about the power, passion, and drive of the

competition. To get into the video, the photograph had to show such qualities. Middle and Upper School students loved seeing their peers in the powerful images, and they were in no hurry to leave. However, all of the videos created in the SMES archives are only three to four minutes long. When it was the Lower School students' turn to wait for dismissal they were shown *Tartan Neighborhood*. This video included photographs of the town of San Juan Capistrano taken fifty to one hundred years ago, and the same sites taken this year. These are places the students pass each day, coming and going to school, and it became a game for them to see if they could tell, watching the older photo, where in town it was taken. A third video portrayed Tartans, from pre-school through grade twelve, doing some kind of performing art. At SMES the archive produces eight to ten of such videos a year. These teach the students about their heritage and their legacy.

An archive can also serve to educate the parent and friend body of the school. A short article ranging from 250 to 300 words can be written for the monthly newsletter mailed home to current parents. At SMES, some topics have been *The Origin and*

Transformation of the School Crest, and Lessons and Carols at SMES Through the Years.

Visual essays that celebrate a school's history can also be created. For the 25th anniversary of SMES, an outdoor set of

canvas panels was installed under the arches of a major campus walkway. Originally it was to be displayed for one year. But it was so well liked that an additional panel was designed, adding photos from 2005, 2006, and 2007. For a two minute walk down the hallway provides any student, or visitor an instant history of the school. In the Tartan Center, the archive hung a framed portrait of every graduating class, taken at commencement. The current senior students look forward to seeing their class photo join the rest - so much so that when the

display was unveiled last year, within one hour a piece of notebook paper had been stapled to the gallery wall where the class of 2007 picture would hang. Scribbled on that paper were the words "Class of 2007" and the signatures of the entire class. Ownership had been claimed for the next space, but most importantly, the seniors saw themselves as a part of the school history, and had claimed their legacy.



Close up of a new school history panel:

Simple Steps to Making a School Archive Come Alive

To make an archive come alive and serve the school is not difficult. Here are some simple steps:

- Give someone the task of overseeing the archive. Depending on the size and age of the school, and the need to establish an orderly arrangement, a part time person might be best.
- Decide how you will organize the contents so that they are easily accessible. Archival cardboard boxes, bookshelves, some locking file cabinets, media storage, and a cupboard for artifacts, plus a desk, table, computer, scanner, printer, and chairs are the basic materials needed.
- Produce an archive map and creating a catalogue system, so that you, and everyone who uses the archive, can find things.



Corridor of school history panels



UCLA psychology professor shares 8 imagery practices to help children face challenges in their lives

The Healing Power of Children’s Imagination

by **Charlotte Reznick Ph.D.**

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Eric had headaches so “hot” and painful, he described them as cannonballs pounding on his head – until he learned to visualize breathing in an ice blue color to cool them down. Homework took hours for Missy – until she imagined Albert Einstein as her guide helping her focus on her studies. And little Sara felt rejected by friends – until her imaginary wizard gave her “gifts” of a star and heart crystal to help her love herself “no matter what.” These are just a few of my patients who are not only coping with our stressful times, but also thriving – using the power of their imaginations.

Growing up is more difficult than ever. Children are exposed to unprecedented pressures, and they are not always coping well. They need to be equipped with strong internal resources.

And for teachers, counselors, and parents, helping to raise happy, healthy, well-adjusted children sometimes seems an overwhelming task.

In my therapeutic practice, I’ve found that many answers to life’s challenges lie within each child – that children can create pictures from their mind’s eye to heal their troubles. Through learning and practicing visualization, kids can develop emotional self-care skills to help themselves with a variety of everyday, practical concerns. If teachers and parents could easily and successfully teach kids effective imagery techniques to solve their own problems and access their highest potential, their worlds could be transformed. Here are eight imagery tools, and how kids use them, to help in that transformation.

1. The Balloon Breath

A simple technique of breathing slowly and deeply into the belly while focusing attention about two inches below the navel. This type of diaphragmatic breathing centers and calms children.



Fifteen-year-old Terrance, who was frequently upset, was able to calm himself and reduce his stress from an 8 to a 2 (0 to 10 scale) by practicing his balloon breath several times a day.

2. Discovering Your Special Place

A safe, special place inside children’s imagination where they can retreat, relax, regroup, or pose questions about life issues, while creating positive solutions.

Six-year-old Fanny had such extreme test anxiety that she cried uncontrollably and had to leave class when facing a spelling test. She learned to create a comforting inner sanctuary to study – with rainbows and fluffy white clouds, flowers in lime green and hot pink, and a star-filled desk.



3. Meeting a Wise Animal Friend

An imaginary guide – kind, loving, having a child’s best interest at heart – to help tap into inner wisdom. It’s often safer and easier for animal friends to resolve problems in innovative ways, than expecting logic to do the work.

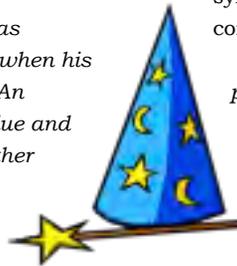
Seven-year-old Sally’s unicorn lived on top of clouds in her rainbow special place and came “every single, pingle, wingle, tingle night” to help her sleep by sprinkling white powder on her head and slowly saying “falling asleep” as she drifted off to her favorite dream.



4. Personal Wizards

Wizards come when animal friends “just won’t do.” They are valuable tools when something stronger and more magical is needed.

Eight-year-old Brian was understandably distraught when his beloved grandmother died. An ancient wizard – wearing blue and silver robes – brought a feather “all about love, hope, and kindness” and when he waved it around, “made the bad all better.”



5. Receiving Gifts

Gifts from imaginary helpers can come in many forms for different situations. Gifts are often symbolic and exactly what the child needs in the moment.

Twelve-year-old Dara received five gifts demonstrating her strides in self-worth: a yin-yang symbol showing balancing friendship with her best friend, a yellow smiley-face necklace reminding her of happiness, a heart shaped candle bringing love into her life, a diamond shaped crystal creating clarity, and a flower making life “even more beautiful.”



6. Checking in with Heart and Belly

This tool is comparable to suggestions of “listen to your heart” and “pay attention to your gut feelings.” Children are encouraged to take a few minutes each morning to “check in” and to notice what messages are there for them as they start their day.

Seven-year-old Sally’s jealousy of her younger brother caused angry tears. She discovered her “good love feelings” for her brother were in her heart, while her “bad hateful” feelings were in her belly. When she asked, her heart told her she needed more time with her mother, and even though her mom was so busy, she could find that time by helping mom with chores.

7. Talking to Other Body Parts

Children discover where and how they hold different feelings in their body

– worry is often in the gut, sadness sometimes in the eyes. There is no exact location or description. Kids learn to dialogue between emotions and/or symptoms to find answers to their concerns.

Eight-year-old Robbie started to panic every day 30 minutes before school ended; he was afraid his mother was not going to pick him up. “Fear and Worry” were renting space in his stomach. By talking to these menacing partners, he struck a deal where they agreed to move out if he practiced his balloon breath every day.

8. Using Color for Healing

Feelings and symptoms often have different colors associated with them.

They can be unique to each individual and change over time. One day happiness may be sunny “yellow” and anger roaring “red,” while on another, happiness can be exciting “red” and anger depressing “black.” By learning where and how colors live in their body, children can use them for their healing advantage.

Eleven-year-old Nancy had painful stomachaches. Her parents were on the verge of an unspoken divorce and her body was suffering from their constant arguing. She asked her stomach what color she needed to breathe in to help her feel better – her stomach wisely created the image of a swirling rainbow to ease her distress, vastly reducing her pain.



Teachers and counselors, you are now armed with eight simple and efficient options to mix and match with your students, depending on the situation. If a child learns one imagery tool today, life tomorrow may be easier.

Learn to recognize this most commonly missed condition, and help your students get more effective treatment



It's Not Necessarily ADHD!

by **Jenny C. Yip, Psy.D., Psychologist**
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Timmy is an 8-year-old in the 3rd grade. He has always been known to be a shy, nervous kid who prefers to keep to himself and wait for others to approach him. He favors routine, and becomes anxious with change, or when he is in a new, unfamiliar situation. When Timmy is in the classroom, he gets bored easily, often stares out of the window, even dozing off at times. He is frequently late to school, and often complains of having headaches and feeling nausea. Although his vocabulary is quite high for his age and grade level, his academic achievement is below what is expected. Timmy spends an inordinate amount of time on assignments and tests, and always needs extra time to complete them. He has problems copying off the board, sitting still, and just staying on track overall. On top of that, Timmy seems to be quite forgetful, as he usually does not have the materials he needs to complete tasks. Although, his teacher reports that he has a hard time paying attention and often gets behind in his work,

Timmy does make astute comments and shows a great deal of general knowledge. In fact, he often talks about world problems and events seen on the news, and displays great compassion and empathy for them. At this point, Timmy's parents are frustrated that he is not reaching his potential. They have heard time and time again that Timmy is an ADHD kid and his primary problem is that he just has difficulty focusing. His parents' frustration continues, as they are at a loss when medication and behavioral methods aimed at ADHD have minimal effects for Timmy, and he continues to have problems focusing and sitting still.

How often have we witnessed this scenario? The fact is that inattentiveness can be caused by various factors, oftentimes unrelated to Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, over the previous decade, the media has trained us to identify and attribute any sign of inattentiveness to ADHD. The fact is that Timmy's inattention, boredom, fidgetiness,

forgetfulness, falling behind on tasks, academic underachievement, and difficulty staying on track has little to do with ADHD. This misassumption has led to many misdiagnoses, and resulted in numerous frustrated teachers, parents, and children. Symptoms of inattention, distraction, fidgetiness, and what appears to be boredom do not automatically spell ADHD. Instead they can indicate anxiety.

Anxiety is the most common cause of mental, emotional, and behavioral problems during childhood and adolescence. However, it is often overlooked, or misjudged in children and adolescents. About 13 out of every 100 children and adolescents ages 9 to 17 experience some kind of anxiety disorder. About half of children and adolescents with an anxiety disorder have a second anxiety disorder, or other mental or behavioral difficulty, such as depression. If left untreated, anxiety disorders in children will likely progress into adulthood. Thus, it is necessary to learn to identify the correct underlying cause of a child's inattentiveness. A proper assessment is the first step to prevent long-term difficulties at school, and minimize frustration for others involved in the child's life. From a valid assessment, we can determine a proper diagnosis and establish an effective treatment plan. Therefore, it is critical that parents and teachers understand the difference between anxiety disorders and ADHD in children.

Anxiety vs. ADHD

Although on the surface Timmy's difficulty with concentration and focus may appear to be the result of ADHD, a closer look at the clues reveal underlying causes that actually point to symptoms of anxiety. Children with ADHD have a difficult time paying attention and focusing. They may also be impulsive, have difficulty with self-control, and be hyperactive. A child with an anxiety disorder may have symptoms that appear the same; however, the symptoms are actually behavioral manifestations of the child's preoccupation with excessive worry, fears, and tension. Let's take a closer look at Timmy's specific symptoms as caused by anxiety rather than ADHD.

- Timmy is a shy, nervous kid who prefers to keep to himself and wait for others to approach him. Children with anxiety do not always understand why they have excessive worries and catastrophic thoughts that trigger intense fears. They cannot comprehend that the experience of the internal "fight-and-flight" sensation actually serves a survival purpose. From their lack of understanding of what is going on with their minds and bodies, they may attribute these symptoms to "something is wrong with me." They may purposely keep their distance from

others, especially peers, to keep their "oddities" hidden and prevent others from noticing.

- Timmy favors routine, and becomes anxious about change, or when he is in a new, unfamiliar situation. Children with anxiety regularly feel apprehensive about their environment. They are constantly hyper-vigilant and on guard for any remotely potential catastrophic event to occur. They view their world as an unsafe place filled with unfamiliar and dangerous possibilities of harm, real or imagined. To maintain a sense of security and certainty, they prefer to be in familiar situations, leaving out the need to second-guess anything. When they are put in new environments, they feel intense fear about the uncertainties, and may even react with extreme temper tantrums.

Anxiety is the most common cause of mental, emotional, and behavioral problems during childhood and adolescence... About 13 out of every 100 children and adolescents ages 9 to 17 experience some kind of anxiety disorder.

- Timmy gets bored easily, often stares out of the window, even dozing off at times. He is frequently late to school, and often complains of having headaches and feeling nausea. Children with anxiety disorders often complain that their bodies hurt, and that they feel ill. These are overt manifestations of internal physiological sensations of anxiety. Children with anxiety may also experience fatigue from lack of sleep at night. Morning and bedtime periods tend to be more difficult than midday for anxious children, making morning routines that much more time-consuming. Although they may appear bored or distracted, anxious children are actually too preoccupied with fears and worries to participate in activities and stay on task.

Instead, their minds are elsewhere, lost in their worrisome thoughts, which can negatively affect their academic performance.

- Timmy spends an inordinate amount of time on assignments, and always needs extra time to complete assignments and tests. He is forgetful, and has problems copying off the board, sitting still, and staying on track. Children with anxiety are so consumed with their worries and fears of uncertainty and harm that they have little room in their minds for anything else. In fact, it is rather difficult to stop the train of apprehensive thoughts once the worry engine is triggered. This makes it extremely hard for anxious children who are in the midst of their worrisome thoughts to have the necessary attention span to retain effective memory skills for their classroom tasks. It also makes it difficult for the anxious child to remain still and maintain calmness. As a result, the time needed to complete tasks is often prolonged.

After taking this closer examination of Timmy's condition, it is clear that his behavioral manifestations stem from anxiety rather than ADHD, as it may have initially appeared. We now have a better understanding of his behaviors and symptoms. Assessing for anxiety gives us a more complete perspective, allowing us to determine a proper diagnosis. If anxiety problems exist, the next step is for the child to get help from someone qualified to tailor an effective treatment plan.

By taking the focus off the scoreboard, coaches can achieve a double goal - winning and teaching valuable lessons for life



Winning Through Life Lessons

by Ray Lokar, Southern California Coordinator
Positive Coaching Alliance
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All coaches would love for their teams to perform to their potential every time out and walk away with an undefeated record. Realistically, coaches also realize that is rarely possible; yet, some are still Win-At-All-Cost coaches who will do anything to try to make that possible. Worse yet, those coaches may place all of a player's self-worth based on the results on the scoreboard. These WAAC coaches drive players out of sports and take away the opportunity for tremendous learning experiences. What most don't seem to recognize is that by taking the focus off of the scoreboard, they actually might be increasing the chance to achieve on it.

Positive Coaching Alliance is a non-profit organization that started in the Athletic Department at Stanford University with a mission to transform youth sports, so that sports could transform youth. Since 1998, PCA has conducted several thousand coach training, parent education, and leadership development workshops to help schools and youth sports

organizations create an organizational culture that maximizes player performance, builds positive character attributes, and improves the entire sports experience. Central to this mission is trying to replace the "win-at-all-cost" model of coaching with the *Double-Goal Coach*, who teaches his team to strive to win, but realizes that learning life-lessons is a far more important goal. As coaches, not only should we work towards achieving both goals, but I think we win through teaching life lessons. Evidence shows that this leads to a better performance and winning on the scoreboard.

Care, Think and Try

Coaches are always looking for the secret path to learning and success, and many coaches develop long laundry lists of qualities and attributes that they want the team to strive to develop. I've tried to simplify that long list to the lowest common denominators.

CARE. When teams begin to work together and go through the everyday effort they develop a certain camaraderie that forces them to truly CARE about their teammates. When that happens, they will do everything that they cannot to let their teammates down.

THINK. Players and coaches must strive to have knowledge of the fundamentals of their game, inside and out. Pay special attention to strategic situations, and understand the objectives of each. THINK about the risk and reward involved in each decision, both on and off the court. Follow all of the laws, rules and regulations as students, employees, and citizens while striving to achieve a rewarding life plan.

TRY. Just try. Your very best. Every time! Try to be competitors without equal. Players and coaches should strive to make sure that no one prepares more thoroughly, or works more diligently to become successful. Display the self-discipline necessary to prepare and succeed at the highest attainable level. Give a supreme daily effort, in all areas of life, towards being the best student, employee, and citizen possible.

If players truly CARE about their teammates, THINK about their actions and TRY their best, the team will grow into a unit and begin to be the best that they can be.

A coach should ask him/herself, "Do those players play for me?" or "Do I coach those players?"

Possession by Possession

The Hall of Fame coach, Dean Smith once said, "Pay attention to execution, not the score." He was talking about focusing on effort, not the scoreboard; yet, he retired as the

winningest coach in NCAA history. Coach Smith coached at a very high level. But when we coach young kids there are a few premises that we need to keep in mind:

1. Players participate for a variety of different reasons.
2. It's rarely going to mean as much to them as it does to you.
3. We do not know what 100% is for each kid - only they can tell us.
4. Players don't know how much they have to give until they've experienced it.
5. Sometimes we won't get 100% but we should strive to get as much as we can.

During our best season we had a slogan on the back of our t-shirts that said, "Possession by Possession," and our guys completely bought in. We wanted to play the game one possession at a time, regardless of what happened the previous play. Leads, or deficits never really affected their performance because they didn't really matter.

At Positive Coaching Alliance's National Youth Sports Awards I heard legendary football coach, Jim Sochor say, "even your opponent is relatively insignificant." We spent a year trying to take the focus off of the scoreboard because it doesn't really matter in regards to your effort. What are the players going to do during "crunch time" - try harder? If so, shouldn't they have been trying that hard to start with?

Concentration? Focus? They should start at tip-off. The score, winning or losing, and even your opponent, don't really matter. The only thing that matters is NOW. The task at hand. A basketball game isn't just a game - it is



Coach Lokar giving his team instructions during a time-out.

a hundred mini games. Fifty on offense, and another fifty on defense. Within each of those battles might be a dozen different decisions, skills, techniques, strategies, and tactics that a player has to execute; and each and every second is an adjustment so that you are in the right stance and spot to get it done.

This is a mentality that has to be fostered in practice. You can't all of a sudden emphasize the importance of the ball when you haven't respected the basketball all week during practice. It has to be a habit - a mentality. You have to start with the first whistle on the first day of practice. This allows players to approach an important possession with the same level of stress as a random possession in the second quarter.

Early in the year, during a pre-practice "soliloquy" (my players might call it a rant!), I remember saying that you should approach every possession like it was a "4th quarter in March." Of course, in high school only the championship games are played in March. After a year full of never using the word "WIN" once during a practice, pre-game, half-time talk, or time-out we had an opportunity to play in the finals in a 17,000 seat arena that wasn't



anywhere near full - but felt like it. Especially when we got a big blocked shot that led to a deep 3 pointer at the buzzer ending the 3rd quarter, giving us the momentum, and giving the crowd a reason to get loud and crazy. Over the noise I asked the players if they knew what time it was. They looked at each other trying to figure out what answer I was looking for, and I reminded them, "It's now a 4th quarter in March!"

Rewarding Unsuccessful Effort

Focusing on effort in order to get results is important; yet, how the coach and player reacts to a mistake, or an unsuccessful effort may be just as important. In order to make the most of a mistake, the player needs

- to recognize the mistake
- get some reassurance
- re-instruction
- to get ready for the next play.

We were competing in the semifinals of an opening high school basketball tournament against a traditional power. A player who was expected to be one of our top players was shooting shots using proper technique, but was not having a very successful night. The shot would leave his hand, I'd say from the bench, "Good Shot", and then it would miss horribly. This happened over and over again. He'd look over to the bench and I'd find myself giving him a few claps and a double-fist pump. That was my "Mistake Ritual" that told him, "You made a mistake, it's ok, I still have confidence in you, let's learn from it,

now get ready for the next play!" Assistant coaches continually pleaded to take him out of the game, to which I finally responded that, "He's going to have to make a big shot for us someday, and I want him to have the

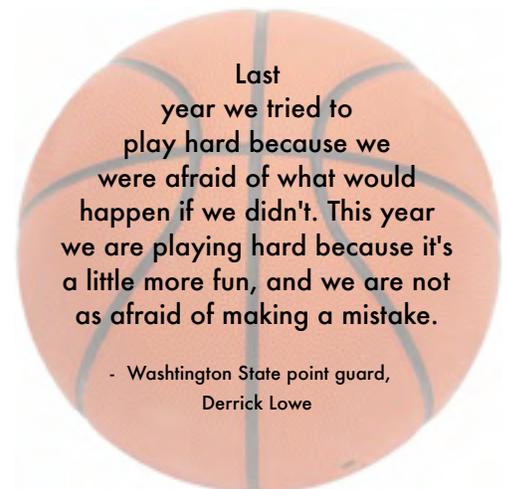
confidence to take it!" He never found his shooting touch that night; and, much to my assistants' dismay, we lost this very early pre-season game. Fast forward 25 games or so. That same player scored our final 7 points in the sectional semifinals against the top seed, and was our leading scorer in the previously mentioned "4th Quarter in March" during the CIF Championship game as we won the first title in school history.

If we can create an environment where it is fun to try without the fear of failure, kids will begin to give us a little better effort every day. And it doesn't really change much as they get older. In an interview recently with the Washington State basketball team's point guard, Derrick Lowe. Lowe was asked why they were having such a great season after being picked last in the Pac 10 preseason poll. The legendary coach Dick Bennett had just retired, and the job was passed to his son, Tony. Both are GREAT coaches. He said, "Last year we tried to play hard because we were afraid of what would happen if we didn't. This year we are playing hard because it's a little more fun, and we are not as afraid of making a mistake."

If every play is played with the same effort and concentration, then every game becomes the same, regardless of the setting. Every possession in practice, preseason, playoffs – or even the championship game should be approached in the same manner.

To culminate March Madness in the Final Four, the Kansas Jayhawks were getting ready to play the Memphis Tigers in the semi-finals. When head coach, Bill Self, addressed his team in the locker room before their most important game to date, he focused on a few things. It wasn't "winning isn't everything it's the only thing," or "win one for the Gipper" like the legendary fire and brimstone pre-game speeches of Vince Lombardi and Knute Rockne.

Instead, Self challenged them to have as much fun playing as he was going to have coaching, and to relax "the best they can." He reminded them that there would be some "anxious moments" (mistakes), so to just enjoy every second. Before the final against North Carolina he suggested that they continue to play exactly the way they had all year, and to "be ourselves and go have fun!" He created a great environment and his team went out in those two games playing as well as they had all year, coming home with a National Championship.



Expect Excellence

Excellence is best described as doing the right things right—selecting the most important things to be done and then trying to accomplish them 100% correctly. The teams that step up to the next level from average to good, or good to excellent are those that require excellence from themselves.

You can't control how WELL you play, or how well the other team plays,

but you can always control how HARD you play! Players will generally give you what you expect from them. Sometimes you see "flashes of brilliance" in a player. That isn't accidental, it's potential. Release that potential and expect that brilliance very time out. If a player is not executing a fundamental, or a play correctly, it is the coaches' responsibility to correct that in a positive manner. Don't be afraid to stretch players beyond what they think they can give you. You (and they) will be surprised when you see that the results far outweigh what your team initially thought you were capable of – then reward those positive efforts.

Why We Coach

While winning is at the forefront of competition, success is an even higher goal. To be defeated by a better team is part of competition. To be defeated because of lack of preparation, or lack of desire during the game is unacceptable. Mistakes will happen, but the teams that play with a need to **succeed** are those that limit those mistakes and bounce back from them faster. Focusing on the daily lessons is what will lead to an improved player performance on game day, but the two goals of a *Double-Goal Coach* can work together to make the most of the sports experience. It is the pressure-cooker of winning and doing your best, whether coming from outside sources, or self-imposed, that provides the necessary slow-simmer of heat making the Second-Goal of learning life lessons really start cooking. Positive character traits



like desire, persistence, resilience, and a sense of honesty and fair-play are developed and tested to the greatest extent possible.

In the process of attempting to achieve athletic success, we need to get players to understand the world outside of sport is where true success and fulfillment can be found. The field of play is merely a laboratory to prepare for the game of life. Sports is just life in a game situation. There was a day when, all over the country, men would run their own farm, ranch, or small business while their sons and neighboring youngsters would apprentice with their mentor. They didn't only learn the trade, they also learned about hard work, discipline, commitment, desire, teamwork, pride, communication, responsibility, trust, dealing with adversity as well as achievement and commitment. Those days are gone and those opportunities have dwindled. I think that sports has replaced those lost opportunities and the coach is the new mentor to these youngsters. Coaches should not take that role lightly. A coach should ask him/herself, "Do those players play for me?" or "Do I coach those players?" Are we taking kids where THEY want to go? Are we teaching them other valuable life lessons in the process? I hope the answer is yes. I hope we are coaching the way that we would want someone to coach our child. I hope we coach the way we want to be remembered.

It's never too late to start.