Examining the Classroom with a Critical Lens: Building an Inclusive Community & Innovative Learners

Student Ownership of Learning

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Presenter

Barry White Jr
Vice - Principal
Charlotte, NC.

Iambarrywhitejr@gmail.com   @Barrywhitejr_   @Barrywhitejr__

Session Objective

In this session, we will explore strategies to create an inclusive classroom environment that fosters innovation, diversity, and collaborative learning

Make IT YOUR OWN

School
I.C.E.

Instruction

Curriculum

Environment

School I.C.**E**.

Environment
(Core)

Focusing on the environment in schools is directly impacts student well-being, learning outcomes, positive behavior, teacher satisfaction, school culture, safety, and equity.

A positive and supportive environment sets the stage for optimal learning and holistic development, creating an atmosphere where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Click on the Padlet and respond to the questions

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Challenges of implementing an inclusive & innovative environment (Core)

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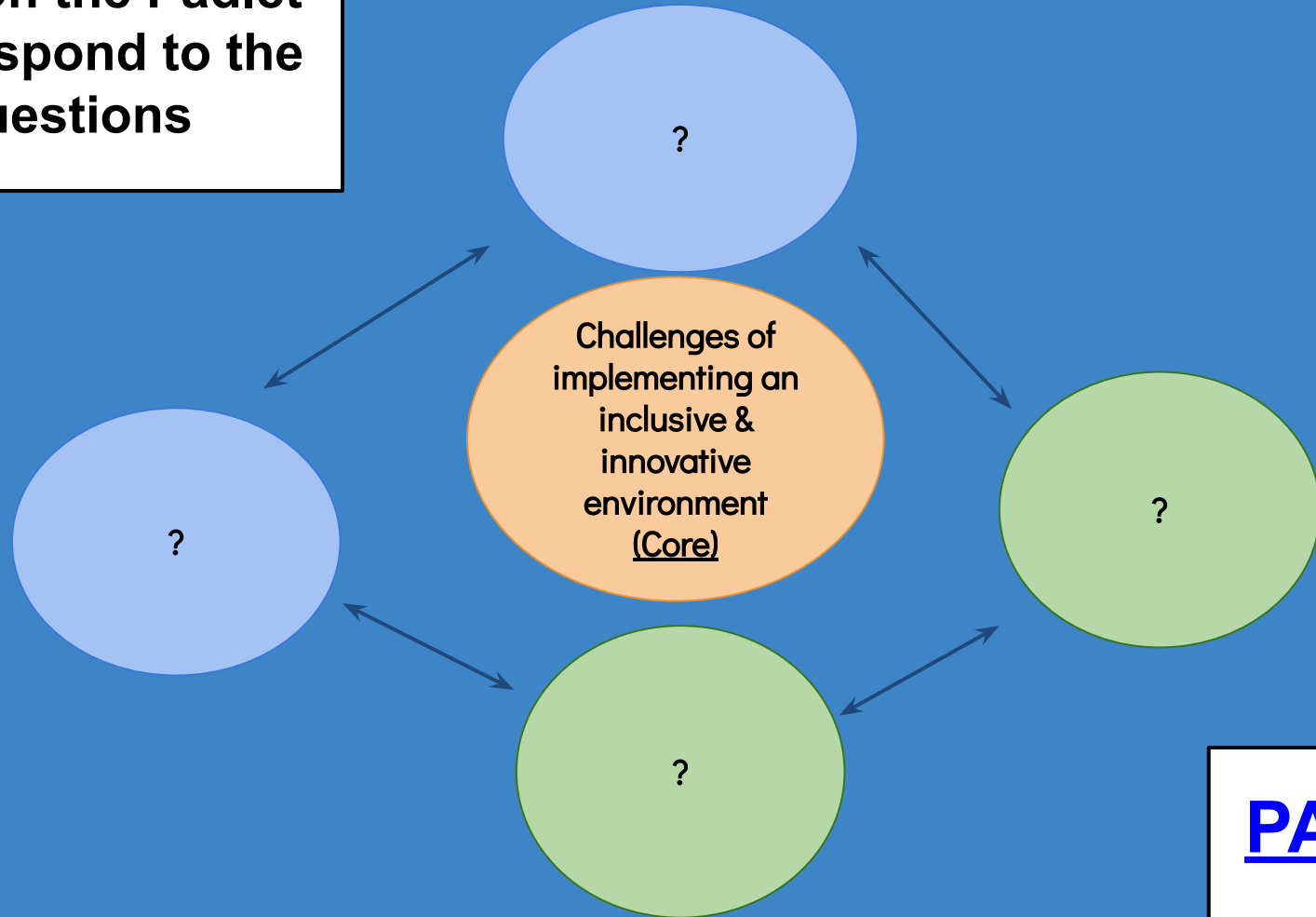
PADLET

""Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone." - Angela Brew"

ANGELA BREW

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Creating an environment where all students feel welcomed, supported, and able to fully participate requires intentional practices that foster a sense of belonging. This involves building relationships, promoting inclusive behaviors, and designing activities that encourage connection.

Creating Safe Spaces

Set Clear Expectations

Communicate classroom norms and policies around respectful behavior, active listening, and confidentiality.

Acknowledge Emotions

Validate students' feelings and provide emotional support when challenging topics arise.

Foster Open Dialogue

Encourage open and non-judgmental discussions where all voices are heard.

Promote Inclusion

Highlight diverse perspectives and ensure all students feel recognized and valued.

Cultivate Empathy

Teach and model empathy, compassion, and care for others.

What is Scholar Agency?

"**Student agency** refers to learning through activities that are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated with appropriate guidance from teachers.

To put it simply, **student agency** gives **students** voice and often, choice, in how they learn."

Structures that Generate Scholar Agency

1. Stop my teaching
2. Negotiating the rules of the classroom game
3. Teaching students the principles of learning
4. Genius Hour or Passion Projects
5. Feedback loops
6. Class experts
7. Constructivist teaching

1. Generate an anchor chart to represent your structure.

Introduction/Purpose: Taken from the popular MTV series Wild'n Out hosted by Nick Cannon, these relationship-building exercises have been adapted and modified for educational purposes to ensure a positive joy-filled experience in the classroom. Although the TV series demonstrate many different exercises, we will focus on one exercise – "Now, you wild out!"

Activity: "Now, You Wild Out!"

How to Play: This exercise has universal usages. Options are but not limited to practicing procedures, expectations, directions for guided instruction and independent practice, etc...

1. Choose a topic - Each team will have the opportunity to explain the procedure/routine, as he/she knows it.
2. Break into teams
3. In teams create 4-5 lines that apply to that topic
4. In a rhythmic manner, the chosen captain to start first will begin the procedure/routine. When he/she begins with the first line, the rest of the team members join in repeating the same line 2 more times and ending it with "Now, you wild out!"

Click here for the video on youtube

Wild 'n Out

Team Respect

How It Helps:

The discussion can be had to emphasize how each member's thinking process of procedures/routines are perceived differently but when we come together using our **LEADERSHIP and COMMUNITY** values we can evoke change in a unified manner.

Heads Up

Series of relationship building exercises

- **What:**
- A fun way to review key concepts using the popular game on the Ellen DeGeneres show
- **Why:**
- Sometimes having to review key terms and concepts can be boring. This interactive game allows everyone in the group to participate in a low-stress environment.
-

Escape Room Simulation/ Breakout

Series of relationship building exercises

- **What:**
- You may have heard of escape rooms. This is in the same concept translated to a classroom. You can transform your whole classroom, use "breakout" boxes, or have a digital breakout.
- **Why:**
- Escape rooms or breakout boxes support different learning styles. The escape activity encourage critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills. The timed challenges add a sense of urgency to the learning and increases time on task. The activity provides opportunities to problem solve with "real-world" scenarios allowing students to use a variety of resources to escape.

Sorry NOT Sorry
Collaborative Reading
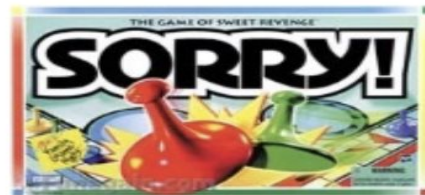
The WHAT
To get all participants to the safe zone by solving a problem correctly.

The WHY
To practice the fluency of solving mathematical computations/ exercising reading skills.

Click here - Folder Containing resources

Bono's Six Thinking Hats

White Hat (Facts and Information):

- Focuses on gathering and presenting facts, data, and information.
- Participants wear this hat when they need to provide objective information, analyze data, and identify gaps in knowledge.

Red Hat (Emotions and Feelings):

- Encourages participants to express their emotions, intuitions, and feelings without needing to justify or explain them.
- Provides a space for emotional reactions and initial gut responses to a topic or idea.

Gray Hat (Critical thinking):

- Represents critical thinking and a cautious, skeptical perspective.
- Participants wear this hat to identify potential problems, risks, and drawbacks associated with an idea or decision.

Yellow Hat (Positive Judgment):

- Focuses on optimistic and positive thinking.
- Participants explore the benefits, advantages, and opportunities that an idea or decision may offer.

Green Hat (Creativity):

- Symbolizes creative and innovative thinking.
- Participants wear this hat to brainstorm new ideas, possibilities, and alternatives, often thinking "outside the box."

Blue Hat (Process Control):

- Serves as the facilitator's hat, managing the thinking process and guiding the discussion.
- Participants wearing the blue hat think about the overall organization of the discussion, set goals, and guide the group through the various thinking perspectives.

It can be hard to accept mistakes. It is even harder to accept failure because of a mistake. In gifted education, expectations are always high. Sometimes it feels like the higher the expectation is, the greater the potential for error. As educators, we arm ourselves with resources to change this notorious mindset.

Failure should not be an entirely negative experience. Failure is an opportunity for growth and advancement.

Dealing with failure and mistakes can be tough for gifted children that struggle with perfectionism and anxiety.
Neihart (2016) identified three types of perfectionists.
"The Non-Perfectionists do not hold high standards for themselves and are not particularly conscientious or concerned about their mistakes.

Healthy Perfectionists hold high standards for themselves but also are not overly concerned with their mistakes. They were conscientious, highly organized, and agreeable.

Dysfunctional Perfectionists hold high standards for themselves and are concerned with mistakes"

Conquering Dysfunctional Perfectionism & Anxiety

MISTAKES CREATE OPPORTUNITY.

Scan the QR code for lessons, activities, and other resources to shift mindset and learn from failure with your scholars.

EMOTIONAL

REGULATION

Taking time to mindfully strengthen resilience skills can help you bounce back from the daily adversity and challenges in the classroom. The work of Psychologist Edith Grotberg, Ph.D., inspires this mindful activity, which focuses on three resiliency points: **I Have, I Can, I Am.**

I HAVE:

- Examples:
    - People around me who support me no matter what.
    - People who set limits for me, so I know when to stop before there is trouble.
    - People who show me how to do things the right way by the way they do things.
    - People who want me to learn how to do things on my own.

I AM:

- Examples:
    - A person people can like or love.
    - A person who likes to do nice things for others.
    - Respectful of myself and others.
    - Willing to be responsible for my actions.

I CAN:

- Examples:
    - Talk to others about the things that frighten or bother me.
    - Find ways to solve problems that I face.
    - Find someone who can help me when I need help.
    - Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous.

RELATIONSHIPS

TEACHER - STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Shining Star Spotlight

Scholar's Name

Insert message here about the contributions that your chosen student has made to your classroom. This should be a personal message, specific only to that scholar!

CREATE YOUR OWN STUDENT SPOTLIGHT ANNOUNCEMENT!

1. Use Common Language

Use a common language to identify social-emotional skills: take time to define what the core skills mean and look like in the classroom (e.g., self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills).

2. Give positive reinforcement

Provide reinforcement when students display social-emotional skills in class and with their peers—not only when they perform well academically.

3. Inform parents about SEL

Provide information to parents about the importance of SEL to encourage teaching and reinforcement of these skills at home.

4. Make learning collaborative

Make learning interactive and team-based to give students the opportunity to participate in discussions, collaborate with one another, solve problems, and negotiate decisions.

5. Incorporate project-based learning

Use project-based learning to give students the opportunity to use social-emotional and academic skills in real-world, experiential applications.

6. Elevate student voice

Elevate student voice by encouraging them to communicate about what they learn, give and receive constructive feedback, and engage their peers in discussions and reflection.

7. Foster a growth mindset

Design activities that foster a growth mindset: teach students how to engage in "productive struggles" and view challenges and mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve.

8. Align academic and SEL goals

Ensure academic and SEL goals are clearly defined and align with one another and the core standards—emphasize achieving subject matter content as well as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

9. Infuse equity and social justice

Infuse equity and social justice into the curriculum to facilitate students' connection between current/historical events and their identity/self-awareness and social-awareness.

10. Ask students what questions they have

Inspire inquiry and conversation as a necessary part of learning—routinely ask your students and encourage them to ask each other "What questions do you have?"

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES
SCHOOLS
CLASSROOMS

SEL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES AND POLICIES
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

SOCIAL AWARENESS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

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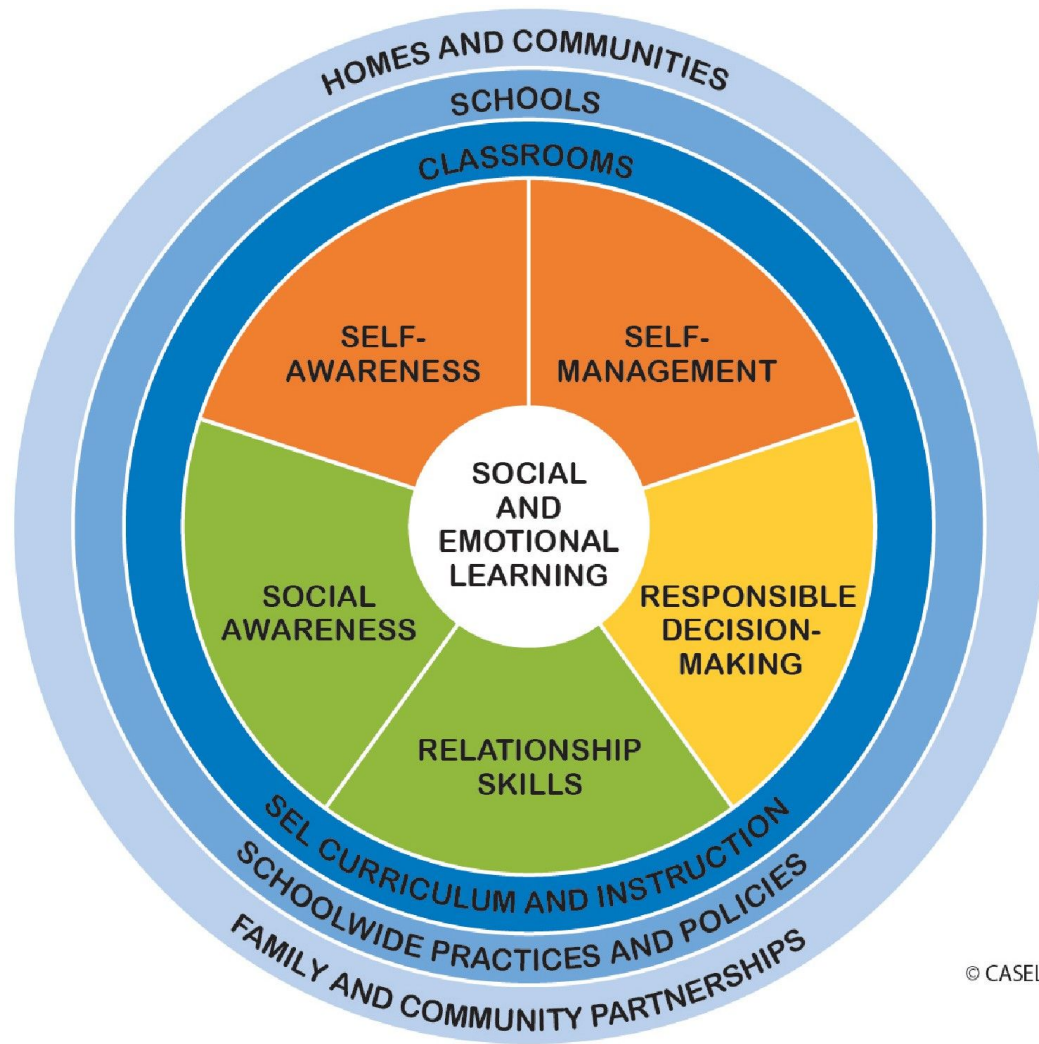
SEL COMPETENCIES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY
Self-Awareness The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations and identify emotions is essential for students to develop self-efficacy skills in order to complete ELA academic assignments.	· Create individual or class books about emotions, such as photographs of themselves demonstrating emotions with the words below. · Identify emotions of characters in stories and compare/contrast them with their own feelings in similar situations. · Read You and Me by Manna (2000) and create representations of some characteristics that are the same or different between themselves and one of the characters in the story. · Create an original story or illustration using a list of emotions vocabulary words (e.g., illustrate the word "furious").

SEL COMPETENCIES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY
Self-Management Self-management skills are necessary for students to master ways to calm themselves and focus their attention sufficiently so that they can effectively participate in learning, including ELA learning.	· Use props (e.g., red, yellow, green signs) during a story to indicate potential conflict, when to stop; slow down and think; or go ahead with a solution. · Return to a project at a later time (e.g., place "save" or "under construction" signs on projects). · Draw or write instructions for tasks requiring a series of steps to follow in order (e.g., a recipe for making a sandwich, constructing a tower out of blocks).

SEL COMPETENCIES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY
Social Awareness Writing depends on the ability to take the perspective of the reader. Characters in literature also represent different perspectives of a story. Perspective taking is an essential part of the SEL core competency of social awareness.	· Develop, illustrate, and display a list of kind, considerate, and empathetic actions/behaviors. · Create social stories describing how someone might feel when... (e.g., exclusion, hitting, etc.)
Relationship Skills The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, and cooperate with others are skills that will enhance student capacity for effectively participating in ELA learning, including collaborative learning opportunities.	· Engage in reciprocal conversations and discussions with peers and with adults, one-on-one or in small groups. · Practice listening attentively in partners (e.g., for one minute, each child describes his/her perspective on a topic while the other listens, then each child summarizes the partner's statements). · Use a variety of media (crayons, paint, writing, photos, videos, etc.) to create greeting cards, notes, invitations, etc. for a specific person such as a friend or family member

SEL COMPETENCIES	MATHEMATICS
Self-Awareness All learning, including Mathematics, is affected by students' goal setting skills that help them to complete academic assignments. Additionally, students' ability to demonstrate self-awareness provides them opportunities to actively and meaningfully engage in collaborative problem solving in Mathematics.	· Mathematically proficient students make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. For example, while transforming algebraic expressions and evaluating correspondence between equations, verbal descriptions, tables and graphs encourage students to ask themselves at every step, "Does this make sense?" · Encourage students to mindfully tap into what they already know and to break down complex problems in order to solve them successfully.

SEL COMPETENCIES	MATHEMATICS
Self-Management Self-management skills are necessary for students to master ways to calm themselves and focus their attention sufficiently so that they can effectively participate in learning, including Mathematics.	· During group work, have the students practice pausing to discuss the problem at hand. · Encourage students to paraphrase their peers. · Prepare scaffolded materials in anticipation of particularly challenging tasks to be provided to students as needed. For example, hint cards, reference materials, videos, partners, etc.

SEL COMPETENCIES	MATHEMATICS
Social Awareness Effective mathematical practice includes students working together in groups to solve mathematical equations. Having the relationship skills such as listening to others, reflecting on others' differing opinions/approaches to a problem and asking questions of one another's thinking are relationship skills that are important in the advancement of one's learning, including collaborative learning, in Mathematics.	· Encourage students engaged in collaborative discussions, to respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and approaches, and qualify their own views in light of evidence provided rather than personal views. · Create routines that require students to take on the perspective of another student and defend their thinking.
Relationship Skills Effective mathematical practice includes students working together in groups to solve mathematical equations. Having the relationship skills such as listening to others, reflecting on others' differing opinions/approaches to a problem and asking questions of one another's thinking are relationship skills that are important in the advancement of one's learning, including Mathematics.	· Have students work together in a group to look at a set of graphs and group them based on commonalities. · During group work, encourage students to ask each other clarifying questions and/or follow up questions when uncertain about the solution and/or the approach to solving a math problem. . Provide students with time to reflect on their own group work/relationship skills.

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2