

# TCARE

## Teachers Connecting to Advance Retention and Empowerment

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CTL@CSUN IS THE RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HUB OF THE MICHAEL D. EISNER COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

Founded in 2002 through the Eisner Foundation, our mission is to identify, research, and disseminate what really works in education.



2017 is going to be a big year for the CSUN Center for Teaching and Learning and we are excited to share our news with you!

First of all, do you know about our Education on the Edge events? Every year we host big-name educational speakers to share cutting edge information on a variety of educational topics. We have hosted (among others) Diane Ravitch, Linda Darling-Hammond, Alfie Kohn, and Tina Payne Bryson. We are so thrilled to be hosting renowned autism-expert Temple Grandin at our next Education on the Edge speaker event. In fact, we "sold out" of our 650 tickets in less than one day! But keep posted for other future Edge events. We may even start streaming these events for those of you who don't live in our sunny neck of the woods.

We are also hosting the What Really Works in Education conference on February 7, 2017. Experts are joining us internationally and from universities throughout the United States to share evidence-based practices related to working with exceptional learners. We will have sessions on working with students: with disabilities, English language learners, gifted, twice-exceptional, mental health or identity issues, Deaf, LGBTQ, multi-racial, difficult home situations, and more! If you want a great excuse to come to southern California for professional development, this is the perfect reason. Some of the sessions will be streamed as well. Get more information at <http://www.csun.edu/center-teaching-learning/what-really-works>

This year the CTL is also publishing the *What Really Works With Exceptional Learners* book with Corwin Press and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). In fact, the book will be hot off the presses in February 2017 so that all attendees to the conference will get a free book. Excited to join us yet? If you really can't attend, be sure to buy your own copy of the book and read practical strategies to help inform your own practice.

Last but not least, we are also excited to share that starting in 2017, TCARE will be a peer-reviewed publication. Do you have great ideas that you know would motivate and inspire other educators? By all means, please send in your articles and we will send them out to our peer review advisory board.

2017 will be a busy year for us....and we are sure it will be for you as well. However, we believe in ourselves and we believe in you! Let's all take a breath and keep our energy up by constantly connecting and collaborating with others.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wendy W. Murawski".

Wendy W. Murawski, Ph.D.  
Executive Director and Eisner Endowed Chair  
Center for Teaching & Learning, CSUN



## WHAT REALLY WORKS

### TOP 5 TECHNOLOGIES TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Finding great technologies to engage students can be a challenge. Here we'll share our favorite technologies for increasing student engagement and participation and meet Universal Design for Learning principles (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). The best part? Each tech is free!

**Nearpod:** a free (paid available) interactive slide deck app that can be used with a computer, tablet, or phone. It allows the "teacher slides" to appear on student devices. Teachers can create slides within the app or load pre-created Powerpoint slides. Interactive features allow for frequent formative assessment, including: polling, multiple choice and short answer questions, matching, fill-in the blank, drawing. We like: Teacher controls the app from a tablet or phone which allows teachers to continue to move about the room and use proximity as needed. Student screens are controlled by the teacher so there's no opportunity to "wander off" during the lesson and data from the interactive features can be downloaded to be used in grading or formative/summative assessment. Saved nearpod presentations can be sent to students as homework and all interactive features remain intact with the homework feature. Our students like: Students can answer questions and only the teacher will see the response—this is helpful for students with anxiety or learning gaps. Nearpods sent as homework can be viewed multiple times for reinforcement and students report that they enjoy the opportunity to engage. Similar apps: Pear deck, Haiku deck

**Educreation:** screencasting whiteboard app has a voice record feature for teachers (or students) to solve problems with visual and aural support. We like: Teachers can re-teach or pre-teach material with visual and oral explanations. All recordings can be uploaded to Youtube or posted to Facebook/twitter accounts for reteaching and parent support. If students use the app, teachers can see and hear where breakdowns occur in problem solving. Great for sharing key concepts with parents to support with homework and non-mastered content. Our students like: Students have the opportunity to see and hear the teacher perform the skill as many times as they need. Students can also record themselves solving problems or answering questions—a great option for students with specific learning disabilities in writing. Similar Apps: Explain everything, Show Me, BaiBoard, Group Board. Other idea: Screen cast-o-matic is a

free screencasting website that allows you to capture any image (PP, Word doc, etc) on your computer and record an explanation that you can upload to Youtube—great for explaining assignments, teaching quick content, or providing examples. Great for when your content has already been created.

**Kahoot:** engaging, quiz-style app made of multiple-choice questions. Students respond to questions with a countdown and more points are awarded for faster answers. We like: Highly engaging, provides for opportunities to respond for the entire class, and allows for quick formative assessment. Our students like: Fast-paced, game that allows for points and rankings. Can be played one to one or in teams. Similar Apps: Socratic, Plickers, Poll Everywhere

**Voki:** website to create a fun avatar and record up to 50 seconds of instruction—great for teachers to share class expectations, procedures for an assignment, or to share pre-teaching (vocabulary, key concepts, etc). We like: All recordings come with a URL that can be saved and shared so they don't have to repeat instructions multiple times. Our students like: to record book reports, share their understanding, or use for creative writing pieces. It allows for repeated views as needed to master content. Similar apps: Sock Puppets, Comic Book Maker HD, and Toontastic allow for longer recordings and have different types of characters for students to choose from.

**Padlet:** interactive "bulletin board" where teachers can post prompts and information (including video, PPTs, and links to articles). We like: Once you share the link, students can join the bulletin board and post responses and engage in "real time" conversation about the topic of the board. It provides for quick formative assessment and is visually appealing to share on a smart board and use for review for summative assessments. Our students like: To create their own display boards for interactive multimedia presentations (instead of traditional posters or class presentations). Similar Apps: Google Docs also allows for this level of "real time" engagement."

Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.cast.org/our-work/publications/2014/universal-design-learning-theory-practice-udl-meyer.html#.WD0dxaIrL2Q>



**Dusty Columbia Embury, Ed.D.** (left) and **Laura Clarke, Ed.D.** (right) are both associate professors at Eastern Kentucky University. Dusty has 12 years in education and Laura has 14. Both have children and dogs, experience teaching students with disabilities, and a love of technology.



# WHAT REALLY WORKS

## POLITICS IN THE CLASSROOM

After the 2016 political season, I wonder if perhaps I have missed some important teachable moments avoiding politics in my classroom. I can list plenty of good reasons to maintain “neutrality.” I want students to feel safe in my class. I never want to abuse the power I have by telling students “what to think.” I don’t want to create a hostile learning environment for students whose views differ from mine. After the chaos of the last year, however, I am questioning these assumptions. So, I decided to do a little research and see what experts have to say about how we should handle politics in our classrooms.

I was surprised to learn that there is a lot, I mean A LOT, of writing on the issue of teachers’ politics in the classroom. Most of it is frankly over my head and beyond the scope of this article. But, I did learn that when we model something called “committed impartiality” (Journell, 2016) for students, they benefit significantly. So here are three “myths” I’ve often used as reasons to avoid politics in my classroom, followed by the corresponding realities and some strategies that can help you implement “committed impartiality” in your classroom.

Myth 1: We owe it to our students to be politically neutral.

Reality 1: There really is no such thing as a politically neutral teacher. We are all political beings. Our kids tend to know, or at least have a sense of, how we think about things in general. However, without additional information from us, they also tend to make inferences about us based on stereotypes. We all know assumptions can create barriers that interfere with relationships and trust. Kids feel safe when they know who we are and can trust us to be consistent.

Strategy 1: Simple... tell kids who you are, what you think, and why. Respectfully and calmly, of course.

Myth 2: We abuse our power as teachers by telling kids “what to think” when we share our political beliefs.

Reality 2: Good teachers don’t tell students what to think on any topic. We help kids learn “how to think” when we are transparent about what we believe and then teach the tools they need to decide if our beliefs are valid or invalid.

Strategy 2: Tell students what you believe and why. Provide support and make clear how your beliefs influence your thinking. Offer alternative viewpoints that students can use to interpret facts and situations for themselves. Be explicit about the connections between your beliefs and the larger social context. Context is necessary to make meaning of ambiguous situations and critical thinking depends on understanding it. In other words, use facts to ground your arguments, not just opinions.

Myth 3: We risk alienating kids and families who believe differently than we do.

Reality 3: We have an obligation to help our students develop the skills they need to participate in effective, productive, civil discourse on important political issues. What better place for this to start than in our classrooms?

Strategy 3: Share your beliefs respectfully. Don’t snark about candidates or parties you don’t like. Model how to have difficult conversations in respectful, meaningful ways. Respectfully listen to students whose well-supported beliefs are different from your own.

We want our students to become engaged citizens, who care passionately about the issues that matter to them, whatever those issues may be. We also want them to effectively negotiate and respectfully tolerate differences. Adopting “committed impartiality” in our classrooms makes this possible. I’m convinced it is time to give it a try... Wish me luck! I wish the same for you.

Journell, W. (2016). Making a case for teacher political disclosure. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing (Online)*, 31(1), 100-111.

**Brooke Blanks, Ph.D.,** has been working with students with disabilities and their families for nearly 20 years. She has served on the faculty of the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Radford University since 2011. Her research interests include inclusive practices in schools and community settings, with a focus in rural middle and high school students.





## ADMIN CORNER

### DEVELOPING A CO-TEACHING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Schools pledge to hold high academic expectations for all students but unfortunately this is not always the case for students placed in special day program classrooms (SDC). At Granada Hills Charter High School (GHCHS) in California, the vast majority of our students with disabilities are placed in general education classes with their non-disabled peers. Unlike many other schools who serve students in SDC in pull-out classes, students in our SDC program are placed in co-taught classes. At GHCHS, we have observed significantly improved classroom management and fewer referrals to the deans because our students remain in the classroom and are engaged in learning a rigorous curriculum. In addition, year-end student surveys have shown that 80% or more of the students in the co-teaching classes would like to remain in an inclusive classroom structure.

How did all of this happen? It took baby steps. Allow me to go back and offer you a little background on this exciting adventure of placing the lowest group of students on our campus in the general education setting...

GHCHS implemented the co-teaching program over 10 years ago with the support and expertise of national consultant Dr. Wendy Murawski. We started with a core pilot group of four teams. Since then, we have expanded the program. Our current co-teaching classes include 12 co-teaching pairs teaching over 30 classes in various core subjects and electives.

Why have we stuck with co-teaching over the years and continued to grow it? Because of the major benefits of co-teaching we have observed! They include:

- ♦ High academic expectations – some of our SDC students are in co-taught Physics classes!
- ♦ Significantly improved classroom management
- ♦ The ability to promote “Inclusivity” not “Exclusivity” throughout the campus
- ♦ Co-teaching classrooms serve all students so fewer students fall through the gaps
- ♦ General Ed teachers have learned to better differentiate instruction, while Special Ed teachers have become stronger in their specific content areas

Some of the specific actions we have taken to increase our co-teaching success include:

- ♦ Ensuring that our Special Ed Co-Teachers at GHCHS are all highly qualified in the content areas they teach
- ♦ Continuing to provide professional development throughout the years to ensure our focus on high-quality co-teaching, differentiation, and Universal Design for Learning
- ♦ Creating the part-time position of “Co-teaching Coordinator” and having one of our expert co-teachers provide peer support to all teams
- ♦ Authoring a grant to propose an in-depth co-teaching program. We were thrilled when our grant proposal was unanimously approved, and we were awarded the full proposed amount of nearly \$220,000 for our co-teaching program!

What are we doing with this generous grant? Our Co-Teaching Program grant has made it possible to:

- ♦ Become a model and observation site at the high school level for other charter and L.A.U.S.D. neighboring schools, creating a Community of Practice (COP) around co-teaching
- ♦ Offer evening professional staff development trainings with Dr. Murawski to address significant co-teaching topics, offered to GHCHS teachers and neighboring schools
- ♦ Support GHCHS peer observations of micro-teaching sessions using the CTSS (Co-Teaching Solutions System; [www.coteachsolutions.com](http://www.coteachsolutions.com)), which encourages teachers to offer each other feedback in a non-evaluative manner
- ♦ Implement the CTIME (Collaborative Teaching Instructional Model of Excellence; Murawski & Lochner, 2017) protocol, which is a continuous improvement model

My colleagues and I are extremely privileged to lead this co-teaching journey at GHCHS. By being a model and observation site and offering extensive, practical professional development to co-teachers, GHCHS is able to share our co-teaching expertise with other interested charter and traditional schools. My biggest suggestion to other schools interested in building their program? Take baby steps, stay committed, and keep moving forward!

Murawski, W. W., & Lochner, W. W. (in press). *No fail co-teaching: A data-driven continuous improvement model*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum.



**Joy Kasper, M.A.**, is the Administrative Director of Special Education at Granada Hills Charter High School and a National Board Certified Teacher. Joy has been working in the field of education for 17 years.

# T-CARE

## TIPS FROM A TOY (TEACHER OF THE YEAR)

### PLEASE DON'T STOP THE MUSIC

I remember when I was a student in the early nineties being obsessed with music. I would stay up late at night to record my favorite songs from the radio, and I never went anywhere without my Sony Walkman.

Much has changed since my high school days. For students today, CDs, let alone cassette players are a thing of the distant past, and recording music is entirely unnecessary in the age of YouTube and Spotify.

Nevertheless, these memories of my days as a student serve to remind me that music brings people together and should be an essential part of all classrooms. Unfortunately, at many inner-city schools like mine, programs introducing students to the study of music or playing a musical instrument have been completely cut. In spite of this, music in education remains an essential part of my students' classroom experience.

Everyday the overwhelming majority of my students walk the hallways or head home on the bus with their headphones in their ears, listening to everything from Taylor Swift to Wu -Tang Clan, to the danceable sounds of Cumbia or the latest K-Pop fad. Music is the universal language, and utilizing it in the classroom is a fantastic way to ensure student engagement in classroom activities. It is imperative that educators utilize various types of music to make connections to the content they teach within the classroom, to help build community, and to liven up dull content.

#### Lecturing With Music

When visitors walk into my class they may see students taking notes about imperialism from a PowerPoint accompanied by a 7 second snippet of Kanye West's song "Power" along with the text and visual definition projected on the board. I create presentations that integrate music and visuals in an effort to assist my ELL students, as well as auditory and visual learners. The short music clips not only provide students with additional time to take notes, but it also provides students with a musical cue that reinforces the ideas and themes of the lesson. My regular use of popular culture and music in my lessons has allowed me to create a curriculum that is not only rigorous, but also relevant, engaging, and develops media literacy skills. (See sample: <https://youtu.be/t31AUvEuB-E>)

#### Creating a Musical Parody

When studying the New Deal government agencies, students pick a popular song and have to create a song parody that explains the program to the class. Recently, an extremely shy student named Andy revealed to his peers his obsession with Lady Gaga as he created a song parody that analyzed the impact of the Wagner Act on labor unions during the New Deal. Having students create song parodies is a great way to increase student engagement and have them teach their peers academic content. (Student example: <https://youtu.be/JoEHC1xjcA>)

#### Musical Motivation

Every Monday I play and display lyrics from various artists to help motivate both my students and myself for the week ahead. Oftentimes students share a line from their favorite song, and other times I introduce an artist that I want to expose my students to. For example, as we got ready to embark on the new semester, one student suggested these lyrics from "Be" by Common:

"We got arms but won't reach for the skies"

The Common quote not only provoked a rich discussion about missed opportunities, but playing the snippet from the song "Be" evolved into a great conversation about goals for the new year and actionable steps students will take to realize those goals. By encouraging students to share songs that motivate them, you will not only see an increase in student engagement, you will also be amazed by the connections students begin to make between pop culture and the academic content of your class.

As you lesson plan throughout 2017, I challenge you to find ways to include music in your curriculum. Remember the words of Kendrick Lamar, "don't talk about it, be about it!"

Feel free to hit up Mr. Daniel Jocz to talk all things social studies, teaching, flipped instruction, equity, and utilizing music in the classroom.

Daniel Jocz  
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**Daniel Jocz, M.Ed.,** is the 2016 California Teacher of the Year and a finalist for National Teacher of the Year. He is a National Board Certified Teacher and works in Los Angeles at the Downtown Magnets High School. He has been teaching for 13 years.



# T-CARE

## THE CARING CONNECTION

### INCREASING TEACHER WELL-BEING

It's 4:00 p.m. on Thursday and you wander into the teacher's lounge. It was a discouraging, overwhelming day in which several students continually disrupted class. As you sip your fifth cup of coffee and nibble on a cookie, you hear several other colleagues relate the difficulties of the day. You go home feeling exhausted and burned out. Surely there is a better way to deal with the inevitable stresses that teaching presents.

When we think of classroom management we tend to think of the most obvious relationship, that of the teacher with students. However, there is a more central relationship that needs to be addressed first, the relationship you have with stress management strategies.

Compared with the general population, teachers are at higher risk for depression. Depressed teachers are more likely to focus on negative behaviors in the classroom and may struggle to move forward or try new strategies for improving the classroom climate. If that sounds familiar, it's time to gain some tools to manage stress, improve your outlook, and become more resilient.

Starting with your **mind**, developing a healthy "mental set" appears to be one of the most critical aspects of effective classroom management. When we unpack this concept, we find it has several techniques:

- A. Frequently scan the classroom. Move around and make eye contact with students.
- B. Squelch anger and frustration in delivering negative consequences and don't feel sorry about implementing them. Try to reframe the situation in the best possible light. Monitor your thoughts and work to replace negative assumptions about a student with positive ones.
- C. Learn to practice deep breathing techniques and guided imagery exercises, and apply humor wherever you can.

If you find you daily exceed your ability to manage stress, seek a professional therapist who can help you develop a strategy that works for you.

Next, we move to your **body**. Research shows that regular daily exercise reduces the impact of stress hormones (cortisol) and increases resilience to negative situations. A diet with large portions of fruits, vegetables, healthy grains, and protein goes a long way toward building resiliency and a strong immune system. It's best to avoid comfort foods like coffee, cookies, sugary drinks, baked goods, and alcohol. A nutritious diet and regular exercise improve sleep, boost immunity, increase energy, and provide a solid foundation for a balanced, healthy life.

When we consider **spirit**, it is helpful to carve out some time for daily solitude—preferably in nature—where you can decompress and allow time for your thoughts to wander. Journaling is an excellent way to process feelings and reflect on how the deeper parts of your nature are handling your situation. Another vital aspect of our spirit is community and sense of support. Reach out to your family, colleagues, friends, and community for conversation, fun, and gather insights that will help you adjust your perspective.

Self-care is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Think of the experience of flying commercially with a child. The flight attendant always says, "In the event of an emergency, parents, please put your air mask on first, then attend to your children." The same holds true for teachers!

#### Resources to Help

"Real Solutions in Classroom Management" is an online course covering teacher well-being, equity, the physical design of a classroom, and evidenced-based strategies and methods for survival and success in the classroom. Available at: <http://realsolutions.uoregon.edu/>



**Deborah Cooke** is an instructional designer with a specialization in online learning for University of Oregon Academic Extension. In her 6 years with the university, she has worked on several large online courses for K-12 and higher education.

**Wendy Morgan** is the program manager for K-12 educator professional development and Real Solutions for University of Oregon Academic Extension. She has spent her career teaching preK through 8th grade both in private and public school in three states.





## SELF CARE SPOTLIGHT

*Self-care is about balance. Working with students all day can be exhausting and it is important to find something you love and are passionate about that keeps you grounded. This issue's Self-Care Spotlight highlights the way one educator integrated her passion for science, her love for her grandchildren, and her "free time." Welcome to Grandma's Science Lab!*

What do you get when you take a thwarted childhood fascination with experiments, a knowledge of the importance of outdoor education and several young grandchildren? Grandma's Science Lab! As a young child, I loved pretending to be a chemist and inventing 'potions' of various household products.

Recently I decided to revisit my interests and engage my grandchildren in outdoor science fun. I envisioned a space in my backyard where the children and I could do a wide variety of experiments. I looked at Pinterest ideas until I came up with a plan that would suit the space perfectly and voila, we have a Lab! Though the children are very young (4 years, 2 years, and 5 months), we all have matching Lab coats. We began with a simple water/sand table. Then we experimented with shaving cream and sand in trays. We did art projects with leaf rubbings. We sorted rocks, weighed them, and counted them. We are building a sound wall with a variety of objects suspended for exploration of vibrations. Now the 4-year old asks, "Grandma, can we work in the Lab today?"



The lab is not only for my grandchildren; it is science therapy for me. Thinking like a scientist, early childhood educator, outdoor enthusiast, and loving grandma all coalesce into a marvelous "potion" creating and sustaining profound joy for me. This is not just my outdoor science Lab; it's my self-care station!

**Carrie Rothstein-Fisch, Ph.D.**, is a Professor of Educational Psychology and Counseling and Co-coordinator of the Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education. She has been an early childhood educator for 40 years and is a core researcher on the Bridging Cultures Project.



### CSUN Center for Teaching & Learning EDUCATION ON THE EDGE SPEAKER SERIES

**Dr. Temple Grandin**

February 6th from 7:00pm-8:30pm  
Book signing to follow



FREE event but you must register at  
[www.CTLgrandin.eventbrite.com](http://www.CTLgrandin.eventbrite.com)  
Learn more about CTL events by joining  
[facebook.com/CTLatCSUN](https://facebook.com/CTLatCSUN) and following us on  
Twitter at @CTLatCSUN

### It's time for the What Really Works with Exceptional Learners Conference!

February 7th, 2017 8am-5pm  
CSUN University Student Union



Come hear directly from many of the TCARE authors, to include 2016 CA Teacher of the Year Daniel Jocz and Presidential Science Award-winner Erica Rood, our keynote speakers!



Get more information at [www.csun.edu/ctl](http://www.csun.edu/ctl) for registration and streaming information



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