

# T-CARE

## Teachers Connecting to Advance Retention and Empowerment

### CONTENTS

- 1 EDITORIAL
- 2 WRW IN READING
- 3 WRW IN BEHAVIOR
- 4 ADMIN CORNER
- 5 TIPS FROM A TOY
- 6 THE CARING CONNECTION
- 7 SELF-CARE SPOTLIGHT

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.



Are you a new educator? A student teacher? A veteran who needs additional motivation to keep things fresh in your classroom or school? This newsletter is for you! T-CARE is about connecting educators around the United States with upbeat, easy-to-read, engaging articles and tips that help you stay focused and excited about education. Research tells us that many teachers burn out after five years (less for our special educators!) so our goal is to increase retention by empowering you. How will we do that in a short newsletter?

We will connect you to experts and each other. We will engage you with stories. We will have other teachers – including those who have won “Teacher of the Year” either locally, statewide or even nationally – share what has worked for them over the years. We will pick different content, pedagogical strategies, and behavioral tips each issue to focus on, but rather than giving you more theory and rhetoric, we’ll focus on strategies and practical tips for success. We will also ask administrators to share what they wish their teachers knew; this will be your “behind the scenes” information that some educators simply learn the hard way.

Each issue we’re also going to have a section on “Self-care.” Teachers are known to be selfless and often give 150% - at the detriment of their own health, personal lives, friendships, and sleep. We will remind you each issue to take care of yourselves so that you are better able to take care of your students, colleagues, parents, and community. We will also give you resources – books, websites, links, movies, and individuals – that you can use for your own continued professional development.

This newsletter is meant to be a quick read, written in an informal tone that talks to you, not at you. If you have something you’d like us to address, please contact us and let us know. If you have something to share with others, send us your article or contact us and we would be happy to discuss it. This is a resource for you. Make it work for you! We look forward to continuing to share, improve, connect, collaborate, and communicate with one another through this publication.

If you are interested in keeping up with what we are doing in the Center for Teaching and Learning, visit us in person at California State University Northridge or visit our website at [www.csun.edu/ctl](http://www.csun.edu/ctl).

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

### THE BEFORE-DURING-AFTER READING PROCESS

So, you're a real teacher with your own classroom! I remember it as exciting and nerve-wracking; you have final say over your own lessons but with that comes the realization that if things go awry, you no longer have the Cooperating Teacher safety net. Even though I student taught in an urban setting, I was still shocked my first year when I realized that my 9<sup>th</sup> grade English language arts students didn't read. There were many reasons, but the two most prevalent were that some students just couldn't read at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level and others could but didn't because it was "too much work." I was worried: What the heck could we learn if my students didn't read?

Even though I had a good credentialing program, there was so much to learn in such a short time that it wasn't until I read a bunch of articles, asked veteran teachers, and attended professional development that I learned/ was reminded about the reading process: before, during, and after. As teachers, we've accepted that some activities are a process and that if we trust the process, we'll end up with better results. An example is writing. Most of us, even if we don't like it, understand that writing is a process, and therefore we need to go through the stages. All good writers go through the process—even if their process looks truncated or downright odd. The same is true of reading. Reading challenging texts in all content areas is a process. Once I started teaching my students the process of reading, things didn't change overnight, but more students actually started to read.

The reading process consists of doing one or more activities before students start to read, one or more activities during reading, and then one or more activities after reading. A "Before" activity is an activity done before reading in order to do one or more of the following: create a context, anticipate the content of the text, remind the reader of any prior knowledge about the content of the text, make predictions about the content

of the text, and/or assist with difficult vocabulary to be encountered in the text. For students, warming up the brain to be prepared to read does not seem so odd when they realize that many other activities also require a person to do something beforehand. For instance, athletes stretch or do calisthenics before a game to warm up their muscles. Depending on your student population and the difficulty of the text, you may need to do more than one "Before" activity, or you may need to differentiate by student need.

A "During" activity should have one main purpose: increase comprehension during the reading of a text. Many expert readers, when reading a challenging text, actively do something while they are reading. Some people annotate in the margins or highlight, others look up vocabulary, still others jot down summaries on sticky notes. Even the act of rereading is a "During" activity. The key to a "During" activity is to find a task that will assist students to better comprehend the text.

An "After" activity assists students to reflect on and process the text after they read. Many teachers initially confuse an "After" activity with homework or an assessment. An "After" activity has one main purpose: to assist the students in thinking about what they read. This might include a journal entry, a blog, a discussion, a Q&A, or a partner share. Sometimes the "After" activity can also serve as homework or an assessment, but teachers should not assume the reverse.

By teaching the reading process, you are making the internal, almost secret, processes of reading explicit and then using activities to assist students to practice what so many expert readers do "naturally." While none of this may feel natural to your students, over time, your students start to relax into the process and understand that academic reading is a multi-stage struggle—for everyone. And that, oddly enough, is the process.



**Mira Pak, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor in Secondary Education at California State University, Northridge and has been an educator for 21 years. Her tip for new teachers? "Keep all the Thank You notes/songs/raps/pictures/cartoons students scrawl for you; each time you want to quit, read through them to get re-inspired."

## WHAT REALLY WORKS

### SNAPPY SELF-MANAGEMENT

Mr. Luke spent countless hours preparing for the start of the school year. He developed classroom rules and procedures. However, one student disrupts instruction EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. Maci gets out of her seat to sharpen her pencil at least eight times a period and calls out an answer to EVERY. SINGLE. QUESTION! Mr. Luke needs help... yesterday.

Some students need more structure to ensure success. One simple, evidenced-based strategy that increases positive behaviors and assists with shifting responsibility from the teacher to the student is **self-monitoring**. The first step involves meeting with the student to discuss the behavior that needs adjustment and identifying a positive replacement behavior. Next, collaborate with the student to set a measurable goal. After establishing a goal, create a simple recording sheet to record both problematic and then replacement behavior. The recording sheet can be high tech (e.g., Excel; smartphone or device), low tech (e.g., index card; post it note), or other mechanism (whatever works for the student and teacher). Initially, record behavior simultaneously with the student and then compare for inaccuracies. Once there is agreement with the data collection, the student independently records behavior. Finally, the recording sheet is phased out once the student has mastered the skill.

In the aforementioned case, Mr. Luke and Maci decided to address her calling out since it is the most disruptive (and Mr. Luke is able to give Maci a full box of pre-sharpened pencils).

They agreed that a good replacement behavior would involve having Maci use a predetermined number of tickets to answer questions during each lesson and then use any extra tickets to teach part of a lesson each week. Maci was not only able to record her own behaviors, but reduce the number of times she was calling out. After implementing the self-monitoring intervention, Mr. Luke is enjoying teaching and learning time is maximized! All in a snap!

Looking for more info? Check out these...

#### Book

Scheuermann, B. K., & Hall, J. A. (2012). *Positive behavioral supports for the classroom* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

#### App

D.A.T.A.- measures how often and long behaviors occur

<http://www.appolicious.com/tech/apps/785895-d-a-t-a-behavior-science-org-llc>

#### Websites

Intervention Central

[https://www.interventioncentral.org/self\\_management\\_self\\_monitoring](https://www.interventioncentral.org/self_management_self_monitoring)

The IRIS Center

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator>

PBIS World

<http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/self-monitoring/>



**Brittany Hott, Ph.D.**, is entering her 15<sup>th</sup> year in education. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor for the Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education department at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

**Jennifer Walker, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor in the Special Education department at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She has 19 years of experience as a teacher, behavior specialist, and university professor.





## ADMIN CORNER

### 7 BITS OF ADVICE TO GET YOU STARTED

I've been a teacher, a principal at both elementary and secondary, and am now director of schools. Where has the time gone? There are so many things I would love to sit down and say to new teachers....or even to any of my teachers....but I've tried to boil them down to some of my biggies.

- ♦ **Have Procedures.** Setting procedures is vital in the classroom. Make sure you have procedures from how to enter the room to turning in papers. When students know your expectations, you'll have more time to teach. They have to know that you'll follow through with those expectations too though. If you are wishy-washy, they'll walk all over you. Organization is the key; be organized!
- ♦ **Get to really know your students.** Make those personal connections, even if you have to write them down so you don't forget them. The saying is true that students don't care how much you know or want them to know until they know how much you care. Go to their events on and off campus. **THEY LOVE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!** These connections need to be personal and meaningful to the student. You can't go to every event of course, but think of the students who might really need an adult in their corner. You can be that adult – and as a bonus, you get to go to a football game, or birthday party, or bar mitzvah, or play!
- ♦ **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** We were all new at one time or another. No one has all the answers....even when we've been in education for years. An inquisitive mind is a growing mind. We learn and grow through our willingness to ask questions. Find a mentor or someone you trust. Ask to attend professional development activities so you can continue to grow professionally.

- ♦ **Know the “Sacred ground” commitments of a campus.** There are some serious, unspoken traditions that are very meaningful and carry weight on a campus. It could be something as simple as assigned parking in the school lots to deep embedded traditions of pep rallies/assemblies. Try to figure out what they are early on so you don't hurt any feelings or step on any toes...even unintentionally.
- ♦ **Take time to listen.....** but reflect and draw your own opinions. Don't always believe what you hear in the teacher's lounge. Connect yourself with positive people – those faculty or staff who look like they still love their job and are constantly motivated and eager to improve. There will always be those who are negative. You can learn from them too, but don't let them bring you down.
- ♦ **Take care of yourself.** Do you know how to de-stress? What makes you happy? Make time for these things. The first years are always hard and you will spend countless hours at school. It's easy to let school take over your life. Carve time out in your schedule to do some things that you really enjoy. The self-care tips at the end of each T-CARE issue will be important to you as you learn to breathe, regenerate, and renew.

**Last and most important: HAVE FUN!!!!!!** Most of your waking hours are spent at school, so why not make it fun? If you are bored with a lesson, you can be guaranteed that the students are too. Tell a joke or ask the students to share funny stories. Link cartoons to your content. Use YouTube videos appropriately. Connect with a colleague and co-teach a lesson. Don't feel as though you have to reinvent the wheel though. There are many sites and apps that can spur your creativity. For example, Pinterest is a great tool to add a little pep in your classroom. Get ideas and share ideas. This is teaching – have fun with it!



**Stephanie Free** is the Executive Director of Schools and School Improvement in San Angelo, TX. She's been in education for 24 years. She has two things she likes to say to her teachers: "The one thing I can guarantee is the kids are going to show up everyday!" and "If you don't like how today turned out, you always have tomorrow."

# T-CARE

## TIPS FROM A TOY

(TEACHER OF THE YEAR)

### TIPS FOR A YEAR OF TEACHING THAT YOU'LL BE PROUD OF

Hello! Thanks for taking the time to hear a few tips from a TOY Teacher (try not laugh at the acronym—I do every time I see it). I do not think that my ideas are perfect, but they are things that I have learned (often by making mistakes along my journey) and I hope that they can help you or give you something to think about.

When I was asked to give tips to other teachers, I tried to organize my thinking so that it would make sense to you—keep in mind that I teach kindergarten and have the attention span of a five year old! In case I miss something, or fail to clarify, please don't hesitate to email me. Seriously. I love connecting with others and sharing ideas, so reach out to me for any questions:

[Palomo.Luisa@gmail.com](mailto:Palomo.Luisa@gmail.com)

- ♦ **Live every moment to the fullest**—the happy and fun moments as well as the tough, tear-jerking ones. Let the moments shape you and reflect on them. I actually like keeping student work that reminds me of these times.
- ♦ **Collaborate with others**—finding people who get you in your teaching world will save you time and energy. It is comforting to know that other people have been in your shoes, and survived! These colleagues will help you with content, but also with things that you can only learn through experience. And in the twisted way that only teachers can understand, it's nice to meet others who share our kind of craziness and chose it on purpose.

♦ **Balance, balance, balance.** You have a million hours of school work that you could do after work... or you could walk your cute dog around the neighborhood, talk to others not engrossed in the teaching world (yes, they exist) and take a literal breath of fresh air. Remember to work hard every day to maintain that balance. You will be better off in the long run, or even just by the end of the week, for taking time for yourself.

♦ **Believe that parents can be your biggest support.** Remember that parents are sending us their most precious thing in the world—their children. Whether the child is 5 (my case) or 15 (yikes, the big kids), parents want what is best for their children and deserve to be kept in the loop. Communicate early and often with families in the way that best fits with your school population.

♦ **Understand that teaching is a dynamic career**—not just in the energy and enthusiasm that we encounter, but also in the “never stop learning, constantly changing” way of being a teacher. The way that you teach your first year will be different from your 5<sup>th</sup> year that will be different from your 10<sup>th</sup> year in the classroom. You will constantly be exposed to various forms of professional development and I urge you to take advantage of them. Attend, learn, and make it apply to your classroom. Added bonus: your students will see that you have a love of learning just like you want them to have.

♦ **Advocate!** Your students and your profession need you to do more than just be a fantastic teacher in the classroom. Be an advocate for what students need (maybe it's needing better measures of academic success beyond standardized tests, or maybe it's making sure that your students have their basic needs met in order to be able to focus on learning). Be an advocate for your profession by standing up for what you know will support teachers to be their best selves.

**Luisa Palomo Hare** is the 2012 Nebraska Teacher of the Year and a recipient of Warren Buffet's Outstanding Teacher Award. She teaches kindergarten in Omaha, Nebraska and has 12 years teaching experience. She is endorsed in English as a Second Language and has her masters in Educational Administration.



## THE CARING CONNECTION

### HOW DO WE CARE? WHY DO WE CARE?

Teachers are “caring” professionals. Like doctors, nurses, and therapists, we tend to others, we want the best for them, and we extend ourselves to meet their needs.... sometimes to the detriment of our own needs! We know that working with students and their families is hard work: physically, intellectually and emotionally. Disillusionment, stress, survival mode, and burn-out are documented struggles experienced in the teaching profession. It was exactly these issues that led to the beginning of the T-CARE project back in 2008.

A group of colleagues working with the Center for Teaching and Learning in the California State University Northridge’s (CSUN) College of Education shared concerns about the difficulties of new teachers and the high rates of burnout. These colleagues had diverse areas of expertise and frames of reference: Robin Mlynarik and Steve Holle came from an educational and teaching background, while Dr. Alan Goodwin and Dr. Corrine Barker were practicing psychologists. Through ongoing discussions, these four recognized that teachers, especially new teachers, needed to care for one another and be cared for. As practitioners and researchers, they considered how to do that and the T-CARE Project was born.

The original mission statement of T-CARE was: “to help teaching professionals, at all experience levels, to explore the developmental stages of their career. Through this process, T-CARE will endeavor to establish and maintain a close, mutually supportive network of teaching professionals who will work together to: (a) gain a deep appreciation for the challenges all helping professionals confront, (b) sensitize teaching professionals to the value of cognitive and behavioral self-affirming practices, and (c) help them to develop higher levels of resiliency and job satisfaction.” These four leaders worked collaboratively to publish the first local T-CARE newsletter, while also visiting CSUN teacher induction seminars to share information about increasing job satisfaction and retention and lowering stress and burnout. This first issue of

the T-CARE newsletter at a national level is our attempt to “scale-up” the work that was started 7 years ago.

So, what does it mean to “care for educators”? Caring for teachers means that we provide opportunities for connection and support. We do this, in part, by focusing on the value of both research and practical applications as means of helping teachers to acknowledge and normalize the challenges all helping professionals confront. T-CARE is a project offering teachers across the nation the opportunity to connect and find support. Support groups have long been a source of comfort and coping for difficult challenges. It often helps to share difficulties with others because you realize that you are not alone, that struggles evolve over time, that you can endure them, and you also learn that there are sometimes ways to manage them that others have thought of but you had not. The articles in the T-CARE newsletter are designed to address content and pedagogy, but also to keep a focus on practical needs and on self-care, which is an area often neglected by those in the helping professions.

Gratitude research teaches us that both giving and receiving help are beneficial to an individual. For this reason, supportive groups are particularly effective when comprised of members who have various levels of experience and perspectives. T-CARE provides teachers a chance to benefit from a diversity of contacts from different areas of expertise and from different parts of the country. Whether you are having difficulty teaching a certain subject or want to find ways to work more constructively with a principal, a parent, or another teacher, or you just want to learn how to use a new form of technology in the classroom—we care about helping you get that information. We want to hear from you about what your needs are and work to share helpful resources with you to increase your own job satisfaction and ability to continue to love what you do. T-CARE is connecting the field of education to reflect, inform, rejuvenate—and care.



**Robin Mlynarik** has been teaching students and teachers for 28 years. She is adjunct faculty at California State University, Northridge and Channel Islands, and is an active presenter with the Center for Teaching and Learning.

**Alan Goodwin, J.D., Ph.D.**, is a licensed psychologist and the Director of the Student Counseling Services Center at California Lutheran University. He has been in the helping professions for 22 years.





# T-CARE

## SELF CARE SPOTLIGHT

Teachers are usually good at thinking about the well-being of others, but not always about their own well-being – until it's too late and they are sick or burnt out. Self-care means taking responsibility for yourself to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle at work and in your personal world through individually determined, proactive activities. Our research, along with others, shows that self-care and healthy stress-coping strategies increase productivity along with a sense of calm and well-being.

So how are you doing? Do you have any of the following signs of stress: fatigue, headaches, sleeplessness, lack of patience? Are you taking work home? Do you sometimes feel anxious, underappreciated, or overworked? Are you coping with stress using such unproductive strategies as overeating, trying to do it all, ruminating on problems and conflicts, or isolating yourself? Then it may be beneficial for you to devote some time to self-care.

The first step is the most important: make a daily commitment to self-care. For hardworking teachers, one of the easiest ways to begin is to incorporate some simple but fun activities into your workday. These activities could include posting and then periodically looking at a humorous picture, inspirational quote, or funny cartoon in your classroom; taking a short walk or meditating during lunch, breaks, or after school; packing fruit, nuts, and veggies for mid-day munchies; and, when especially stressed, doing some deep breathing: inhale for a count of four and then exhale for a count of four, all through your nose.

For more information on self-care and stress, check out the Self-care for U website at:

[www.csun.edu/eisner-education/self-care](http://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/self-care)

Continue to look for more self-care tips in this section in the future!



**Carolyn Jeffries** has been in education over 35 years, as a secondary science teacher and now as a professor in Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University, Northridge.

**Shari Tarver Behring, Ph.D.**, has 30 years in education, is a credentialed school counselor & psychologist, and is the Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling at California State University, Northridge.



### What Would You Like to See In This Space?

This newsletter is for YOU, so let us know what you'd like to see here? Some options are "fun facts" about teaching, quick reflections from new teachers, more teaching apps and resources, book recommendations, a share space where you can share what's helped you the most, inspiring quotes... Shoot us a quick email at [ctl@csun.edu](mailto:ctl@csun.edu) and let us know your thoughts!

### Spotlight on a Teacher App:

**Class Messenger** makes it effortless for teachers to send home important notes and updates about the day's learning experiences. They can even see exactly which parents have read each note. And whether via app, text or email, communication through Class Messenger is always private.

### Three Helpful Websites:

[www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org)

[www.edhelptr.com](http://www.edhelptr.com)

[www.edutopia.org](http://www.edutopia.org)



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