

T-CARE

Teachers Connecting to Advance Retention and Empowerment



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Welcome to T-CARE

Dear Recent Credential Grads,

The Michael D. Eisner College of Education and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) wish to welcome you to our innovative project, **T-CARE**. We know how much time and effort you put into earning your credential and the excitement and anticipation you experience as you face the many challenges as beginning educators. We appreciate that you selected California State University Northridge as the institution to guide you through this pedagogical process. As you begin to meet new challenges on a daily basis, we want you to know that CSUN remains your educational partner.

I am the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning within the College of Education. Our

mission is to keep CSUN at the forefront of cutting edge innovations in the field of education, and most importantly support the development of highly effective teachers. We want to create frameworks to support our educators while at the university and when out in the field in their own classrooms. Our philosophy is that school personnel need and deserve continuity in their ongoing efforts. To accomplish this, the CTL is working with our faculty as well as nationally renowned innovators exploring such diverse areas as Resilience, Mindsets, Motivation, Instructional Intelligence, Bridging Cultures, Deaf Education, Urban Education amongst many other exciting and relevant initiatives.

T-CARE is here to assist you. Our newsletters, online support, workshops, etc. are our way to stay in

touch and respond to the many apprehensions and successes you may experience as you cultivate your own survival tools. During these early years, many questions will arise, and isn't it great to know that you are not alone. The CTL is pleased and honored to provide the resources for this worthwhile and unique effort.

We look forward to providing support and collaborating, as all of you develop your careers as educators.

Richard L. Goldman, Director
Center for
Teaching and
Learning



What is T-CARE?

A Comment On Resiliency, Teaching Effectiveness, and Burnout

Alan Goodwin, Ph.D., J.D.
Licensed Psychologist, Director &
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It's hard to help. Therapist's and others have spoken of "compassion fatigue." Psychologists try to understand the reactions therapist's can have to clients, one of which is known as "counter-transference," as a way of improving the therapy the client

receives. Similarly, the difficulty of helping has led researchers in various fields to explore ways to make helpers more *resilient* in the face of the challenges of helping. In this process, the subject of resiliency has become a major focus of study within most professional disciplines.

But what does resiliency refer to? Some researchers focusing on teachers have referred to "occupational well-being" as a measure of both *emotional exhaustion* and *job satisfaction* (Klusmann, Kunter, et al., 2008). Other researchers have noted that teachers' effectiveness is

not merely related to job satisfaction, but is also a function of *life satisfaction* (Gu & Day, 2006). Gu and Day (2006) explored the way a teacher's sense of self can impact on how that teacher responds to the often very difficult task of teaching. As they noted, the teacher's response not only can determine the effectiveness of the intervention, but it can also have the secondary gain of modeling the same resiliency great teachers instill in their students (Gu & Day, 2006).

One thing that is clear is that

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“Resilient teachers place a strong value on professional development activities”

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resilient teachers place a strong value on professional development activities (Patterson, Collins, Abbot, 2004). It is also true that school districts do not always facilitate the provision of such on-going development and that this can be particularly true in urban districts in which such assistance would be particularly helpful to teachers (Patterson, Collins, Abbot, 2004). A primary aspect of the T-CARE mission is to help teachers to advance their professional development by finding various means to openly address the challenges they confront.

The T-CARE team thinks of teachers’ “challenges” in both a traditional and a nontraditional sense. Traditionally, teachers have always had to confront the enormously difficult task of finding innovative ways to bring about learning. The *traditional* aspect of this challenge, then,

has involved a search for new *methods* that might be used on the *helpees*. The *nontraditional* aspect has been the personal difficulties that may get in the way of teachers using the methods effectively. Teachers, like all human helpers, confront personal limitations at times during the process of trying to help. T-CARE interventions will target these difficulties, among others.

Our meetings with student teachers have provided the T-CARE team with vitally important information about the types of difficulties both newer and more experienced teachers confront. We also explored ways to approach finding solutions to some of the problems. Beyond solutions, our meetings with student teachers affirmed our belief that the T-CARE effort to create supportive collaborations among experienced and newer teachers will provide a much needed vehicle

for addressing challenges teachers confront. Added support for our belief is provided by researchers such as Patterson and Patterson, who spoke of the role teacher leaders, in particular, can play in developing a culture of teacher resilience (Patterson and Patterson, 2004).

There is no question that helping is difficult. Effective teachers are extremely talented individuals. Fortunately, in recent years it has become clear that there are many talented teaching professionals seeking to join the field. Rather than the problem being recruitment, the problem is retention (Salvador and Wilson, 2002). The T-CARE team intends to mine that talent and bring teachers together to share their wisdom for the betterment of both learners and teachers.

From the trenches...

-Reflections of a first year teacher

Disillusionment: to take away the ideals or idealism of and make disappointed, bitter, etc. I think I am at this phase?

Day 30, 40... I really do not know how many days I have been teaching. It goes by so fast that I have just realized that Christmas is coming. I sit here ready to write like it’s an open diary and think about how I do not want to go back to my lesson planning. I have created units but yet fall behind many, many pages. I know I have deadlines to meet but struggle to do the best. The worst... I am a perfectionist and falling apart! Things are literally thrown at you from administrators, parents, and students and do not forget



your personal life which merely seems distant to yourself. In addition, you have your own expectations to meet. You get negative comments from teachers who have been there for a long time. Should they not help you? Some days are the greatest and many days are just speechless. I can walk out wanting to cry or walk out smiling away. The funny thing is that I always stay positive and smile. My story began many months ago but I never thought it would be a roller coaster ride like this. Disillusionment it is. I get bitter but get myself out of it quickly. I dream and daydream about my

class and lessons and I constantly think about how to help my students learn everything so that they will achieve greatly at the end of the year. I always feel the pressure of being the perfect lesson “creator” with endless results.

I will not say teaching is easy because it is not that simple, but I will not tell anyone not to go into it either. I guess when you go to sleep and wake up knowing that you love your job is when you know you are at the right place so just keep going. You will survive!



Dear Docs: I am a first year teacher and have received a few letters and emails from parents who have concerns about their child, my assignments, or philosophies. I believe what I am doing is right, but why do I feel angry and defensive?

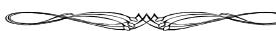
Dear Angry: If you're feeling angry and defensive, it is often helpful to explore what other feelings might be underlying the guilt and anger. Hurt? Shame? Frustration? Are the negative letters and emails from the parents focusing on legitimate issues that you have been avoiding OR are they stirring up deeper conflicts within you (e.g. your own internal "wounds", feelings that you are really "an imposter" as a teacher, fear of failure, etc.)?

The best solution is to know AND honor thyself. In other words, learn your own areas of sensitivity and insecurity. Even though you may not be able to totally dismiss your defensive and angry feelings when they emerge, develop an

understanding of what your own shaky areas are, and from where they evolved in your own personal history (such as a hypercritical, domineering father) so that they can be minimized with awareness.

Secondly, look closely at the source (i.e. the specific personality of your student's dissatisfied parent) from which the negative responses came. For example, is the parent overly anxious? Needy? Insecure? Or struggling with difficult memories from their own experiences in the grade you are teaching? Becoming aware of these types of issues that might exist in the person making the criticisms often makes the disapproval less incapacitating and more tolerable.

Finally, be able to look at any valid "suggestions" being offered in the context of the parental criticism. If we develop a tolerance for the sting that accompanies acknowledgement of our errors (and not indulge in wasteful self-flagellation) every feedback session can be a remarkable growth experience and we will progress with leaps and bounds.



Dear Docs: I am finding it impossible to get everything done for my class. My family is complaining that I work all the time – but the planning, preparing and paperwork never seems to be done. I knew teaching was going to be a big job, but didn't know it would be like this. Help, I don't know how to do all this.

Dear Overwhelmed: There are several dimensions to your question: 1)

priorities, 2) perfectionism and the need to please, and 3) the necessity for balance.

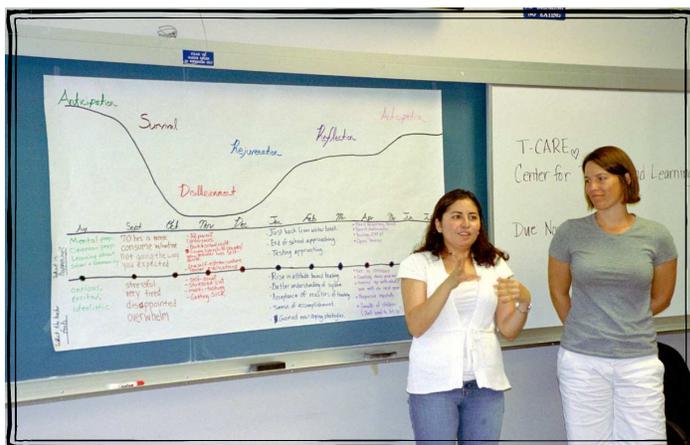
Begin by examining your priorities (not those of everyone you are hoping to please). If you feel that more time with your family is warranted, or that they are receiving minimal undistracted contact with you, then examine your work activities to consider if you are demanding perfectionism in all you do. If not, and you are simply struggling to complete minimal requirements, consult with experienced teachers to learn productive shortcuts regarding a given project, and perhaps even share/trade some tasks, handouts and written materials.

Permit yourself to have meaningful contact with your family, as well as pleasurable time for yourself – even if it means doing a "less than perfect" job. Extensive hours with loved ones is not crucial – but consistent, meaningful **contact** is. Establishing a regularly scheduled time (e.g. family nights that include your own preferences for fun and laughter) will provide reassurance that you are available.

Finally, allow yourself time to laugh. Imbalance between work and play, family and students can ultimately lead to burn-out and even depression.

Dr. Corinne Barker and Dr. Alan Goodwin are Licensed Clinical Psychologists and CTL Fellows.

Please submit your questions for "The Doctors Are In" to: t-care@csun.edu



Teacher candidates explore the six phases of a first year teacher in their student teaching seminar at CSUN.

"Phases of a first year teacher" is an article by Ellen Moir, University of California, Santa Cruz.





NEWS IN EDUCATION

BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

See
**“Second Step
 Bullying”**
 at
www.lausd.net

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second largest public school district in the United States of America with a student population of 694,288 at 1190 school sites. Years ago I worked for LAUSD as an elementary classroom teacher and have witnessed bullying on various occasions. I've heard faculty say, “Oh, bullying is part of growing up – it prepares you for real life.” I reflected on my own bullying experiences growing up and began to realize that this commonly expressed belief largely depends on which side of the bullying you find yourself.

Currently I teach at California State University Northridge (CSUN) in the College of Education. The best part of what I do is when I work with my student teachers during their fieldwork assignments. Here these developing teachers practice the techniques and strategies they have studied during their coursework. In working with a wide variety of elementary schools bullying

inevitably becomes an issue, which these teacher candidates unfortunately must face.

Traditionally, bullying is a topic buried until it erupts into a major news story. When a catastrophic event such as Columbine becomes a media focus for weeks and ignites public outcry, then people suddenly begin to question, “How could this happen?” Upon further investigation it is discovered that these two frustrated high school boys had been bullied to a point where they simply could not take the humiliation and isolation any longer and violently struck out against anyone in their path.

LAUSD has implemented a bully awareness program as part of *Second Step* (www.lausd.net - enter “Second Step Bullying” into the search window). This program is widely disseminated across the vast district and has already yielded some measurable results.

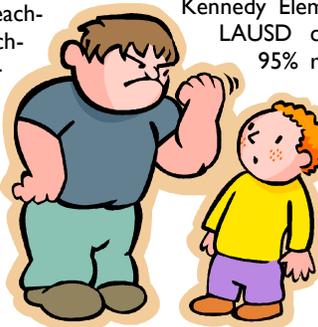
McMahon, S.D., et al., (2000) found a decrease in observed levels of physical aggression, verbal aggression, and disruptive behavior in preschool and kindergarten children from low-income urban families who received *Second Step* instruction. A 50% to 80% drop in office referrals was observed at Kennedy Elementary School in LAUSD combined with a 95% reduction in fighting after introducing the program school wide. Frey, K.S., et al., (2005) identified a 41% re-

duction in teacher time spent mediating minor conflicts after *Second*

Step had been implemented, which would understandably provide more classroom time for instruction. Just as encouraging, students enrolled in a school based social-emotional learning program rank at least 18 percentile points higher on academic achievement tests than students who do not participate in such programs and have a significantly higher attendance rate as well. The “Committee for Children,” creators of *Second Step* (www.cfchildren.org) have an excellent website dedicated to providing practical strategies to assist in bullying prevention.

It has been my experience that elementary schools across LAUSD have recognized the pervasiveness and severity of school bullying and have initiated awareness programs and individual school policies to intervene and educate children, parents, and classroom teachers of the escalating potential for violence resulting from what was once considered “part of growing up.” Does this mean the problem is solved? Hardly, we need to continue being vigilant in addressing the early signs of school bullying and to engage the perpetrators and victims equally.

Steve Holle,
 Fellow,
 Center for Teaching and
 Learning





PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

WOW! The vacation is already over and here you are ready to get going on the next part of the school year!!

The first thing you need to do is reflect back on the first few months of school. You did many things well! What were they?? Why do you think they went well?? What did the students do well?? Next, think back - - what did not go so well? What do you need to work on?? What areas do the students need to work on??

Now, where will you go from here?? You need to sit down quietly and look at the curriculum for the next few months. Decide how you will structure your days in order to accomplish what you need to do. Look over your State Standards and your teacher editions for the core programs and see what your students need to know and be able to do during the next few months.

PLAN! PLAN! PLAN! The best way to reach success is when you are planned and prepared for daily instruction. When you are planned and prepared you can just walk into your classroom each morning knowing exactly what you want to accomplish. The children will realize you are prepared and ready for them, and they will quickly get ready to learn. Thorough, consistent planning also keeps children engaged

in their learning and decreases the opportunity for unwanted behaviors in the classroom.

You have had a chance to rest and refresh yourself during the vacation and so have your students. Hopefully, you are eager to begin again and do the best job that you can do. Your students will return from the break rested and ready to go as well!! You'll be surprised at how much they seem to have matured during the break!! Really, they do!! Remember to review with your students your school and classroom rules, and your expectations.

As you go from day to day - - don't forget about your reflections. Continue using the techniques and strategies that went well, and work on those areas that you want to improve. Share with your students areas that they also need to work on to improve. Older students should understand that they, too, have a responsibility for their own learning.

Most important, use the resources available in your school to help you become an excellent classroom educator. Administrators, coordinators, and instructional coaches are always willing and anxious to help new teachers improve their skills and expertise. **Surely**, don't forget about

your colleagues in the classrooms!! Who knows better what your challenges are than the person next door!! Most teachers are happy and eager to assist their new colleagues. Just ask!!

Teaching is a very rewarding profession - - but it is not easy. Some days will go just great - - and others will have you running for your car. Just keep reminding yourself that you can't do everything perfectly in a single year, so you should focus on one or two areas to direct your energies. Maybe focus first on Language Arts and then move on to Math, Science, etc. You will get frustrated trying to do it all right the first year! Spend your reflective energy on one or two things each year and **GROW!**

Marcia Jackman
Principal,
Parthenia St. Elementary

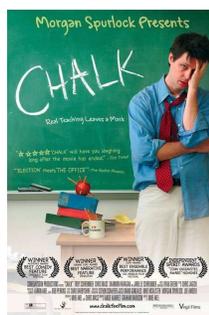


T-CARE Recommends...



Author: Dr. Mel Levine

This book was written to help children in the elementary grades (7-11 years old) understand how they learn and how they may have different strengths and weaknesses in some areas of learning.



In this documentary comedy, CHALK pulls you into the frenetic and awkwardly painful journey of three novice teachers as they navigate one memorable school year.

T-CARE

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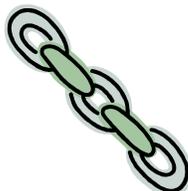
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T-CARE TEAM

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T-CARE is dedicated to help teaching professionals, at all experience levels, to explore the developmental stages in 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:

- gain a deep appreciation for the challenges all helping professionals confront,
- sensitize teaching professional to the value of cognitive and behavioral self-affirming practices, and
- help them to develop higher levels of resiliency and job satisfaction.



Links to Visit:

www.csun.edu/education/ctl/tcare

www.callutheran.edu/counseling_services/



Teacher candidates supporting one another as they share field experience successes and challenges during T-Care induction.