

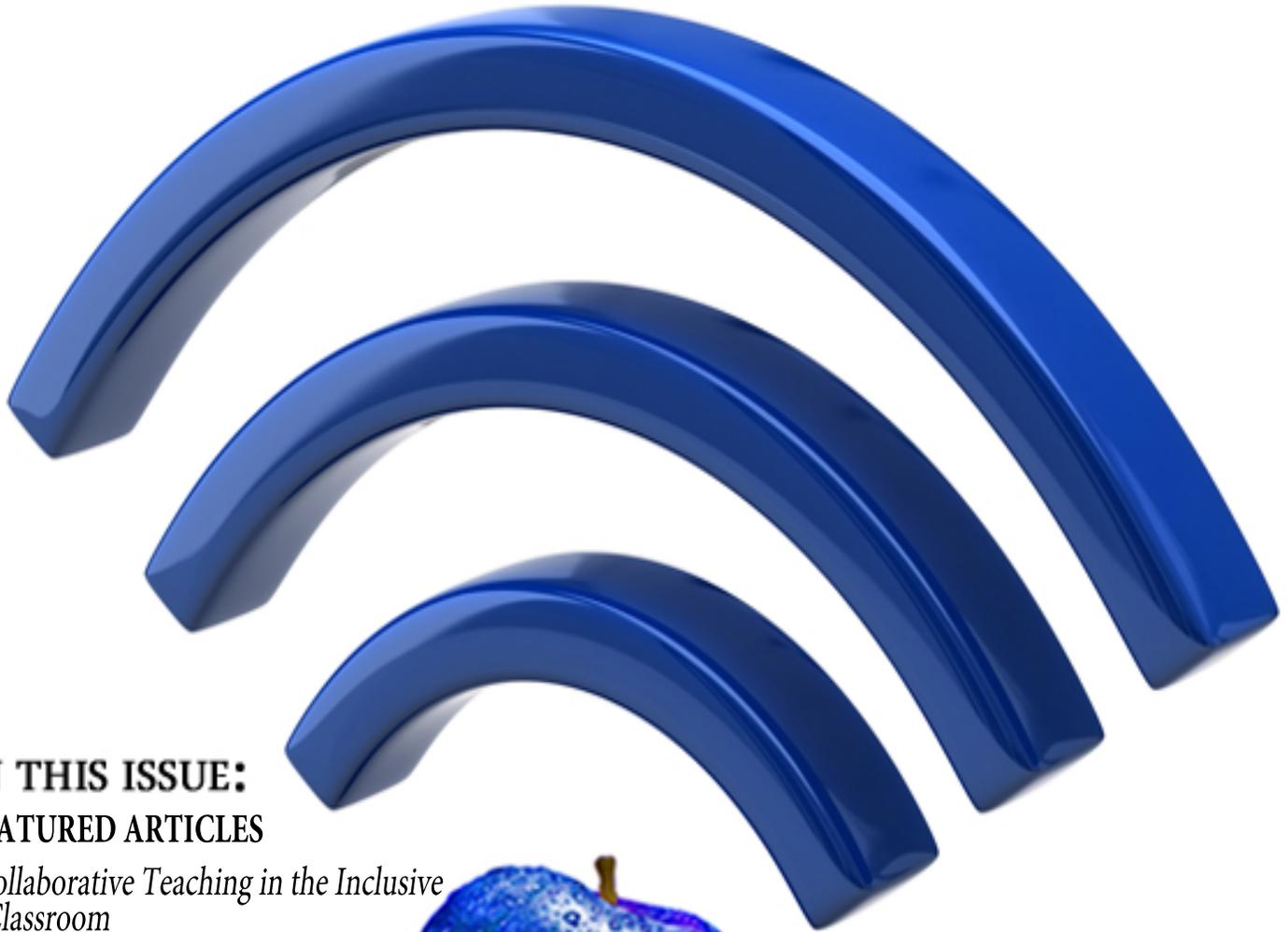


SPSSC
Student Programs and Services
Steering Committee
Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)

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THE JOURNAL

Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California



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- Reducing Juvenile African American Recidivism*
- English Language Development for College and Career Readiness:*
- An Imperative for Students in Court and Community Settings*
- Everyone a Learner, Everyone a Coach*
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JUVENILE COURT, COMMUNITY, AND ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF CALIFORNIA



VISION

Under the direction of the County Superintendents, and as a sub-committee of the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee (SPSSC), JCCASAC is a professional educational organization dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures.

MISSION

The mission of JCCASAC is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office administrators who:

- Research and share best practices regarding new and innovative program options for at-risk students
- Provide training, support and assistance to new administrators
- Endorse and support legislation that advocates for the learning needs of all students
- Give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of our student population

GOALS

- Improve student achievement through research and sharing best practices
- Support special projects that enhance instructional programs
- Provide regular training for new county office administrators
- Conduct successful conferences with statewide representation
- Publish the JCCASAC Journal that informs superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices, methodologies, and that showcases successful programs
- Provide scholarships to eligible graduating seniors in order to encourage life long learning
- Represent JCCASAC through participation in statewide committees
- Monitor legislation affecting County Office alternative education programs
- Advocate for legislation and policies that support the unique needs of our student population

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



I work at the Stanislaus County Office of Education as Director III, , Among other things I oversee site administrators and all state and federal budgets, reporting and plans:) I have served as a site administrator in Alternative and comprehensive education for 21 years.

TELKA WALSER - JCCASAC CHAIR, 2015-2016

It has been an honor to serve as the JCCASAC Chair this past year. In reflecting back on my eleven years on the JCCASAC Board - and twelve years in the Court and Community School world - I realize just how fortunate I am to be part of such a unique, supportive, creative, hardworking and generous organization. I would like to thank the JCCASAC Board, those who have served on prior boards, and my Stanislaus County Office of Education team for their support. I have been truly blessed with many mentors along the way, including Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, JCCASAC board members, COE staff, teachers, and support staff. All of them have inspired and motivated me. In addition, these people all have made an incredible impact on the students we serve in our diverse and innovative programs.

The educational pendulum has swung back and forth over the past twelve years, but the focus and vision of JCCASAC - with the ongoing support of SPSSC and CCSESA - remains true. Each county, in its unique way, maintains student success as the priority. JCCASAC continues the 47 year tradition of meeting the needs of those who work with students in county-run, court, community and charter school programs through collaboration, sharing best practices, training, and support. While our charge to serve remains focused, we will continue to embrace a variety of challenges (aka “opportunities”) along the way. The manner in which we thoughtfully address issues while maintaining high expectations is a testament to the motivation and dedication of all of you and those before us.

During the next three days we have the opportunity to hear from others who motivate and innovate; who make a difference and provide students with the very best chance to find success.

Thank you for your support of JCCASAC, I encourage you all to become involved and attend 2016-17 Region meetings as well as the 2017 annual conference. I wish you a wonderful conference and all the best in 2016-17!



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

CHRISITAN SHANNON - JCCASAC CHAIR- ELECT, 2016-2017



I have had the privilege of serving within the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office for 15 years. During my tenure I have served as a Teacher, EL Resource Specialist, Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, Principal, and currently as a Director for the Alternative Education Division. Prior to my career in education I worked in Commercial Lending and Healthcare Management. I also served in the United States Marine Corps.

On behalf of the JCCASAC Executive Board I welcome you to the 47th Annual JCCASAC Conference. The theme of this year's conference is Progress through Innovation – Leadership, Excellence, Unity. Our Alternative Education students come from diverse backgrounds with unique needs and educational goals. It is our responsibility to leverage innovation to provide our students and teachers with the most current research based tools and strategies to support our students in achieving their goals. During the next three days we will highlight and celebrate the diversity and potential of our students as well as showcase the outstanding programs and best practices that promote innovation throughout California.

Our keynote speakers have been intentionally selected to inspire and motivate you to enlarge your thinking on what is actually possible in each of your instructional settings. You will be challenged to rethink traditional educational norms and consider what could be if we summon the courage to engage and motivate students in new ways to discover a true love for learning. We believe that all students are capable of learning and deserve educators who are sold out for their success. We are excited that you have chosen to participate and collaborate with your colleagues from throughout the state who share your passion to see students thrive regardless of barriers they've had to overcome.

We encourage you to connect with our Industry Partners. Their investment in the JCCASAC Conference supports this statewide gathering to promote best practices within Alternative Education. Before you head to dinner on Wednesday please join us for the President's reception in honor of Telka Walser's year of service as JCCASAC's Chair on the Members Lawn from 5:00-6:30. Thursday's General Session Luncheon & Awards Ceremony will feature the 2016 John Peshkoff Memorial Award recipient, Jacqueline Flowers, San Joaquin County Office of Education; JCCASAC's 2016 Teacher of the Year, Maria Straith, San Diego County Office of Education; and introduce the 2016-17 JCCASAC Board Members.

We hope you enjoy the conference by discovering innovative ways to improve student engagement and learning, and by strengthening professional relationships with your colleagues throughout the state. Newport Beach is a beautiful community with lots of fun activities. Our hope is that you return home renewed and refreshed ready to take on the challenge of pursuing the best for your students.

Christian Shannon

47TH ANNUAL JCCASAC CONFERENCE OPENING LETTER

Welcome to the 47th annual JCCASAC Conference! This year's theme is "Progress Through Innovation: Leadership, Excellence, Unity – and I hope you will join me in embracing a new and dynamic future for Alternative Education in California.

Kern County is very pleased to be the host county for this year's conference. I am very fortunate to work in a county where innovation is in our blood. After all Kern County is home to the Sunset Labor Camp made so famous in Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath, where families relied on their own innovation and dreams for the future in creating an new life. We are home to Edwards Air Force Base and NASA's Neil Armstrong Flight Research Center. We are the County that produced the test pilots made famous in The Right Stuff, and the place where Sir Richard Branson just introduced Spaceship Two – the future of commercial space travel.

Kern County is also home to innovative educators who are committed to seeing our students thrive in today's modern world. I am very proud of our Alternative Education staff who work tirelessly to see their students succeed.

As the current President for CCSESA I know firsthand that the other 57 counties throughout California share a similar vision for educational excellence. Our time together over the next several days is an opportunity to learn from each other and share in our excitement for the future.

The 2016 JCCASAC Conference will focus on igniting a passion for innovation in educational leadership that will provide guidance throughout the 21st century. Thank you for your willingness to explore new possibilities and learn best practices that will take us into the future.

Congratulations on taking the next step on your trail to success!

Christine Lizardi Frazier, Ed.D.
Kern County Superintendent of Schools
President, CCSESA



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Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

BY:

KERRY POLSON, JULIANNE ALBERT, TED PRICE, AND STEPHANIE WOODSON

“Effective collaboration between general and special educators in particular is essential to providing effective, evidence-based instruction to inclusive classrooms”

In the world of public education, general educators play an important role in the success of all students, including students with disabilities. Yet general school personnel often lack training in current special education regulations, instructional strategies, and best practices. This lack of training may result in unintentional student neglect, and—ultimately—a failure to implement necessary and federally mandated services.

To accommodate the needs of all students, general educators and special educators *must* collaborate, but effective collaboration requires time and resources that small districts or county office programs may find scarce. In this study, we surveyed the special education teachers of a small rural Southeastern Virginia school district and asked them to describe their experiences with collaborative teaching in inclusive classrooms. The majority of respondents claimed that they did not truly collaborate with their general education counterparts, serving as mere behavior management tools or assistants to the general educators rather than equal partners. Furthermore, all respondents expressed a need for either more common planning time or more professional development in team collaboration. These results suggest that many schools, despite attempts at inclusion, still may not be providing the best possible educational opportunities to students with disabilities, particularly in small districts or in county office operated programs.

Literature Review

In Virginia, for example, and similar to other states, state regulations governing

special education all share the same fundamental goal: to ensure that special education services “meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities,” provide the best possible educational opportunities in accordance with each child’s individualized education program (IEP), “and prepare children with disabilities for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living” (Virginia Department of Education Division of Special Education and Student Services, 2010, pp. ii). These regulations apply not only to special educators, but also to general educators, who perform essential roles in the identification process, IEP development, implementation of accommodations and supports, and, most importantly, instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Inclusion is the belief that students with disabilities have the right to be members of classrooms alongside their nondisabled peers, “whether or not they can meet the traditional expectations of those classrooms” (Friend, 2007, pp. 4). This belief refers not only to physical space, but to the classroom community as an intangible concept: we may think of inclusion as the idea that “all belong.” According to the Virginia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center, inclusive schools embody a “sense of community”, shared visions, vocabulary, and planning time“, flexible scheduling,” and partnerships between” parents, other teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and community” (Collaboration Writing Team & CTE Resource Center, 2007, pp. 14). Inclusive schools cannot be built overnight,

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

because they require a strong foundation of trust, mutual respect, and common vision.

Administrators and teachers have developed various strategies to meet the challenge of building inclusive schools. One such strategy is collaboration, or more specifically, collaborative teaching. According to Friend (2007), collaboration is a voluntary, mutually respectful style of interaction through which educators work towards common goals. In order for collaboration to work, all parties must participate equally; share accountability, resources, and mutual goals; and make equal-valued contributions. Friend and Cook (2007) cite extensive research supporting the effectiveness of collaboration in educational decision-making, and thus the importance of collaborative training for educators.

Effective collaboration between general and special educators in particular is essential to providing effective, evidence-based instruction to inclusive classrooms. General educators specialize in core content and subject mastery, while special educators specialize in assessment and adapting curriculums to fit individual student needs (Ripley, 1997). Both types of educators contribute unique and necessary skills. By working together and combining these skills, general and special educators can develop strategies to differentiate content (what students learn or how they access information), process (how students make sense of and come to understand content), product (how students show what they've learned), and learning environment (classroom arrangement and climate) in response to individual student readiness, interest, and/or approach to learning (Ripley, 1997). In this way, collaborative teams encourage the optimum growth of all students while also providing support to struggling students.

Powell outlines the many advantages of special-general educator collaboration. Successful collaborative partnerships allow for more direct, accessible, and individualized instruction; more time for one-on-one assistance; a wider variety of methods for checking student understanding;

more creative and varied lesson plans/instructional strategies; fewer special education evaluation referrals; the potential to maximize learning outcomes; the potential to improve teacher accountability; and overall higher professional satisfaction (Powell, 2004). As Powell notes, not only students, teachers gain from collaborative partnerships: collaboration bridges the gap between general and special educators, reducing teacher alienation and territoriality, and creating opportunities for professional growth via ongoing teacher-teacher feedback.

However, collaboration also poses certain challenges, chief of which are training and time. General and special educators can easily misunderstand their respective roles in the inclusive classroom (Berry & Gravelle, 2013). To form effective, equal partnerships, they may first require training in collaborative strategies.

Successful collaborative teacher relationships also require time—for planning, scheduling, and reflection—but in the school environment, time can be scarce (Powell, 2004). Special educators in rural districts may find time an especially limited resource. Due to the shortage of highly qualified special educators in rural areas, rural special education teachers must often assume a wider range of responsibilities than their urban/suburban counterparts: they may, for example, be required to teach multiple grades or subjects (Berry & Gravelle, 2013). This leaves them with little time for shared planning or other collaborative activities.

Methodology

To understand how special education teachers view collaboration and their role therein, we developed an anonymous survey, which we distributed to all special education teachers in a small rural district in Southeastern Virginia (n=15). This district encompasses grades Pre-K through 12 and contains approximately 1,200 students, with a special education population of 14%.

The survey focused on three primary research ques-

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

tions. Firstly, do special education teachers truly collaborate with their general education partners in inclusive settings? Secondly, how do collaborative teams differentiate instruction to reach all learners? Lastly, what do teachers need to optimize their collaborative teaching? The survey remained open for one week, and 100% of those surveyed responded.

Results

Of the 15 special educators surveyed, only five (33.33%) claimed to collaboratively teach in their inclusion classes. The rest (10, or over 66%) claimed that they did not collaboratively teach in inclusion classes, defining their roles in these classes as that of mere behavior management tools or assistants to the general educators. The majority of respondents reported that general education teachers lacked training in collaborative partnership, and that the district provided minimal professional development in collaborative teamwork. According to respondents, only the teachers of one grade-level subject (Science 6) had received effective, evidence-based training on collaborative teaching and how to make collaboration work in the classroom.

When asked how they differentiated instruction in inclusive classes, five respondents answered that they did whatever they were told to do by their general education counterparts (see Figure 3). They claimed to have no input in developing lessons and were thus unable to ensure that the instructional models used engaged all learners. Four respondents (26.66%) used hands-on activities and manipulatives as a means of differentiated instruction, while two (13.33%) provided copies of notes or shortened assignments to students requiring special education services. Surprisingly, the remaining four respondents (26.66%) reported that neither they, nor their general education counterparts, differentiated instruction at all.

The survey also asked respondents to describe, via a write-in prompt, what they needed to optimize their

collaborative teaching experiences. In their responses, 7 teachers (46.66%) mentioned a need for additional training in collaboration, while the other 8 (53.33%) mentioned a need for additional planning time (see Figure 2). In small districts with limited personnel, most educators are responsible for more than just teaching, and it can be difficult to schedule either training or common planning time: in fact, in the district surveyed, only three grade levels allowed for shared planning time between all four core subject general educators. Yet without appropriate training, and time in which to develop shared instructional strategies, collaborative teaching cannot occur. While respondents believed that they and other special educators had been exposed to the benefits and general methods of teacher collaboration, they claimed that their general education counterparts had not. If this claim is true, it bodes ill for the success of inclusive classrooms. After all, collaboration between special and general educators becomes challenging when only half of the parties involved understand what's expected of them.

Conclusion

In today's inclusive classrooms, special and general educators must collaborate to provide effective evidence-based, differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all students. However successful collaboration may prove difficult in small districts and/or county office operated programs due to limited time, resources, and opportunities for professional development.

To improve the success of collaborative teacher teams, small districts and county offices of education might consider using volunteer substitutes to cover certain classes, a strategy that would free up time for collaborative planning (Friend, 2008). Administrators could, additionally, set aside extra staff development time for planning sessions or offer professional development credit for collaborative planning (Friend, 2008).

In the future, expanded research on this topic done by examining a larger sample size and incorporating ur-

COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

ban and suburban as well as rural districts, analyzing any potential similarities or differences between multiple districts in a broader region, and also including county office programs may lead to beneficial solutions for teachers working with both general and special populations.

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REDUCING JUVENILE AFRICAN AMERICAN RECIDIVISM

BY: JASON HASTY

“We must implement effective interventions that break the causal link between educational exclusion and criminalization; better known as the school-to-prison pipeline.”

African American students throughout the nation experience a larger number of exclusionary behavior interventions than white students and have been found to be subject to a higher rate of disciplinary removal from school (Abdul-Alim, 2012; Skiba et al 2011; Wilson 2014). In a study of descriptive and logistic regression analyses, Skiba et al (2011) found that students from African American families are 2.19 (elementary school) to 3.78 (middle school) times more likely to be referred to the office for problem behavior than their white peers. Moreover, Abdul-Alim, (2012) points out that African-American students, especially boys, were more likely to be suspended or expelled from school. In a study conducted in Indiana, African American males were 30% more likely to be referred for discipline and 333% more likely to be suspended or expelled than were their Caucasian counterparts (Wallace, et al 2008). This evidence clearly depicts the disproportionate treatment of African American students; therefore, it is imperative to explore the impact of this treatment.

Research has shown a causal link between educational exclusion and criminalization of youth known to many as the school-to-prison pipeline (Wilson, 2014). Among African American juveniles who were arrested one time, a study conducted by Ryan, Williams, and Courtney (2013) showed that they were the most likely minority to experience a subsequent arrest. This study included 19,833 juveniles from 2004 to 2007. In order to better craft effective strategies that combat this obvious disparity, it is imperative to understand the many components that cause the link between educational exclusion and criminalization among African American juveniles.

Developing a clear understanding

as to why African Americans are incarcerated six times as much as whites (Wilson, 2014) may lead us to developing effective interventions to reduce overall recidivism of juvenile African American offenders. Although African American students are disproportionately overrepresented with suspension rates across the nation, evidence shows that with the right multi-tiered approach, schools can implement successful strategies to address this inequality (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 2015). Graham, Taylor, and Hudley (2015) found that after 64 third-to-fifth grade boys deemed aggressive participated in an intervention program that focused on both social and academic skills, the boys showed an increase in social skills and academic motivation skills and were rated by their teachers as more cooperative and academically persistent. In addition, social and academic skills can also be supplemented by integrated programs that focus on student-adult mentor relationships as well. This literature supports the importance of identifying at-risk students early and then implementing a program that involves both academic remediation as well as social-emotional content is imperative to success.

Implementing multi-component intervention programs for at-risk African American students which focus on positive student-adult relationships, academic remediation and fostering affirmative student perspectives of school climate are essential to impacting achievement and reducing suspensions (Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 2015; Heinrich & Holzer, 2011; Shippen, Patterson, Green, & Smitherman, 2012). One of the key components of successful intervention programs is the mentoring piece (Shlonsky, Nguyen, Mizel, & Abrams, 2014). Heinrich and Holzer (2011) state

REDUCING JUVENILE AFRICAN AMERICAN RECIDIVISM

the need for comprehensive programs such as the Harlem Children's Zone, which starts with a "*critical mass*" (p.166) of adults as early as possible, providing social services which establish positive adult relationships. And as children grow, these relationships foster job training and college preparation. Students in these programs are outperforming their peers on state exams, especially in math where their performance increased from the 50th to the 71st percentile (Viadero, 2010).

Secondly, meaningful academic intervention must be effective and robust (Daunic, et al, 2013). Time-and-time again, studies have linked literacy rates to recidivism rates (Heinrich, & Holzer, 2011; Shlonsky, et al, 2014). Lockwood, Nally, Ho, and Knutson (2012) found that out of 6,551 adult offenders who were released, those without a high school education were over 50% likely to return to jail. Literacy intervention programs such as Scholastic's Read 180 have proven to improve literacy among students from elementary to high school, allowing students to get back on track and become more likely to graduate (Kim, Capotosto, Hartry, & Fitzgerald. 2011).

Lastly, there needs to be a deliberate and strategic attempt by districts and schools to change African American students' perception of the school climate (Shirley & Cornell, 2012). Overall, African American students deal with more bullying from other students and more discipline referrals from teachers, which has a direct impact on the perception of school climate and even school climate itself (Albdour, & Krouse, 2014; Vincent, Tobin, Hawken, & Frank, 2012). Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) has been a proven comprehensive method in transforming student perception of school climate; especially in both schools for incarcerated youth and schools with a high percentage of low socioeconomic students (Johnson, et al 2013; Reynolds, 2014).

As many educators can attest, there has been a multitude of research illustrating the disproportionate disciplinary actions taken against African American students in K-12 educational institutions. And much of the research discusses how such tactics are contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline (Wilson, 2014). As a first year teacher in a large urban high school, I witnessed

this disproportionate disciplinary action first hand. It was clear that African American students were most likely to be sitting in the dean's office. Our African American student population at the time was hovering around 23%, yet they represented well over half the students who were being suspended and expelled on a regular basis.

African American students throughout the nation experience a larger number of exclusionary behavior interventions than white students (Robbins & Kovalchuk, 2012; Skiba, Arredondo, & Rausch 2014; Skiba, et al 2014; Walker, 2014). These behavior interventions are supporting an inequitable trend evident not only in schools, but also throughout the spectrum from incarcerated juveniles to incarcerated adults nationwide.

Wilson (2014) suggests that the link between exclusionary tactics and the criminalization of youth are major factors contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. Although many K-12 educational institutions communicate a vision and mission of equity, Skiba, et al (2011) suggests that African-American do not experience the same treatment as their white peers in most progressive discipline models, enduring harsher consequences. The facts remain clear that American educational institutions are discriminating against African American students.

In pointing out the many disparities among African American juveniles in educational institutions, we must also exemplify what's working as of late having a positive impact, offering effective alternatives.

The evidence is clear that African American students in K-12 educational institutions suffer from disproportionate disciplinary actions more than their white peers, which is major contributing factor to the school-to-prison pipeline (Wilson, 2014). All students have a human right to equal access to education and fair treatment within our society regardless of skin color, ethnicity or socioeconomic status. African-Americans are incarcerated six times as much as whites (Wilson, 2014); therefore, overwhelming evidence leads us to believe that a connection between exclusionary strategies used in schools and high incarceration rates are related. The data provides a clear impetus as to why we must develop effective interventions to reduce overall recidivism of juvenile African American offenders to find effective ways to reduce in-

REDUCING JUVENILE AFRICAN AMERICAN RECIDIVISM

carceration rates among African American juvenile offenders.

We must implement effective interventions that break the causal link between educational exclusion and criminalization; better known as the school-to-prison pipeline, which is costing us nearly \$30,000 per year per prisoner. (Orrick, & Vieraitis, 2015; Wilson, 2014). Not solving this problem will simply perpetuate inequality throughout an already unjust system, elongating the achievement gap between whites and minorities. Moreover, the negative impact on society as a whole is exponentially damaging; especially when evidence-based practices exist to remedy this problem. Solving this problem will support overall equality of education and have a positive impact on society as a whole.

Although there have been many programs that are showing promise within our educational institution, there has been little to no comprehensive framework that has proven successful for incarcerated youth.

Road To Success Academy™ (RTSA) is an up-and-coming instructional framework that the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) has implemented at many of their county schools for incarcerated youth. Created by a team at LACOE and headed by Director Diana Velasquez, RTSA early on has shown promise. The RTSA framework has many of the missing elements other intervention programs have lacked. One being the socio-emotional component.

RTSA is a framework that combines both a social emotional and Project-Based Learning (PBL) piece. Teachers are assigned the task of collaborating together to plan cross-curricular lessons around themes and unifying essential questions. The framework includes strategies incorporating academic interventions and community-based relationships. More importantly, there is a career technical component as well which correspond with the community-based organizations (CBO). For example, at the Santa Monica Mountains Camp School, projects are coordinated with a CBO that does landscaping. The CBO works with students to learn all aspects of gardening maintenance. Cross-curricular lessons are created thematically with teachers including all core subjects. Last year, the students covered the subject of

identity researching who they were personally and how who they are relates to their own genetics and the native vegetation in the surrounding area. Students learned the history of immigration while discussing the geometry of landscaping.

This deep socio-emotional and PBL curriculum is also supported with an advisory class that allows students to explore career options and seek remediation to build academic skills where needed to be successful in their future careers. Students have access to academic intervention programs such as Read 180, Achieve 3000 and Think Through Math. In addition, students can recover credits through the online curriculum Apex.

RTSA operates in conjunction with probation and the department of mental health. The ultimate vision is that all supporting agencies will work in unison supporting the thematic areas in their daily work with mental health and life-skill building.

Currently the data has proven positive. Suspensions rates have dropped and students have shown academic growth on national normed assessments provided by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA).

RTSA has a certification component as well. A team of 4-8 stakeholders make quarterly visits to each RTSA pilot sites. The team uses a rubric observing the academic program, the culture and climate along with curriculum and instruction. Overall, RTSA has shown promise to culminate all the necessary components for a multi-tiered meaningful intervention approach for at-risk students.

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SHOP CLASS TEACHES VALUABLE LESSONS

BY: CYNTHIA FENECH, STANISLAUS COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

“The students coming out of SMA are exactly the type of people we want working for us in the future.”

- Mike Gemperle, Vice President of Gemperle Family Farms

Wood shop has taken on a special meaning in Ron Kunnen’s class at the Stanislaus Military Academy (SMA). While students in his Building Trades class are learning important carpentry skills, they are also gaining an important lesson in giving back. Currently, his class is constructing picnic tables and benches that will benefit Foothill Horizons Outdoor School in Sonora. Previously, students built a Free Little Library to help promote reading and literacy, and plans are underway for the class to build more of these libraries in the future. In addition to the work they do in class, each Friday the students also volunteer at Habitat for Humanity.

“Our students take a great sense of pride in all of our projects,” said instructor Ron Kunnen. “When they see things they built in the

community and at Foothill Horizons, it’s a big deal for them.”

Marcus Soto, a senior at SMA said he’s learned a lot from this class. “Not only have I learned about construction, but it feels good knowing that the projects we work on will benefit others,” he said. “It feels good knowing that we’re giving back.”

The picnic table and bench project was made possible by a donation from Denair Lumber Company and Gemperle Family Farms in Turlock. “We think it’s fantastic that the students at the Stanislaus Military Academy are helping the community and at the same time learning work skills that

can help them in their future,” said Gregg Kelley, Owner of Denair Lumber Company. “As a former student who visited Foothill Horizons many years ago, I recall it was an eye-opening experience that helped my classmates and I mature, spread our wings, and gain a little taste of independence that is vital to growing up. We were very happy to support the youth in our community.”

Mike Gemperle, Vice President of Gemperle Family Farms, said his family also attended Foothill Horizons as youth and were happy to support the project. “The students coming out of SMA are exactly the type of people we want working for us in the future,” he said. A former Eagle Scout and currently a leader in the Boy Scouts of America Greater Yosemite Council, Gemperle sees the project as a win-win for both SMA and Foothill students.



It was a coincidence that his Eagle Scout project many years ago was to make benches (similar to the 25 benches being built by SMA students) for Turlock’s Crane Park tennis courts. “Fifteen years later, I remember seeing some skate boarders vandalizing the benches. I guess those kids could have used a program like the Stanislaus Military Academy,” he said. “Students for the next couple of decades will use these tables and benches to learn, play, and enjoy the outdoors,” said Foothill Horizons Director Jessica Hewitt. “The project represents children giving back to children, and it’s a source of pride for our staff to have benches made with love and

SHOP CLASS TEACHES VALUABLE LESSONS

hard work by students.”

The Building Trades class at SMA is definitely making an impact in the lives of students. “This is my favorite class,” said Andrew Fowlkes, a junior at SMA. “I wish I could stay in this class all day.” Andrew is looking forward to working as a counselor at Foothill Horizons in the near future. “I remember when I went to Foothill Horizons. It was so much fun,” he said. “It’ll be great to see our completed tables and benches when I’m up there as a coun-



selor. I’ll be able to tell the students, “Hey look - I made those!”

Foothill Horizons Outdoor School

Connecting students to science and nature through hands-on learning is the goal of Foothill Horizons Outdoor Education School. Located on 143 acres near Sonora, Foothill Horizons has provided a comprehensive educational program for children while nurturing an appreciation for the natural environment for more than 50 years. During their three to five day stay, students learn that they are strong and capable by facing challenges such as hiking in the forest or being away from home for the first time. In addition to these personal and social achievements, students also learn about nature and science through interactive and engaging curriculum.

Stanislaus Military Academy

The Academy provides a comprehensive education for high school students in a military environment and fea-

tures academic studies, physical conditioning, strict military discipline, character training and extra-curricular activities. Located at John B. Allard School in Turlock, SMA served 150 students last year. “The Stanislaus Military Academy is all about providing additional opportunities and options for students to succeed,” said Tom Changnon, Stanislaus County Superintendent of Schools. “Students know the end result of this Academy will help prepare them for a brighter future.”

A quote by Confucius is displayed in white text over a dark, semi-transparent background. The background image shows a hand holding a white mug, with the mug's reflection visible on a surface below it. The quote reads: “If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.”

“If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.”

-Confucius

COME BACK KIDS CHARTER STUDENTS BUILD THEIR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS THROUGH ON-LINE LEARNING PLATFORM

BY: JANICE DELAGRAMMATIKAS, CBK PRINCIPAL

DR. DEBRA SACKS, EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SOLUTIONS

“The best climate for learning comes when students, staff, and school leaders each take steps to become more emotionally self-aware and socially intelligent.”

-Daniel Goleman

During 2014-2015, the Come Back Kids (CBK) Charter staff participated in four professional development Social Emotional Learning (SEL) modules. A significant outcome was the positive staff response, and a collective sense of urgency to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the social emotional needs of our students. The need was echoed by stakeholders during our regional Local Control Accountability (LCAP) meetings. Comments included, “Teach us to have hope and not give up on ourselves,” and “Teach us to believe in success.”

However, the CBK instructional setting and unique student population presented a challenge for the delivery of SEL instruction as it is typically taught in a traditional school setting. CBK is an independent study dropout recovery and prevention charter school operated by Riverside County Office of Education, established in 2008. Over 90% of our students are between the ages of 18 and 24 and virtually all of them have experienced multiple educational, social, and emotional challenges that have affected their educational success. Our goal was to provide a Tier One intervention that would improve retention and graduation rates as well as develop social capital with adult students and staff. The development of the Values and Decisions Course in the on-line learning platform, blended learning model was the result.

A team from CBK and Collaborative Learning Solutions (CLS) met to design the first of its kind SEL blended learning course for high school students. The goal was first to develop the capacity of staff to be SEL coaches for their students and second, to create an engaging, self-paced course featuring the Collaborative For Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies as well as the Social Emotional Character

Development (SECD) competencies. From August to April, CBK teachers met monthly in designated SEL PLCs where they developed their coaching skills by engaging with the online content and the modeled coaching strategies from the CLS Coach. Teachers then assigned the Values and Decisions Course to students. The course content was delivered in modules stored on our learning management system. Next, students met with their teacher coaches weekly to set SEL goals and to discuss their progress incorporating SEL strategies into their daily lives.

Values and Decisions is a two-semester elective course composed of 10 online learning modules. It is a school-wide intervention funded in our LCAP and addresses State Priorities: Student Engagement, School Climate, and other Student Outcomes. It is also our belief that increases in our students’ social emotional skills will lead to increases in student learning and ultimately high school graduation.

This year, students have found the assignments to be exciting and challenging with many projects, learning videos, non-fiction articles, unique activities/projects, and collaborative assignments that feature current research and models that students find relatable and exciting. For example, in Module 1-Mind Matters, students take an assessment evaluating their own mindset, learning quickly what they can work on to decrease a fixed mindset and increase their growth mindset. They meet Harvard Professor Carol Dweck (on video) and begin to rethink their own potential for learning anything in life. In Module 2-Breath and Brain, students learn the benefits of Mindfulness and how to practice Mindfulness to increase focus, impulse control, and living with gratitude. One student said her

COME BACK KIDS CHARTER STUDENTS BUILD THEIR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS THROUGH ON-LINE LEARNING PLATFORM

father noticed her doing the breathing exercises one day and was gratefully surprised that she had learned a new skill for improving her impulsive responses and ability to focus for test-taking and completing her work. Other modules include: Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness; Responsible Decision Making, Positive Relationships; Optimizing Optimism and Holding on the Happiness; Cultivating Character with Mindfulness Based Strengths Practice; Strengthening Altruism, Empathy, and Compassion in Self and Others; Service Learning-Giving Back to Your Community; Finding Forgiveness and Growing Gratitude; and Igniting and Nurturing Your Spark.

“Embed SEL into the educational experience. These are the things, ultimately in the real world, that are the main factors in getting hired and getting fired.”

-George Lucas, filmmaker

This year has been a pilot year and further research will include the CBK Student Wellness Pre-Survey in Module 1 and the Post-Survey at the end of Module 5. In a seat-based comprehensive school environment there is more opportunity to teach SEL skills in a larger dose and to reinforce skills along the way. Our goal is to create this same result with on-line/blended learning where the SEL teacher coach supports his/her students working in an independent study model. For the 2016-2017 school year, the staff will evaluate the effects of student growth from pre/post surveys and compare student attendance rate, retention rate, and enrollment in advanced courses by students who have completed the Values and Decisions on-line SEL course.



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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS: AN IMPERATIVE FOR STUDENTS IN COURT AND COMMUNITY SETTINGS

BY: VALERIE J. CALLET, ED.D.

“Language is how we think. It’s how we process information and remember. It’s our operating system... Talk is the representation of thinking. It seems reasonable to suggest that classrooms should be filled with talk, given that we want them filled with thinking.”

-Fisher, Frey, & Rothenberg

In November of 2014, California’s State Board of Education approved the new English Language Arts (ELA)/English Language Development (ELD) Framework. California is the only state that has combined the two subjects in a single Framework in order to better address the needs of its roughly 1.4 million English Learners (ELs). On September 18, 2015, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson sent a letter to County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators. In the letter, Torlakson indicated that ‘English Learners (ELs) at all English proficiency levels and at all ages require both integrated English Language Development (ELD) and specialized attention to their particular language learning needs (designated ELD)’. In short, ELs need both language instruction across the content AND they need a separate time during the day for designed ELD—in addition to ELA.

Some will argue that integrated ELD is simply a new term to describe an older approach: Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), but it is not (Echevarria, J., presentation at the Assembly Committee on Education, California State University, Long Beach, December 14, 2015). The authors of the Framework have deliberately introduced this new term and approach – to ensure California’s ELs are college and career ready when they complete high school. SDAIE is – and has been – understood as a set of techniques and strategies such as role plays, graphic organizers, and simplified texts to support students’ access to core curriculum (Echevarria, J. 2015) and does not necessarily require teachers to address the ELD standards in core content classes. Integrated ELD, by definition, requires that content teachers use the ELD standards alongside content standards (or

“in tandem with” them, as the Framework states) to teach math, science, social studies, and ELA. In other words, today’s expectation is that teachers teach language explicitly, alongside content, throughout the school day. So a common SDAIE practice such as simplifying text to ensure students have access to concepts runs counter to the notion that we are to teach academic English as we teach content. A better approach, it follows, is to begin with shorter (not simpler) texts, and use strategies such as chunking and close reading, introducing longer and longer texts to build students’ capacity to understand increasingly complex texts and concepts. Given that all teachers are now required to address California’s new (2012) ELD standards, it follows that they – and their administrators – are trained on them. Two main parts comprise these standards: (1.) interacting in meaningful ways and (2.) learning about how English works. The standards were written to support ELs’ access to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Important to note is that the new ELD standards reflect our most current understanding of how students learn the academic English needed to be successful in school and beyond.

Students in court and community settings are vulnerable for a variety of reasons including academic. While factors such as socio-emotional needs are often more complex and thus difficult to address, using the best, most current approaches to close academic gaps is not. It is imperative that educators deliberately plan for instruction – and continuously reflect on and improve instruction – to maximize student learning. Language is central to learning, and having a clear understanding of integrated and designated ELD will ensure that we are teaching language for optimal student learning.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”

-Ludwig Wittgenstein

Integrated and Designated English Language Development

Integrated ELD refers to ELD instruction throughout the day and across disciplines. All teachers with English Learners (ELs) in their classrooms should use the ELD standards—in addition to their focal content standards—to support ELs’ linguistic and academic progress. During integrated ELD, teachers use the ELD Standards as a guide (1) to support ELs’ participation in collaborative discussions about rich content and (2) to help ELs increase their knowledge of how language works in different content areas. Above all, in integrated ELD, ELs should frequently engage in discussions to develop content knowledge; they should apply comprehension strategies and analytical skills to interpret complex texts; and they should produce oral and written English that increasingly meets the expectations of the context – all while developing an awareness about how English works to make meaning.

Designated ELD, by contrast, is a protected time during the regular school day when teachers use the ELD standards as the focal standards to, according to the Framework, “build into and from content instruction”. This simply means that during designated ELD, language is the main focus of the lesson. A good practice, however, is to incorporate topics and texts from core classes to support students’ language development. The Framework provides useful vignettes that illustrate how this might look across grade levels. Because the focus is on language in the designated ELD class, the recommendation is (and has been since the 1997 ELA Framework) that ELs are grouped by proficiency level during designated ELD (though not during integrated ELD). Designated ELD teachers do not necessarily have to use the same topics as students are learning in content classes but, rather, they must support ELs in their development of critical English language skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for content learning in English. Hence, designated ELD should not be remediation nor should it be isolated from ELA, science, social studies, mathematics, and other disciplines but rather an opportunity during the regular school day to support ELs

in developing academic conversation and writing skills, grammar, and vocabulary necessary for successful participation in academic tasks across the content areas. During this protected time, ELs should be actively engaged in collaborative discussions to build their awareness about language and develop their skills and abilities to use language. A strong emphasis on academic conversation is a key feature of designated ELD, but students should also be engaged in reading and writing as they learn to use English in new ways and develop their awareness of how English works in both spoken and written language.

Implementing the Framework in Court and Community Settings

The Framework, thorough and complex, provides information and examples that require unpacking by teachers as they attempt to align current practices to best practices and apply traditional school examples to court and community settings. Such work necessitates ongoing structured collaboration and reflective dialogue among educators to ensure ELs’ language and content needs are maximally addressed. Scheduling is also of particular concern given many court and community settings simply do not have enough ELs at similar proficiency levels to fill a designated ELD class. But the principles of integrated and designated ELD can easily be applied if teachers and administrators are strategic. Similar to elementary settings in which all students are together throughout the school day, teachers in court/community settings can group students at similar language proficiency levels to provide designated ELD for a portion of the school day (typically 30-45 minutes). And in settings where most if not all students are struggling academically, as is the case in many community/court school settings, it makes sense that all students receive effective integrated ELD regardless of EL designation. Here again, if teachers do not have a solid understanding of the ELD standards, effectively implementing them is unlikely.

Understanding the ELD standards and the ELA/ELD Framework will be a time-consuming endeavor. However, certain strategies can easily be implemented that align to the ELD standards and that do not require extensive training, only willingness. Perhaps the most important skill that is often absent in classrooms is academic con-

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<p>Pose a Question</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I wonder...?● What do you think about...?● Can you give an example of...?	<p>Present an Idea</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I think...● I didn't realize that...● Something to consider is...	<p>Support your Thinking</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● _____ is/was an example of ...● The article/author states that...● _____ is evidence that...
<p>Build on an Idea</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I agree that _____ because ...● I also think that...● Based on your comment, I think...	<p>Challenge an Idea</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● But/On the other hand...● I disagree because...● Another way of looking at it is...	<p>Close the Conversation</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">● In the end...● It sounds like...● In summary...

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

versation, a critical feature of both designated and integrated ELD (and very different from the traditional Initiation, Response, Evaluation discourse pattern often found in schools). Engaging students in discussions throughout the school day in which they take the lead in exchanging information, presenting and challenging ideas, and supporting claims with evidence is both aligned to what we know about learning in general as well as research that demonstrates the link between improved speaking and listening and overall learning gains. Zweirs and Crawford (2011) maintain that speaking, listening, and conversation are three separate skills; they argue that the third in particular, academic conversation, leads to critical thinking and essential understanding necessary for academic success. This is not to say that more traditional approaches such as oral presentations are unnecessary, but authentic academic dialogue provides students opportunities to fully participate in and ultimately own their learning.

A variety of tools and strategies are available to support students in engaging in moves to initiate, sustain, and close conversations. The tool (opposite) was developed by and for teachers in the Alternative, Community, and Correctional Schools and Services (ACCESS) program at Orange County Department of Education; it is a starting point for helping students engage in 'learning conversations', but as with any scaffold, the goal is for students to ultimately engage in conversations without the tool. Guiding students in adapting the Academic Conversation Tool – explicitly teaching them to 'shift up' for more formal academic conversations and down for informal, casual conversations – will support the development of students' metalinguistic awareness, knowledge about language which is needed to independently adapt language choices to match communicative purpose(s) and audience(s), a skill that most assuredly leads to improved life outcomes.

For teachers attempting to address the new ELD standards, using a strategy such as the Academic Conversation Tool is a good first step. But simply handing the tool to students will likely not result in sophisticated conversations and improved learning. Rather an introduction to the tool might involve teachers explaining it then showing a video of students engaged in effective academic conversations – helping students identify the conversation

moves as they hear them; teachers might then encourage students to begin with one conversation move at a time. But before students can successfully grapple with rigorous academic content in a conversation, they will need support in learning academic vocabulary and in organizing their ideas (perhaps using graphic organizers) before they can attempt to discuss complex topics and texts. With time and practice, however, we have found that students begin to take the lead and engage in academic conversations in the classroom in which they pose questions, present ideas, support their thinking, build on/challenge ideas, etc.- conversations that lead to greater collective understandings. And it is classroom time well spent:

“Language is how we think. It's how we process information and remember. It's our operating system...Talk is the representation of thinking. It seems reasonable to suggest that classrooms should be filled with talk, given that we want them filled with thinking.”

-Fisher, Frey, & Rothenberg, 2008)

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BY LISA SANFORD, PRINCIPAL, ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION, NEVADA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“The concept is that staff behaviors and attitudes affect students and vice versa. Embracing this concept helped us to realize that we, as staff members, hold some responsibility for the escalation/de-escalation of student behaviors.”

Those who work with students in Court and Community Schools know that they have chosen a unique career path in education. They realize no two days will be the same and their at-risk students need more than just academics to help them be successful in life. As the newly hired Court and Community Schools Principal in Nevada County, CA in 2012, I had a good understanding of the complexities of working in this setting and held a strong commitment to these students beyond the day-to-day instruction in the classroom. The Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NC-SOS) had just taken over operations of the Court and Community schools from the local high school district, and I walked in from the outside, with one returning teacher and one returning classified staff member. I stepped into the job with lofty goals and a sincere devotion to our students and the staff who are dedicated to their success.

That first year was a learning ground for me as the staff at the two schools and I attempted to help the many volatile, physically and verbally aggressive, academically low-performing, and socially/emotionally-challenged students, who had found little success with traditional schooling and who suffered from PTSD, ADD/ADHD, Separation Anxiety, family discord, hunger, homelessness and other stressful life experiences. Although this is the norm for Court and Community School students, for a new staff, these challenges prevented us from connecting with the students on the level we desired. We tried to figure out the best possible way to keep things positive, while helping the students to grow academ-

ically, socially and behaviorally, with the goal of each student returning to their less restrictive schools and future academic and life successes.

I wish I could say I had a perfectly developed plan and that we sailed through that first year, with few negative interactions and huge student academic and behavior growth. To say that we had our share of negative experiences would be a vast understatement. At the Community School, the students were angry and resentful, since most had returned after the summer break to find that the teachers they trusted and had developed a successful working relationship with had left. We used a myriad of tools to promote appropriate behavior and mutual respect with the students. Coming on board at the end of July, hitting the ground running and grasping at any training that seemed to fit our students' needs, I gave no solid foundation to my staff. We slowly realized that an authoritative approach was not going to work with our students, who often came to school to get a warm meal and be treated kindly, even when they were not able to convey this with words. The number of days of suspension that year was over 150, with one student accumulating over 36 days on his own. We sorely needed a new approach to helping our students make it through a school day and we needed to learn how to manage their behaviors in a more productive way. By the end of the school year, it was clear that we needed to focus on a planned strategy, using a team approach with our students, while not becoming personally frustrated with behaviors multiple times per day.

LEARNING AND BEHAVIORS IMPROVE THROUGH NONVIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION®

Our local SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) Director and our County Psychologist were being trained as trainers in the Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® (CPI/NCI) techniques and strategies so they could train the Special Education teachers and para-educators in Nevada County. I volunteered to become a trainer as well, so that I could train my staff and use these skills to work through the crises we experienced, ending up with more positive results, reducing the adversarial and ineffective relationships that existed by the end of that first school year.

I believed that the training of my staff would help us to work through the crises we experienced, resulting in more positive outcomes, reducing the adversarial and unproductive relationships that existed by the end of that first school year between staff and many of the students. The approach that I learned, through my training as a trainer of NCI, opened my eyes to the ineffectiveness of our present strategies. A new picture developed of how we could work together as a committed staff to help our at-risk students, and build a community of trust, using the standards of care, welfare, safety and security, the basis of all CPI training. Upon implementation, there was no panacea, but we have seen a dramatic difference in the student behaviors since the fall of 2013. We now have a basis of understanding of the escalation of student behavior and how we can best de-escalate students, while showing them dignity and respect.

The NCI program is taught in ten units, moving from Prevention to Physical Interventions to Postvention (a word CPI developed to mean Post-Intervention). Although we have a strictly no-hands-on policy with our students, the NCI program includes physical intervention strategies and techniques, which help to protect our students and staff in a physically volatile situation. Our focus has been on the NCI verbal de-escalation training, which has been used successfully for the past 3 years and has dramatically changed the way we work with our students. The CPI Modelsm explains the escalation of a student through

the following stages: Anxiety, Defensive, Risk Behavior, and Tension Reduction. By far, the most important parts for us were the sections that focused on Anxiety and Defensiveness, since these behaviors develop prior to the physical acting out, and were the areas we wanted to focus on to help students de-escalate instead of the intensify in a potentially volatile situation.

We learned that when a student is showing anxiety, (defined as a noticeable change in behavior), this can be shown in increase/decrease vocalization, facial expressions, body language, pacing, or other changes. The anxiety is best matched with a staff response of support. This support can be in the form of acknowledging student feelings and needs, providing physical supports, and carrying out routines. This support can also be more unconventional, such as voluntary time away to regroup, staff simply listening, or developing other means to show that staff truly cares about the student's feelings. Because we work in a smaller setting of students, we are able to accommodate students' needs, whether by a quick walk around the blacktop, 5 minutes of quiet disengagement to regroup, or a one-on-one discussion with a trusted staff member to share what's bothering them. Being reminded that our students have so many precipitating factors (those internal and external causes of a student's anxiety over which the staff have little or no control) has helped us to better recognize the students' changes in behavior and help them in this supportive manner, preventing further escalations in behavior.

When a student does reach this next level, the defensive stage, it can intensify from questioning, to refusal, to release (verbally), to intimidation (verbally), then decrease to tension reduction. As we learned to recognize the beginning stages – such as questioning, and learned the techniques to alleviate the student's defensiveness - using positive choices and limit setting, we were more able to get the student back on track and focused on the academic learning. The students have also learned through our coordinated efforts that we really do care and that we all

LEARNING AND BEHAVIORS IMPROVE THROUGH NONVIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION®

work together to help each student succeed.

We also learned to be much more aware of our own physical and emotional states, as well as becoming more aware of the students' changing physical and emotional states. CPI has developed the concept "Integrated Experience" to label the connection between staff and student behaviors. The concept is that staff behaviors and attitudes affect students and vice versa. Embracing this concept helped us to realize that we, as staff members, hold some responsibility for the escalation/de-escalation of student behaviors. Coupled with the acronym QTIP (Quit Taking it Personally), our staff has taken great strides to create ways to defuse the student's escalating behavior, and to do what it takes, even if unconventional, to help the student return to a more calm state. This refocusing allows the student to concentrate more on the academic learning.

Since implementing the program, we have solid statistics to show the improved behaviors. We have reduced our

suspensions dramatically. During the 2013-2014 school year, we had 50 incidents of suspension. Last year, during 2014-2015, we had 40 incidents, showing a 20% reduction. This year we are on target to again reduce our suspension rate another 10%. Beyond this concrete statistic, we have seen a strong commitment from staff to use the NCI techniques to support students, which has created a more positive, caring environment for both staff and students. Combining our dedication to meeting the unique needs of our Court and Community School students with using NCI, we have developed a more positive and supportive environment in our schools. We continue to update our training formally at least once per year. Informally, but regularly, we discuss specific student behaviors and staff's successful responses, so that, as a team, we can best support our students.



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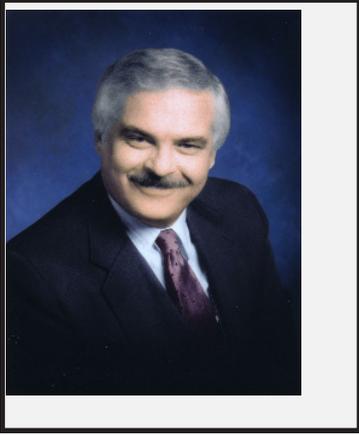
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JOHN PESHKOFF AWARD

Congratulations to the 2016 Award Recipient- Jacqueline Flowers, San Joaquin County Office of Education



John Peshkoff (1935-2006) was one of the founding fathers of JCCASAC (then known as Juvenile Court School Administrators of California or JCSAC). John served as the JCCASAC president in 1977-78 and again in 1990-91. He advocated for legislation and practices which support quality educational services for students in alternative education programs. He also served as a mentor, friend, and cheerleader to his peers and colleagues in the field.

The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.



My professional career has spanned 52 years and four states, commencing in 1964 when I graduated from the University of Michigan, to my current position as an Educational Leadership Coach working for the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) on a STRS retiree contract.

From classroom teacher, to high school counselor, to high school principal, I finally made my way to SJCOE in 1997 when I was hired as a Director II of Alternative Programs. Immediately following my move to the county office, I was introduced to JCCASAC and began attending the meetings and conferences. I was soon elected to the board and subsequently the Chair Elect, Chair, and Past Chair positions. Having that kind of camaraderie and support from my colleagues was invaluable in helping me to understand the complexities of the court and community school environment. I was on quite a learning curve because I had virtually no experience outside of the traditional K-12 educational setting. The next five years provided me with an in depth look at the trials and tribulations of at risk youth, and the social prob-

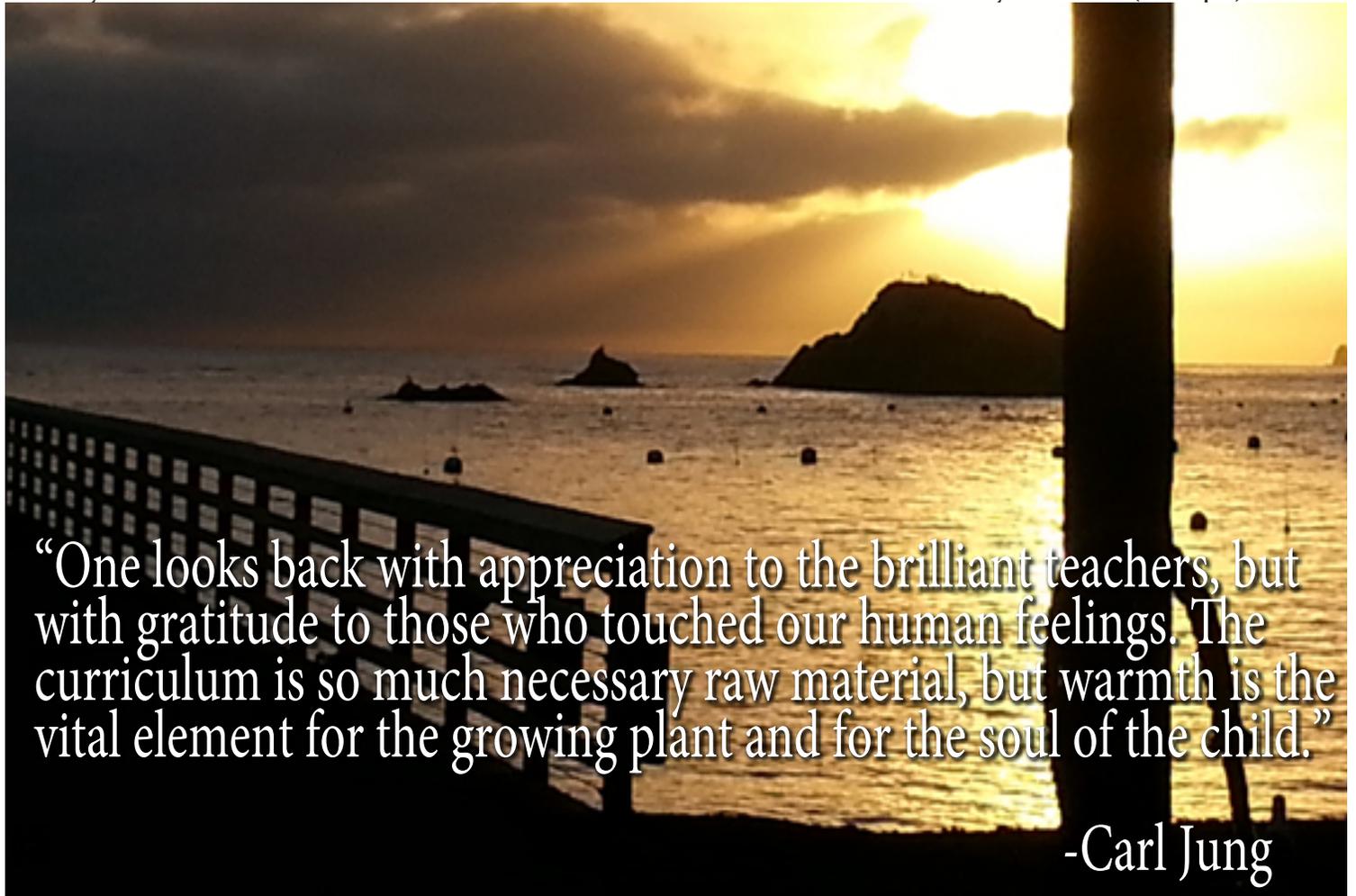
Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California

JOHN PESHKOFF AWARD

lems that plagued them and the community. The innovative programs that were in place, and that we improved upon over the years, taught us many valuable lessons about how our students could succeed. Clearly it was more than a strong academic focus. My time in JCCASAC was a wonderful learning experience and certainly set the stage for my participation in the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee under CCSESA.

In 2002, I was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of County Operated Schools and Programs and held that position until my retirement in June of 2008. My role as Instructional Leader now included the Court and Community Schools, ROP, Workstart YES, YouthBuild, Foster Youth, and Outdoor Education.

Since my retirement, I have continued to coach administrators who are clearing their credentials as well as coach new managers in different departments, particularly those who have come up through the classified ranks and had little or no professional development in Educational Leadership. As each year draws to a close I think it might be my last, but then I think, what would I do? I can only play golf 2-3 days a week so this alternative works well for me and even better for my coaches (I hope)!



“One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.”

-Carl Jung

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

JCCASAC board members are excited to announce the fifth annual JCCASAC Teacher of the Year award recipient and nominees. County operated school administrators from across California were encouraged to nominate one of their outstanding court, community or alternative school teachers for this extraordinary recognition. JCCASAC seeks to celebrate excellence and honor teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and inspire students of all backgrounds and learning abilities while carrying out the mission and vision of JCCASAC. These teachers are passionate, collaborative professionals dedicated to empowering students to become competent, creative thinking and caring adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are academically prepared for an ever changing and global economy

Congratulations to Jacqueline Smith of San Diego Office of Education

Jackie has been a teacher with the San Diego County Office of Education since 2006. She has been a community school teacher and is currently a court school teacher in their SOAR- Girls Rehabilitation Facility (GRF).

Jackie is pilot teacher for Thematic Integrated Project Based instruction (TIP) initiative. This past trimester, students participated in a unit based upon the theme of courage. Students were asked to be reflective of how does one become courageous, and what was each student's vision of courage. Students worked individually and collaboratively to create poetry, dances, songs and artwork for an audience that included SDCOE, San Diego County Probation Department, and San Diego Juvenile court. In the area of mathematics students continued their study of arithmetic and geometric progressions and functions. Students worked on the National Geographic Survival Project and how to survive in the wildness, as well as how to reduce the human footprint by conserving resources using their mathematics course work.



Jackie believes that education never ends; this includes her own professional learning. She aspires for her students to have excitement and that drive when reaching towards their future. She is a great motivator and a source of encouragement even when students have been released from GRF.

And Jackie is so much more than just an engaging educator. She is a transformational educator. She is the teacher students cannot stop talking about when they get transferred to other court and community schools. Jackie's determination, critical and creative thinking, quality and integrity of practice, professional humility and respect for others, have enabled her to rise to the top of her craft. Not only does she consistently design and lead excellent lessons and projects, she is always will and able to assist her students and colleagues when they are in need of extra guidance and support.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to all of our Teacher of the Year nominees.

Vicki Lock, San Joaquin County Office of Education

Ms. Lock has been a teacher for 8 years with the last 6 spent with the San Joaquin county Office of Education's one. Program.

Every teacher has high expectations for their students but Ms. Lock goes above and beyond to help her students find success. She arrives at the school site early and stays late to allow students the opportunity to get one on one tutoring or complete classwork; she provides rides to students with no transportation to school and gets to know the students on a personal level to understand their circumstances. Ms. Lock expects her students to be good students in the classroom but also good stewards of the community. A strength that has earned the admiration of colleagues, students and past students is her ability to establish positive, trusting relationships with her students. She passes those life skills and traits on to her students to help them develop good interpersonal skills, which are pivotal in college, the workplace and being a productive member of society.



Maria Straith, Orange County Department of Education

Maria has worked is a teacher in the juvenile court schools for more than twenty years. Currently she teaches at Rio Contiguo High School. She embodies the vision of excellence we want for all of our students. Maria is the model for a growth mindset. She is willing to explore new ideas and expand on current programs and partnership that exist in ACCESS. Maria is sought after by her peers as a resource and support. She is always ready to lend a helping hand or brainstorm about unusual and unique problems our staff faces in providing supports and services for at-risk youth. Maria is a role model for all her peers and the staff that work with her. She would be an excellent role model for any aspiring educator. Maria is an exceptional educator and worthy of any award or recognition of her skills. She consistently helps with mentoring students, collaborating with general education teachers, and following up with students on discipline and behavior modification strategies. Maria is a team player, innovative, and supportive to school and probation staff, students, and colleagues alike.



JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees



Lorraine Trombino, , Santa Cruz County Office of Education

Ms. Trombino has been an educator for the Santa Cruz County Office of Education for 25 years. She began as an instructional aide and became a teacher in 1995.

Lorraine believes that every student she meets can be successful, and she makes it her goal to help them see it for themselves and to achieve it.

Lorraine never gives up on a student. New students are welcomed into her classroom and the transformation begins. She builds relationships with students. This creates trust and students begin to re-engage, where previously they had disengaged in the school process. She helps students to experience academic success, in areas they have come to believe impossible.

Lorraine agreed to help an incarcerated young adult, who had previously been her student, to complete high school. From there, she created a small high school diploma program, largely in-kind, to a number of young incarcerated adults who were in the same situation. From January to June, she graduated six young adults. Since then, Lorraine has applied for grant funding to continue her evening work in the Jail. She recently confided in me that, “Johnny, those guys are so hungry to learn.”



Katharine Edmonson, Kern County Office of Education

Katharine has been an innovative educator as well as respected by her colleagues, the probation department, and mental health staff at Erwin Owen High School for 25 years. Katharine is a valuable asset to their school program because of her immense work ethic and a creative teaching style that reaches all her students. Katharine has developed great working relationships with both students and staff, all of whom have a tremendous amount of respect for her.

From the moment students step into her classroom they realize not only are they going to learn science, but they will take a journey that is captivating, creative, and extremely fun. Twenty-five years of service in a residential court school program shows more than a commitment to KCSOS and the students she serves, but that Katharine Edmonson truly loves her job, her colleagues, and most importantly, the students that she serves.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Alicia Garcia, Teacher, Alameda County Office of Education



Alicia has been a teacher for twenty three years. Currently she serves in the capacity of English language Learner Teacher on Special Assignment for the high-risk students in Alameda County's Court and community Schools, Alicia is a bridge that connects people, ideas, and passions.

Alicia works daily with students, teachers, administrators, and curriculum leaders. She rotates between schools, providing intensive intervention and assessment to high-need adolescent English language Learners. She also provides resources and coaching to teachers, who highly respect her knowledge and her ability to resources and coaching to teachers, who highly respect her knowledge and her ability to share it in a way that is always supportive.

She is a critical thinker, a team player, and a passionate and compassionate developer of emerging readers, writers, and speakers. Not only does she embody the essence of a lifelong learner, but she inspires the adults around her to learn what they need to know to serve the students she holds in the center of the conversation with such passion and compassion.

We are looking forward to begin the process for our Sixth Annual Teacher of the Year Award for 2017. Details and the nomination forms will be sent out in early 2017. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to recognize the outstanding work your teachers do on a daily basis.

Thanks you,
JCCASAC Board



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Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

CTE COURSES: HELPING STUDENTS BETTER COMPETE FOR JOBS

BY: TODD EVANGELIST, DIRECTOR AT IMPERIAL COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Imperial County

When confronted with the dreary unemployment figures of Imperial County, historically one of the worst in the State of California, Monalisa Vitela the Senior Director of Imperial County Office of Education's (ICOE) Alternative Education department, wanted to provide her students with programs that would not only keep them engaged and on track, but also be an asset to students who are looking for jobs before or after they graduate.

Nestled at the bottom of California bordering Mexico, Arizona and San Diego County to the west, Imperial County has struggled with being at the bottom of the economic development food chain. With high numbers of immigrants and day laborers from across the border, young people entering the work force face fierce competition for jobs for virtually all-unskilled jobs, which are typical for recent graduates.

One industry that has been resistant to economic down turns has been healthcare, with local health agencies, hospitals and doctors' offices expanding and increasing the need for new workers. This need coincides with a new course at ICOE's Alternative Education programs, *Medical Terminology*. As a result of a partnership with the local community college, Imperial Valley College, and the California Career Pathway Trust, high school students enrolled in the Medical Terminology program may also take an exam at the end of the year and if they showcase proficiency, they are given college credit for the course. This additional benefit of earning college credit while completing their high school diploma is valuable to students who want to graduate as soon as possible and not spend time in an additional course after graduation. Earning college units before high school graduation is a motivating factor for students considering attending college and obtaining an Associates degree or eventually a Bachelors degree.

An ROP Career Technology Instructor, Elizabeth Flores, teaches the Medical Terminology course at Valley Academy School. A graduate of California State

University Los Angeles, Ms. Flores returned to her hometown of El Centro after working as a healthcare professional in Orange County. Now in her second year of teaching at the alternative education school, the program has grown to two campuses, one in El Centro and another in Calexico. Additionally, Ms. Flores has been able to organize several field trips and college tours that have greatly impacted students who typically haven't had these types of experiences. On the horizon is the formation of a HOSA club (Health Occupations Students of America) at Valley Academy School, with the intent of having students in the club compete against other local and statewide students in the annual HOSA competitions.

School officials have noted that students enrolled in the Medical Terminology courses have shown more school engagement and academic effort has improved overall. This trend is hopefully something that can be duplicated in other school sites and with additional students. The goal is graduating students with tangible career skills that give them a decisive advantage when applying for local jobs.

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HELPING STUDENTS BETTER COMPETE FOR JOBS

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BIG HEARTS BUILD TINY HOUSES: THE BLUE RIDGE H.S. TINY HOUSE PROJECT

BY: TARA STRONG, MA,

PRINCIPAL OF BLUE RIDGE@ JAMES RANCH

“No one person is truly responsible for the success of this project, it takes the proverbial village... Blue Ridge’s project is accomplished because Big Hearts build Tiny Houses.”

High school students are a mystery to many adults, At Risk Students are even more mystifying, add incarceration to the equation and most adults can’t fathom the concept. Incarcerated youths evoke images of surly youths circling to do harm, but the reasons for incarceration and the story that leads to incarceration is a deep, complex, commentary on social norms, cultural disconnect and crisis. This story is not about those factors, but about a project developed to promote social justice and improve student Career Technical Education, or CTE at Santa Clara County Office of Education Alternative Education Department or SCCOE/AED.

Before the Tiny House project, students welded fire rings and made beautiful redwood picnic tables as part of Ranch restitution program, admirable but not innovative; the learning was skills based but not advanced skills. This changed six months ago when AED started the Tiny House project at Blue Ridge, since then 40 students have learned how to read blueprints, measure, apply theorems to solve roof design, analyze energy usage and discuss composting toilets. These students are currently building a Tiny House as a social justice piece. The house when completed will be donated to a community based organization for the homeless.

The most fascinating result for BR students is not just developing skills but developing appreciation for having their own permanent home in the future. Many students have been homeless for periods of time, sometimes alone or with family, so homelessness is not new; but the understanding of gaining a home and keeping it through a project like this provokes

thoughtful consideration. Another significant surprise is how the entire Blue Ridge staff of educators teamed up to support the CTE teachers, Ralph Wigginton and Marty Bajda, by expanding the project to reflect science, math and English curriculum in their classrooms. In fact the math teacher, Ms. Le a retired engineer, created the Blue Ridge blog. www.brmodestdwellings.com The excitement of watching the students participate in this project has also resonated with probation. This project is the culmination of so many individuals working together to bring it into Blue Ridge. There are still a few hurdles, but the project has support from the AED Director Yvette Irving, to the SCCOE Superintendent Jon Gundry. The project finally feels achievable. The walls on the house are up, the roof is being cut and assembled, and windows are next. We are a third of the way complete. Completion is scheduled for September 2016...before Labor Day. No one person is truly responsible for the success of this project, it takes the proverbial village... Blue Ridge’s project is accomplished because Big Hearts build Tiny Houses.

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.”

-Chinese proverb

PARTNERS IN ACTION

BY: SHELLEY NORTHROP, KERN COUNTY

“Teen parents benefit by observing quality interactions between the teachers and their children and see first-hand the importance of becoming involved in their children’s education”

Kern County Superintendent of School’s Blanton Child Development Center (Blanton CDC) would like to formally announce its formed partnership with Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAPK) and Early Head Start (EHS); the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS CCP). This partnership serves teen parents and children for all KCSOS Community Schools in the Alternative Education Program. The Blanton Child Development Center will continue to operate a quality day care program with support from First 5 Kern; however, it is now augmented with a new support agency that also has a history of providing quality services for families and children up to 36 months old.

The partnership provides year-round day care for children up to 36 months of age. Early Head Start Child Care Partnership offers comprehensive child development and family support services that enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children, and supports parents’ efforts to fulfill their parental roles and move toward self-sufficiency. The EHS CCP receives funding from the federal government, the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, and First 5 California.

The Blanton CDC sought this opportunity to enhance its quality, to offer its teen parents a wider breadth of community resources, and to strengthen its focus on assisting teen parents in seeing the significance and effect of their new choices. This partnership allows students to take advantage of education options while learning valuable parenting skills.

Blanton CDC uses its funding to provide additional quality learning experiences

by purchasing new learning materials and indoor and outdoor furniture to enrich the environment, and offering evidence-based training to Blanton’s CDC early childhood educators to improve teacher-child interactions. Teen parents benefit by observing quality interactions between the teachers and their children and see first-hand the importance of becoming involved in their children’s education as they assist teachers in setting individualized goals for their children’s cognitive, language, motor, and social-emotional development.

Teen parents are also supported by an in-house Family Advocate located at the center. The Family Advocate assists parents in overcoming any obstacles that may prevent them from attending school; assist with setting up doctor’s appointments for the parents or their children; keep track of a child’s immunizations; give referrals for assistance with food, clothing, dental, or medical needs; and help parents set achievable goals and check in on them to evaluate their progression.

Blanton CDC has cultivated a strong and mutually beneficial collaborative relationship with EHS CCP. We embrace this new partnership as we set forth to achieve the goal of improving lives through education and relationships.

“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

-B.B. King

THE HISTORY OF JCCASAC

BY BOB MICHELS, PAST PRESIDENT

WITH THANKS TO KEN TAYLOR AND JEANNE HUGHES

Before we can discuss JCCASAC, it is important to discuss the history of Court and Community Schools in California. Forty seven years ago the responsibility for operating court schools in county operated detention facilities was that of the California Youth Authority, today known as the California Division of Juvenile Justice, a division of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Generally, CYA, would assign the responsibility to the probation department, who generally contracted with the local district or districts. The educational services that would result were often fragmented, lacked a focus on the unique needs of the court school student population, and often became a simple extension of a nearby K-12 school program. A common result was an educational program that was generally substandard and often forgotten. At best, students received a satisfactory education. At worst, students received little or no education and the education they did receive was unsatisfactory.

There were a number of counties that had developed strong working relationships between the county probation department and county office of education relative the education of incarcerated youth. As early as 1971 and 1972, legislation was introduced to shift the educational responsibility of students housed in county operated detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the County Board of Education. These early efforts by the Santa Clara County Office of Education failed. In 1976, a bill was introduced and passed that shifted the responsibility from CYA to the County Board of Education. Court schools were the first mandated instructional programs that was the responsibility of the County Board of Education.

County Offices of Education (COE) were now able to hire their own teachers for court schools and provide appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The COE operated programs were in juvenile halls and ranches and group homes and day centers.

The creation of community schools was much easier. Forty seven years ago, the status offender (W&I Code 601) who was a runaway, a truant, or out of control was commonly locked up and served through the educational programs within the juvenile detention facilities. Assembly Bill 3121 (1975) decriminalized these status offenders

for juveniles and changed the entire structure of the juvenile justice system. When the law was changed to eliminate the use of detention as a tool for dealing with the status offender, there was an immediate need to serve this population. One answer was the requirement that each county establish nonsecure crisis resolution centers for these students. Another answer appeared in the form of legislation that Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties were instrumental in getting introduced in 1976 that was known as the Community Schools Bill.

The organization that is now known as JCCASAC (Juvenile Court and Community Alternative School Administrators of California) was founded in 1969 as JCSAC (Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). The organization began as a group of professionals with a common interest that was instrumental in the development of the early court school programs. Its first major success as an organization was seen in 1976-1977 when it supported the efforts of key Northern and Southern California counties in the passage of legislation establishing court and community schools. With each passing year, the organization matured and took on new dimensions. It was not until the late 1980s that the organization changed its name to JCCASAC and included "Community" schools in its title.

What was once a stand alone organization operated by JCCASAC administrators now works as a sub-committee of the County County Superintendents Educational Services Organization.



HONORING OUR PAST JCCASAC PRESIDENTS

1970-71 Don Purdy Santa Clara	1981-82 Joe De Mello Contra Costa	1992-93 John Stankovich Kings	2003-04 Jacqueline Flowers San Joaquin
1971-72 Chuck Lee San Diego	1982-83 Roy Savage Riverside	1993-94 Bob Michels Santa Clara	2004-05 Jeanne Dukes San Luis Obispo
1972-73 Doug Booth San Mateo	1983-84 Ken Kammuller Marin	1994-95 Larry Springer Los Angeles	2005-06 Paula Mitchell Santa Clara
1973-74 Joe De Mello Contra Costa	1984-85 Wayne Toscas Santa Barbara	1995-96 Claudette Inge Alameda	2006-2007 Maruta Gardner San Diego
1974-75 Marshall Lomax Los Angeles	1985-86 Greg Almand Contra Costa	1996-97 Ken Taylor Kern	2007-2008 Peter Kostas Mendocino
1975-76 John Hull Sacramento	1986-87 Hedy Kirsh Orange	1997-98 Mick Founts San Joaquin	2008-2009 Mary Lou Vachet Orange
1976-77 Rocco Nobile San Diego	1987-88 Shirl Schmidt Shasta	1998-99 Dolores Redwine San Diego	2009-2010 Mary Bell Sacramento
1977-78 John Peshkoff Santa Clara	1988-89 Chuck Lee San Diego	1999-00 Vic Trucco Sonoma	2010-2011 Sean Morrill San Diego
1978-79 Jerry Matney Orange	1989-90 William Burns San Mateo	2000-01 Janet Addo Los Angeles	2011-2012 Janine Cuaresma San Joaquin
1979-80 Miltie Couteur Butte	1990-91 John Peshkoff Orange	2001-02 Michael Watkins Santa Cruz	2012-2013 Deni Baughn Orange
1980-81 Marty Familletti Riverside	1991-92 Orene Hopkins Contra Costa	2002-03 Jeanne Hughes Kern	2013-2014 Gary Vincent Monterey
2014-2015	Monalisa Vitela, Imperial	2015-2016	Telka Walser, Stanislaus

BY: STACY SPECTOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

“As my ability to gather descriptive evidence increased so did my ability to coach. My coaching conversations with teachers then became useful to both of us because we focused on authentic student learning outcomes and not some arbitrary checklist.”

Walk into many classrooms across San Diego County’s Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) and one won’t find desks in rows or bare walls. Instead one will find groups of students engaged in rich, authentic, self-directed conversations. Students are clustered into groups, negotiating their learning with their teacher and one another through the use of academic discourse and thematic interdisciplinary problem based learning (TIP). Charts plaster the walls, capturing students’ thoughts and the development of their critical thinking and conceptual understanding of essential ideas and concepts. Students can articulate what they are learning and how they apply and transfer this knowledge from their classroom context, to learning outside of school.

This culture of learning did not occur by itself. It developed through the regular and on-going coaching teachers provide to students, principals provide to teachers, and district leadership provide to principals. This nested model of site and system level instructional coaching stems from a clear theory of action in JCCS that states, “Student learning and achievement increases when adult practice improves.”

Over the course of the past few years JCCS, like many districts across the United States, has faced declining enrollment, a changing student population and even more options for families to choose from in regards to their student’s learning. Regardless of these external pressures, there has been an intentional focus in JCCS to improve the quality of the teaching and learning occurring in every classroom. As with most systems, the quality of instruction varied from school to school and classroom to classroom. However, we believe that every student has a right to a

high quality instructional program and we must therefore help all teachers improve their instructional practice.

In order to create this expert system we knew that our model needed to focus on teacher professional development. According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), research on effective teacher professional development suggests that it must be:

- Grounded inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven;
- Collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers’ communities of practice rather than on individual teachers;
- Sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practices;
- Connected to and derived from teachers’ work with their students;
- Engage teachers in concrete task of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development;
- Connected to other aspects of school change.

Reflecting on Darling-Hammond’s research lead us to develop a system-wide coaching model where site and district instructional leaders provide ongoing coaching and support to classroom teachers. We needed a model where principals, vice principals, site coaches, and directors all spoke a common coaching language. Through regular classroom visits and coaching based upon observable student evidence, teachers could continue to con-

EVERYONE A LEARNER, EVERYONE A COACH

struct and improve their practice. However, an evaluation-only system of teacher observation will not allow for the needed change in teacher practice and student achievement. Evaluation observations are too infrequent and formal to help teachers improve their instructional practice. Conversely, coaching provides the strongest opportunity for improving instructional practice by meeting learners at their place of need through regular and on-going conversations grounded in observation of student learning.

Implementing this coaching model was not just about the structure. Rather, a culture of continuous learning and improvement first had to be developed to support the actual coaching model. In the current paradigm, principals were accustomed to being site managers and not instructional leaders. JCCS needed to change from an operational system where principals managed schools to a learning organization constructed around mutual inquiry and critical feedback. To grow this organization, district teachers and leaders came together through our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) to determine the learning needs of students and the instructional practice and supports necessary to ensure all students will be successful in college, career and community. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) staff at schools developed leadership agreements about how to engage in critical conversations focused on student learning, and the specific indicators of what quality teaching and learning looks like in every single classroom. These agreements became our Instructional Focus and Indicators of Student Learning.

As these conversations have unfolded we have been able to develop a culture that allows for the coaching model to emerge knowing that all teaching practice must directly result in an improvement in student achievement.

According to one principal, "When I focused on evidence it became not about the evaluation of teacher practice, but the evidence of student learning. As my ability to gather descriptive evidence increased so did my ability to coach. My coaching conversations with teachers then became useful to both of us because we focused on authentic student learning outcomes and not some arbitrary checklist."

In addition to calibrating our observation of descriptive

evidence we also had to calibrate the model and language of coaching. Doing so allowed for a common understanding and application of the model that we would use to grow both site and system level change in practice. JCCS' coaching model includes a compliment, leverage point, coaching question, and a summary with follow up.

Compliment: Make a statement that explicitly acknowledges an effective instructional decision or move that the teacher made based upon observable, non-evaluative evidence. The compliment starts the coaching conversation by concisely naming a strategy the teacher is using well and clearly articulating why it is important. Ex: "By doing...students were able to..." or "As a result of your... students were able to..."

Leverage Point: State a leverage point that you want to ask about or address in your coaching conversation based upon the classroom or lesson observation. Coaches must choose the leverage point that has the most immediate opportunity to change practice. Ex: "I noticed that students were able/not able to..."

Coaching Question: Pose a question that is open ended enough for a teacher to reflect and to address the identified leverage point. Ex: "I want you to reflect upon...what evidence do you have of...?"

Summary: Check for understanding with the teacher as to what they have learned and what next steps are for their practice as a result of the coaching conversation. Ex: "Share with me what you will do differently in your practice as a result of our conversation." Or, "As a result of our conversation you have agreed to... by ..." and "I will follow up on ... by...to support you in..."

Principals coach teachers using this process during their daily instructional classroom observations. We found that many of our principals struggled with collecting nonjudgmental, observable evidence of teaching and learning. According to Richard Elmore, "A tougher part of the problem, in our experience and in the experience of many others who are working to improve instruction, is

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getting people to agree on what they are actually looking for in the classroom and translating that agreement into specific guidance and action for educators. This is where the discipline of classroom observation gets difficult” (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel 2009).

For our coaching model to be effective we had to move principals away from statements similar to “I liked...” or “Your lesson was really strong.” to ones based upon evidence from the classroom, such as “I noticed that x number of your students were able to...” Learning Walks, a modified instructional rounds process, was critical in helping administrators make this transformation. During Learning Walks, administrators would focus on collecting observable, nonjudgmental evidence and calibrate their observations with each other. Additionally, Learning Walks build the capacity for the culture of change and improvement while also providing the clarity and focus for our existing and ongoing professional development.

Ultimately, Learning Walks became the practice through which we could collect observable evidence while also understanding the quality and level of tasks that engage students in critical thinking. Through Learning Walks principals could begin to predict the performance of students for a given task and provide evidence that marked variability of student success for that task. All of this information provided the foundation through which directors coached principals and principals coached teachers.

Currently, the coaching model is implemented to varying degrees in schools throughout the district. While we have only started this journey over the past 36 months, in that short amount of time we have seen three significant results.

1. Our learning culture is changing from technical to adaptive work (Heifetz, 1994). Rather than sole-

ly focusing on technical issues, such as structures and time, staff now focus on adaptive work: what does authentic learning look like?

2. Teachers and site leaders are developing a discerning eye for collecting observable evidence of student learning versus value-based judgments of discreet and isolated skills.
3. As we visit classrooms, academic tasks are becoming increasingly more cognitively demanding where students are expected to demonstrate higher-order, critical thinking skills through rich academic discourse.

When asked how coaching has changed her practice one JCCS teacher reflects, “By being in a culture of coaching I feel safe to try on new strategies and approaches with students in my classroom. When I receive objective feedback from my principal it’s based upon observable evidence and a not a value judgment. Knowing that he also receives coaching on best practices makes me feel like we are all in this together - everyone is a learner and everyone is a coach.”

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Student Programs and Services
Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

C3 - COLLECT, CONNECT, COACH

DATA COLLECTION, COLLABORATION, AND COACHING TOOL TO HELP ADMINISTRATORS

CONDUCT WALK-THROUGHS

BY: KATHY HILL, KERN COUNTY

One lead teacher made the startling comment that she “had been completely opposed to this effort”, but once she was involved in it, she realized how powerful it could be.

Beginning in the fall of 2014, the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) partnered with the KCSOS department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Accountability (CIA). The long-range goal was to improve student outcomes. Working together, the education technology team spent many hours with Alternative Education administration customizing an observation tool that had been previously created. The web-based Collect, Connect, Coach (C3) program originated in CIA, and was designed by the ed tech team. It was used extensively by the department to observe in classrooms, record those observations and collate the data into evidence of instructional methodologies.

Alternative Education includes both court and community schools, in traditional classroom settings and independent study. It is a large department spread throughout a county of over 8,000 square miles, making systemic professional development or consistent practices more difficult. As the State shifted towards Local Control and KCSOS was writing its own LCAP plan, the need for improved instruction moved to the forefront. However, the first step was to identify what the current practices were. Using the original C3 tool was an option, but it was quickly decided that it would be most valuable if it were customized to meet the unique needs of the alternative education settings. Conversation ensued with the technology team, the curriculum experts, and the alternative education administrators all collaborating on the items to be observed and what the expected outcomes should be.

In the fall of 2015, a group of approximately 30 leaders, including all site administrators for alternative education, department resource teachers, and site lead teachers, were trained in the use of the tool, both the technical aspects and the curriculum requirements. Because the Alternative Education Department had also implemented Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS), their custom C3 template even included a section devoted to that. The rubric for the template was shared with all

staff and sites were encouraged to go out and “play” with the tool for a month, completing at least 3 observations in that time period. One challenge was to make sure that the teaching staff did not think of this an evaluation, but as a way of gathering data to indicate what teaching strategies were in place and what trends existed.

At the end of that month, the group reconvened and spent some time troubleshooting. The next step was for each site to have an assigned curriculum coach from CIA and the teams of site leaders, plus their coach, visited classrooms together. Immediately afterwards, they discussed what they saw and calibrated their responses. These discussions were often rich and animated, as they worked on a consensus of what they had observed. As the process becomes more refined, every single faculty member will get the opportunity to do these observations with peers.

The now- quarterly group meeting was scheduled to discuss trends that seemed to be evident county-wide. From those trends emerged a list of areas for professional development. One very positive aspect that was discovered was the identification of individuals who were particularly adept at a certain technique, such as differentiation. It was discussed that teachers could model and mentor their peers to enhance their own teaching. One lead teacher made the startling comment that she “had been completely opposed to this effort”, but once she was involved in it, she realized how powerful it could be.

The alternative education directors have asked that the coaching assignments remain in place; they see value in the relationships being built inter-departmentally. The curriculum staff is excited to be able to assist in delivering professional development that is truly needed and wanted. The ed technology team has also benefitted from this partnership, as they are currently building a new and improved C3 tool, and these experiences have enhanced their knowledge as well.

COLLABORATION TO ADDRESS HIGH RISK YOUTH

BY: DARYL THIESEN, KERN COUNTY

“We strive to empower our students to reclaim responsibility and become an active participant in their educational experience.”

Purpose / Mission:

Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) Alternative Education Programs provide educational services to some of the highest risk youth in court and community schools settings across 14 Kern County sites. Some of these educational settings, such as Camp Erwin Owen, and Crossroads Juvenile Detention Facility provide services in settings where 95% of youth served are gang affiliated as assessed by Kern County Probation staff. *The mission of Alternative Education Programs is to support the educational, social, and emotional needs for all its students and community members. We strive to empower our students to reclaim responsibility and become an active participant in their educational experience.*

Partnership with KCSOS Project 180

To provide meaningful supports to this high-risk population, KCSOS Alternative Education programs have partnered with KCSOS Project 180 Gang Prevention Programs in the School Community Partnerships Department to connect youths at risk for gang participation or affiliated with gangs and their families to supports and interventions to turn their lives in a positive direction.

KCSOS Project 180 is a gang prevention and intervention program that provides a wide range of comprehensive services for youth who are at risk of joining gangs and to those who are gang involved throughout Kern County. KCSOS Project 180 services include early identification of at-risk youth through referral and triage process, risks and needs assessments, targeted case management that includes referring youth to support services and supervision and progress monitoring. Over the last five years, KCSOS Project 180 has served over 2,000 students referred by school districts across Kern County and utilized a three-tiered approach to provide the appro-

priate services to youth and families based on a research-validated criminogenic risk and needs assessment.

In 2014, KCSOS Project 180 received 260 student referrals; 54% were KCSOS Community School students, 80% were males; 4% of all referrals were assessed as “very high-risk”; 27% as “high-risk”; 65% as “moderate risk”; 4% as “low risk”. KCSOS Project 180 data shows the program is **highly effective**: 27% reduction in gang participation of referred students; 43% drop in re-offending (arrests); decreased truancy 54%; 31% drop in disruptive school behavior; 42% improvement in academic achievement based on pre/post surveys; parent knowledge of ways to reduce negative behavior increased by an average of 21% across key parenting indicators

Collaboration with Cal State University Bakersfield - School Social Workers

KCSOS Project 180 partners with California State University Bakersfield and the Masters of Social Work (MSW) Program by creating an internship for students centered on School Social Work primarily in KCSOS Alternative Education Community Schools. These MSW Student Interns receive an intense summer training focused on School Social Work and interventions prior to being placed at specific Community School sites. Once at their school sites, they perform the role of a school social worker.

KCSOS Project 180 staff train MSW Interns to identify youth at risk for gang involvement by assessing for criminogenic risks, needs, and responsibility factors utilizing the **Youth Level of Service case Management Inventory** that allows interns to create a targeted case management plan for students who have been assessed as moderate to high risk for criminal behavior. Criminogenic needs

COLLABORATION TO ADDRESS HIGH RISK YOUTH

are identified major risk factors associated with criminal conduct: antisocial/pro-criminal attitudes, values, and beliefs, pro-criminal associates, temperament and personality factors; a history of antisocial behavior, family factors and low levels of educational, vocational or financial achievement. Research indicates that if you look carefully at these areas, some can be influenced while others cannot. The factors that can be changed are called “dynamic” and targeted (Ohio Judicial Conference For the Record, 2005, Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2006).

The Project 180 staff and MSW Interns provide Targeted Case Management services focused on the dynamic factors such as participation in Juvenile Gang Diversion programs, Cognitive-Behavioral treatment using the Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.) and Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling curriculums, and Parent Project.

Role & Function of School Social Workers:

School Social Workers have a multifaceted role. SSW Interns provide interventions and support at all Tier levels under the umbrella of the site implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS). SSW Interns provide services unique to each Community School setting based upon consultation within the school PBIS Leadership team.

The key to all services is the assessment. The assessment is a systematic way of understanding what is taking place in relationships in the classroom, within the family, and between the family and school. The SSW looks for units of attention-places where intervention will be most effective. SSW Interns provide services aimed at improving student outcomes by improving the student’s social-emotional adjustment to school, family, community and society. School Social Workers are the link between the home, school and community.

Case Study Showing Impact with high-risk students – Jacob’s Story

Jacob, a 9 year old male student, was referred to Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) Project 180 in November 2013 by a community member. Jacob was referred to KCSOS Project 180 due to his inability to control his anger, because of his attraction to gangs, and the fact that he exhibited behavioral problems at school. Jacob’s parents had both been involved in gangs, been incarcerated, and Mom and Dad had been victims of gang violence. Jacob’s mother was shot in the back by a gang

member and paralyzed. Even though Jacob was very young and not yet gang involved, he displayed a lot of early signs for future gang involvement--including trauma exposure, attraction to gangs, early signs of delinquency, and poor school performance.

KCSOS Project 180 staff assessed Jacob using the **Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)** assessment tool. His YLS/CMI baseline assessment score was 15 (moderate risk), however, due to his attraction to gangs and early delinquent behavior, KCSOS Project 180 staff used their professional judgment to override the score and monitor and case manage this youth at a higher level of supervision.

A case plan was developed to address his high-risk areas. Jacob was referred to a Cognitive Behavioral group using the **Forward Thinking Interactive Journaling** to address his anger. During the interview, Jacob stated that he enjoyed basketball and that he would like to get involved. Jacob was referred to the **Greenfield Sports Association’s Basketball** program and to **Youth Connection** to assist the family with the registration fees. The Saturday basketball games became the family’s outings and helped the family bond.

Jacob’s parents were so grateful for the services they received that they asked if they could help in any way. Jacob’s parents began sharing their story at the **Student Gang Call-Ins** being held at several KCSOS operated Community Schools to deter students from joining gangs or continuing with that lifestyle.

Jacob’s YLS/CMI follow-up score was four (4) low-risk. At the year-end follow-up he was participating in the Boys and Girls Club summer program and he was staying involved in positive activities.

Annual report Outcomes That Show the Collaboration is Effective

- Reduced gang participation by 29%
- Reduced re-offending by 86%
- Increased Parent/Guardian knowledge to reduce negative behaviors by 17% (target = 5%)
- Reduced truancy for KCSOS Project 180 referred students by 15% (target = 5%)
- Reduced risk factors by 42%

AN APPROACH THAT WORKS: ALIGNING ACADEMICS, BEHAVIOR AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SUCCESS

BY: KIM SCOTT, ED.D., TEEN FOCUS INC.

“A more holistic approach - one that relies on intrinsic motivation to produce academic, behavioral and personal success in the long term – is the approach that works”

Educators must learn to rethink the way in which they work with at-risk students. Slowly but surely school systems have begun to realize that doling out suspensions and expulsions do nothing to lower the rate of poor performance and behavior recidivism. A more holistic approach - one that relies on intrinsic motivation to produce academic, behavioral and personal success in the long term – is the approach that works.

I know this because I spent almost ten years running a successful after-school program called Teen Focus. The program unknowingly met the future goals and objectives of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), later developed independently and implemented by the California Department of Education, of taking young, at-risk teens to:

- Help build their self-esteem
- Provide positive motivation
- Recognize and reward my charges for incremental success along the way

My philosophy correlates with proponents who support the view that adverse childhood experiences (ACE) have a deleterious effect on the entire range of a teen's educational, social and behavioral success. [KVCHYPERLINK “https://www.kvc.org/blog/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-ace-study/”](https://www.kvc.org/blog/the-adverse-childhood-experiences-ace-study/) Health Services conducted a study that demonstrates a high ACE score can lead not only to poor academic and behavioral performance, but also health problems, high-risk behavior, cognitive impairment and even early death (KVC).

The ACE study mirrors what I discovered through my experiences with at-risk youth. I concentrated on intrinsic motivation, relationship building, and nurturing. There were only three requirements for participating in my afterschool program:

- Maintain a clean school attendance record
- Maintain a clean school disciplinary record
- Maintain at least a 2.0 GPA in all classes

The Teen Focus program attracted many students that had chosen to disconnect from school and the activities on campus. Whenever young people joined my program, they felt empowered. They made a decision to make positive changes in their lives.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is defined as a method that works on facilitating and engaging a client's own intrinsic motivation to change behavior. MI is a goal-oriented, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence. Today, educators across the country have begun to teach and use MI due to its proven effectiveness with at-risk teens. (Rollnick & Miller).

My intentions with Teen Focus were to bring students to a point where they developed the ability to do three things: maintain positive choices, continue to participate in my program and remain on a positive path to success. My hope whenever I work with teens is that they would

AN APPROACH THAT WORKS

be more self-motivated and continue to hunger for success in school and life. I believe that by introducing at-risk teens to a different, more positive way of life, they will evolve and eventually make better choices in their lives. Our motto was “Teen Focus, Beauty from the Inside Out!” My after school program success rate surprised many. Ninety-five percent of our members graduated from high school. Many have graduated from four-year colleges. Still more have attended community colleges and trade schools.

Other school systems have also acknowledged the value of, and have had success with this type of approach. The Redland Middle School in Montgomery County, MD employed a process of constructive interventions as an alternative to punitive discipline. In our program, by reinforcing expectations through modeling and employing positive behavior interventions by having fun with creative rewards, young people started to demonstrate positive behaviors. By deemphasizing punitive results during minor incidents, educators were able to avoid communication breakdowns and instead work through the events with young people (Holcomb).

These types of results are possible when we can be more empathic with the child and what they are experiencing. Students will appreciate our honesty, our passion, and our desire to help them grow in life. What we are doing is treating the “whole child,” not just implementing exams, standards and a rigorous workload. I believe all students can learn under the right circumstances and the will to succeed. Discipline has its place and is necessary in some cases. However, defenses go up when students do not have a connection to the person that is disciplining them.

My hope remains focused on helping students to become self-motivated, stay the course and not to allow the obstacles they face at home or elsewhere to get in the way of success in life. Helping them to become self-sufficient by mak-

ing the right choices is the ultimate goal. We need to learn to align academics, behavior and personal social success, by first understanding the cause of the at-risk behavior and then addressing it using a multi-tiered system of support programs.

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“It is in fact a part of the function of education to help us escape, not from our own time — for we are bound by that — but from the intellectual and emotional limitations of our time.”

-T.S. Eliot

By:

LISA CARLTON, DANIEL STONEBLOOM, AND CAMY DITTER

“My son’s transition from traditional school proved difficult both socially and academically. At Seabright High School, my son feels empowered by being an integral part of his education.”

It’s Monday morning at Seabright High and we’re seated in a small circle. We check in with how everyone’s doing and begin to discuss what needs to be done for our book’s publication. We then discuss how to get a commitment from everyone to be on time for our new classes. Our Create Community class ends and the room is cleared of all furniture. Music is softly playing as we kick off our shoes and our new Qi Gong teacher walks into the room. A new movement practice: everyone spreads out to swing their arms and begins breathing more deeply than any of us have in a long time! Some of us are laughing and leaning back, not sure we want to try. The hour goes by and, when it’s over, we sit on the floor talking for a long time. We make some food and move the furniture back in place. More students arrive and sign in as we all get ready for our writing groups.

The Place Between Classroom Learning and Independent Study

Court, Community, and Alternative schools often employ Independent Studies (IS) as an effective way to work with students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend school every day. IS is an excellent educational experience for many students. For some of these students, however, independent

studies result in fewer opportunities for collaboration and socialization, important opportunities for developing interpersonal skills. For English Language Learners, IS affords less opportunity to speak and thus less opportunity to develop competence with the English language. In some situations tutoring, computer access, weekly counseling, lunch, and events are missed out on because students simply don’t attend school frequently enough to receive them. They miss out on opportunities and resources that would enrich and support them academically, socially, and emotionally. Many students need an option that falls between a daily classroom experience and Independent Studies.

Personalized Learning Communities

This year, three schools in the Santa Cruz County Office of Education have created a middle ground: the Personalized Learning Community (PLC). These new PLCs are in compliance with Independent Studies contracts and rules but provide access to a greater range of supportive services, working to build community and provide a safe space to access learning. These programs are flexible, individual, and responsive in offering a creative and supportive education to students who need something different.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Seabright High School: A Personalized Learning Community

After 18 years of classroom teaching followed by 7 years as an Independent Studies teacher, Lisa Carlton began offering classes for her IS students, realizing the need for positive peer interaction. That experience informed the development of the Seabright High School model. This year, Lisa has blended Independent Study with daily classes and events. Seabright High School: A Personalized Learning Community has three primary strengths: empowerment, personalization, and safety. The students have co-created this school with their teacher. The first class, "Create Community," begins Monday mornings when students participate in community building exercises, discuss current issues, and explore what events they want to run on Fridays. These Friday activities range from documentaries on bees while eating bread with butter and honey, to student-led performance art. In an inclusive and safe environment, students share why they are at Seabright and what they want from the school. Students collaborated in writing the school's guidelines and mission statement:

At Seabright High School, we are creative, flexible, ambitious, independent and responsible learners. We are creating a comfortable learning community where students have choices, reach their goals, appreciate diversity and feel safe. Through independent study, small daily classes, and recreational activities, we work together in a personalized learning community, supporting each individual to reach their potential!

New students sign an agreement to honor the mission statement and guidelines as they come into the school. Elective classes are designed to emotionally ground and increase students' focus on their activities at school. These classes include percussion, qi gong, hip hop, artistic events, guest speakers and sports. Students play in the alternative education sports league on Fridays. With a background in Art Therapy and in alignment with research on Trauma-based Learning, Lisa utilizes many creative techniques that will allow students to experience success. For example, coloring is sometimes encouraged during class discussions. Students may also study outside in the sunshine and play a little basketball with the aide when they need a break. The school's counselor meets individually with half of the students two days a week and teaches a popular class: "Breaking Through Barriers," every Thursday. All classes involve active and often hands-on experiments, activities or technology.

A Personalized Program

When a student joins the Seabright High Community, a personalized program is developed with the teacher, guardian, and student to meet their needs while earning credit. Our 9th-12th graders come from unique, often challenging situations with a wide range of abilities and interests. Once a week, each student has an IS appointment with Lisa. This interaction supports developing a friendly, trusting teacher/student relationship. Students earn credit for independent work and participation in classes and events.

Program Logistics

Seabright students are currently writing a book as part of the Santa Cruz County Office of Educa-

PERSONALIZED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

tion's Young Writers Program and most students have doubled the number of classes they attend to participate in its creation. In general, students attend 3-4 days a week for 3-4 hours each day: this includes their I.S. appointment, three or more classes, and tutoring/study time. Academic classes currently offered include: English, U.S. History, Physics and Research Methods. When students are on campus, they participate in any of the classes offered that day. At other times, students are studying, eating, or being tutored, often in math, by the instructional aide or the University of California intern. Staff strategically engage in conversation with students: "So glad you're here! What will you complete today? What kind of support do you need? Where's the best place for you to study?"

Students track their academic progress on a Google doc., raising self-efficacy. Understanding their own progress supports teens in taking increased ownership of their education. When a student gets behind, an intervention and revised plan is negotiated with the teacher and often the student's guardian. Lisa dialogues every day with students and parents: "How much time does the student need to be here to succeed and how can we work together?"

Safety

The class atmosphere is bright and welcoming. There is music playing, soft lighting, and friendly offers of good food. The variety of activities each day offer the students practice at working within a changing environment while maintaining productivity. Students collaborate in classes, on research projects, and socialize in between. This population of students enjoys being in control of their education and are proud of their commit-

ment to and success at it. There is an emphasis on emotional safety within the student population. Students are extremely respectful of one another's differences. Humor and joy are values this group practices: making it enjoyable to be a school and safe to try out new things and make mistakes.

La Manzana Learning Community

The PLC model takes a slightly different shape in nearby Watsonville. Daniel Stonebloom's La Manzana Learning Community (LMLC) is open throughout the week, mixing direct instruction with guest speakers, a book group, structured language instruction, one-on-one support, and time to work independently. Some students, especially teen parents or those with jobs, follow the traditional IS model. But most students attend the entire week to get multiple needs met.

The students at LMLC are there primarily to access a safe and supportive space for learning. Either because of neighborhood boundaries, instability at home, social anxiety, or issues with their peers, many students are not successful at the large high schools. When they leave traditional high school and lose access to a computer lab at school, they often lose access to technology altogether. Our students can look up words on their phones, but they need scaffolding and EL strategies as they struggle with written composition and navigating online courses. More than 80% of the students at LMLC are English Language Learners or Long Term English Learners. Providing students support to access academic conversations, collaborative group projects, and oral presentations is critical for their language learning.

PERSONALIZED LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Highlands Park Personalized Learning Community

The third school utilizing the PLC model, Highlands Park Personalized Learning Community, is located in the San Lorenzo Valley. HP serves students who have any number of needs that bring them to alternative education: social-emotional issues, health limitations, unique learning styles or personalities that make large classroom settings too challenging. In general, the location of this site in a small, semi-rural mountain community allows much-needed support to independent study students whose transportation challenges reduce their access to the larger variety of alternative school options in the Santa Cruz area. This program provides a model that is basically the half-way world between daily attendance classes and traditional independent study. Students who need more academic support, or possibly an opportunity to be in a social setting, are encouraged to attend classes throughout the week where they receive teacher-directed small group instruction in language arts, math, and social studies. Each school morning begins with a short “circle” meeting and mindfulness activity and personal goal setting.

In addition to directed studies, students are provided a supportive and nurturing environment for completing other independent studies work, access to computers, and lunch. A variety of other activities are blended into the program including field trips, guest speakers, group activities with another classroom on campus, nature hikes, art and cooking activities. All students complete additional school work outside of class; those assignments are carefully constructed options tailored to the unique skills and interests of the individual students. The teacher, Camy Ditter, utilizes both the

student’s self reported interests and personal observation to select appropriate homework assignments that are user-friendly so completion and success rates are high. An option for one student might be an online class while novel reading or work experience would be a better fit for another. In this setting, students benefit from the flexibility of independent study while still having a sense of connectedness to peers, the nurturing and fun environment of a classroom that is “just theirs,” and curriculum that is shaped to individualized learning needs, styles and academic skill level. Vigilant communication with parents, counselors, or outside support people helps create a feeling of strong support and concern for students. With experience in education and counseling, Ms. Ditter knows first hand the value of coordinating, outreach, and providing a supportive environment that puts students’ minds at ease so that learning opportunities are enhanced.

First Year’s Results

A personalized learning community is student friendly and flexible, offering abundant resources and opportunities for learners. As a safe and supportive community, students can learn to lead. Utilizing technology and other resources to inform themselves, they work together to practice critical skills and master meaningful content. The model provides choices for families to find the right amount of support for their teenager. The model is new and it’s working! Although many of our students have been searching for a school that fits, the populations of our schools have had very little turnover this year. Seabright student’s share:

“This school is the best choice for me, because not only am I attending the classes I want, which makes me want to succeed, but we’re getting the

PERSONALIZED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

help we need, which I never really got before.”

Another shares,

“This is a fantastic small community with a positive environment. It proved helpful to me, being behind in credits, because I had the support and help from teachers and aides around me.”

And finally a parent’s perspective:

“My son’s transition from traditional school proved difficult both socially and academically. At Seabright High School, my son feels empowered by being an integral part of his education.”

Resources:

Capern, T., & Hammond, L. (2014). Establishing Positive Relationships with Secondary Gifted Students and Students with Emotional/Behavioural Disorders: Giving These Diverse Learners What They Need. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(4).<http://ddoairg/10.14221/ajte.2014v39n4.5>

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Literature Review

This literature review is intended to assist researchers, practitioners and policymakers in learning about programs and strategies that actually support the improvement of the college-going rates for at-risk/transient students. These programs and strategies are intended to help transient youth improve their academic performance, plan for post-secondary education and build the confidence necessary to pursue a post-secondary education. This underscores the importance of examining the various challenges transient students face such as incarceration, foster youth placement, and enrollment in special education programs, which may negatively impact their participation rates in secondary education. Today's high school graduation rates and national estimates of high school graduation rates emphasize the need to increase college aspirations in our nation's schools. According to government and independent reports, the typical high school graduation rate was 72% in 1991 and declined to 71% in 2002 (Greene and Winters, 2005). Among ethnic-minority students, the graduation rate is considerably lower. Researchers Greene & Winters (2005) approximate that only 56 % of black and 52 % of Hispanic students graduated, weighed again 78% of their white counterparts. Green & Forster (2003) show that a mere 70 % of students in public high schools graduate and only 32 % leave eligible to attend colleges and universities. Despite the overall national decline in high school dropout rates, percentages remain high among ethnic- minority and impoverished groups. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education recorded a 15.4% dropout rate

among Hispanics and 9.3% dropout rate among African Americans. In contrast, percentages among other ethnic groups were significantly lower— 5.2% among whites and 3.4% estimation among Asian Americans. Percentages are even higher for groups with pecuniary difficulties; 15.8% of students in the lowest income bracket do not complete a secondary level of education.

The following is an examination of literature related to issues associated with increasing the college-going rate among at-risk students and further examination of the efficiencies and deficiencies of these programs in addressing the social, academic and psychological needs of transient youth. This literature review begins by outlining the necessity for reform by exploring variables that contribute to the low college attendance rate. The next section reviews the college-going improvement models that have demonstrated improved completion rates in secondary education but have not affected post-secondary enrollment. The final section presents an examination of the research on the effects of incarceration, foster youth placement and participation in special education programs that influence educational attainment. A review of educational reform is fundamental to researchers, practitioners and policymakers as they consider ways to improve college readiness options for at-risk students.

History

In 1960, California adopted the Master Plan for Higher Education that assured access to public post-secondary education. Major dimensions of the Education Act included transforming competing col-

“Young people who interface with the juvenile justice system face significant barriers to education” (Abrams and Franke, p.234)

INCREASING THE COLLEGE GOING RATE

leges and universities into a coherent system. Although a number of key features were never enacted, subsequent policy has modified the Act to provide all California residents in the top one-eighth or top one-third of the state-wide high school graduating class who apply to be offered a place in the UC or CSU system. In spite of these efforts, The Education Trust (2004) states that only 34 % of high school graduates meet the basic requirements for admission into four-year universities--numbers plunge even lower for minority groups. For those who do not finish high school prepared for success in postsecondary education, there is a clear and well-documented cost--Belfield and Levin (2009). The low achievement rates of the area are being addressed by educational leaders in the region. In state after state, leaders have said,

In the information age, it is no longer tenable for large numbers of our students to graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills that they need to be ready for college. Instead of just getting some of our students to that level, we're going to make readiness for college, careers, and citizenship our core goal for all of our students. (Achieve and the Education Trust, 2008).

Carden maintains that a lack of information about going to college is a leading barrier to college attendance in the region (Carden, 2007). Although education may not be the answer to all of the Central Valley's problems, improving the college-going rates of at-risk students would be a great benefit to the region.

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) point out that low-income and first-generation students frequently face challenges when preparing for college admission: taking college entrance tests, searching for colleges, submitting college applications and choosing a college. Students may lack knowledge and information about how to navigate these difficulties and may not have adequate guidance from those close to them (Cunningham, Erisman & Looney, 2007). Therefore effective dissemination of information about colleges, programs and other collegiate related materials has been shown to improve participation. For example, research has demonstrated that students with lower amounts of information about college, in particular information on cost and available financial aid are less likely to attend college (Flint, 1993). Hossler and Stage

(1992) maintain that the amount of information available to students is also conveyed by relationships and interaction with other students who intend pursue a post-secondary education. (Hossler & Stage, 1992; Perna & Titus, 2005). A few studies have suggested the strongest forecaster for college attendance include social and parental support as well as access to information about admissions, testing, and financial aid (Martinez & Klopott, 2005). Research also shows that a lack of knowledge about college, specifically financial aid, is widespread in society today with this deficiency being most distinct among Latino and Black students (Cunningham, Erisman, & Looney, 2007; Grodsky & Jones, 2004). Successful approaches which inform parents and students include one-on-one academic tutoring, college field trips, college counseling, and some type of parent element (Fashola & Slavin, 2001; students' localized needs by affirming their culture and identity, rather than ignoring or rejecting it" (Jun & Colyar, 2002, p. 206). In spite of these measures attendance rates in secondary-education are still alarmingly low for at-risk students, which may be attributed to incarceration, foster youth placement or special education needs.

Incarceration

"Young people who interface with the juvenile justice system face significant barriers to education" (Abrams and Franke, p.234) While education is important for all members of society and essential for upward mobility it is even more critical that at-risk youth who have been incarcerated acquire postsecondary education and become meaningful contributors to society. Unfortunately, studies show that policy reforms alone may not be enough to change the trajectory of their lives. Despite current political reforms such as restorative justice and alternative sentencing, it still appears that when individuals and at-risk youth have been incarcerated their involvement with the judicial system produces significant obstacles to educational attainment. An exploration of the factors that contribute to this dismal outcome is of relevance because it contributes to the factors of incarceration. Students that have been incarcerated face substantial obstacles to higher education. The effects of incarceration can be

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long lasting and affects individuals both personally and socially as they attempt to re-acclimate themselves into society. Oftentimes, being incarcerated creates invisible barriers, such as the stigma associated with having a criminal record and alienation from one's peers, which these individuals must overcome. Indeed, education is important to all members of society but even more so to those with a criminal record. Abrams and Frank theorize that acquiring an education may serve as a protective factor and earning a college degree may negate an individual's criminal record thereby significantly decreasing the levels of recidivism and the likelihood of re-incarceration (Abrams and Frank, 2013). In general, incarcerated individuals face numerous learning disabilities that have an impact on academic achievement but are not considered by the judicial system. Cases in point, national estimates show that as many as 33.4 % of incarcerated youth have learning disabilities in contrast to the general population of 8.8% (Kirk, Roberts and Sampson). In congruence, adolescents that have been incarcerated have a wide range of intellectual disabilities, which hamper the likelihood of academic success (Oudekerk, Reppucci and Chauhan, 2012). Further, when youth are incarcerated they are less likely to develop strong school attachments that may further hinder achievement and lessen their chances of advancing to higher education (Abrams and Frank, 2013). Many researchers suspect that once youth have become indoctrinated into the criminal justice system, they are placed at an educational disadvantage, which may have far reaching consequences. According to Kirk and associates, "Rational Choice theories suggest that students may drop out of school or opt not to enter college following arrest because they assess (perhaps correctly) that the touted benefits and added utility of education are not likely to materialize given the stigma of a criminal record"(Kirk, Robert and Sampson, p.37). It is theorized that once an individual has acquired an arrest record, it sets in motion a cycle of detachment from the academic arena. Furthermore, there exist institutionalized barriers that serve as a deterrent to those with a criminal background. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, more than 60 % of colleges and universities account for applicants' criminal history when making admissions

decisions. Measures such as the Education Act of 1998, barred higher education benefits--such as financial assistance like grants, student loans, etc. -- to individuals convicted of misdemeanor or felony drug charges. Deprived of financial support, it is unlikely that ex-offenders will enroll in college let alone finish their post-secondary education.

Foster Youth

School programs and systems may not be designed to address the specific needs of foster youth that extend well beyond the classroom. Along with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) comes disorders such as anxiety, depression, trust issues and difficulty establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships, all of which may impact their ability to partake in post-secondary education. The impact of being a foster youth can extend well beyond the social and personal characteristics having long-term effects on this segment of the population. These students face a myriad of obstacles in their attempts to achieve higher education that other groups do not, making them one of the most vulnerable populations in academics (Morton, 2015). This group has substantially even lower high school graduation rates when they are single parents as well. Many foster youth have experienced the trauma that comes from being separated from their family, usually under dire circumstances, and having to acclimate to a new family and home. It is no wonder that children in foster care often demonstrate behavior problems with the most common being Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS)--which 25% of the foster children suffer from (Morton, 2015). These statistics are alarming, especially in lieu of the fact that their percentages are significantly higher than veterans who have fought in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq whose percentages are less than 20%. Since they are minors, foster children are assigned social workers that are responsible for their safety and wellbeing, a scenario that would be challenging for anyone. Because foster youth experience such turbulence in their home life, it is not surprising it impacts their success in school with at least 24% experiencing suspension or expulsion. Not such a large number, but if you look at the number of people

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in combat it paints a surreal picture of the severity of the problem. Those foster youths who do graduate from high school seldom attend college or university; only a mere 33% will transition to an institution of postsecondary education. (Barth, 1990). Academic success can be particularly arduous for at-risk students in foster care who require special education services. Their representation in special education can be attributed to the high rates of relocating, perceived stigma of foster care and the effective implementation of Individualized Learning Plans (IEP). At times these services do not automatically follow the student to new school sites, hence there is a delay in the student's access to these services. Further, of the students referred to Special Ed over half are referred for emotional and behavioral diagnoses (Morton, 2015). To effectively and safely navigate the academic highway requires that students be advocates for their academic success, establish meaningful relationships with peers and instructors as well as manage monetary concerns, financial aid, psychological challenges and mental aptitude to effectively participate in higher learning. However, many of these skills are substandard in at-risk students in foster care because of setbacks they inherit as a result of their social situation.

Special Education

Navigating the transition from high school to postsecondary education can be a major challenge for special education students. According to researchers, as many as 28% of special education students graduate high school without a diploma, decreasing the likelihood of academic success in secondary education coursework (Scherer, 2015). When special education students transition to college they are often faced with the dim reality that they are no longer covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but now, rather ascribe to the guidelines of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. As result, they are no longer privy to the services and supports once allocated to under IDEA such as educational advocacy, transitional planning and collaboration between parents and school personnel. Bearing this in mind, admittance into higher education can appear insurmountable for students with mental, physical, or

learning disabilities, such as dyslexia or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) that requires special education services. Due to the academic and social needs of these students they are often underserved in higher education because providing support can be multi-tiered. (Patterson, 2013). Enrollees with special education needs require a scaffolding of support services to remain successful in college and these programs are oftentimes underfunded or not supported on college campuses. Furthermore, this group must address innate invisible barriers to success and struggle with self-efficacy in areas of confidence, motivation, or even the persistence to accomplish their college aspirations (Patterson, 2013). In addition to facing academic challenges, special education students have difficulty in areas such as meeting with school personnel, class scheduling, managing finances and just learning how to get to college since many have relied on family for support in these areas. For some, the cost of college attendance can seem challenging because they often do not have the mental fortitude to attend full-time and financial aid will not fully fund part-time enrollment. Hence, the outlook is bleak for special education students and the probability of them successfully earning a degree will be an uphill battle.

Implications

The implications for the high dropout rate among minorities, low-income students and those considered at-risk is of urgency for educators. Practitioners and policy must acknowledge there can also be dire consequences for the California Central Valley, state and nation if this issue is not addressed. The low high school graduation rates are alarming and research shows that lower levels of education have an impact on the individual with lower earning power over a lifetime and this has costs to society as well. Human capital is one of our greatest resources and there is a large portion of the population that may be lost if the current trends continue. However, to better engage students in learning in high school educators, practitioners and policy makers may need to re-evaluate how students are taught. If we are to increase the college going rate it is first necessary to address the generational patterns of low graduation rates. Often, as an educator, I

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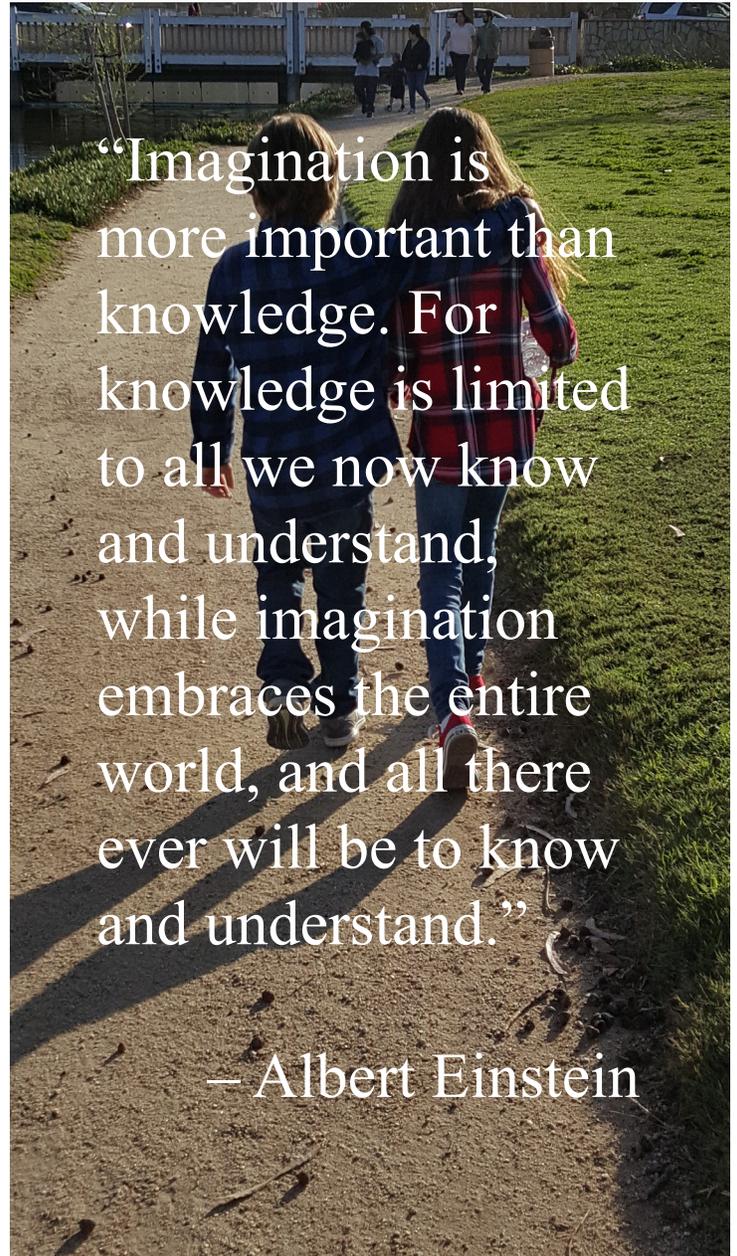
teach numerous students who are still among the first to graduate high school in their families. More importantly, we must begin to empower students to see beyond high school and know they can aspire to higher educational levels as well. Many students have shared that because they have met this first milestone, high school graduation, that it should suffice since they have accomplished more than many of their peers or family members. Students must be encouraged to dream beyond high school graduation and to aspire to secondary education. It is essential for the individual and the community that students transition to higher education. While the outlook may be dismal for students in traditional high schools those enrolled in alternative education settings face an even greater battle to succeed in postsecondary education. These students have been unsuccessful in traditional high school and often fall further behind academically, socially and psychologically when enrolled in alternative education. Many are credit deficient due to their high mobility rates and transiency. Hence, further research is needed to address the academic, social, behavioral and psychological needs of at-risk and transient students. Students that are homeless, in foster care, have special education needs and that are or have been incarcerated have special needs that warrant additional review and research. After much review and exploration I believe that whatever the path students take to become classified as at-risk and transient by nature within itself is traumatic and it is this trauma that must be addressed. How can educators take into account a student's background and diversity when implementing strategies and programs to increase the college going rate, is a question that warrants research. Why is it that some students excel and aspire to higher education while others do not? My hypothesis is that students have an intrinsic motivation, which propels them to academic success, and this unseen factor oftentimes can compensate for extrinsic factors.

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“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.”

– Albert Einstein



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TEACHING RESILIENCY AND ACADEMIC CONTENT IN AN AT-RISK SETTING: A FOUR-WEEK PRELIMINARY STUDY AND AN EIGHT-WEEK EXTENDED STUDY

BY WILDT, D., TEACHER'S COLLEGE OF SAN JOAQUIN

“Most students expressed in their writings that aggression is a situational issue that cannot be taught or learned from historical examples.”

Purpose

Can academic content, specifically social studies and historical examples, positively affect the resiliency in students? I want to see if there is behavioral value in teaching and learning history. For the sake of this project, resiliency will be measured by attendance, student in-class behavior, suspensions, and student views on when aggressive behavior is necessary or justified. The following study specifically focuses on At-Risk school populations in the Community Schools and Program for the San Joaquin County Office of Education.

A Four-Week Preliminary Study

Central Research Question

What effect does teaching resiliency through social studies have on behavior and academics in historically at-risk schools?

Teacher Actions and Methods

A mixed study examining various data (quantitative and qualitative data) that was collected during a four-week period. The study sought to discover if teaching examples of cultural differences and overcoming adversity through social studies would influence a student's attitude towards aggression and aggressive behavior. It is expected that there will be no significant change in student attitude on aggression and aggressive behavior during the four-week treatment. The study hopes to find any slight change in attitude and behavior in order to extrapolate a stronger hypothesis for the outcomes of a longer treatment period. Both the four-week and the eight-week study was conducted with students classified as at-risk, based their educational histories—such as

expulsions, truancies, behavioral issues, learning disabilities, and transiency.

Prior to the application, 43 students were asked to complete a survey obtained from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention that measured students' normative beliefs about aggression. In addition, suspension records, attendance records and field notes for these students were gathered to provide a baseline for comparing post application data. Instead of using the previous established resiliency building curriculum created by the CDC, only the A1 assessment tool for normative beliefs about aggression was used. This assessment tool was used as a pre-survey and post-survey for the treatment period. The treatment given to the students was curriculum written and compiled by San Joaquin County Office of Education County Operated Schools and Programs curriculum writers, which is focused on integrating social students with a variety of content areas. During this initial treatment, students learned about the similarities and differences between major world religions and how individuals and cultures have dealt with adversity in the past and during contemporary times. Religions and historically related topics that were covered during this treatment included comparisons of one or more religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Sikhism) and a comparative study on the stories and attributes of leaders that are significant to each of the religions. The curriculum used included information about religious history, scriptures, stories, beliefs, and significant leaders and individuals within each religion. During the treatment, students completed

short on demand writing tasks that were based on their own learning reflections and ideas about studying history, culture, and literature. The three writing prompts that were completed by each student are:

1. In your opinion, is it important to **learn about history**, and can learning about history affect a person’s views on aggression and aggressive behavior?
2. In your opinion, is it important to **learn about other cultures and religions**, and can learning about other cultures and religions affect a person’s views on aggression and aggressive behavior?
3. In your opinion, is it important to **read literature that is from different perspectives**, and can reading literature from different perspectives affect a person’s views on aggression and aggressive behavior?

The student writing responses from the above writing prompts were used as qualitative data and they were categorized based on common ideas and words expressed by students. See Table 3.1 for the compiled and categorized responses to the writing prompt regarding “history.”

The quantitative data chosen for this study was attendance percentages for the school site of the students receiving the treatment, the frequency of negative student narratives written by teachers of the students receiving the treatment, the frequency of suspension before and after the treatment, and Normative Beliefs about Aggression pre-treatment and post-treatment scores.

Collection of Data

The following data compares percentages and frequencies immediately before and after the treatment period. This data was obtained through both the San Joaquin County Office of Education attendance files and teacher narratives related to positive and negative student behaviors. For the sake of this study, negative behavior teacher narratives (that were teacher generated intervention notes) were examined on a variety of student misconduct—such as refusing to work on an assignment, students demonstrating disrespectful behavior towards the teacher or other students, or students not complying with school site policies on electronic devices or classroom procedures. Negative behavior teacher narratives are used

in the school program to track teacher interventions that are used prior to issuing suspensions. Table 1 features a summary of attendance, negative behavior teacher narratives, and suspensions before and after the four-week treatment. Table 2.1 is the pre and post survey scores for all 43 students that received treatment. The data is broken down further in the table to show the difference in the average responses of males and females. It was determined to be important to reveal this further break down considering the wording of the survey question that distinguish between genders in the provided scenarios. Also, when considering the topics of gender in the religions that were studied during the treatment, this data may be used in the future to generate other writing prompts and gender specific lessons.

Table 1.1

<p>Attendance Daily average at the start of trial treatment: 81% Daily average at the end of the trial treatment: 84%</p> <p>Negative Behavior Teacher Narratives Weekly average at the start of trial treatment: 6.75 per week Weekly average at the end of the trial treatment: 2.75 per week</p> <p>Suspensions Weekly average at the start of trial treatment: 2.5 per week Weekly average at the end of the trial treatment: 2.0 per week</p>

Table 2.1
(continued on next page)

TEACHING RESILIENCY AND ACADEMIC CONTENT IN AN AT-RISK SETTING

Normative Beliefs about Aggression Questions	Pre Treatment Average Score	Male (Pre) n = 29	Female (Pre) n = 14	Post Treatment Average Score	Male (Post) n = 29	Female (Post) n = 14
Situation #1: Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John.						
1. Do you think it's OK for John to scream at him?	2.093	2.207	1.857	2.186	2.241	2.071
2. Do you think it's OK for John to hit him?	1.744	1.793	1.643	1.674	1.655	1.714
Situation #2: Suppose a boy says something bad to a girl.						
3. Do you think it's OK for the girl to scream at him?	2.442	2.483	2.357	2.419	2.276	2.714
4. Do you think it's wrong for the girl to hit him?	2.023	2.0	2.071	1.837	1.828	1.857
Situation #3: Suppose a girl says something bad to another girl, Mary.						
5. Do you think it's OK for Mary to scream at her?	2.418	2.414	2.429	2.233	2.172	2.357
6. Do you think it's OK for Mary to hit her?	2.047	2.0	2.143	1.907	1.828	2.071

TEACHING RESILIENCY AND ACADEMIC CONTENT IN AN AT-RISK SETTING

<p>Situation #4: Suppose a girl says something bad to a boy.</p> <p>7. Do you think it's OK for the boy to scream at her?</p> <p>8. Do you think it's wrong for the boy to hit her?</p>	1.837	1.759	2.0	1.93	1.897	2.0
<p>Situation #5: Suppose a boy hits another boy, John.</p> <p>9. Do you think it's OK for John to hit him back?</p>	3.047	3.712	2.786	2.837	2.862	2.786
<p>Situation #6: Suppose a boy hits a girl.</p> <p>10. Do you think it's OK for the girl to hit him back?</p>	2.844	3.069	2.5	2.721	2.724	2.714
<p>Situation #7: Suppose a girl hits another girl, Mary.</p> <p>11. Do you think it's OK for Mary to hit her back?</p>	2.930	2.862	3.071	2.651	2.621	2.714
<p>Situation #8: Suppose a girl hits a boy.</p> <p>12. Do you think it's OK for the boy to hit her back?</p>	1.488	1.310	1.857	1.512	1.379	1.786

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General Belief Questions						
13. In general, it is wrong to hit other people.	1.884	1.828	2.0	1.837	1.724	2.071
14. If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things to other people.	1.465	1.349	1.714	1.512	1.621	1.286
15. In general, it is OK to yell at others and say bad things.	1.326	1.345	1.286	1.442	1.552	1.214
16. It is usually OK to push or shove other people around if you're mad.	2.116	2.138	2.071	1.977	1.966	2.0
17. It is wrong to insult other people	1.723	1.724	1.714	1.558	1.586	1.5
18. It is wrong to take it out on others by saying mean things when you're mad.	1.558	1.448	1.786	1.605	1.586	1.642
19. It is generally wrong to get into physical fights with others.	1.372	1.414	1.286	1.442	1.517	1.286
20. In general, it is OK to take your anger out on others by using physical force.	1.442	1.414	1.571	1.628	1.655	1.571
Mean Score	1.957	1.95	1.975	1.911	1.897	1.939

Interpreting Scores:

1 = indicates the belief that it is unacceptable to aggress against others in provocative situations.

2 = indicates the belief that it is somewhat unacceptable to aggress against others in provocative Situations.

3 = indicates the belief that it is somewhat acceptable to aggress against others in provocative

Situations.

4 = indicates the belief that it is acceptable to aggress against others in provocative situations.

Qualitative Data

Table 3.1

Categorized Students Writing Responses:

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n = 43 (29 males, 14 females)

History can help people avoid repeating historical mistakes	18.6%
History can not help people avoid making mistakes	2.33%
No direct writing related to avoiding mistakes	70.97%
History can help improve a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	88.37%
History can not help improve a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	9.3%
No direct writing related to a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	16.31%
History helps people understand human behavior/aggression	48.84%
History does not help people understand human behavior/aggression	2.33%
No direct writing related to understanding human behavior/aggression	48.83%

Analysis of Data

The Normative Beliefs about Aggression assessment results show no statistical significance. This assessment tool was chosen to be the main tool for measuring statistical significance in this study. The following is a summary of the pre-treatment and post-treatment survey statistics:

Pre-treatment survey

No. of student participants: 43

Mean: 1.957

Standard Deviation: 0.5865

Post-treatment survey

No. of student participants: 43

Mean: 1.911

Standard Deviation: 0.6572

P-value from comparison t-test: 0.7300.

As for data collected for attendance percentages, negative behavior teacher narratives, and suspensions, there was a decline in the frequencies of the negative narratives and suspensions and an increase in the attendance percentage. The basic attendance percentage improved by 4 percentage points, which proportionally is 3.7% improvement. The per week decline in negative teacher narratives clearly change based on teacher observed misconduct in the classroom, but it may not be directly related to the social studies curriculum treatment during this time period. A drop from 6.75 to 2.75 negative behavior teacher narratives is a 59.26% reduction. The rates of suspension per week were reduced by 20%, changing from 2.5 average suspensions per week to 2.

As for student perceptions about the importance of studying history and how it relates to views on aggression, a majority of students expressed that learning history helps improve cultural awareness and tolerance, but it does not have a direct relationship on how or when a person demonstrates aggressive behavior. Most students expressed in their writings that aggression is a situational issue that cannot be taught or learned from historical examples. This is something that I would like to explore further when I continue this research with longer treatment periods.

Conclusions

The Normative Beliefs about Aggression assessment results and the attendance percentages do not show a strong connection between the treatment and a direct change in student attitudes and behaviors, but the data regarding negative behavior teacher narratives and suspensions show some change in teacher-student relationships within the classroom. Perhaps, the treatment did not directly change the general views that students have on aggression and aggressive behavior, but it may have impacted their school relationships while in the classroom and when interacting with teachers. The improved dynamic between teacher-student relationship is supported by the 2013 study "When schooling experience is respectful of children" by Linda Theron, at least in regards to the benefits of students having positive perceptions and experiences with their school and teachers.

The findings of this four-week study seems to support some previous studies related to student teacher relationships, and ways in which these relationships can be improved. Though there was no statistical significance shown in the results of the pre-treatment and post-treatment survey, it does not mean that this study was a failure. There were some minimal differences in student responses from the pre-treatment survey to the post-treatment survey, which supports the notion that a longer treatment period may lead to more statistically significant outcomes.

In regards to differences in aggression attitudes and behaviors, previous studies found that there tend to be measureable differences between males and females, such as the 2007 study “Sex difference in the forms of aggression among adolescent students in Ghana” conducted by Amedahe and Owis-Banahen, and the 2011 study by Smith and Bunting, “Moral reasoning of two groups of college students.” Prior research has found that males tend to demonstrate more physical aggression than females, and females tend to demonstrate more emotional aggression. When re-examining the gender specific response averages to Normative Beliefs about Aggression survey, females scored higher on the aggression scale than males on most questions. This appears to be very interesting considering previous aforementioned research, especially since many of the questions related to taking physical action against another person. Perhaps, this change in the gender stereotypes about aggression and aggressive behavior may be related to the specific student population that may have a higher concentration of females that have been exposed to more aggressive home or social conditions.

Reflections

Action research is very helpful when considering how to better refine my teaching practice. Collecting and examining data allows an educator to not only feel like they are accomplishing their desired teaching goals, but it can help direct areas of need and improvement that will better meet the needs of students. I plan to continue to refine this study throughout the current school year. Specific improvements include longer treatment periods and more lessons that include more lesson topics that include females from history, which is supported by the finding

in the 2004 study “Pupil perceptions of effective teaching and subject relevance in history” by Buddupl an Adey. I am also interested to continue the tracking of negative behavior teacher narratives and suspensions to determine if they are exclusive from teaching content or if there is a measureable positive relationship between the two.

An Eight-Week Extended Study

Central Research Question

The main research question “What effect does teaching resiliency through social studies have on behavior and academics in historically at-risk schools?” was still used to drive most of the data collection and analysis for the eight-week extended study, but there are also two more questions, developed through the data analysis of the four-week preliminary study. One of the two extended research questions is an extension of the 2013 study by Linda Theron. The two new extended, or sub-research questions are:

1. What effect does teaching resiliency through both male and female historical individuals have on the behavior and academics in historically at-risk schools?
2. What effect does teacher-student relationships have on a student’s direct perception of learning and resiliency related to academics?

Teacher Actions and Methods

At the core of the eight-week extended study, the same mixed study of examining various data used during the four-week preliminary study was continued (quantitative data on attendance percentages, the frequency of negative student narratives written by teachers, the frequency of suspension before and after the eight-week study, and Normative Beliefs about Aggression post-treatment scores), and some additional data collection and analysis was added—exclusively to the eight-week study (see the immediate list below). It is important to note that this study also included 58 student participants rather all of the original 43 students. Approximately 12 students from the four-week study were no longer available due to transiency or other factors of attrition—such as graduating

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mid-year or moving. The extended study sought to further examine if teaching examples of cultural differences and overcoming adversity through social studies would influence a student's attitude towards aggression and aggressive behavior, but it also sought to better define the following:

1. The current resiliency classifications of students in the study (Table 4.1, quantitative data)
2. Gender specific perceptions on studying historical individuals through the a "lens of resiliency." (Table 5.1, qualitative data)
3. Student perceptions on student-teacher relationships in regards to learning and applying academic knowledge to either jobs or post-secondary education (Graphs 2.1-2.10, quantitative data)

As was expected in the four-week preliminary study, there will be no significant change in student attitude on aggression and aggressive behavior during the eight-week treatment. This extended study hopes to find any slight change in attitude and behavior and to better understand the resiliency profiles of the student population in the targeted school program in order to develop a stronger hypothesis and a more in-depth study (such as a program wide application)—ranging from a year to two years.

In comparison to the original 43 students that were asked to complete a survey from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention that measured students' normative beliefs about aggression at the beginning of the four-week preliminary study, 58 students completed the survey at the end of the eight-week extended study. And again, only the A1 assessment tool for normative beliefs about aggression was used. Though there was a needed change in the number of students and the actual participants from the four-week study to the eight-week study, this research is most concerned with discovering any possible overall averages in student perceptions and behaviors. Therefore, it is not only concerned with isolated students, it is also attempting to observe any possible changes in school culture. So, even with the change in replacing some participants and increasing the total number of participants in this extended study, the eight-week

treatment continued with the data collection methods used for the four-week study—suspension records, attendance records, and field notes. The data gathered from the eight-week period was also compared with the before data and after data from the four-week preliminary study.

The treatment given during the eight-week study was an extension of content used during the four-week study. The topics of the academic content varied between the two studies in regards to the themes. During the four-week study, students examined and discussion various major world religions, and during the eight-week study students examined political and cultural conflicts related to cultural and religious identities—such as the cause and effects of the Protestant Reformation and Jewish migration and living conditions from Roman times to the 20th Century. The curriculum used included information about religious and cultural history, stories, narratives, and significant individuals from a range of historical events and periods, in order to demonstrate to students how individuals and groups have been resilient when faced with adverse conditions. During the eight-week study, just as with the four week study, students completed a short on demand writing tasks that were based on their own learning reflections and ideas about studying history, culture, and literature. Again the following three writing prompts are identical to the ones included in the four-week study:

1. In your opinion, is it important to **learn about history**, and can learning about history affect a person's views on aggression and aggressive behavior?
2. In your opinion, is it important to **learn about other cultures and religions**, and can learning about other cultures and religions affect a person's views on aggression and aggressive behavior?
3. In your opinion, is it important to **read literature that is from different perspectives**, and can reading literature from different perspectives affect a person's views on aggression and aggressive behavior?

All 58 students included in the eight-week extended study, responded to each of the above writing prompts, and these writing responses were tabulated as qualitative data to measure the eight-week study and to compare it with the responses from the four-week study. The same

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categories developed from the four-week study responses were used for organizing the student writing responses at the end of the eight-week study, so the two data sets could be compared more easily. See Table 3.2 for the compiled and categorized responses to the writing prompt regarding “history.”

Collection of Data

The following data compares percentages and frequencies immediately before the four-week preliminary study and after eight-week extended study period. Again, this data was obtained through both the San Joaquin County Office of Education attendance files and teacher narratives related to positive and negative student behaviors. Table 1.2 features a summary of attendance, negative behavior teacher narratives, and suspensions before and after the eight-week extended study. Table 2.2 is the pre and post survey scores for all 43 students that participated in the four-week study and it is then compared to the survey scores of the 58 students that participated in the eight-week study. As discussed in the Collection of Data section for the four-week preliminary study, the data is broken down further in the table to show the difference in the average responses of males and females, which was influenced by previously mentioned research (Block & Robins, 1993; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Greenberg-Lake, 1991; Licht & Dweck, 1984; Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope, & Dielman, 1997). Also, such gender considerations directly relate to sub-goals of the eight-week study with the desire to better understand the effects of studying both male and female historical individuals. This specific sub-goal was created due to related findings in the four-week preliminary study.

Another set of data that was included in the eight-week extended study was the following data table (Table 4.1) measuring overall students resiliency through ten key survey questions directly taken, or slightly modified, from a 2012 study on first generation college students by Martinez, Bilges, Shabazz, Miller, & Morote. Table 4.1 below includes the overall mean score for all college students,

and first generation college students, surveyed in the 2012 study, as well as the mean scores of the students surveyed during this eight-week study. The table also includes detailed breakdowns and considerations of resiliency in adolescents, such as self-esteem related differences between males and females, which has been discussed in previous studies (Block & Robins, 1993; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Greenberg-Lake, 1991; Licht & Dweck, 1984; Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope, & Dielman, 1997). The results of the ten measured survey questions were as follows:

Table 4.1

Resiliency Classifications of Students in the Study
Average Resiliency Scores From College and Work Study (Martinez, Bilges, Shabazz, Miller, & Morote, 2012). Possible Score Range is 10-15:

Overall Mean Score: **43**

Overall Standard Deviation: **4.1**

First Generation College Student Mean Score: **37**

First Generation College Student Standard Deviation: **5.43**

Average Resiliency Scores From the Eight-Week Study Participants:

No. of student participants: **58**

Overall Mean Score: **36.657**

Overall Standard Deviation: **0.566**

Male Scores

No. of student participants: **43**

Mean Score: **36.34**

Standard Deviation: **0.4921**

Female Scores

No. of student participants: **15**

Mean Score: **37.51**

Standard Deviation: **0.9037**

P-value from comparison t-test: 0.9612.

The Measurement Tool Used Questions used a Likert 4-point scale, and the following ten statements for gathering data:

1. I try harder if a task is very difficult.
2. I want to graduate from the current high school I am attending.
3. I can usually overcome obstacles.
4. I like to try new things.
5. I am the one in control of my life.
6. I have learned to overcome obstacles from my relatives' stories.
7. I ask for help when I need it.
8. I would find a way to pay expenses in order to stay in school to complete my goals in education.
9. I am proud of my ability to juggle home, work (if applicable), and school schedules.
10. I am determined to reach my goals

Analysis of Eight-Week Study Student Participant Population

Though the above resiliency measurement tool was not used in the four-week preliminary study, it has been included in the population data for the eight-week study in order to better understand how the student participants compare with another student population. Even though the students in the eight-week study are high school students, comparing their average scores with first generation college students is reasonable because such learning identities in one of the career and college goals of the school site and program. So, with the justification of comparing the eight-week study student participants with first generation college students, it is interesting to see how students in a historical at-risk school population have a similar overall resiliency score—first generation

college Student mean score of 37 compared with students in the eight-week study mean score of 36.657. It is even more interesting when comparing the average scores for females in the eight-week study with the average resiliency score of the males. The average female is 37.51, which is higher than the average first generation college students, and the average male score was 36.34, which is slightly lower than the average first generation college students. The reason why this gender difference is so interesting is due to prior research related to self-esteem in females and confidence in challenging academics during primary and secondary schooling. So, in short, it appears that the females in the eight-week study have higher aspirations than the males, especially considering that only 15 of the 58 participants in the eight-week study are females.

Table 1.2

<p>Attendance Daily average at the start of the eight-week treatment: 67% Daily average at the end of the eight-week treatment: 82%</p>
<p>Negative Behavior Teacher Narratives Weekly average at the start of the eight-week treatment: 0.73 per week Weekly average at the end of the eight-week treatment: 1.41 per week</p>
<p>Suspensions Weekly average at the start of the eight-week treatment: 0.73 per week Weekly average at the end of the eight-week treatment: 1.32 per week</p>

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Table 2.2

Normative Beliefs about Aggression Questions	P r e F o u r - w e e k A v - e r a g e S c o r e	M a l e (P r e) n = 29	F e - m a l e (P r e) n = 14	P o s t E i g h t - W e e k A v e r a g e S c o r e	M a l e	F e m a l e (P o s t) n = 15
Situation #1: Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John.						
1. Do you think it's OK for John to scream at him?	2.093	2.207	1.857	2.161	2.071	2.381
2. Do you think it's OK for John to hit him?	1.744	1.793	1.643	1.875	1.714	1.904
Situation #2: Suppose a boy says something bad to a girl.						
3. Do you think it's OK for the girl to scream at him?	2.442	2.483	2.357	2.536	2.429	2.714
4. Do you think it's wrong for the girl to hit him?	2.023	2.0	2.071	2.018	1.914	2.190
Situation #3: Suppose a girl says something bad to another girl, Mary.						
5. Do you think it's OK for Mary to scream at her?	2.418	2.414	2.429	2.232	2.286	2.143
6. Do you think it's OK for Mary to hit her?	2.047	2.0	2.143	2.071	1.913	2.334
Situation #4: Suppose a girl says something bad to a boy.						
7. Do you think it's OK for the boy to scream at her?	1.837	1.759	2.0	1.911	1.971	1.81
8. Do you think it's wrong for the boy to hit her?	1.302	1.276	1.357	1.5	1.629	1.286

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<p>Situation #5: Suppose a boy hits another boy, John.</p> <p>9. Do you think it's OK for John to hit him back?</p>	3.047	3.712	2.786	2.768	2.771	2.762
<p>Situation #6: Suppose a boy hits a girl.</p> <p>10. Do you think it's OK for the girl to hit him back?</p>	2.844	3.069	2.5	2.696	2.286	2.714
<p>Situation #7: Suppose a girl hits another girl, Mary.</p> <p>11. Do you think it's OK for Mary to hit her back?</p>	2.930	2.862	3.071	2.625	2.6	2.667

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Situation #8: Suppose a girl hits a boy.						
12. Do you think it's OK for the boy to hit her back?	1.488	1.310	1.857	1.518	1.4	1.714
General Belief Questions						
13. In general, it is wrong to hit other people.	1.884	1.828	2.0	1.875	1.857	1.905
14. If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things to other people.	1.465	1.349	1.714	1.679	1.857	1.381
15. In general, it is OK to yell at others and say bad things.	1.326	1.345	1.286	1.679	1.657	1.714
16. It is usually OK to push or shove other people around if you're mad.	2.116	2.138	2.071	1.714	1.714	1.714
17. It is wrong to insult other people	1.723	1.724	1.714	1.696	1.686	1.714
18. It is wrong to take it out on others by saying mean things when you're mad.	1.558	1.448	1.786	1.643	1.657	1.619
19. It is generally wrong to get into physical fights with others.	1.372	1.414	1.286	1.393	1.486	1.238
20. In general, it is OK to take your anger out on others by using physical force.	1.442	1.414	1.571	1.661	1.829	1.381
Mean Score	1.957	1.95	1.975	1.963	1.962	1.964

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Interpreting Scores:

1 = indicates the belief that it is unacceptable to aggress against others in provocative situations.

2 = indicates the belief that it is somewhat unacceptable to aggress against others in provocative Situations.

3 = indicates the belief that it is somewhat acceptable to aggress against others in provocative Situations.

4 = indicates the belief that it is acceptable to aggress against others in provocative situations.

Pre four-week survey

No. of student participants: 43

Mean: 1.957

Standard Deviation: 0.5865

Post eight-week survey

No. of student participants: 58

Mean: 1.963

Standard Deviation: 0.4182

P-value from comparison t-test: 0.9612.

Qualitative Data

Table 3.2

Categorized Students Writing Responses:
n = 58 (43 males, 15 females)

History can help people avoid repeating historical mistakes	86.21%
History can not help people avoid making mistakes	8.62%
No direct writing related to avoiding mistakes	5.17%
History can help improve a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	86.21%

History can not help improve a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	8.62%
No direct writing related to a person's cultural awareness and tolerance	5.17%
History helps people understand human behavior/aggression	81.03%
History does not help people understand human behavior/aggression	10.34%
No direct writing related to understanding human behavior/aggression	8.62%

Analysis of Data

As with the four-week preliminary study, the Normative Beliefs about Aggression assessment results show no statistical significance. In fact, the higher p-value suggests that there is even less likely chance of a correlation between the teaching of historical academic content and aggressive behavior. As stated in the four-week preliminary study, this assessment tool was chosen to be the main tool for measuring statistical significance in this study. The following is a summary of the comparison of the pre four-week study survey statistics with the same statistics gathered after the eight-week extended study:

As for data collected for attendance percentages, negative behavior teacher narratives, and suspensions, there was a decline in the frequencies of the negative narratives and suspensions and an increase in the attendance percentage. The basic attendance percentage improvement first appears to be a significant amount of 15 percentage points, from 67% to 82%, but it is important to align this with the attendance rates gathered during the four-week preliminary study. When comparing all four attendance rates as a sequence of points though the year: 81%, 84%, 67%, 82%, there is not only a decline in the latter two percentages, but possibly also highlights

the impact of school calendar changes. For example, the eight-week extended study start at the beginning of spring, when there is a common meandering shift back to a regular school schedule, after the Winter Break.

The per-week increase of negative teacher narratives (from 0.73 to 1.41) initially seems to be the opposite results that this research is seeking to find. Yet, when we consider the negative teacher narratives data from the four-week preliminary, we see an overall more desirable declining weekly average trend for such narratives. Both data points for negative teacher narratives in the eight-week study are noticeably smaller than the four-week study's data of 6.75 (at the beginning of the study) and 2.75 (at the end of the study). So overall, the average weekly negative teacher narratives declined 5.34 (or a 79.11% reduction), which may support that teacher-student relationships did improve, or the school site culture and routines were more established and maintained by the mid-school year.

The rates of suspension per week had a similar trend of increase during the eight-week study (from 0.73 per week to 1.32 suspensions per week) as observed in negative teacher narratives. Yet, just as the overall trend with teacher narratives, suspension rates also reveal an overall drop of 1.18 less suspensions per week, which is a 47.2% reduction. These two reduction may suggest that some established routines or expectations may have promoted such behavioral or school culture improvement, but the degree in which teaching resiliency through academic content effected such change is not yet clear. The following will show how more focused classwork and discourse may be related to overall improved school-relationships and individual student resiliency in an academic setting.

As for student perceptions about the importance of studying history and how it relates to views on aggression, there was a dramatic shift compared to the qualitative data gathered from the four-week preliminary study.

Even though the average score for the Normative Beliefs About Aggression did not significantly change, students clearly expressed more positive opinions about the social and cognitive benefits learning about the stories of historical individuals. In general, most students expressed that being informed about history and other cultures helps them in their public and personal social interactions because it allows them to better relate with and understand other people.

Conclusions

The Normative Beliefs about Aggression assessment results and the attendance percentages do not show a strong connection between the treatment and a direct change in student attitudes and behaviors from the before the four-week preliminary study to the data collected after the eight-week extended study, but the data regarding negative behavior teacher narratives and suspensions show some change in teacher-student relationships within the classroom, found through additional data analysis including teacher response, student narrative, suspensions etc.. Perhaps, the treatment of teaching resiliency through historical content did not directly change the general views that students have on aggression and aggressive behavior, but again (as mentioned in the conclusion of the four-week study) it may have impacted their school relationships while in the classroom and when interacting with teachers. An overall examination in additional studies, appear to show direct correlations with teacher-student relationships and how students view their learning environment and the value of their education. This support claims put forward by the findings of the 2013 study "When schooling experience is respectful of children" by Linda Theron. So, perhaps fostering genuine student-teacher relationships is the best direct example and model that helps students see and build resiliency on a daily incremental basis.

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BY MARISA GAMBOA

“The team identified that clarity remained to be an area of needed growth, clarity in that instructional leadership needed to be more deliberate in establishing clarity in our beliefs...”

The Court and Community Schools of the Fresno County Office of Education began the 2012-2013 school year with a district-wide initiative of successful implementation of a professional learning community continuum with a focus on effective implementation of Common Core instructional practices. Essential to the new process were the professional learning and coaching collaborative services provided to each of the schools: Alice M. Worsley, Kermit Koontz Education Complex, and the Violet Heintz Education Academy by the Curriculum & Instruction Department. Over the course of four years, the continuum has progressed from collective inquiry to best practice and current reality to continuously supporting and monitoring a resulting action plan.

The process began with planning sessions between the administrative staff and a systems and leadership coach by identifying district wide expectations and the plan for support through professional development. What did we expect of our students, staff and of each other? The model followed was adapted from Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work by Richard DuFour. District-wide professional learning communities (PLCs) with designated bi-monthly meetings were introduced and the process was guided through the facilitation of a systems and leadership coach.

Accelerated Academic Action Plan

The coach and the site administrator met weekly to discuss progress towards overall goals and specific action steps as delineated within the jointly developed, site-level Accelerated Academic Action Plan. The overarching academic goal was to increase the 2013 CAHSEE pass rate

by 5% over the 2012 rate. The process goals, steps to help achieve the academic goal, included 1) the bi-monthly PLC meetings to ensure teachers were provided the necessary time to plan collaboratively for common assessments, review data from the assessments, and to use the data to plan instruction; 2) establish consistent procedures in all classrooms for discipline steps and the referral process regarding student behavior; and 3) support the teaching and learning process in classrooms with weekly walk-throughs and feedback given to teachers by the site administrator.

Resulting action steps, along with responsibilities, a timeline, a results indicator, and status on the progress made, included procedural, behavioral, and academic actions. As the PLCs were new to the school site, DuFour's model of Doing by Learning was studied with staff. Through the process, the staff engaged in the development of agreed upon norms, expected demonstrated behavior of each other to be visible at each PLC. From there, the group was better able to focus on agreements among the implementation and monitoring of curriculum-embedded assessments and procedures for implementing identified learning goals and common assessments.

While the Community Schools in the district had already begun implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), a school-wide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments, Worsley was just at introductory levels of implementation. However, student discipline and behavior data supported a need for proactive, research-validated practices

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS' COACHING MODEL



Jointly developed school-wide expectations

Classroom visits consisted of weekly walk throughs, brief classroom observations of evidence of teaching and learning based on the academic and behavior goals as developed in the Professional Learning Communities. Data collected and distributed in the form of teacher feedback included practices of CAHSEE instructional support specific to CAHSEE Math and English strands as identified as a need via data analysis by the instructional staff and administration, levels of student engagement, teacher proximity, and academic vocabulary in addition to the monthly, board-approved curriculum matrix.

Adaptations to the Accelerated Academic Action Plan

As progress was made on several actions throughout the school year, progress was gauged on a four-point scale of minimally, partially, substantially, and fully, the focus remained on actions that did not meet the fully-achieved rating. Naturally, actions were added as the summer of 2013 brought Common Core implementation. Contracted services between the Fresno County Office of Education's Curriculum and Instruction Department and the Court/Community Schools delineated direct support to the school sites to assist in the planning and implemen-

tation of successful implementation of the instructional shifts for English Language Arts/Literacy and Math. The Court and Community Schools' staff had the opportunity to participate in one of two offerings of the California Common Core State Standards Summer Academy, a five-day training that was open to all Fresno County educators by the Fresno County Office of Education's Curriculum & Instruction Department.

As collective inquiry to best practice focused on continuous improvement, the administrative team and the Curriculum & Instruction Coach returned to the district-wide plan in monitoring the effectiveness of the Professional Learning Communities and professional development offered. The team identified that clarity remained to be an area of needed growth, clarity in that instructional leadership needed to be more deliberate in establishing clarity in our beliefs in answering: How will we each ensure that every student can learn; that every student can develop a positive self-concept; that every student is capable of producing quality work; and that every student will flourish in a positive and safe learning environment? Thus began the defining of the current PLC reality and its measure of success as determined by a PLC rubric. Expectations, communication, vision, product, and student behavior were carefully examined by the team. The need to set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant/results-oriented, and timebound (SMART) goals was also identified as an area of needed growth for the instructional leaders. SMART goals were then drafted in alignment with Court and Community Schools' focal areas of PLCs, PBIS, Common Core State Standards and the Integration of Technology into teaching and learning for staff and students, as the schools were now in the second year of PLC implementation. Actions and process goals within the site-specific Accelerated Academic Action Plan were revised to reflect the SMART goals' criteria. Site leadership became more deliberate in the disaggregation and analysis of student assessment data with a data team, teachers on special assignment, in preparation of analysis with the instructional staff at the PLCs and provided clarity of the expectation of analyzing student work as a result of the group reviewing assessment data.

An example of the impact on the effectiveness of reflecting on the current reality of the PLCs and appropriate

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS' COACHING MODEL

support to staff through professional development was realized when Michelle Trevino, Teacher on Special Assignment led the English Department through a site-developed curriculum-embedded assessment and mapping process of a school-wide literature study in alignment with the Common Core State Standards, College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards and Webb's Depth of Knowledge.



Students working in structured learning groups

Student learning goals as listed in the 2014-2015 school year's Accelerated Academic Action Plan, included a CAHSEE pass rate of 40%, an increased level of students' complexity of thinking in daily instruction, and increased use of technology to enhance students' creativity and collaboration. Resulting process goals included 1) more strategic use of data to inform and guide instruction, 2) implementation of different types of assessments, including constructed responses and performance tasks similar to Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's, 3) earn silver-level award in PBIS, and 4) more strategic planning in school-wide use of research-based instructional strategies.

The revised goals and the resulting process were critical as they assisted in the district-wide preparation of an upcoming joint accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the California Department of Education. The school revisited the work of Robert J. Marzano's high-yield instructional strategies adapted from the book *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achieve-*

ment by Robert Marzano (2001). A focus was placed on two to three strategies every other month as reviewed in the PLCs and was supported with conversations, classroom observation, and classroom walk throughs by administration.

The school's local assessment system, processes, and use of resulting data were monitored to reflect changes in the content of the Common Core State Standards. Protocols for examining data were implemented including identifying who would extract and disaggregate the data in preparation of each PLC, the regular use of data at each PLC, the regular use of an identified data template to record what the data revealed, what was confirming and why, what was surprising, implications, which measures compelled the staff to ensure students succeeded, identifying potential additional indicators and a plan to obtain said indicators, and resulting goals based on the analysis. Part of the data protocol included the analysis of the data in group structures of staff, each with an assigned role through the data analysis. Documented and resulting actions determined next steps to support teaching and learning.

Continued Monitoring and Evaluating of the Accelerated Academic Action Plan

The weekly coaching meetings with site administration served as a support to assist in maintaining the jointly developed collective agreements and beliefs in how each member of the school team would ensure success for students. Through the systems approach of identified goals, professional learning, content coaching, systems & leadership coaching, evidence of implementation, and reflecting on the effectiveness of each component, professional development opportunities were reflective of the need of the school community to ensure resources were in place for all to achieve continued success. The Court and Community Schools welcome the new school year and advance planning which will no longer include the California High School Exit Exam as with the recent suspension of the exam, goals and indicators will include a stronger focus on local assessment data, growth performance as measured by the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, and student and parent engagement.

Congratulations to the 2015- 2016 JCCASAC Scholarship Recipients

ABOUT THE JCCASAC SCHOLARSHIP:

Twice a year, the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative Schools Administrators of California (JCCASAC) offers scholarships to Court and Community School graduates who will be attending college or have passed the GED within the 2015-16 school year. The scholarship is intended to pay for tuition and/or books up to \$500. Two scholarships will be awarded in the southern section and two in the northern section this January. Each county may submit two applications per semester (for a total for four in a year).

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