

Instructional Leadership: A Learning-Centered Guide

Anita Woolfolk Hoy and Wayne Kolter Hoy

Short Leadership Challenges for Class Discussion

In the following pages you will find two resources.

- I. The first is a library of ideas from master teachers and other educational leaders about how to solve the *Leadership Challenge* problems posed in chapters 2 through 7 of the text.
- II. The second resource is another set of problems (not provided in the text) along with solution ideas from educational leaders.

These short leadership challenges provide materials for class discussion or assignments.

I. Solutions ideas for the in-text Leadership Challenges

CHAPTER 2: STUDENTS

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge about the “White Girls Club.”

CAROLYN ELY PARHAM

Second Grade Teacher, Conway Elementary School, Ladue (St. Louis), Missouri

My first priority would be to build lessons into the curriculum relating to respecting and appreciating differences in people. At the set age level in this situation, one specific example would be to read out loud the book *Tacky* and the sequel, *Three Cheers for Tacky*, by Helen Lester. After reading, a discussion could be held centering around differences in people. Numerous “What Makes Me Special?” activities could be planned. One such activity could be a Reader/Writer workshop about this topic. For this young group of children, a class picture book could be created with each child illustrating a page of characteristics that make him/her special. Upon completion of the class book, each child could be invited to share his or her page. Another activity could be to initiate a Star of the Week bulletin board where each child’s unique interests and hobbies are displayed during their assigned week. Exposure to these types of activities should increase awareness that everyone is different in some way, but THAT is exactly what makes each of us special!

Throughout the day, I would involve the new student in the various class activities, perhaps even asking her to “star” in a few of our lessons (i.e., choose the student to answer a question, erase the whiteboard during a lesson, use her name during a story, etc.). As needed, I would revisit these topics throughout the remainder of the year during “class” meetings. At these sessions, I would pose challenging situations, without names, encouraging the class to solve the problem. For example: Today at recess I saw a student sitting alone on the playground. How would you feel if that child were you? What would you do if you saw another child sitting alone? What would you do to help the child? Another example: I heard about a club today at school; however, not everyone can belong. Is that fair? How would you feel if there were a boys club? A 2nd grade club? Should there be clubs at school that everyone is not invited to join? Why or why not?

Finally, if the above suggestions do not eliminate the “exclusive” behavior in some of my students, I would speak to them individually. At this point, I would involve their parents and the school counselor.

REV. EDWARD MELI, MSC

Teacher, Sacred Heart High School, Hagita, Alotou, Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea
(Answered as if a White child joined my secondary class of Papua New Guinea students.)

On learning about the “Milne Bay Girls Club” and the new student’s apparent loneliness and isolation, I would conduct an investigation of the club. I would interview the leader of the club to find out about the membership criteria. If I found that the club was created to exclude non-Milne Bay students, then I would encourage the club to change the criteria for membership to include any student regardless of nationality or colour.

I would explain to them that every human is a person with dignity, freedom, and the right to be respected. The club would be doing a great service to someone who really needs that sense of acceptance and comfort in a new learning environment. I would encourage this club to take the new student in as a member and be a support group for her. I’d encourage the group to work toward unity because they have a common goal: to learn.

JENNIFER HUDSON THOMAS

Armidale High School, Armidale, Australia

In students so young, such discriminatory values must emanate from home or community attitudes. Perhaps there would be value in quietly assessing the attitude of the general community toward racial and cultural differences. Having done this, I would adopt a “flanking action” to increase the knowledge and understanding of all involved in this situation to ensure the attitudinal change required for the successful inclusion and acceptance of my new student. This could be done by:

- Involving the parents and the broader community, if possible, in a knowledge-gathering and information-sharing program on value differences in society.
- Launching into teaching a unit on diversity with my class, touching on the similarities and differences of ethnic, religious, social, and disability groups.
- Investigating, unobtrusively, the individual strengths of my new student, and using these to demonstrate to the class that she is a greatly valued class member and contributor.
- Utilizing group instruction and cooperative learning during class time in as many learning areas as possible, rotating my new student through different group combinations, ensuring that her role within the group encourages sharing and interaction.
- Demonstrating at all times that I value, appreciate, and include her like everyone else in all class activities.

With older students, a more direct approach may be more appropriate, utilizing a case study/role-playing approach ranging across many personal relationships/situations and in which individual feelings are openly discussed within the group.

PAM GASKILL

2nd Grade Teacher, Riverside Elementary, Dublin, Ohio

Although at first glance this appears to be a difficult situation, it can in fact be a wonderful opportunity to help students gain some valuable insights into tolerance and understanding of others. It is very likely that these students have had little or no contact with others who are different from them and their behavior is more a result of insensitivity than of mean-spiritedness. My first step would be to put an immediate stop to the “White Girls Club” by telling the girls that groups that exclude others are not acceptable at our school because they hurt other people’s feelings. I would then initiate a series of activities with all the students in the class that would help them to begin to develop an awareness of similarities and differences between people, an appreciation for the differences, and sensitivity toward the feelings of others.

Peter Spier’s book, *People*, provides an excellent starting point for a discussion of attributes shared by all humans. Each page contains colorful cartoon-like illustrations that help young children to compare a different feature of “being human.” For example, one page acknowledges that while all people have hair (or noses, eyes, hair, skin, language, clothing, and so forth), there are many variations. In this context, when children are asked to think of something that is different about themselves that makes them a special person, they typically respond openly and comfortably. We make sure that each child not only feels valued for the special person she is, but also begins to understand that each of her classmates is special as well.

Besides using this situation as the “teachable moment” for a study of diversity, it would also be helpful to assign carefully selected small groups to work together on class projects, making sure to place the excluded student with others who are likely to be kind and accepting. Praise of the group’s positive behavior should encourage others to behave in a similar manner. Since all of the class shares the common experiences described above, references to the feelings of others and celebration of our differences should be meaningful and helpful if reminders are needed. Hopefully, we will not only resolve the issue of one student being excluded, but raise the entire class’s sensitivity to the feelings of others and acceptance of their differences.

KELLY HOY

Third Grade, Faber Elementary School, Dunellen, NJ

I would take quick action if this were my class. First, I would talk to the students about the “White Girls Club” to see what was really happening. I would not make an issue of the comment, but I would use it as an opportunity to talk informally with the students in question. The comment might be simple chatter of a couple of students or it might signal the emergence of an exclusionary group or club. At any rate, I would want to structure the social relations of the class to get the new student more involved and interacting with her classmates. The fact that she is not being included in many activities, sits alone in the library, and plays alone is reason enough for concern. I can and will structure recess so that she is more involved and central to the activities. I would also ask the new girl to join with a few hand-picked students to help me after school with a project or two so that I could again encourage constructive interaction.

I also periodically do what I call “Lessons in Life” with my students, which revolve around problems of right and wrong. I create a scenario in which a student is being treated unfairly. I break the class into groups and have them assume the problem personally, ask them how they would feel in that situation, and what is the right thing to do. We then formulate a lesson for life. My students respond well to this and they do know what is right and wrong.

The current situation, however, presents a natural learning opportunity in which the issues of tolerance, sensitivity, diversity, and democracy could be taught. The third-grade students that I teach are ready to learn and talk about such issues; in fact, these are the kind of problems that a social studies unit can be built around. This situation is a way to help students grow and become more sensitive to people of different races and beliefs. I would not be heavy-handed or unduly upset, but rather I see this incident as a chance to teach democracy and values in a natural way.

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge presented at the beginning of this chapter about the an inquiry-based history curriculum facing falling test scores.

DOUGLAS G. HEUER

Principal, Griffin Elementary School, Dublin, Ohio

The Principal in this situation must address two issues with the staff of the school's History Department. The first issue is the "ownership" of the school's history curriculum. The second issue is the appropriate balance between content and process in the study of history. Answers to the first issue are grounded in state law and the delegation of powers to local boards of education. Answers to the second issue can be found in the perspectives offered by the behavioral, cognitive, and constructivist theories of learning.

The authority for the governance of schools rests with the state legislature. The state legislature in Casebook 3 has determined that historical facts, such as names, dates, and locations of events, are to be included in the state's model curriculum. Furthermore, it has provided an instrument by which individual districts can evaluate the extent to which this portion of the curriculum is being learned. The local Board of Education, in its role as the delegated, local representative of the state must consider its accountability for the implementation of the state model curriculum along with the desires of its local community. Each teacher in the district is obligated by contract to instruct the students in accordance with the graded course of study adopted by the local Board of Education to the best of their ability. The Principal, together with his History Department Chairperson, needs to clarify this point with his History Department faculty.

The Principal must also point out to the History teachers that the teaching of content and process is not a mutually exclusive relationship. In fact, the blending of the two can make for a richer learning experience. Current cognitive theory suggests that a critical factor in the learning process is the prior knowledge the student brings to the learning experience (Hoy & Hoy, p.72). The Principal can cite the work of Recht and Leslie (1988) to highlight that a good basis of knowledge can be more important than good learning strategies for understanding and remembering. With these concepts in mind, the Principal and his staff can address the goal of creating a stronger curriculum that blends both extensive knowledge and good strategies.

TIM DONAHUE

Teacher, Briggs High School, Columbus Public Schools, Columbus, Ohio

State minimum standards and their correlating objective tests are quickly becoming the norm in nearly every state as the public and government officials want to be able to rate how well schools are doing. If a school is not doing well according to the tests, then the public and state government have evidence that minimum standards are not being met and can demand change. That is the case in this situation.

This school's history department focuses more on the inquiry process and of students' creating their own knowledge rather than memorizing facts. Unfortunately, the state standards are based almost entirely on individual facts. Which is more important in history? What should the students know about history? My general opinion is that there are certain minimum facts about history that all students should know, especially about their countries and states. However, these minimum facts should help an instructor lead the students towards understanding themes throughout history that will connect them to today's society and the future. It is my opinion that the state standards, based on facts, should be the building blocks for more student-centered constructivist lesson plans. As a principal in a state sponsored institution, I would have to say students should know what the state says they should know because they are products of the state's educational system.

The role of rote memory in learning is to learn the basics. Rote memory of certain types of declarative knowledge allows the student to develop procedural knowledge with on how to use that basic information and eventually into conditional knowledge so the student knows when to use that knowledge. This is a very cognitive view of rote memory in the learning process. However, I feel this use of rote memory is also true in behavioral and constructivist learning views.

These three views of learning, in my opinion, offer the same thing but in different ways so we are more able to reach the different students. These views explain different views on how people learn. I feel they are all correct, according to the situation. All teachers should be aware of and know how to use methods from all three of the theories.

What is the right balance between learning facts, or a breadth of knowledge, versus discovery learning, or depth of knowledge? I stated earlier that the balance is to learn the basic facts or ideas in history and then learn how to use those facts to understand similarities or themes throughout history that connect to today and the future. This is a very difficult task. The balance in teaching will change with every new group of students, the teacher must learn to change with the students. In conclusion, the principal needs to make it very clear to the history department that they will teach the state standards and make sure their students are ready to take the tests. They are after all public employees and are responsible to the public and what they want.

CHAPTER 4: MOTIVATION

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge presented at the beginning of this chapter about the middle school students who give up before they start.

THOMAS W. NEWKIRK

Eighth Grade Teacher, Hamilton Heights Middle School, Arcadia, Indiana

If things are not going well in the classroom, I remember three important lessons my students have taught me. First, humor is often important in presenting a lesson. For example, students are more likely to build strong transitions between their ideas after they see me wobbling on an imaginary rope bridge from one detail to another.

The second lesson is that variety is important in planning curriculum. Maybe a lesson doesn't need to be taught in the classroom. Perhaps it can be taught in the cafeteria or on the football field. Maybe someone else—a parent or a member of the community—can teach the lesson. Maybe the lesson can be taught by listening to a recording or by viewing a film rather than by reading one more assignment.

I have also learned my students' attitudes are likely to be a reflection of my own. From the beginning of the year my students learn the emphasis is on what we can do: "I can't" receives short shrift. They know I am enthusiastic not only about what I teach but also about what they achieve.

Remembering these lessons, I have dispelled many clouds of despair before they've overwhelmed my classes.

PEGGY MCDONNELL

Sixth Grade Teacher, West Park School, Moscow, Idaho

It appears that the students in this middle school class have lost the motivation to work in school. Have they also lost the motivation to excel on the basketball court, in the video arcade, or on their rollerblades? If not, it may help to see what rewards they reap from their efforts outside of school. Are these rewards all external? Probably not—many are intrinsic, such as the feelings of well-being and success. Outside of school, these students are striving to meet higher, often self-imposed standards. What can we as educators, do to parallel this in our classrooms?

First and foremost we can provide a sense of relevance to our assignments, an attachment to real-life situations and problems. If we are teaching about percentages, we should be taking students "shopping" to calculate sales prices. If we are exploring classification in science, we can visit a pet store or greenhouse to classify the animals or plants. We need to make the subjects we share with our students come alive by providing material in a variety of ways. We should also be giving students choices that allow them to share their understanding of subject matter in various ways. This would offer more opportunities for success.

Educators have made great strides in developing "shared-decision making models" in schools. In such models teachers share decision-making power with administrators. Somehow, many of us have left the students out of this process. Although we realize how much harder we work when we have an investment in a process, we tend to deny our students that right. This middle school class needs a project that they can plan and develop as a group and execute as a group to see if they can benefit from this model. It appears that the students need to have some ownership of their activities and that they need to help set the standards for performance.

JEFF HOVERMILL

Seventh–Twelfth Grade Teacher, Seabury Hall School, Makawao, Idaho

I would try to improve the environment for learning in the classroom by fostering intrinsic motivation in the students. I would look for topics in which the students are interested and incorporate those themes into assignments and activities. Keeping class fresh and interesting is particularly important in the middle grades. A wide variety of activities and assignments help to keep the students involved and motivated. I try to use such activities as group work, films, field trips, projects, speakers, drill and practice, and interdisciplinary themes to introduce assignments.

Some of their projects should have varying levels of difficulty. Students should have the option of selecting from the entire list the projects that most appeal to them and are more realistic in terms of meeting their goals. This is one way to help students experience success without having them feel they have been “tracked” into different ability levels. I also choose assignments of varying lengths, in different educational settings, and ones which will involve different learning styles.

Getting to know the students outside of the classroom is another way to demonstrate concern and model motivational behaviors. Participating with or observing students in extracurricular activities outside of class often enhances motivation inside of class. When a teacher expresses enough interest in the students to be a club sponsor or athletic coach and attends plays or recitals in which students are involved, this attention is often reciprocated with increased effort in the classroom.

Decreased motivation to learn can be a contagious inhibitor to learning in school. If students are apathetic and feel that the locus of causality for success in school is extrinsic to them and that they cannot succeed even if they do try, it will be very difficult to motivate them to learn. Careful attention by the teacher to the students’ needs can help to alleviate decreased motivation. Helping the students to meet realistic goals and develop intrinsic reasons for learning will increase academic success and in turn increase self-esteem and motivation. Group and individual affect among the students within the classroom should also be improved by this attention, which in turn provides a better environment for learning.

NICOLE DEPALMA COBB AND SANDRA T. MCNEICE

Eighth Grade Teachers, Sterling Middle School, Quincy, Massachusetts

In a situation where the students seem defeated about learning, we must ask ourselves if the current curriculum fits the children and the times. We must remember the power of connecting their high interest and curiosity to our curriculum. Assuming that we have developed our curriculum to fit our students’ needs and we still find there is a motivation problem, we must try to adopt certain strategies. In order to tap into the inner motivation of the students, groupings of students could be used to brainstorm about the current conflicts facing the class. We can entice students by modeling the inquiry process. To encourage our students to be vested and have a sense of ownership, inner motivation could also be stimulated by peer tutorials, educational games, project-based learning, oral presentations, videos or photo montages, student-peer teaching drama, newspaper or community magazine work, and the use of interdisciplinary connections.

CHAPTER 5: TEACHING

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge presented at the beginning of this chapter about a whole-language program under fire.

KATIE CHURCHILL

Third Grade Teacher, Oriole Parke Elementary School, Chicago, Illinois

If the principal chose to keep the whole-language program intact, then I would integrate another method of teaching into the program. Children require more than one method of teaching to compensate for varied learning needs. I would include phonics within the program as well as more direct instruction to ensure that the children are achieving and learning. In addition, I would assess the students' learning more carefully to track individual progress. Some aspects of the whole-language program are beneficial because the students have shown an increased interest in reading and are writing more creatively. This is an integral part of learning because children need this type of encouragement and motivation to remain interested in school.

REGINA M. LAROSE

Second Grade Teacher, Hillside School, Needham, Massachusetts

The good news in this case is that the children appear to be productive learners with positive attitudes. I would remind parents of this as I respond to their questions and concerns. Parents need to be informed; therefore, I would approach their complaints with an open mind and offer explanations as directly and honestly as I could. Perhaps parent workshops could be held by the school's principal and teachers to further explain goals and to answer questions.

I believe that children are successful when they are offered a balance between an innovative approach and a structured plan for delivering skills. If children were not meeting the standards of a required test, I would take a serious look at my goals and methods. I would scrutinize my plans and make sure that I was offering students sufficient practice in those skills that seem to be the weakest. Because children have different learning styles, a variety of approaches should be used to introduce and practice skills. Discussions with fellow teachers often reveal new techniques that help to stimulate ideas.

After analyzing my program, I would supply my principal with concrete examples of methods that would provide more understanding and practice in the skills that I found lacking. I would include an explanation of these additional lessons in my weekly newsletter to parents.

VALERIE A. CHILCOAT

Fifth/Sixth Grade Advanced Academics, Glenmount School, Baltimore, Maryland

When addressing parent complaints, great care is needed, especially when they concern the decisions made by your administration. If the concern is widespread, I would set up a meeting with the parents that included your administrator. Perhaps other teachers would want to be involved. Discuss in detail with your administrator what you plan to say, and make sure you are clear on the position of the administration.

As a teacher who uses an integrated curriculum, I have much practical experience with the pros and cons of a whole-language approach. As educators, we know that all children do not learn in the same way. That is why I believe that a completely whole-language approach is an inappropriate teaching style. In keeping with the idea of an integrated curriculum, basic language and reading skills can be introduced in conjunction with the standard

CHAPTER 6: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge presented at the beginning of this chapter about a class out of control.

RICHARD T. SMITH

Fifth Grade Teacher, *Harrison Middle School, Yarmouth, Maine*

The fact that the other teachers know that this is a tough class and you are in for a challenge is probably a good thing. People are offering help and understand that as a new teacher you may need it, so look at it as a challenge and ask for the help you need. Every school has experienced teachers and teachers with great classroom management skills. Talk to these teachers and find a style and a system that works for you.

Most teachers want to have a positive effect on their students. The more difficult the class, the more they need a role model, or calm force in their lives. If you remember that these kids need you and your expertise, you will have an easier time keeping your patience.

Begin “Day Two” with a class meeting, with all students sitting quietly in a circle. The teacher begins with a tennis ball in her hand. The teacher has the ball so she has the floor—she explains her expectation of her students in order to conduct a class. The ball is passed and each student is given a chance to explain what he or she needs from fellow classmates and the teacher. After everybody has spoken, they begin to make a list of classroom expectations, consequences, and privileges. You know what the kids expect and they know what to expect from you. These rules should be photocopied and taped to their desks, reminding students of behaviors, rewards, and consequences.

Discipline is something all kids need and it does not have to be negative. Being a role model to kids and letting them know what you value is important. As a teacher you need to convey your value system to your students. “You get what you tolerate.” This is true in all aspects of life, including the classroom. If you don’t tolerate students speaking out, then they will not. If you don’t tolerate students saying “I hate you,” they will not. Stick with your consequences. Be consistent!

I believe that if this teacher looks at the situation as a challenge; seeks help from experienced teachers; establishes ground rules, expectations and rewards and punishments with the students, she will end her second day, and many days to follow, still exhausted, still losing her voice, but encouraged!

KATHLEEN CONROY

Third Grade Teacher, *Rancho Canada Elementary School, Lake Forest, California*

If I were hired in January to take over a class that had no management system, I would start the class as if it were day one with my own system of rules, expectations, and consequences. We would create the needed classroom expectations together so that students felt part of this process. Then we would go through how to enforce these expectations. I would put up a colored chart with our class-created rules, and another corresponding chart with the consequences if rules are broken. I would put up all the students’ names and newly assigned numbers on a series of different colored cards, and explain that this system of behavior is a reward system. If all the rules are followed, then they earn different privileges by collecting stamps for being on task. These would be passed out on a daily or weekly basis. The reward aspect is a motivator. Students choose their privilege from a posted list that includes the amount of stamps needed next to each reward or privilege. Examples would be things as small as a water pass, to lunch with the teacher, a homework pass, and so on. Therefore, students will want to try hard to follow the management rules to seek the rewards of their choice.

KATIE CHURCHILL

Third Grade Teacher, Oriole Parke Elementary School, Chicago, Illinois

I believe that it is extremely important to be firm when entering a new classroom. I would enter the classroom the next morning and make the students aware that I will enforce classroom rules and expectations and that I will contact parents if any behavior problems persist. I would have my students help me choose a set of classroom rules that are reasonable so the rules will have more meaning to the students. I would make it clear that the students are in charge of their own behavior and consequences. The students will know exactly what is expected of them and what will happen if they disobey any of the rules. I would consistently follow through with the prescribed consequences. I also would keep the students busy with material that interests them. Finally, I would encourage good behavior in the classroom through positive reinforcement.

CAREY PERKSON

Second Grade Teacher, Brown School, Natick, Massachusetts

Establishing an environment in the classroom conducive to learning is vitally important. Although a previous teacher may or may not have had classroom rules, it would be necessary for me to communicate to the students what the expectations are for the remainder of the school year. Working in conjunction with the students, we would develop a set of class rules that everyone agrees to.

I would discuss with the students the reasons for having rules that we could uphold and at the same time respect one another with. Making the students an integral part of the decision-making process is important in gaining their trust and respect. The students need to understand that I value them as well as their individual ideas. Together as a classroom community we would establish a set of rules.

My philosophy has always been to be firm but fair, ensuring that students know they will be given every opportunity to be successful.

ANNE WORTH

Fourth Grade Teacher, Clardy School, Kansas City, Missouri

After the first day of agony, it is obvious that something needs changing before any learning can occur. Have the students share their ideas about what rules are necessary at school and what a working classroom sounds and looks like. Try to call only on those who raise their hands and compliment those who do follow the rules. Before you begin this discussion say, "I think it is important that we establish the rules we will follow together, so for the next ten minutes we will share ideas about school rules. Please raise your hand to be called on so that everyone gets a chance to share." The time limit will keep this from getting away from the teacher. When the list is complete, or if the list needs additions, the teacher can add some basics.

Using a behavior tool such as marbles in a jar, the teacher can set up a system instantly. Tell the class that when each of the rules is followed, a marble will be dropped in the jar. When the jar is full there will be 15 minutes of free time. Drop a marble each time something good happens in the class. Hopefully by the end of the day or the next there will be a reward and you can begin to control the class and do some teaching.

BRENDA MILLER

Second Grade Teacher, *Yucca Elementary School, Alamogordo, New Mexico*

I would introduce this class to a reward system using classroom “bucks” and a “store” of items to be open each Friday. I would ask parents for various items to be sold in the store, such as toys, pencils, notepads, markers, and toiletries. I would describe the behaviors I expected to see and reward each good behavior with a “buck.”

I believe rewards would be more useful at first because most children see discipline as negative, and this class has already seen too much negativism. After my reward system was established I would enlist the help of my students to determine the classroom rules. The key to the reward system’s working is to be consistent, generous, and fair. I would price my items higher in the store and give “bucks” away often in reinforcement of good behavior. On the day of store I would have two students (different each week) be the shopkeepers. This reward system teaches responsibility, math, cooperation, and communication. I use this in my second grade classroom with much success.

CHAPTER 7: ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

Here is how some instructional leaders responded to the Leadership Challenge presented at the beginning of this chapter about discussing IQ scores with parents.

KELLY L. HOY

Third Grade Teacher, *Faber Elementary School, Dunellen, New Jersey*

Disclosing individual information about standardized tests is always a ticklish problem. Of course, parents want to know as much as they can about their children, but there are dangers of misinterpreting or misusing information, categorizing and stereotyping children, and individual comparisons. I would be very careful about disclosing the specifics of IQ test scores to parents.

I certainly would meet with the parents who have written to explain the reasons for IQ testing in our school. Tests are aids to teachers to help us understand how to deal more effectively with our students—to challenge them, to help them, and to have high, but realistic expectations of them. For those parents who persist in wanting to know the results of an IQ test, in an individual conference I would sketch the meaning of IQ and emphasize the notion of multiple intelligences. I would avoid simple numbers and gross indices such as “your child has an IQ of 115.” Rather, I would focus on the strengths of the student as I discussed the student’s intelligence profile. All of my explanations would be in general terms, such as “your child is better than most of his peers in coping with new experiences, but about average in solving abstract word problems.” Again, I would emphasize the positive and use other results to provide suggestions to parents about what they could do to help in areas in which the student seemed less advanced.

This real problem is a challenge because it forces me to do what I should be doing anyway—assessing each student as an individual to determine how strong the academic challenge should be and how much support is needed. The problem compels me to look for strengths while identifying areas where the child may need special help. I believe this process is fundamental to good teaching.

JEFF D. HORTON

Seventh–Twelfth Grade Teacher, *Colton School, Colton, Washington*

For the most part, intelligence testing can give some information about groups of students. It also can tell where individual students are positioned compared to a group. However, these tests are usually not a good instrument for determining how “smart” a student is or can be.

When presenting intelligence test scores to parents, it is important to be clear about what the information does and does not say. Parents should also be informed that they will be comparing their son(s) or daughter(s) score(s) against a group, not against individual students. This point is very important. Often teachers will be asked to compare one student’s work with that of another student. This should never be done. Each student is unique and has a variety of abilities and limitations. Teachers must look at the individual abilities, skills, and knowledge of the student being assessed, as well as that student’s effort in the subject(s) being taught. If the parent wants to see the actual scores, it may be wise to have the school’s counselor or an administrator available to help explain the results.

THOMAS W. NEWKIRK

Eighth Grade English Teacher, *Hamilton Heights Middle School, Arcadia, Indiana*

Reports in regard to the success of my students and especially of my advisory students are important and deserve my full attention. Hopefully such reports, together with my own observations and the observations of my colleagues, give me insight in helping my students realize their potential. Obviously, the more information I have, the more insight I am likely to have, and I would try to avoid basing any judgment on a single observation or report.

When I met with the parents to discuss their child's achievement, I would review the types of questions asked on the test, share my own opinions based upon daily observations, and emphasize that test results are only one measure of intelligence.

AMY NEAL

Ninth Grade Teacher, *Katy High School, Katy, Texas*

After I read the test results, I would call each parent. I would arrange a time for them to come to the school to meet with me and their child's guidance counselor. At that meeting, we would discuss the results of the test and the validity of the test. I would explain to the parents that as a special education teacher, I use intelligence tests as a guide to a student's intellectual ability, but the scores are not a measure of "how smart a student really is."

ELIZABETH CHOUINARD

Fourth Grade Teacher, *MacGregor Elementary School, Houston, Texas*

How smart is Jason? Can a standardized intelligence test give an accurate measure? From my personal experiences with standardized tests, I can say that they are not always accurate. One child might have an advantage over another because he or she has been exposed to that test's format before taking it, and the other child has not. Some students might score high on an intelligence test because they have been trained to use effective test-taking strategies. The students who have not been trained in these test-taking strategies would be at a great disadvantage and their test scores would reflect this.

A third concern is the actual test administration. Although the test would likely be administered using explicit directions, there is no way to ensure that test validity is being maintained. People giving the test could interpret the directions differently, they could follow the directions casually, or they could disregard them altogether. The obvious result would be intelligence scores that are not true reflections of the students involved. In addition, there are numerous emotional and physical factors that could affect test results, including amount of sleep the night before the test, awareness of the importance of the test, and whether there was adequate light in the test area, among others. The test results may not legitimately reflect the child's intelligence level.

With this in mind, I would cautiously analyze the test results and compare them to other information on the child, such as performance on other tests and classroom experiences. I would share the test results with parents of the children involved. However, I would caution them about possible sources of error in testing. I would also share other pertinent information with the parents that might present a more accurate rating of their child's intelligence level.

II. Additional Leadership Challenges—Not in the text

Chapter 2: Students Leadership Challenge

One of the girls in your 10th-grade class is desperate for friends. Vanesa seems so lonely and depressed—no one ever joins her at lunch or walks with her to class. She is a reasonably good student, but just doesn't seem to fit in. On several occasions she has tried to join a group by offering help or asking questions, but these initiations never go anywhere. Even when a friendship begins, it never lasts. It seems like Vanesa gets so excited about the possibility of a developing relationship that she pushes the newfound friend away by overwhelming her with attention, showering her with special gifts, pouring out her heart, and sharing her deepest secrets and worries. Then Vanesa always seems to be the one exploited, abandoned, or hurt. Lately her schoolwork is careless and incomplete; she looks tired and pale.

- I. What are your concerns for this student?
- II. How do you think Vanesa feels about herself?
 - What are some danger signs you might watch for?
 - How would you help her form some genuine relationships?
 - Consider the same situation, except the child is a third-grade student.

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

*Constance Carter, Mary Phillips, Diane Batty
Orono High School, Orono, Maine*

We've all had students like Vanesa in our classes. Our concerns for her would be that in spite of being a reasonably good student, it might not be enough to compensate for losing out on the social aspect of school. Social issues are very important, almost a matter of life or death, for students at this age. Vanesa might go overboard trying to come up with friends and make choices she wouldn't ordinarily make simply to impress peers.

With a student like this, teachers should watch for certain warning signals such as absences from school and decreased quality of work. If Vanesa feels like a failure already, a drop in her grades will only make her feel more like one. Listen for talk about feelings of hopelessness, of "not fitting in." Other danger signs might be low affect, weight loss, or a drop in personal care. Watch her demeanor in class and in the halls.

A student like this might substitute risk-taking attempts, especially if she feels that academic risk taking hasn't worked for her. She might substitute more dangerous risk-taking attempts, such as substance abuse or delinquent activities, to impress other students.

Many schools have resources available to help students like Vanesa. Our school has a student assistance team, which is a group of faculty that meets with students who are having difficulty surviving: the team takes a supportive, not a punitive, standpoint. We would encourage Vanesa to get involved in peer groups to develop healthy friendships and to keep in touch with a guidance counselor. Extracurricular activities can also be a wonderful way to develop self-esteem and a sense of belonging in students who otherwise feel cut off from school life.

A student like this might benefit from developing a one-on-one relationship with a counselor who could serve as her advocate. A job at school, even being responsible for one simple errand a day, can be an

excellent way to encourage a student's feeling of worthiness. If Vanesa can be helped to feel that her presence each day at school is important, that her being there made the day better, it could have a very positive impact on her.

*Susan B. Strauss, Principal
Lincoln High School, Lincoln, Rhode Island*

Any time a student's work, attitude, or appearance shows a continuing change from their regular appearance and routine, it is a "heads-up" notice for concern. Her neediness of others may be an indicator of problems at home—a dysfunctional family, neglect, or abuse. A student such as Vanesa, who relies on others for her feelings of self-worth, may start to question whether there is any point to trying to get good grades, keeping up a good appearance or even, at the extreme, living at all. It is likely that Vanesa has very negative feelings about herself, and probably doubts that she has any value to anyone.

Whenever a student displays behaviors that are attention seeking, it is because something is missing and/or wrong in his or her own life. These described behaviors are, in themselves, "danger signs," and having been alerted by them, I would be sure to monitor Vanesa for any increasing displays of the behaviors already observed, as well as being watchful for any signs of withdrawal, self-inflicted injury, or radical mood swings. Utilizing a strategy of collegial brainstorming for student support, I would contact the student's guidance counselor to arrange a meeting of Vanesa's teachers as well as the school social worker and psychologist. Have her behaviors been observed in all classes? Is there any other student who seems to take a genuine interest in Vanesa? Is there a teacher with whom Vanesa has bonded? Such a meeting can help to focus on what the observable behaviors have been and to identify a variety of creative options to help address the issue. It is also an opportunity for the social worker to determine if a social history is needed. At the classroom level, I would seek out the assistance of peer leaders—students, who by their nature, have an interest in helping others—and find ways to provide for cooperative learning activities that will, through the natural classroom learning environment, offer nonthreatening opportunities for interaction.

*Thomas O'Donnell, Social Studies Chairperson, Grades 7–12
Malden High School, Malden, Massachusetts*

The concerns are Vanesa's self-image and interpersonal relationships. I would turn to adjustment personnel, guidance personnel, and parents to alert them and have them use their expertise.

I might try counseling her one-on-one if I felt confident and comfortable under the circumstances. Seating arrangements and cooperative learning situations might help Vanesa develop some relationships. I might encourage her to join extracurricular activities where she can make contributions and form some attachments.

Chapter 3: Learning Leadership Challenge

The seniors in the history classes seem to equate understanding with memorizing. They prepare for each unit test by memorizing the exact words of the textbook. Even the best students seem to think that flash cards are the only learning strategy possible. In fact, when you try to get them to think about history by reading some original sources, debating issues in class, or examining art and music from the time period you are studying, they rebel. “Will this be on the test?” “Why are we looking at these pictures—will we have to know who painted them and when?” “What’s this got to do with history?” Even the students who participate in the debates seem to use words and phrases straight from the textbook without knowing what they are saying.

- What do these students “know” about history? What are their beliefs and expectations, and how do these affect their learning?
- Why do you think they insist on using the rote memory approach?
- How would you teach your students to learn in this new way?
- How will these issues affect the grade levels in your building?

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

*Ashley Dodge, Ninth and Tenth Grade Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles, California*

These students are obviously using strategies that have worked for them in the past (memorization and regurgitation of facts and dates), but they have not developed any critical thinking skills. Many students are very successful with these techniques up to a certain point. They become obsessed with learning only what is necessary to pass the class. At times it has seemed to me that they are attempting to conserve their energy for other things. Their insistence on using the rote memory approach may stem from unimaginative teachers in their past who have relied on tests of only facts and dates. These students may have received very good grades in the past, and thus now equate this type of learning with succeeding academically.

In order to give these students the opportunity to see history as something more than a time line, I would announce to the class that for the next unit, there would be no test. Instead, we would create projects reflective of the era. Perhaps we would produce a play, a fashion show with period clothing, or a festival. Some students may wish to construct a city at the time being studied, focusing on the differences in the city as it was then compared to now. The students would need to use the information in the text to incorporate their ideas into their project, but it would not need to be memorized. They would be graded on both the originality and the quality of their work, and the project grade would count as two unit grades.

Since I believe that it is important to give students reasonable assurance of success, especially when attempting something so foreign, I would try to give examples of successful similar projects, and to offer as much guidance and time as necessary. This requires a lot more personal time and energy on my part than simply lecturing on the text, but students are generally appreciative when they see a teacher working with them. In my experience students have worked very hard on these projects and have been pleased with the results.

*Mitchell D. Klett, Twelfth Grade Teacher
A.C. New Middle School, Springs, Texas*

Apparently, these students know historical events, including dates and places, but they don’t comprehend the implications of these events to today’s world. They seem to equate superficial knowledge with comprehension and conceptual understanding. Their beliefs indicate that the events in the past are “history” and of little or no relevance to the world today or specifically, to their world. Their learning consists of surface knowledge and rote memorization, probably because they’ve experienced history as series of disjointed, sequential events.

Students need to understand that the events of the past have a profound influence on the world today. The adage, “Those who don’t know history are doomed to repeat it,” rings true. As their teacher, I would emphasize cause and effect relationships throughout history and compare them with one another. By focusing on the causes of specific events, such as revolutions caused by economic rifts, students can better understand the cyclic nature of these types of revolutions. Events like the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution could be examined through inquiry learning, group discussion, or role playing. Students could be given the opportunity to explore the nature of revolutions and apply what they have learned to new situations. An example topic could be: Third World countries have increasing populations and diminishing resources—what will happen as the rift between the haves and the have nots is increased?

*Thomas O’Donnell, Social Studies Chairperson, Grades 7–12
Malden High School, Malden, Massachusetts*

These students “know” history as a set of factual events that happened in the past. Although much bias, prejudice, and myth have crept into the “known” history, the students don’t realize this. Since they believe history is only a set of facts, they expect to learn them, know them, and be tested accordingly.

If their school experience has brought success through rote learning, it is logical for them to continue this approach to learning. To help students break out of rote thinking I would test them on comprehension and assess them on that basis. Once they realize what the goal is, they will switch their approach in order to achieve success. I would also teach them to recognize any word in the reading that assumes “a truth” or accepts only one explanation of events. Finally, I would train students to ask Who? What? Where? How? and Why? for all situations.

Chapter 4: Motivation Leadership Challenge

On the first day of your orientation for your new position as a principal of an elementary school you are handed a long list of competencies and topics that could be covered on the 4th grade proficiency test in the spring. You learn that your new school is on a State list of districts being monitored because the test scores from previous years have been so low. You agree that many of the topics on the test list are important, but your school curriculum seems to have no plan for teaching other than drill and practice on facts and skills that might be on the test.

- How will you help teachers arouse students' curiosity and interests about the topics and tasks that will be tested?
- How will you help teachers establish the value of learning these skills and facts?
- How will you help teachers get students engaged in real learning about the topics?
- What more do you need to know to prepare your students for this big test?

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

Sandra Gill

Sixth Grade Teacher Hudson, Middle School, Hudson, New York

Since the topics on the upcoming proficiency test are important ones, I would use them to form the core of my own curriculum. The curriculum would augment individual assignments with a hefty dose of group challenges in which students would work collaboratively in doing projects involving the examination of the world outside of school. These challenges would culminate in written reports as well as group presentations, incorporating both visual and verbal elements, for classmates and others. I would choose the members of each group based on the personalities and learning styles of the students. The competencies and topics that pertained to the proficiency test would be identified in the plan for each group challenge, and they would be repeated in subsequent challenges in order to reinforce them.

Julie Mohok

Classroom Teacher Ponam Primary School, Manus Island, Papua New Guinea

The first thing I would do is try to understand the situation. Perhaps through conversing with other teachers, and analyzing past records I could quickly learn of the contributing factors to the present low school performance. In addition, I would find out what the reasons are for the school's decision to resort to drill and practice on facts and skills. This may be a situation analysis. This understanding would assist me in planning my teaching for the first few weeks without overtly challenging the school administration.

I would proceed to plan and teach on the principle that learning and developing skills is for usage in the real world and not merely for passing some important test. This may include experiments, simulations, role plays, watching a video clip on a specific topic, etc. These activities should motivate students by arousing curiosity and interest in learning. Drilling and practice of key concepts and skills can follow enjoyable segments. In the process, I would inform the school's administration of my teaching program. Perhaps I might even suggest that they conduct a mid-test within the school to find out if my teaching makes a difference to the students' success rate as they prepare for the big test.

I believe that through active participation, students should be able to master skills and understand topics more clearly. Perhaps by understanding the real value of learning, preparing for the "big" test can be more of an individual challenge. The teacher is only a facilitator.

Margaret Doolan
Year Three, St. Michael's School, Gordonvale QLD 4865, Australia

What a challenge! The first few weeks would be spent in becoming familiar with my students and the standard of work of each. I would then enlist the help of my teacher-aide and as many parents as possible to help with individual and small-group study. Such helpers would work with those children exhibiting learning difficulties, focusing on areas of difficulty. They would also spend time with the students performing at the highest level, giving them the chance to attempt challenging exercises under supervision. The bulk of the class would be exposed to a variety of exercises that would improve their reading, interpreting, comprehension, and thinking skills.

Throughout the year we would cover all test topics using all forms of information available—books, library visits, excursions, guest speakers, newspapers, computers, and displays. We would read, write, talk, write poems, illustrate, and integrate with science, math, and the arts wherever possible. I would present these topics as normal curriculum learning, without mentioning “test” to the class at this stage.

Finally, in order to prepare the class for the actual test itself, I would obtain copies of previous papers and practice going through them. If necessary to create enthusiasm, I would graph class results (not individual) and attempt to achieve a higher rate of successful answers each time. The test would be tackled with confidence, not fear, by most of the class at least!

Jennifer Hudson Thomas
Armidale High School, Armidale, Australia

Although the importance of the 4th grade proficiency test cannot be overlooked from both the student's and school's point of view, it should not impede the process of “real” teaching and learning. Developing an enthusiasm for the learning required should be the greatest priority for any group of learners. Listing the mandatory topics to be covered and voting on the order in which these topics will be undertaken will give the learners some ownership of the direction that their learning will take over the year. Further involvement in planning the course and outcomes of such units of work will also increase students' commitment to their learning. Relating the learning within each topic to the real-life situations and interests of the group of learners will also help promote and “sell” the learning required. As the teacher, it will be my responsibility to incorporate as many of the required competencies as often as possible in all learning undertaken. This should ensure that the facts and skills required for that proficiency test become consolidated learning and form the basis of an automatic and well-rehearsed response repertoire. With such a learning background, my students should be able to generalize their skills and approach the proficiency test in the spring with confidence.

Chapter 5: Teaching Leadership Challenge

You are the Chair of the English Department. Over the summer, your teachers planned a new World Literature course. They picked books that they really enjoyed in high school and some new selections that relate to recent films. The first day of class, they discover that a number of students in their classes appear to be limited in their English proficiencies. To get a sense of the class's interest, the first assignment to write a "review" of the last book they read, as if they were on TV doing a "Book Beat" program. There was a bit of grumbling, but the students seem do the assignment.

That night one after another of the teachers called you to complain. Either the students were giving them a hard time, or no one has read anything lately. Two students try to write about the Bible, but they refuse to "review" it. Several mention a text from another class, but their reviews are one sentence evaluations—usually containing the words "lame" or "useless," (often misspelled). If the paragraphs are any indication, these students can't put four sentences together and stay on the same topic. In stark contrast are the papers of three students—they are a pleasure to read, and worthy of publication in the school literary magazine (if there were one), and reflect a fairly sophisticated understanding of some good literature.

- How would you adapt your plans for this group?
- What will you do tomorrow?
- What teaching approaches do you think will work with this class?
- How will you work with the three students who are more advanced?

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

*Michael J. Ellis, Tenth and Eleventh Grade English Teacher
Quincy High School, Quincy, Massachusetts*

The problem here is one of mistaken assumption. The teacher has anticipated a certain level of ability and a certain degree of past knowledge, both of which seem to be abundantly lacking in this case. Obviously, the students are unfamiliar with the review as a literary form. Starting tomorrow, I'd begin teaching that. The first thing the students need to see is a well-written review, something they can begin to pattern their own responses on. Fortunately, I have three excellent examples already in hand, passed in by my own students. In the next class, I would have those three students read their reviews aloud and I'd pass out copies of them to the class. A discussion of what made those three papers so good would not only be instructive to the group, but would also positively reinforce the work done by those three students.

It seems the purpose behind the curriculum for this class is to expose the students to a wide array of great literature. That is a noble goal. In teaching, however, nobility must frequently give way to practicality. A teacher's first duty is to guide his students in the acquisition of necessary skills. Sometimes having them read Dickens isn't the best way to do that. The curriculum worked up over the summer will probably work well with the three standouts in the class. I'd try splintering them off from the rest. This can be a logistical nightmare and it effectively doubles your prep time for the class, but it's the best way to be sure that the students of a particular ability level don't stagnate while you cater to another group.

With the rest of the class, it's time to shift on the fly and ditch the original reading list. Emphasizing longer novels in a class dominated by poor readers is nothing less than a suicide attempt spread over 40 weeks. If you rely instead on shorter selections and young adult fiction titles with catchy plot lines, then you've at least given yourself a fighting chance at a class that actually finishes the books. It's also never a bad idea to throw video material into the mix. My first year of teaching I showed an episode of the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* to two classes of tenth graders, knowing they'd despise it. Kids can always write more effectively on things they hate than on things they like. The reviews they passed in were, from a technical standpoint, the best paragraphs most of them had ever written. That assignment really helped to

etch the proper paragraph format in a lot of their minds. You can never allow yourself to forget that it's the skill itself, and not the means you use to convey it, that is ultimately most important.

*Jeff D. Horton, Seventh–Tenth Grade Teacher
Colton School, Colton, Washington*

This teacher may have set himself or herself up for problems from the start by assuming that all the students would be at the same learning level. Since this is clearly not the case, the course was delivered to a narrow range of students, and the majority are probably frustrated. The teacher needs to take another approach, though perhaps not abandon his or her original goals.

It appears that most of the students need some form of reteaching of the skills this teacher feels are necessary to complete the original plans. The teacher must determine which skills and knowledge are necessary for the students to successfully complete the course, and then assess the students in those areas. Once this is completed the teacher can develop several units that address those needs. This may take several days, but it is not wasted time. It will make life for all much easier in the long run.

Another problem may be the materials that the teacher planned to use. I do believe that students need to be introduced to the “classics” in literature. However, teachers are self-motivated to read and study these writings. We must remember that most students do not feel the same way. The teacher in this scenario must present the “classics” in a way that will hold the students’ interest. Instead of reading a whole book, pick out parts that reflect the writing style or message of the author. Then present other parts of the book using other teaching tools. There are movies available that are presented in a more current style that will appeal to students. Whatever the teaching tool used, there must always be a learning activity connected to it.

Having students that excel in a subject is always rewarding to a teacher. It makes us feel that we have accomplished what we are setting out to do. These three students can help a teacher convey the skills and knowledge to the rest of the class. They should be required to complete all the assignments and activities along with the class. However, they will do this quickly while others struggle. The teacher should try and use them to help in conveying the material to the other students. Students that are finding the work easy could be used to help others by reviewing their work and offering suggestions on how to improve it. They could also offer the teacher some suggestions as to how to make the material more interesting to the rest of the class.

Chapter 6: Classroom Management Leadership Challenge

There are students from four different ethnic groups in the middle school “pod” you are working with this year. Last week, you added a student with pretty severe emotional/behavioral problems and a student with cerebral palsy to the group as part of an experiment in full inclusion. The boy with cerebral palsy is in a wheelchair and has some difficulties with language and hearing. Each of the four ethnic groups seems to stick together, never making friends with students from “outside.” When the teachers ask students to work together for projects, the divisions are strictly on ethnic lines. Many of the subgroups communicate in their native language—one you don’t understand—and you assume that often the joke is on you because of the looks and laughs directed your way. Clarise, the emotionally disturbed student, is making matters worse by telling ethnic jokes to anyone who will listen in a voice loud enough to be overheard by half the class. There are rumors of an ambush after school to “teach Clarise a lesson.” You agree she—and the whole class for that matter—needs a lesson, but not this kind.

- How would you structure the class to help the students feel more comfortable together?
- What are your first goals in working on this problem?
- Is conflict negotiation called for here? How would you handle the situation?
- How will these issues affect the grade-levels in your building?

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

*Ann Sande, Third Grade Teacher
Henry Viscardi School, Albertson, New York*

In order to break down the barriers separating ethnic groups I would assign two children from different groups to perform a desirable task. It might be working together to find information on the computer’s encyclopedia or the Internet and reporting it back to the class, or preparing materials for the class science experiments. It would depend on the grade level and the interests of the group. I would assure that the task was one in which the children would meet success together. This is time-consuming but must be done repeatedly with different students in a variety of situations. The children need to “see” each other in new ways and to learn to appreciate each other’s strengths and talents beyond preconceived notions.

I would do a theme relating to a group that has suffered injustice. I would allow choice within a predetermined list of topics. One might be a study of the problems of the physically disabled in terms of access or discrimination. Hopefully the students would be able to draw comparisons between the group being studied and other ethnic groups who suffer discrimination and to see the experiences and challenges that each group has in common.

Modeling behavior is critical. When a group of students is speaking in another language and seemingly laughing at me I would “call them on it.” I would express my dislike of the behavior in a firm manner and reiterate that it is unacceptable within our class community. By doing so, it gives the students another way and the appropriate language to deal with the objectionable behavior displayed by Clarise. I might also suggest that, as a fun activity, the entire class try to learn a language that is not part of the curriculum; we might learn some American Sign Language together.

*Nicole DePalma Cobb and Sandra T. McNeice, Eighth Grade Teachers
Sterling Middle School, Quincy, Massachusetts*

There are no constants in teaching, but there are many ways of bringing together different groupings of students. In this case, the groupings are ethnically divided. On the first day when we, as facilitators, are faced with new groups, we try to envision what might be possible particularly when the students are drawn to their own ethnic zone of comfort. Our vision for the future is harmony within our classroom, which includes respect for ourselves and each other in a safe environment.

A respect and feeling of self-worth can be enhanced by exposing all students to a variety of language, books, food, tapes, videos, games from around the world, and music; in this living “personal gallery,” all voices and faces are represented and heard. The facilitator would initiate the sharing of her own culture by bringing in a plethora of artifacts and memorabilia. By participating in a group project along with our students, we model our own personal respect for our ethnic background by bringing in a representation of who we are and where we have come from. Once materials have been brought to class, the students will be divided into diverse pairings in order to conduct personal interviews about classmates of a different culture. These interviews create a woven fabric symbolizing the strength of a new bond.

From the beginning of our journey, we have been engaged in a process that has allowed all of us to explore and investigate the questions surrounding ourselves with regard to our ethnicity. Since our class was introduced at the beginning of the year with an open-ended project along with consistent reinforcement, we have circumvented potential conflicts. As facilitators it is our job to model for our students strategies that hopefully they will internalize and use outside the classroom. Our students then become the teachers of other students.

*Steven P. Rude, Guidance Counselor
John C. Fremont High School, Los Angeles, California*

I would request that the school psychologist or special education teacher come to my class to prepare the class for the arrival of their new fellow students. I would also encourage the students with disabilities to explain their own individual differences in their own way. There are many classroom activities that encourage students to explore and acknowledge their own differences, whether it is the color of their skin or the type of disability they possess. I would expect to review the Individual Education Plan for each of the students involved in the transition. Also, it would be helpful to know what behavior interventions work for the emotionally disturbed child and what teaching methods are most effective for the student with cerebral palsy. I would speak with the parents of these children to explore their expectations and past experiences in inclusive settings. There would also need to be teachers’ aides available to help the special education students and to assist in communicating with the children who do not speak English. The inclusion of special education students’ into the classroom is a challenge, but it can ultimately encourage acceptance across all lines, including ethnicities and exceptionalities

Chapter 7: Assessing Student Learning Leadership Challenge

It is nearing the end of school and the 9th grade achievement test results are finally in. The parents' report form went home last Friday, and Monday morning you arrive to find the parents of one of your students in the office. They have asked to speak with you immediately. The father is a prominent businessman and the mother is a lawyer. Their daughter received a grade-equivalent score of 11.8 on her standardized math test. The girl has been making Bs and Cs in her math class—she seldom completes homework and has trouble with your conceptual approach to math. She just wants to know the “steps” to solve the problems so she can finish. The teacher has tried several times to get the parents to come in to talk about ways to support the girl's learning, but they never seem to have had the time—until today.

The secretary has called the math teacher down to the office because the parents wanted to talk with her and it is her planning period. So now all three are in your office. You smile as they enter your office, but the parents are not smiling. As soon as you sit down, the father says to the math teacher, “Well, you can see from our daughter's scores that you have been totally wrong in the grades you have given her this year. We thought she was just weak in math, but now it is clear you have something against her! Or maybe you just don't know how to teach math to bright girls.”

The mother chimes in to the teacher, “Yes, we expect you to reconsider her final grades for the year in light of her obvious ability. In fact,” she glances at you and then glares at the teacher again, “we believe she should get credit for the 10th grade class you teach as well, because she obviously knows the material already.”

- What would you say to the parents?
- What do you need to know about tests to deal with this situation?
- How will you approach working with this teacher?

Ideas from Master Teachers and Principals: What Would They Do?

Mark H. Smith

Teacher, Grades Nine through Twelve, Medford High School, Medford, Massachusetts

The only thing that the 11.8 grade-equivalent score that the daughter received on her standardized math test tells us is that she has the ability to do well in high school mathematics. The parents should be more concerned that with the ability shown on the standardized test, she should probably be scoring a lot higher in her math course in school. As students develop and move up to the high school level, courses become more conceptual and there is more of a process than just getting the steps and the answer, especially in mathematics, which is a sequential subject with each course leading into the next one. It is imperative that students get beyond the simple solutions in order to progress to the next level.

I understand that many parents will choose the side of their child over the side of a teacher. This definitely happened in this case, because the parents would not come in to talk about their daughter's learning until they had something they thought would give them ammunition against the teacher. As a teacher all you can do is explain your grading procedure, what the curriculum is, and what is expected of the students in your class. When you have clear and reasonable expectations for all of your students, then it becomes the responsibility of the student to achieve.

It is unrealistic for a parent to expect a teacher to change a grade for a class based on results in a standardized test. It is even more ridiculous to want to skip a course in a sequence because of the results. Although this case did finally get the parents to meet with the teacher, the parents were way off base and the educational system must be explained to them. At the high school level and beyond, the responsibility of learning is geared more toward the student.

Thomas W. Newkirk
Eighth Grade Teacher, Hamilton Heights Middle School, Arcadia, Indiana

The grade a student receives in a class is sometimes not so much a measure of intelligence as it is a measure of performance. Bright students who are disorganized may bring assignments in days past a due date. Bright students who are distracted may not bring assignments in at all. Bright students who have been absent several days may be overwhelmed by the work waiting for them.

The grade a student receives in a class often requires an explanation in order that the students and the parents understand the basis for the evaluation. It is important that the teacher maintain a record of comments and correspondence for parents and teachers to review.

While it is wonderful that the student has a grade-equivalent of 11.8 on the achievement test, her daily class performance does not meet the established standard for an A. Whether a student's achievement test results are high or low, it would be unfair to reconsider a final grade based on one score.

Unless the school has a policy for receiving credit for classes based on achievement tests, the parents and the student should be encouraged to maintain the lines of communication as she enters the 10th grade class.

Thomas O'Donnell
Social Studies Chairperson, Grades Seven through Twelve, Malden High School, Malden, Massachusetts

The math achievement the girl took might not be a good device for measuring one's ability to go beyond high school math to the more abstract, conceptual approach needed for college-level math. You must explain your grading system to parents so they understand the needed combination of effort and achievement to achieve top grades. Since the parent statements include two serious charges against you, make it clear you expect respect from them, but that this issue will have no impact on your work with the student. You must reject their expectations of changing grades and credits.

Instructional leadership: A learning-centered guide. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Google Scholar. Iwanicki, E. F. (1998). Evaluation in supervision. In G. R. Firth & E. F. Pajak (Eds.), Handbook of research on school supervision (pp. 138–175). New York: Simon & Schuster. Classroom-based assessments of teaching and learning. In J. H. Stronge (Ed.), Evaluating teaching: A guide to current thinking and best practice, 2nd ed pp. 101–124. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. Google Scholar. Download references. Author information. Affiliations. The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, USA. Introduction to Educational Administration / Leadership >. Instructional Leadership: A Research-Based Guide to Learning in Schools, 4th Edition. . PreK–12 Education. Higher Education. Using a learning-centered approach that emphasizes making decisions that support student learning, the authors address issues critical to the teaching and learning process: student differences, learning, student motivation, teaching, classroom management, assessing student learning, and assessing and changing school climate and culture. Features. Students get experience applying theory and research in each chapter through the chapter opening “Leadership Challenges” which present provide actual content and ground the chapter in practical, applied context. At its core, instructional leadership aims to improve student learning and teacher effectiveness. As an instructional leader, you can use a number of methods to accomplish these goals. But they typically involve: Student engagement. To inform the aforementioned leadership practices and specific strategies in this guide, you must visit classrooms more often. Either announced or as a surprise, regularly watching your teachers teach will help you: Offer corrective feedback. This new instructional style has also been called “learning-centered” leadership. It began with a push by state education leaders to process student data from available achievement tests. Private companies enjoyed financial benefits, selling data reporting systems to schools to help them sort the data. State education leaders hired consultants, who created data analysis workshops and data retreats to instruct school leaders on effective data use. School leaders adopted new school reform plans and curricula coordinated with state learning standards, resulting in far-reaching changes in student learning. Positive results only happened when practitioners were willing to change their ways and conform to the new standards. Instructional leadership is generally defined as the management of curriculum and instruction by a school principal. This term appeared as a result of research associated with the effective school movement of the 1980s, which revealed that the key to running successful schools lies in the principals' role. However, the concept of instructional leadership is recently stretched out to include more distributed models which emphasize distributed and shared empowerment among school staff, for example...