Faces we see, shadows we cast: the increasing reality of classroom diversity

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The United States is currently undergoing several important cultural shifts. For teachers, among the most important is the embracement of heterogeneous student populations. Current society is acknowledging and celebrating different forms of diversity in the classroom, providing the opportunity to take oversimplified, homogenous techniques targeted towards the average, Caucasian middle-class student and transform them into culturally responsive pedagogy - techniques that draw on diversity to directly improve student achievement.

Ball's Model of Generative Change, proposed by Arnetha Ball in 2009, offers one frame to consider in the context of classroom diversity. Ball uses the concept of generativity to advocate for teachers to continually build to their pedagogical knowledge base through personal and professional means, drawing on both to generate new solutions to complex pedagogical problems. This leads to a continuous process of taking in new knowledge from classroom surrounds (the students in your class) to reevaluate existing knowledge and integrate new knowledge into the curriculum.

Differentiated Instruction is another important topic to consider when discussing diversity in the classroom. People have different needs based on the factors that contribute to their unique set of diversity, which means that a "one size fits all" approach will not be very rewarding to a teacher or student; instead, offering pathways by which students can approach the acquiring of knowledge through mediums that are better suited for them will lead to a more interesting school year. By applying the ideas of diversity in this section to your own classroom, you will be able to discern ways in which you can use differentiated instruction to help students engage in classroom curriculum.

We have broken down the broad spectrum of "diversity" into four identifiable categories: Socioeconomic, Racial/Ethnic & Cultural, and Ability. As you read about these three areas, and our recommendations on recognizing and making use of this diversity, reflect on how this knowledge can augment your ability to help your students excel in the classroom.

Socioeconomic Diversity

Across the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that close to half of K-12 students are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. This correlates with a large number of students who enter into your classroom hungry, unwashed, and unprepared, not out of “laziness” but instead due to factors outside of their control.

In the modern classroom, we must acknowledge the existence of varying degrees of socioeconomic status, which is defined as a range of social and economic factors that determines the class we arbitrarily assign to people; oftentimes, this is measured through income, resulting in low, middle and high-income households. However, income isn’t the only thing to consider when looking into socioeconomic diversity. Students may come or have come from households with an “oppositional culture”, where education is not prioritized nor seen as a way to improve one’s life. Others may not have a place to call home, people to call parents, or the resources to arrive fully prepared to learn every day.

Still, income is a primary driver of many facets of socioeconomic diversity in the classroom. Whether your school district is situated in an area of relative affluence or poverty can exogenously affect how you perceive your students’ actions if you do not acknowledge and discover a wide range of socioeconomic status. In poorer areas, teachers may find themselves encountering underfunded schools and students whose poverty has hurt their ability to focus in the classroom, leading to the loss of the cardinal rule of education: the belief that all students can learn. In affluent areas, teachers often assume that students can easily access the resources they need for the classroom, even though there can exist students of lower socioeconomic status in these areas who are burdened by the purchases.

How can your teaching reflect the varying degrees of socioeconomic diversity in your classroom? The first thing to do is find out the socioeconomic demographics of your school. Are a majority of students from upper-middle class households? Are almost all of the students on the free and reduced lunch program? It is very likely that you will find a mix of students from

across the socioeconomic spectrum in your class, which provides you with the wonderful pedagogical opportunity to draw from these different areas as you teach.

To be able to draw on different facets of socioeconomic diversity in the classroom, examine the materials required to excel in your class. If a student isn't able to purchase a black three-ring binder, does that put them at a disadvantage to others? Are there clear, alternate avenues for students to obtain your class materials if they cannot purchase them? If you want prepared students in the classroom, it's always good to ensure that all students are able to actually get with the materials you have tasked them with obtaining.

A final aspect that can affect students' classroom experiences is their relationship with their parents. Depending on what grade level or school you teach at, you may or may not have a direct communication line with your students' parents. If you can, keep track of which parents appear more involved in their children's schooling, which appear too involved, and which don't appear very involved. These levels of involvement can happen at all income levels, especially given the trend of having two working parents, and offer useful insights into why students may act a certain way in your class. All too often, students are diagnosed with medical issues when they are simply trying to get some form of attention from you and their peers.

With that said, the classroom is a place where you can positively draw from different aspects of socioeconomic diversity as well. When planning your curriculum and creating assignments for class, think about the ways you can help students see different socioeconomic perspectives. A History class can easily incorporate ancient civilizations' class structures into a relevant paradigm for understanding socioeconomic biases in the United States. A Math class can include word problems that feature scenarios from students' own experiences (i.e. a trigonometry problem on "walking up stairs" vs. "the angle between the sun and your yacht", depending on the socioeconomic makeup of your class). As you create examples and draw from those of the past, try to select material that resonates with different socioeconomic perspectives. If a lesson can draw on group activity, alternate between pairing students of similar socioeconomic status and a non-homogenous mix of socioeconomic diversity. The former builds relations through shared connections in your classroom, especially pertinent if a minority of students fall on one end of the socioeconomic spectrum in your class; the latter builds empathy, and increases the worldview of all students in the mixed group.

Finally, we must acknowledge that most of this section has been focused on understanding the needs of students on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. This section on socioeconomic diversity would not be complete, however, without mentioning the needs of some of the wealthier students in a class. It is possible for wealthy students to be ostracized or manipulated by their peers for their wealth, depending on the situation, which can be detrimental for the student's social interactions in the classroom. As a teacher, don't be afraid to encourage a discussion between your class, and find common ground between "rich" and "poor"; as we mentioned earlier, one factor that may unite them is having two working parents.

Here are a couple activities you can do in the classroom to further both you and your students' knowledge of socioeconomic diversity:

1) Struggles and successes of the past

This is an excellent project to implement in a wide variety of classrooms, such as American History, World History, or Economics. Ask your students to look into the pasts of their families and find out the socioeconomic statuses of their ancestors (great-grandparents tend to be the furthest back most students can go, unless their families keep good family trees). What occupations were their ancestors in? Do your students live in similar conditions today as did their parents or grandparents? What is a life circumstance that they have in common with their ancestors, that is worse than their ancestors, and that is better than their ancestors?

This activity ties in well with the section on cultural diversity, but this aspect of the activity focuses more on socioeconomic status. By implementing this activity within an established curriculum, you can make students more involved in material, appreciate other students' range of socioeconomic circumstances, and evaluate how they have changed over the years. For example, an Economics teacher can use this activity to introduce the concepts of budget constraints and inflation to students.

2) Can I afford these supplies?

In this section, we briefly mentioned one way to improve your teaching efficacy is by examining what materials you require for students to succeed in the classroom. The best way to do this is to go out and try to purchase these supplies yourself. If you require several books to read in class, are they easily accessible in a school or town library for students who cannot purchase them? If not, it's a good pedagogical move to have a supply of books for students to rent out, especially if you are going to use the same books for many years. The same idea can be applied to the notebooks, pencils, highlighters, rulers, colored sheets of paper, printed copies of work, or even online sourcing of knowledge. If students cannot buy the physical materials, nor access the Internet in a way that is accessible to their schedule, then they will find themselves falling behind in class for no reason other than not being able to pay. On the other side of the socioeconomic spectrum, if students have the means to purchase materials but cannot easily obtain them, this can hurt their ability to learn through reviewing materials at their leisure at home.

This activity is very important in nearly all classrooms. If you require materials, and your students cannot access them due to inability to pay or inability to take materials off school grounds and into their homes, then these students will be unable to learn as you intend them to.

Racial/Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

As educators of the next generation, it's important to keep in mind the continuous change in racial and ethnic demographics throughout the country, but more importantly in your classroom. In a nation where students of minority racial and ethnic backgrounds are becoming one of the fastest growing populations, it's important to recognize this change when thinking about your classroom pedagogy. Although they often go hand in hand in popular lexicon, race and ethnicity are two separate terms. Racial diversity refers to the presence of members from different socially-defined races, usually defined in the United States as: Asian, Caucasian/White, African/Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American. Ethnic diversity refers to the presence of members from different regions in the world, geographically grouped into ethnicities; Lebanese, Chinese, Croatian, and Puerto Rican are all ethnicities that connect people to their ancestors' backgrounds.

When discussing racial and ethnic diversity, remember the cardinal rule of education: all students can learn. However, keep in mind that each student is different and comes from diverse experiences, so not all students learn the same way. Students with different racial backgrounds engage in course material in significantly different ways; what follows is a series of tips that are meant to be suggestions, and not guaranteed solutions for teaching in racially diverse classrooms. Teachers should continuously develop a range of pedagogical skills that best serve the needs of *all* their students.

One way to begin preparing to teach a racially and ethnically diverse classroom is to develop a syllabus that explores multiple perspectives on a given topic. Include multicultural examples, materials, and visual aids as much as possible to engage with students as much as possible. For example, in a History class about World War II, it would be vital to mention Navajo code talkers, who were instrumental in the encryption of communications and transmitted secret messages that would not be easily deciphered by enemy soldiers. Another suggestion is to design classroom instruction and materials with a diverse group of students in mind. Designing classes with a clear structure but also with flexibility can go a long way to ensuring that students' inputs feel valued and there is a conscious wanting to learn.

Cultural diversity is another type of diversity that has not been really highlighted in discussions and debates around education reform. This leads to a widening of the cultural gap between students and their teachers. Most educators are white, middle-class English speakers, while the students they work with do not necessarily fit the same profile. As an educator, it is

important for you to highlight that culture matters in the classroom because each student has a life experience that is unique to them, and which affects the way they interact and think in the classroom.

To truly engage students effectively, you must reach out to them in ways that are culturally responsive and appropriate, and examine the cultural assumptions and stereotypes that are brought into the classroom that may hinder meaningful interactions. One way to do this is by working with students in establishing the class norms so that way both you and the students can be held accountable in the event of “hot moments” (tensions) in the classroom. In order to engage students effectively in the learning process, teachers must know their students and their academic abilities individually, rather than relying on racial or ethnic stereotypes or prior experience with other students of similar backgrounds. Many teachers, for example, admire the perceived academic ability and motivation of Asian American students and fail to recognize how even a "positive" stereotype isn't positive if it presses students into molds not built for them individually.

Curriculum, in its most simple, essential, commonly understood form, is the "what" of education. It is crucial to academic performance and essential to culturally responsive pedagogy. Even the most "standard" curriculum decides whose history is worthy of study, whose books are worthy of reading, which curriculum and text selections that include myriad voices and multiple ways of knowing, experiencing, and understanding life can help students to find and value their own voices, histories, and cultures. When developing the curriculum, try to anticipate what topics may be explosive and design pedagogical strategies (e.g. small groups, free writes, and reflection responses) that may assist in managing sensitive topics.This is also a good time to think about the type of examples and materials that you want to use for the class to best understand the content.

Teachers are often a young immigrant's first regular, ongoing contact with someone outside their home community and culture. It's a relationship that can provide the emotional scaffolding necessary to cross the linguistic and cultural divide between country of origin and country of residency. With a bit of cultural insight, teachers can help English language learners acquire language skills more rapidly — and foster inclusion in the school community. This is a good time to practice heteroglossia as a teacher to have a better understanding of modern communication which may contribute to the development and pedagogy for teaching and learning.

Effective teachers of culturally diverse students acknowledge both individual and cultural differences enthusiastically and identify these differences in a positive manner. This positive identification creates a basis for the development of effective communication and instructional strategies. Social skills such as respect and cross-cultural understanding can be modeled, taught, prompted, and reinforced by the teacher.

Identity is another aspect of culture that is relevant in the classroom. As mentioned before, no two students are exactly the same across any demographics - sex, race, ethnicity, and even culture. This diversity is important to remember when constructing lessons and activities where students need to be engaged. Creating lessons around topics that are relevant to the interest of the students is important to remember; for example, a lesson that focuses on traditional ideas of “masculinity” and “femininity” may alienate a student who, while male in gender, acts in and enjoys activities that are more traditionally associated with “feminine” roles.

Here are a couple activities you can do in the classroom to further both you and your students' knowledge of racial, ethnic and cultural diversity:

1) Teachers and students can both take a test on implicit bias near the beginning of the year. An implicit bias test is designed to examine preconceived notions about different types of identities; for example, what stereotypes do you associate with African-American males in your class? Although you may not directly state or believe in harmful stereotypes, there are still surface-level assumptions that can be made unconsciously about many demographics.

   From this activity, both teachers and students can learn to be more conscious of how they view each other in the classroom and the interactions they have with each other. As a teacher, it is imperative that you understand implicit biases in order to teach all students to the best of your ability. Having your students take the implicit bias test can help as well, as not only can they learn what identities they still hold harmful associations about, but you can learn a group consensus on what harmful stereotypes are shared in the classroom. By correcting these biases, you generate a classroom that is safer, and thus more conducive to learning and discussion amongst students.

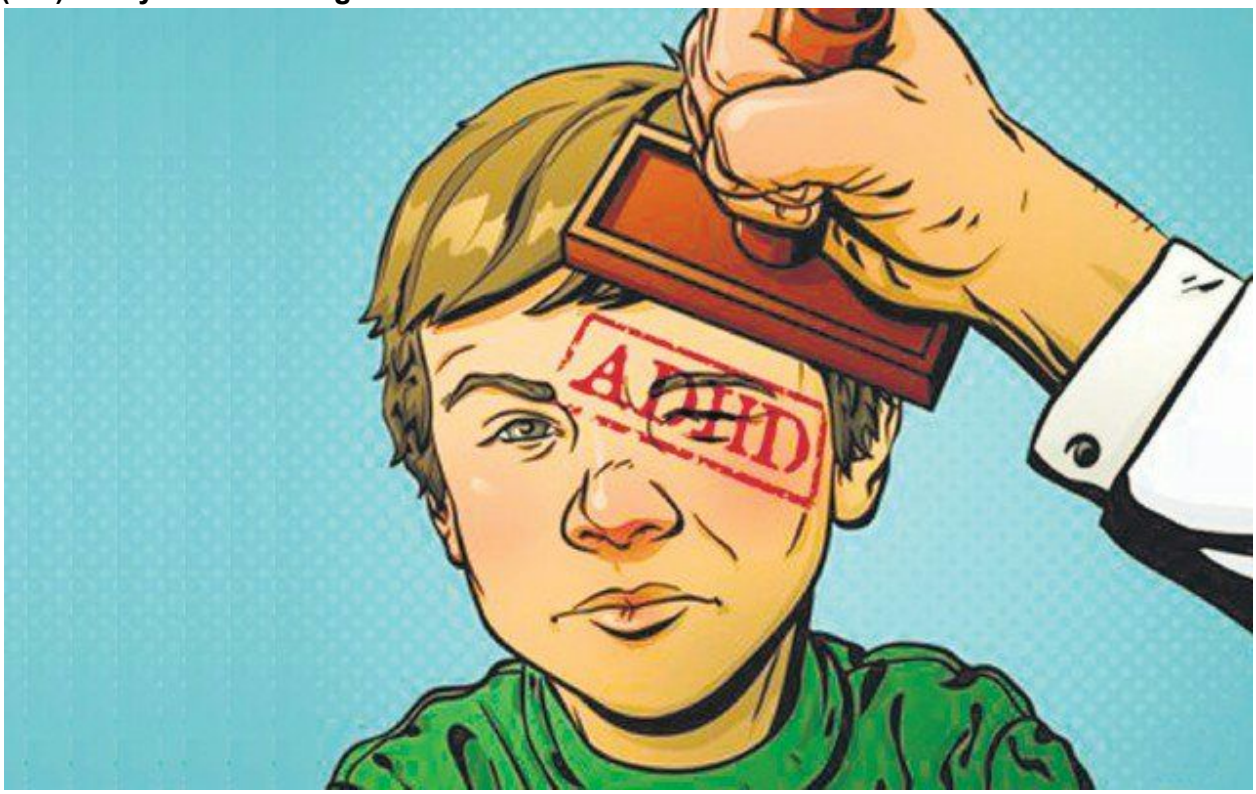
2) Teachers and students can do various simulations around empathy, where they put themselves into the shoes of of another individual in the class. This results in them having a better understanding of this person's life experiences.

   The more different the individual, the better. For example, a tall Latino male named Tony and a short, blond Caucasian female named Kristen paired together can discover how their partners interpret the world. Perhaps Tony will learn about Kristen's fear of walking home alone due to the cat-calls and hungry looks of strangers in the dark. Perhaps Kristen will learn about Tony slouching as he walks because he believes that cops will see him as less of a threat than if he stood at full height. Maybe both of them will discover a common bond of having a great and loving family who supports them. The end result, no matter where the empathy talks take them, will be a mutual respect for each others' lives.

3) One activity surrounding Identity revolves around students discussing about the identities that other people see when they look at them and "hidden identities", ones that cannot be known by looking at someone.

   This conversation really promotes the idea that everyone's identity is complex and different to each person, not easily discernible without getting to know the person well. Before you attempt this activity, judge the classroom; if the space is relatively safe, and you think that conversations around identity won't have a detrimental impact on a student's experience, then go forward in the classroom. While the topics may range from a student's secret love of baking cookies to a young woman coming out as bisexual to the class, it should result in a greater understanding of the different aspects of identity that are so important in understanding the increasing reality of diversity in our classrooms, and our society as a whole.

(Dis)Ability and Teaching



We have known how significant Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory is, but how does it apply to teaching students of diverse ability backgrounds? The way some teachers define "ability" is questionable because they have a tendency to classify people based on how effectively a specific teaching style works on a group of kids from diverse backgrounds and therefore, varying skillsets. It's not as simple as boiling it down to the whole "visual" or "hands-on" learning spiel as it is shown to be a bad indicator of ways to teach effectively. All that really matters in effective teaching are a couple things: the belief that all students can learn and how engaging a teacher can make their lessons.

The important belief that every student has the potential to learn is one of the core requirements for ZPD to work, as the teacher must provide a scaffold to the learner. And by scaffolding, it is meant by being aware of each individual's strengths so that the teacher may know what sort of help to provide in order to get the learner to the next step in their understanding of the concept. For novices, guiding them through examples to figure out how the concepts learned in class apply to different types of problems is helpful whereas for more experienced students, providing hints when needed as they try to solve problems by themselves. Studies have shown that learning is most effective when methods are based around current understanding rather than their supposed individual style. Besides, with regards to individual learning styles according to Fleming's VARK model, it's a good idea to think about the efficiency of trying to pull off teaching a concept in all the different ways in a timely manner. Also, some subjects just don't lend themselves to different styles such as trying to teach art by the auditory model even if some students claimed they learn best by hearing. Imagine trying to teach art verbally. The example regarding novices and more experienced learners is rather generalized, but the lesson here is that it really helps to get to know the students not just by gauging how much they understand, but by getting to know them as people.

Now, how is this important? The other condition for the ZPD to take effect is that the student must be willing to learn. Some teachers have a tendency to attribute low performance in class to low ability, but usually that really isn't the case. The subject that the learner is trying to learn might be taught in a way that doesn't resonate with them. In other words, the student may not be motivated and scaffolding would not help with the learning process. A way to fix that would to make the lessons more engaging, but this is easier said than done. What does it mean for a lesson to be more engaging? For some students, it means tying what they learn to their interests. Usually, some students may not devote their mental capacities to learn because they do not see the point. This ties back to an example within a pedagogy reading where a student adamantly refused to take part in projects until the teacher related a concept to something she was passionate about, AIDS, as her grandmother had been afflicted. However, with a wide variety of students, it's obvious that not all of them will be suddenly motivated after learning about how a topic learned in class applies to AIDS, but the takeaway is that just because a student is performing poorly may not be because they are incapable.

For other students, it's how the teacher teaches the concept that motivates a student to learn. ADD/ADHD is an over-diagnosed "disability" in America. Compared to other countries, we seem to have by far the highest occurrences. Is there anything wrong with a student who refuses to sit down and be lectured at for entire periods or falls asleep, without delving into the material itself via interactive activities? In a society that needs improvements due to the corruption and general unfairness of the status quo, we want to be raising up inquisitive minds that are curious about what they do and not let them be mindless drones. Is it right to essentially force diagnosed kids to be drug dependent in order to allow them to function in such a structured environment? The problem lies in how the teacher engages the students. When a student isn't able to get a concept or just isn't listening, a good attitude for teachers to have is to ask themselves if their teaching isn't effective rather than just blaming it on the students. With that attitude, the teacher is abler to adapt their teaching to the needs of the overall class that will change each year.

But a topic that hasn't been touched so far is what if some of the students themselves have a disability that may impede their learning, like dyslexia? In that case, teachers should be willing to experiment around with methods to get the material across, but most importantly be patient. This is different from the Fleming model where it essentially says students have a preferred style and would rather learn in one way; here, we have students who may have a style they would like to avoid and are open to any other methods of learning the material. Despite having disabilities in one area, students may have strengths in others according to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory. It can't be stressed enough, but teachers should get to know the students to get an idea of what they are for each student. Also, they should try to avoid bringing the weaknesses of individual students to light. Being considered an intellectual inferior in terms of class work may be discouraging, especially if the criticism came from their peers.

A lot of the time, people tend to make quick assessments of one's ability without taking note of underlying causes, so here are a couple activities that may help the teacher get to know their students better:

1) At the beginning of the term (or as soon as you can), have the students take a test to find out their Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. First developed in 1983, Howard Gardner created a way to express intelligence in a way that went beyond the limitations of an IQ test. These intelligences are Visual Spatial, Bodily Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Linguistic, and Logical-Mathematical.

   From these results and determining the overall strengths and weaknesses of the class as a whole, adjust the teacher's teaching style to accommodate for the class in a way that they'd still be comfortable with, as execution of their pedagogy is one of the keys to learning. This allows for a quick adjustment to make the learning style of the classroom more differentiated, allowing students different ways to excel in the classroom. For example, visual-spatial students should be allowed to experiment with visual media as a way of learning material, while *realia* (tangible objects) should be allowed for bodily-kinesthetic learners to discover their own paths of learning. You should find that many homework assignments and projects complement well to this idea of Multiple Intelligences, including the ability to help students build other areas of intelligence that they may be lacking. While some assignments can have a variety of media to choose from, it may be a good idea to have the entire class try several different ways of learning for exposure to the different intelligences put into practice.
2) While it may be commonplace to ask students what their hobbies/interests are as an ice-breaker and to get students to know each other, teachers should keep track of these interests in order to structure their curriculum in a way that personally resonates with the students.

   For example, if multiple students in a physics class like football, it would be a good idea to develop practical examples that make use of the concepts in a football setting. This could be seen in something like describing the path a football traces depending on the degree by which it is thrown, how much force the ball was thrown, and what forces act on the ball as it moves through the air.

   As another example, suppose a student in an English class loves to draw hyperrealistic images, but dislikes reading books. If you knew about the student's drawing abilities earlier on, and then noticed that they didn't enjoy reading books, you could tie both ideas together by having the student draw scenes from a book as a side project. This increases the intrinsic motivation for the student to read books, and perhaps will build a love of reading through bringing the still pages of a book to life with pen and paper.

Video

Education: Culture Matters (Kamehameha Schools)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YAPRsDEOsU&feature=youtu.be&list=PLrMqXQ2J_13ubw2OiTy9FdkAYHm_y2IIy

Background:
Hawai'i has retained its rich cultural heritage, both within the majority-minority population and in its public school systems. Students of Native Hawaiian heritage thrive when their schooling more directly connects to their culture and traditions. Since the video is 14 minutes long, we recommend watching the segment from 05:00-13:15, although the video in its entirety is very interesting to watch.

As you watch the video, consider the following:

- How do teachers draw upon their own experiences, as well as the experiences of their students, to create a strong curriculum?
- Why is the sociocultural curriculum beneficial to students in Hawai'i?
- What characteristics of the programs implemented in the Kamehameha Schools are transferable to your classroom environment?

For more videos, we highly suggest you explore the following resource:
http://www.edutopia.org/blog/five-minute-film-festival-culturally-responsive-teaching

Closing Activity

The following prompts are designed to be challenging, real-life scenarios in which teachers can implement pedagogical strategies that use the increasing reality of classroom diversity. Although there is no one "right" answer, we have provided potential solutions in response to these scenarios.

1) *A suicide by a popular Latino freshman student rocks the high school campus. You are a 9th grade English teacher about to teach the final part of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Your classroom is about 50% Latino and 50% White, with tensions divided between racial lines surfacing on occasion. How do you teach the next day's lesson?*

2) *You are a 4th grade elementary school teacher in a fairly affluent school district. The school year has just started, but you've already noticed certain disruptive behaviors in one student, Tommy. Whenever you ask students to begin their writing assignments, Tommy starts to tell the story of his immigrant great-grandpa in a loud voice. Furthermore, he refuses to turn in the weekly notebooks that you assign as homework. After confiding your impressions with Tommy's 3rd grade teacher, you find out that Tommy did not behave this way last year. How can you get Tommy to be a non-disruptive participant in your class?*

3) *You are a 9th grade English and Language Arts teacher who is in charge of the "Accelerated Reading" program at your school. Students are reporting their passing scores for tests and each student is reaching the minimum number of pages required per semester except for one, Bonnie. Bonnie is particularly good at reading. You notice that she prefers getting one big book with at least the minimum number of pages in order to avoid reading multiple books. However, she misses the majority of the Reading Comprehension questions for the books she reads and her grade is slowly declining in English. How do you reach out to Bonnie and help her in her future book selections?*

4) *You are an 11th grade Physics teacher who recently finished grading tests. It is relatively late into the year, but one male student has consistently been scoring low on these exams. There are only three tests left and there is a chance his grade may be salvaged. You decide you want to help said student. Where do you start helping and how do you go about the process?*

Here are some of our responses:

1) Was the freshman student in your class, or did he have close friends who are in your class? Was the freshman student part of a low, middle or high-income household? Learning some of these answers can better prepare you for the different reactions people may have to this tragedy.

   The climax of Romeo and Juliet involves two lovers committing suicide, an apt (albeit morbid) topic for teenagers starting their high school careers. With the recent news of their student, include a nuanced view of Romeo and Juliet from different perspectives; for example, *West Side Story* presents a modern-day retelling of this story that focuses on the Latino community. Judge the mood of the class, but don't be afraid to bring in the topic of suicide to a very real perspective; high school students are stronger than one often gives them credit for, and drawing on their shared experience, however tragic, could build stronger community in the years to come.

2) This is early in the year; how well do you know Tommy's life circumstances? It is possible that Tommy has recently entered into low socioeconomic status, and is acting out to hide the fact that he cannot purchase the notebooks you require. This is more likely given that Tommy didn't have problems last year in his class. Breaching this subject is a more delicate matter for a younger child, so first attempt to contact Tommy's parents and offer to obtain the notebooks that Tommy needs. If the parents are unreachable, or unwilling to accept your offer, try giving Tommy a piece of paper to write his responses on during each day. Fortunately, Tommy has already given an indication of a topic of interest to him: his great-grandpa. Perhaps you can tie in a pertinent topic to something his great-grandpa may have gone through. If his great-grandpa immigrated to the United States, it is likely that he came from very little means. Use the context of socioeconomic diversity to allow Tommy to connect his ancestor's struggles and triumphs with his own life circumstances.

3) Are you familiar with Bonnie's reading level? Are the books she's reading too difficult? Is she failing her tests for failure of comprehension or simply slacking off on reading? Are there problems at home that are affecting her studies? Seeing as Bonnie is an overall good student, I would invite her to meet over a break in school to discuss this concern. I would then figure out what is going on in her life outside of school to see if there is anything in particular going on that may be affecting her concentration in school. As an example, Bonnie could be deliberately doing worse on her comprehension quizzes due to bullying over being a "nerd" (a common trope of the high school experience). If she is receptive to talking, then the next move suggested could be to follow up on any of the concerns that she may have highlighted. If not, then the next best move would be to bring this to the attention of the parents so that they are aware of potential roadblocks at home that may be affecting her studies. Use the context of Bonnie's cultural diversity to see if reading is encouraged outside of school (at home) and how that plays a role in how she thinks about reading.

4) First, we would recommend trying to find the source of the student's troubles. Is it motivation? Does he seem like he's even trying? Did something troubling happen to him recently? Are his foundational skills in math weak? Does he lack the physical intuition to solve a problem? Arrange a private, warm and open meeting with the student to seek to find the answer. If it has to do with the first two questions, try to get him interested (preferably intrinsically) with the concepts, as the one of the requirements for ZPD is that the student must be willing to learn. If it's the latter two questions, gauge where he's at skill level wise and offer tutoring services to bring him up to speed, being aware of the various multiple intelligences he possesses. If something really did happen that caused distressed, provide support as a professional to build trust and get him back on his feet. This all stems from the belief that everyone has the potential to learn.