Innovative Teaching Practices

Duct Tape and Pom-Poms

HOW WHERE WE'RE FROM COLORS
OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD

Engaging the Quiet Highly Capable Learners in Your Classroom
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Students Matter

In their upcoming book, *Middle School: A Place to Belong and Become*, authors Laurie Barron and Patti Kinney tell us, “We know that when students believe they matter and that their perspectives and suggestions matter, they are much more likely to engage in learning processes. And we know that, as the level of student voice rises, so does the level of teaching, learning, and personal development in a school and its classrooms” (p. 139).

Innovative teaching practices, like those featured in this issue of *AMLE Magazine*, are possible and successful when educators care about students, acknowledge their interests and ideas, and help students know they are important members of the learning community.

And I think these great practices must come from honoring students, something I hear loud and clear from Rachael Williams in “Get Real: Worthy Curriculum for Worldly Adolescents,” when she states that students are “…capable of compassion, open-mindedness, and genuine interest in the world.” This shows great respect and understanding of this age group, even though it’s easy and common to buy in to the stereotype that they’re entirely self-focused and self-absorbed.

So what teaching practices help you create an environment that ensures students feel valued and therefore ready to learn and engage in your classroom? Anita Stewart-McCafferty encourages us to make room for student self-expression, Matthew Moulton shares how he learned the importance of getting to know your students’ stories, and Patricia Clendening Buzzerio takes time to share ways to engage quiet or introverted learners that respects their unique personalities.

And don’t miss our articles on STEM, advisory, writing, student organization, reader response, leadership, and cognitive coaching. It was fun planning this diverse issue for you, which I hope gives you ideas to reach every student, grow professionally, and create a great school! 🎉
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