TEACHING AS COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

How to Develop Students Holistically So They Can Shape a Better Future

A CROWD-SOURCED GUIDE TO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS
FROM TRANSFORMATIONAL CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD

Global Institute
for Shaping a Better Future

An initiative of
Teach For All

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PREFACE

THE CALL FOR A DIFFERENT PARADIGM OF EDUCATION

By Steven Farr

Welcome to Teaching As Collective Leadership! I'm so glad you are joining us to explore what I think might be one of the most important questions in the world:

What is happening in and around transformational classrooms
that are developing students holistically
as leaders who will shape a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us?

As the father of Clara, Jeremiah, and Ella, as an awestruck lover of the natural world, as someone who wants education excellence and equity for all children—I am worried about the challenging future today's young people are inheriting. Not only is the news full of existential challenges like climate change, resource constraints, intolerance, and conflict, but even after decades of intense investment education systems around the world still struggle to ensure all children have the learning opportunities they need to thrive. Inequitable education systems continue to perpetuate inequities in student growth and opportunity. Sometimes, to be honest, I am overwhelmed by the deflating frustration of those realities.

And yet, as I type these words, I am actually overflowing with hope. Teaching As Collective Leadership, I believe, is a critical answer to those frustrations and offers actionable promise in the face of those brutal truths. Global patterns in classrooms that are, today, successfully developing students as creative, collaborative, critical thinking problem solvers are the antidote to those scary headlines. The ways that teachers and students in those classrooms are sharing ownership, responsibility, and power on their way to dramatic growth are mapping a path to a fundamentally different paradigm of education, one that centers students as active leaders who will shape a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

I feel obligated, however, to make a confession: not that long ago, I was highly skeptical of some of the most important elements of Teaching As Collective Leadership. I kept hearing a voice in my head that was dismissive of our key findings from transformational classrooms:

KEY PATTERNS IN TRANSFORMATIONAL CLASSROOMS	BUT THE SKEPTICAL VOICE IN MY HEAD SAYS . . .
Students, their families, and communities must inform education's purpose and goals.	*What? I get working with families and investing them in our efforts, but we don't have time for conversations about the purpose of our classrooms. I know what it takes to compete and succeed in college and the world because I did. I know what we should aim for.*
We should be developing students "holistically to shape a better future" by focusing on wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency in pursuit of mastery?	*No, thank you. Those "broader outcomes" are just distractions from the real learning of reading, writing, math, and science. Start with mastery and end with mastery.*
My "lenses" need to shift to see students as leaders and teachers as learners?	*With all respect, what in the world are you talking about? What do my "lenses" have to do with good teaching? Don't tell me I need to "unlearn" something. New teachers need to LEARN to do what works. Period.*
Great teaching starts with "Love and Connect" and "Listen and Envision"?	*Are you kidding me? "Love" is the fluffy place where low expectations hide. Love doesn't close achievement gaps. Listening to what? Envisioning what? We know that higher test scores on reading, writing, and math open doors of opportunity. So let's set some big goals, invest everyone in them, and drive toward them. Relationships and conversations about purpose are a waste of valuable time.*

As a novice English and English-as-a-Second Language teacher on the Texas-Mexico border in the early years of Teach For America (1993!), those were the voices in my head. I was living through a new era of outcomes data showing how far behind some students were, and I embraced the singular focus of closing achievement gaps as the path to open opportunities for my students. And, as head of Training and Support at Teach For America, I saw my role as primarily helping new teachers to get kids who are behind to work hard enough to catch up with kids who were ahead. I was skeptical of anything that wasn't immediately and obviously about raising test scores.

But today, I am in something of a professional mid-life crisis. Through work with Teach For All's Global Learning Lab, many of my most foundational assumptions about education have been crumbling under the wonderfully inspiring, provocative, and disorienting insights of teachers and students in transformational classrooms around the world. Those voices in my head have shifted.

While this change of perspective has been a journey, not a moment, I do think I can identify two big reasons my perspective has shifted toward the powerful insights of Teaching As Collective Leadership. And I hope articulating those reasons will help frame your engagement with this guide.

First, our changing and challenging future on this planet is telling us that education's purpose must center around developing students to shape a better future for themselves, for their communities, and ultimately for all of us. I continue to be obsessed about closing achievement gaps, but I have also come to believe that young adults who can read, write, and do math *but who cannot creatively collaborate and think critically to solve challenging problems* will not shape a better future. Our inherited education systems were, at best, designed to prepare children for compliant work in an industrial era. These systems were built to fill students with basic knowledge and skills that will help them assimilate to economies and cultures that no longer exist. We need a reimagined model of teaching and learning that prepares students not only to navigate but also to shape the future.

Second, transformational classrooms where students ARE growing holistically show that there are common strategies that we can all learn from. Over the last eight years, Teach For All's Global Learning Lab hosted over 5,000 people from several dozen countries on virtual visits to transformational classrooms in countries all around the world. (You'll visit some of these classrooms yourself in this guide.) In these "learning loops," we have asked participants to help identify what we should learn from these incredible classrooms. A fundamentally different approach to teaching and learning distinguishes those classrooms. Having had the privilege and honor of getting to know the teachers and students leading those classrooms, I have seen with my own eyes that we can in fact attain student mastery through, **instead** of at the expense of, student wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency. I have seen, heard, and felt the promise of reorienting education to grow students' holistically as leaders who will shape a better future.

In summary, my disorienting shift in perspective is coming from *purpose* and *people.* The future is demanding that education serve a different

purpose than the one that shaped our inherited classrooms, schools, and systems. And teachers and students in transformational classrooms are showing us what it will take to pursue that purpose.

Teaching As Collective Leadership is an attempt to learn from and capture the collective wisdom of people around the world who are aligning their efforts to the purpose of growing students holistically as leaders who will shape a better future.

   The emerging insights in Teaching As Collective Leadership may be a bit uncomfortable. Many of us have internalized assumptions about the role of students, the role of teachers, the role of community, and the very nature of our work that do, in fact, have to be "unlearned." Many of us are products of systems meant to prepare us for our position in an industrial age—positions that call on compliance more than critical thinking and narrow knowledge and skills more than collaborative creativity.

   The book and rubric I helped create in 2010, *Teaching As Leadership*, was centered around that inherited purpose. That book asked the question, "What do teachers do to get students to raise achievement scores?" I think the differences that emerge when we instead ask how to grow students holistically to shape a better future might offer the best introduction to Teaching As Collective Leadership:

	EDUCATION EXCELLENCE & EQUITY AS EQUAL OUTCOMES	EDUCATION EXCELLENCE & EQUITY AS DEVELOPING STUDENTS HOLISTICALLY TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE
If our PURPOSE is...	...to raise students' academic achievement (with little regard to broader student outcomes)	...to develop students holistically as leaders who will shape a better future
and our sources are...	...observational research (by a small number of people) of classrooms in one country that produce dramatic academic achievement	...globally crowd-sourced studies of ways of being, knowing, and doing in classrooms around the world that are growing students holistically to shape a better future
then the outcomes we value will be...	...mastery sometimes *at the expense of* student wellbeing, connectedness, awarenes, and agency	...mastery *through instead of at the expense of* student wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency
and the patterns that distinguish excellent teaching are different:	teachers' direct instruction of rigorous content and classroom management a culture of achievement built around efficient, well-managed systems little focus on dynamics of power, privilege, and identity that influence learning relentless hard work and urgency to reach ambitious aims improve impact	a strategic mix of teachers' direct instruction and students' collaborative discovery learning of rigorous content a culture of collective responsibility and interdependence grounded in strong relationships explicit focus on dynamics of power, privilege, and identity that influence learning reflection and wellbeing to sustain effort and improve impact

Whether or not you are familiar with the 2010 *Teaching As Leadership* book and rubric, I am confident we are all familiar with (and have probably experienced) models of teaching and learning in the spirit of that left column. Most Ministries of Education, most education research, most education systems, and many of the world's most influential resources and rubrics are oriented to that left column.

My time in transformational classrooms around the world convinces me that the question we must ask, however, is not just "What works?" but "What works to what end for whom?" When we add purpose and people to our quest to improve education for all children, we find ourselves pulled to transform, not just improve, our classrooms, schools, and systems.

Teaching As Collective Leadership is not a conventional "framework." It is not designed to be a formula that you can cut-and-paste into your context, but is instead an emerging collection of the patterns in transformational classrooms that should, I believe, make us reflect on and potentially realign our own locally contextualized frameworks and rubrics. The question posed by this guide for teachers is not "Am I embodying all these patterns from transformational classrooms?" but is instead "How can I contextualize these global patterns to help my students in our context?"

Above all, Teaching As Collective Leadership is an *invitation*—an invitation to join the global inquiry into what it takes to grow students holistically as the leaders who will face challenges to shape a better future. As you explore this guide, you will see that these crowd-sourced insights from transformational classrooms are still emerging and evolving. You are not just a recipient of those emerging insights, but a contributor to them. Please take the insights you need, but please leave a few too.

Brace yourself. I've always wanted to give a rousing "locker-room speech" to a team that's got an enormous challenge in front of them. This might be my chance.

I genuinely believe shifting our classrooms, schools, and education systems to develop students holistically to shape a better future is the most important work in the world. If today's students—if my three children and their children—are going to not just survive a challenging future but change it, we must reimagine education. If we are going to break the cycle of investing billions of dollars in education systems with flat and in some cases declining outcomes for the most marginalized children, we must reorient classrooms and schools and systems.

Welcome to Teaching As Collective Leadership.
Let's learn our way forward, together.

What is Teaching As Collective Leadership? Why is it needed? Where did it come from? How can you use it?

INTRODUCTION

Co-created by transformational teachers across the Teach For All network, Teaching As Collective Leadership is an actionable and locally customizable framework for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers to grow students as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us.

OVERVIEW
Preview the why, who, what, and how of Teaching As Collective Leadership.

WHY
Reflect on voices from around the world calling for the collective reimagining of education's purpose.

WHO
Explore how 4000+ people studied transformational classrooms to create resources for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers.

WHAT
Preview Teaching As Collective Leadership:
- *Purpose, Lenses, Strategies, Outcomes, and Learning theory*
- *Six provocative cross-cutting themes*

HOW
Learn how to maximize the power of these insights with teachers and students.

SHARE
Contribute to and explore incoming insights, challenges, questions, resources, and research.

OVERVIEW

Transformational teachers collectively explore the purpose of education with students, families, and community members, sharing key lenses and strategies to grow students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery.

PURPOSE   LENSES   STRATEGIES   OUTCOMES

STUDENTS AS LEADERS OF A BETTER FUTURE
FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND ALL OF US

students as leaders · teachers as learners · community as power · our work as systemic

LOVE & CONNECT
LISTEN & ENVISION
LEARN & DESIGN
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE
REFLECT & GROW

WELLBEING
CONNECTEDNESS
AWARENESS
AGENCY
MASTERY

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied, we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way. We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this Glossary.

WHY

Today's children face a changing and challenging future. To make a more just, equitable, and sustainable society, they will need to navigate uncertainty, collaboratively solve complex problems, and create meaningful careers in a changing economy.

Most education systems define success with narrowly defined and measured achievement assessments, but the world is calling for a different purpose in education: growing students as creative, collaborative, critical-thinking problem-solvers. We must, together, reimagine education to help students realize their potential as leaders of a better future.

WHO

The insights in Teaching As Collective Leadership are emerging from teachers' collective studies of transformational classrooms worldwide.

So far, over **4,500** students, teachers, teacher coaches, community members, program designers, CEOs, researchers, and policymakers from across and beyond our network of **60+** partner organizations have contributed to these crowd-sourced studies of transformational classrooms.

WHAT

Four elements distinguish classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future: purpose, lenses, strategies, and outcomes. We are also finding prominent patterns in the qualities and conditions of learning that help teachers "unlearn" and learn to facilitate transformational learning.

Several provocative cross-cutting themes are emerging as well:
- *Teaching As Collective Leadership may be more accurately described as a "map of what students need" than as a "map of what teachers should do."*
- *When teachers develop the purpose, lenses, and strategies they need to grow students as leaders of a better future, the teachers themselves grow into agents of systemic change.*
- *Education systems carry historical dynamics of power and privilege, and dismantling those unjust systems requires proactive, explicit engagement with those histories and dynamics.*
- *"Unlearning" our internalized assumptions may be key to growing students as leaders.*
- *Rigorous mastery of meaningful knowledge and skills comes through, not at the expense of, students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.*
- *Teaching As Collective Leadership is not more, it is different. And a much more fun and fulfilling way to teach and learn.*

HOW

Teaching As Collective Leadership is not a framework to *cut, paste, and apply* in your context, but is instead a set of global patterns that should provoke productive critical reflection about whether and how these insights might be locally contextualized in your classroom and community. We believe these insights have implications for teacher recruitment, selection, training, support, and beyond. Let's explore and learn about those implications.

WHY

The call for reorienting toward student leadership

Today's children will inherit a changing and challenging world. To make a more just, equitable, and sustainable society, they will need to navigate uncertainty, collaboratively solve complex problems, and create meaningful careers in a changing economy. Inherited models of teaching and learning do not help them grow as leaders of a better future.

Teach For All is a growing network of over 60 partner organizations around the world developing collective leadership to ensure all children fulfill their potential.

From our global perspective, we see a disturbing reality: inherited, Industrial-era paradigms of teaching and learning are not preparing and cannot prepare today's children for tomorrow's changing and challenging future. The world is calling for students to be collaborative, creative, and critically thinking problem solvers, and yet all around the world we see models of teaching and learning that are inhibiting instead of encouraging those qualities.

Across and beyond Teach For All's global network, we hear powerful, impassioned students, educators, families, and community leaders calling for reconsideration of education's purpose. With all their diverse contextual and cultural variation, these voices are unified in their urgent concern that, today, too many children experience models of teaching and learning that are

- designed to achieve narrowly defined academic goals, sometimes at the cost of other important student leadership outcomes;
- built for a past Industrial Age that values compliant efficiency over creative and collaborative critical thinking and problem-solving;
- dismissive of the critical importance of community values and cultural identities to helping students realize their potential; and
- uninformed by a revolution in the science of learning and development.

Perfecting inherited, Industrial-era ways of teaching and learning will not lead to an equitable, just, and sustainable future on this planet. Locally and globally, paradigmatic shifts in teaching and learning will be critical to humanity's hope to survive and thrive.

The same global vantage point that is revealing this disturbing reality is also offering profound hope. Our collective studies of transformational classrooms around the world are showing a powerful map of teaching and learning, one where teachers and students learn and grow together with increasing wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. We are finding an untapped reservoir of collective insight and wisdom among teachers who are growing their students as leaders for a better future, for themselves, for their communities, and ultimately for all of us.

Check out some of the perspectives we are hearing **around the world**:

GLOSSARY

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders of a Better Future: A concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Transformational Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Agency: By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

Explore more about these concepts in our **Glossary**.

Even though I am a small person, I can also help the community. Even though we are small, we have strength inside us. We all have strength inside us. We just need time to show our strengths … To me leadership is someone who is strong inside, and very supportive to others.

Kusum
Former student, Teach For India. (Quote taken from Kusum: "We have a power, a strength inside of us," 2018)

They know that their community is not as good as they want it to be, but also they have the vision and imagination for what they want … But if we are to achieve our visions as a class, we have to start acting like our vision is right now.

Charles Obore
Teach For Uganda Alumnus

There is no path to any of our aspirations for peace, justice, and sustainability without developing today's students with the skills and mindsets to tackle the injustices in their communities and beyond, to solve the increasingly complex problems facing our society. This must be the purpose of education–to develop students as leaders who can shape a better future for themselves and all of us.

Wendy Kopp
Co-founder and CEO, Teach For All

The transformation within education that I would like to see the most would be a better support system for students, not academically, but in making sure they're seen and heard in the Enseña classroom.

Paola Parra Leggs
Teach For All Youth Ambassador, former Student Leadership Advisory Council Member from Todos Santos, México. *Photo by Robert Banez*

They always made me feel like I was missing something, like I was incomplete. Like I was inferior … My view of success is going to college and striving, but I don't just want to be a light that shines bright. I want to be able to reach out and have other people shine with me … Going back into the neighborhood and changing the reality of other people.

Elijah Miles
Former student, Teach For America. (Quote taken "Elijah Miles - Who's Defining Success?", 2014)

At Enseña Chile, we have learned that most pedagogical models are insufficient to change the fact that where you are born predicts your future opportunities in this country. It's not that most teaching rubrics are wrong, but most oversimplify and minimize the obstacles our students must overcome to change the trajectory of their lives. Most teacher frameworks we have seen and used do, in fact, close achievement gaps on standardized tests, but they do not reflect the reality that systemic injustices are solved with much more than a standardized test. These pedagogical models are not training our young people to see and address issues that are within their locus of control that are causing achievement gaps. And usually, conventional teaching frameworks say little about the need to resolve these injustices together and with all our individual efforts. Simply put, our current pedagogical models dramatically underestimate the challenges our students experience.

Tomás Recart
Co-founder and Executive Director, Enseña Chile. He was also an independent candidate for the drafting of Chile's New Constitution

⬈ **SHARE**

You can explore more calls to reimagine education, and share your own, at the bottom of this chapter in the SHARE section.

Equity: Equal Inputs? Equal Outcomes? Or Student Leadership?
Most education systems define success as all children getting the same resources, or as all children attaining the same levels of academic achievement. The world is calling for a different purpose in education: growing students as creative, collaborative, problem-solving leaders of a better future.

Many education systems around the world purport to address inequity. And yet, the term "equity" is used in many different ways. Take a few minutes to examine and reflect on the drawings below, each of which is an attempt to metaphorically capture different "paradigms" of education equity. What do you notice is similar and different about each drawing? What do the differences represent? [You can engage with these drawings more interactively here.]

Before we share some analysis and implications of these pictures, take a few moments to reflect on them yourself:

Look carefully. What do you see in this picture?
How does this picture represent (and not represent) elements of the education system you work in (or that you experienced as a student)?
How is equity defined in this picture?

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How does this picture represent (and not represent) elements of the education system you work in (or that you experienced as a student)?
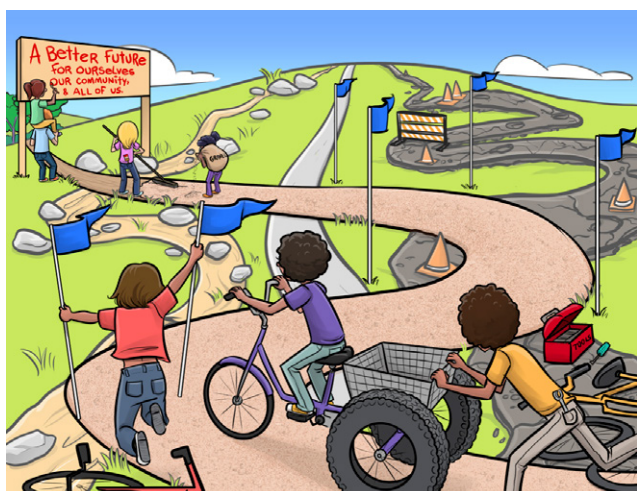*How is equity defined in this picture?*

Look carefully. What do you see in this picture?
How does this picture represent (and not represent) elements of the education system you work in (or that you experienced as a student)?
How is equity defined in this picture?

From our global vantage point at Teach For All, we see some education systems that assume "equity" means all children have the same resources–the same inputs. We see other systems that define equity and success as all children attaining the same levels of academic achievement (usually measured with standardized tests).

We see few if any systems oriented to the goal of helping students fulfill their potential as leaders of a better future. What would teaching and learning look like if that was our aim?

EQUITY AS EQUAL INPUTS

Some education systems define success as all children receiving the same resources.

In this imperfect metaphor, the kids have the same bike, regardless of whether it fits them for their path.

The focus is on equalizing what teachers have to offer students, without considering its impact on them. Do all children have the same books? Same qualifications? Access to laptops or iPads? Success in this paradigm is defined by what adults do, not what students learn.

When we celebrate that all children have access to the same rigorous curriculum, or that we have provided them all with computers or iPads, we are defining success in terms of input.

EQUITY AS EQUAL OUTCOMES

Many education systems define success as "closing achievement gaps" so that all children, regardless of their background and context, read, write, and do math at the same high level.

All the kids reach the same finish line, even if we need to give them different bikes to get there.

The focus is on teachers and students working harder and faster to overcome resource disparities to attain a common standard of academic achievement (that is usually a bar set by scores of students with privileged identities).

Teach Like a Champion, Teaching As Leadership, and similar models are built to close "achievement gaps." Sometimes these and other models raise test scores at the expense of (instead of through) student agency, wellbeing, awareness, and connectedness.

EQUITY AS STUDENT LEADERSHIP

But what if the purpose of education was growing students as leaders of a better future, for themselves, their communities, and all of us?

Children are working together to creatively combine tools, resources, and insights to create new paths to better futures.

This approach includes student achievement and mastery, but those aims are one part of a holistic focus on student leadership development. Teaching and learning are centered around students' ownership, voice, and collaboration as students and teachers work to grow as leaders, together.

Aligning to the purpose of growing students as leaders of a better future challenges many conventional assumptions about teaching and learning. Mastery is achieved through, not at the expense of, student wellbeing, connectedness, agency, and awareness.

What is happening in and around classrooms where students are not only closing achievement gaps but are also growing as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us?

This is the question driving the emerging insights in Teaching As Collective Leadership.

WHO

Transformational teachers are revealing a path forward

The insights in Teaching As Collective Leadership are emerging from teachers' collective studies of transformational classrooms around the world.

Teach For All's network of over 60 independent partner organizations around the world is a powerful natural laboratory for innovation in education. In recent years, Teach For All's Global Learning Lab has facilitated virtual (and sometimes in-person) visits to classrooms in dozens of countries where students seem to be growing as leaders of a better future. (You can explore many of those "virtual visits" to transformational classrooms embedded throughout this guide.)

With every visit, we ask the same questions:

What do these classrooms have in common? What does it take to grow students as leaders of a better future? What should we be learning from these classrooms about what students and teachers need to realize students' potential to make the world a more just, equitable, and sustainable place?

So far, over **4,500** students, teachers, teacher coaches, community members, program designers, CEOs, researchers, and policymakers from across and beyond our network of over **60** partner organizations have contributed to these crowd-sourced studies of transformational classrooms.

The global patterns in these classrooms are striking. In many cases, these teachers, in diverse cultural contexts from Nepal to Haiti to Peru to New Zealand to Spain, are demonstrating approaches to teaching and learning that seem more similar to each other than to the teachers next door to them in their same school.

Teach For All is a global network of more than 60 independent, locally led partner organizations working to develop collective leadership to ensure all children fulfill their potential. To tackle the complex challenges facing children in disadvantaged communities, we need a coalition of leaders addressing the problem in all its complexity. Each network partner recruits and develops promising future leaders to teach in their nation's marginalized schools and communities and, with this foundation, to work with others inside and outside of education to ensure all children are able to fulfill their potential.

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Energized by the compelling global patterns in these classrooms, we convened a representative Advisory Council of teachers, students, program leaders, and researchers from around the world to help us synthesize all those global patterns into an accessible and actionable model. And the Teaching As Collective Leadership framework was born.

So, the Teaching As Collective Leadership model is emerging from teachers' studies of strong classrooms around the world. It is a model built on the insights of teachers and students in marginalized and oppressed communities who are charting a map of teaching and learning that grows students as leaders of a better future.

Our ultimate aim, and opportunity, with these critical insights from our crowd-sourced studies of transformational classrooms is not just to change teaching and learning in classrooms, but to challenge and change the systems that are currently inhibiting students' growth as leaders of a better future. We believe that these insights have profound implications not only for teachers but also for teacher developers, program designers, recruiters, researchers, policymakers, and anyone else who recognizes that perfecting our current approach to education would not prepare children for the future they face.

WHAT

The distinguishing elements of classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future

Around the World, transformational classrooms share common approaches related to purpose, lenses, actions, and outcomes.

Spoiler alert! Here's a quick overview of the key insights coming out of these collective studies that are explored (with illustrations, advice, quotes, guidance, reflection exercises, etc.) in this guide.

Four major elements distinguish classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future: purpose, lenses, strategies, and outcomes, as captured in this imperfect but useful graphic:
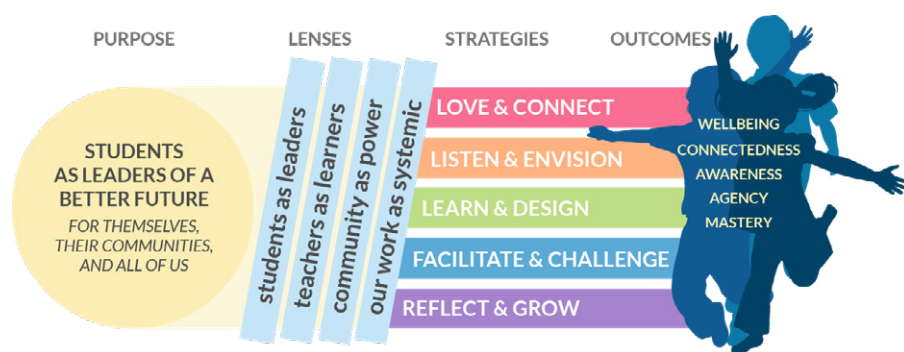
PURPOSE

Transformational teachers **collectively** explore the **purpose of education** with students, families, and community members as part of an ongoing conversation, which prioritizes who is in the conversation. These teachers align their daily efforts to a **locally rooted** and **globally informed vision** of **student leadership** emerging from those conversations.

LENSES

Transformational teachers "**see**" their students, themselves, their communities, and their challenges in ways that are *different* from conventional perspectives. By bringing into **focus** the **internalized assumptions** we may need to "**unlearn**" to become great teachers, these lenses have radical **implications** for pre-service training, teacher coaching, and ongoing teacher development.

STRATEGIES

Transformational teachers **prioritize** different **actions**. They take time to build **loving connections**. They really **listen** to diverse voices to **collectively envision** the purpose of education. They carefully design **discovery-based learning**. They facilitate **challenging lessons**, believing in deep learning, which grows mastery and broader outcomes. And they ensure they are always **learning** and **growing** themselves.

OUTCOMES

Students and teachers in transformational classrooms value **outcomes** that align with the **overall purpose** of growing **student leadership**: wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. While education systems rarely embrace these broader outcomes, they have extensive support in education research. To promote local innovation, we are building a **bank of assessments** that help **measure** and **monitor** progress on these student leadership outcomes.

GLOSSARY

Learning loops: "Global Learning Loops" is what we have called the mini-courses we host in which people from around the world virtually visit classrooms in different countries and share what they think we can learn from them. The Global Learning Lab has also worked with many partner organizations to host their "learning loops" where staff come together to learn from their strongest classrooms.

Explore more about this concept in our **Glossary**.

Learning Theory: Growing Collective Leadership

Through our studies of transformational classrooms, we are also **learning** a lot *about learning*. Changing the way we make meaning of the world around us is often **catalyzed** through (sometimes *disorienting*) **experiences** and **reflection**. Shifting perspectives requires "unlearning" internalized assumptions. By contrast, building new skills often starts with new knowledge that we then try out and practice.

The most **powerful learning** skillfully balances **competing priorities** and **creates experiences** that are simultaneously welcoming and disorienting, collective and personal, directive and exploratory, structured and responsive, and reflective and active.

Six Key Themes You'll Encounter Across Each of the Elements of Teaching As Collective Leadership

As these patterns around purpose, lenses, strategies, and outcomes have emerged from our collective studies of transformational classrooms, several provocative cross-cutting themes have emerged.

As you engage with this model, please look out for these concepts and questions. And reflect on how you make sense of their implications.

- **Teaching As Collective Leadership may be more accurately described as a "map of what students need" than as a "map of what teachers should do."** By combining the approaches of transformational teachers and students in different contexts, this model represents a map of the learning conditions and experiences that seem to help students grow as leaders of a better future. *No single classroom we studied in our learning loops embodied all of the elements of Teaching As Collective Leadership.* As educators, we should ask ourselves what elements of this broad picture we will contribute to our students' experiences and we should ask ourselves how we can help build an ecosystem of systemic support around students that will ensure all children experience these learning conditions.

- **When teachers develop the purpose, lenses, and strategies they need to grow students as leaders of a better future, the** *teachers themselves grow into agents of systemic change.* When we work to grow our students' leadership, we grow our own. The path to growing student leadership pushes us to confront both our own biases and limiting assumptions, as well as the structural conditions that are inhibiting students (and us all). This sheds light on the path to system change. Teaching As Collective Leadership is a guide to student growth and systemic change, at the same time.

- **Current education systems carry historical dynamics of power and privilege, and dismantling those unjust systems requires proactive, explicit engagement with those histories and dynamics.** A painful but important starting place for improving teaching and learning is the reality that education systems have historically created and perpetuated divisions of power and privilege among groups of people. Our studies find transformational teachers and students and families grappling with those histories and proactively working to counter them, because silent "neutrality" only perpetuates those historical dynamics.

- **"Unlearning" some of our internalized assumptions may be the key to growing students as leaders**. Many of us think of teacher development primarily in terms of what teachers need to know and do to teach well. Pedagogical knowledge and skills are obviously important. Our collective studies are also suggesting, however,

that becoming aware of and shifting deeply held assumptions about students, ourselves, communities, and systems is a critical part of becoming a transformational teacher. (See Lenses)

- **Rigorous mastery of meaningful knowledge and skills comes through, not at the expense of, students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency**. The classrooms we studied challenge a widely held assumption that broadening outcomes beyond academic achievement is a dilution of academic achievement. These classrooms show the absurdity of that false dichotomy. Teaching As Collective Leadership is, in some ways, a map to teaching and learning that attains deeper learning and mastery (not just superficial knowledge) *alongside and through students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency*.

- **Teaching this way is not more, it is different and a much more fun and fulfilling way to teach and learn than conventional classroom models**. A striking pattern among transformational teachers is how much they love what they do (even as they often feel frustrated by the incentives and systems around them). Yes, they tell us, teaching well is hard work. But they also emphasize that teaching to a test is a kind of hard work that is less fun and fulfilling, and facilitating learning to grow student leadership is a different kind of hard work that is more fun and fulfilling.

HOW

A critical mirror: Maximizing the power of these insights through reflection and contextualization

Teaching As Collective Leadership is not a framework to simply apply in your context, but instead a set of global patterns that should provoke productive critical reflection about whether and how these insights might be locally contextualized in your classroom and community.

What are the implications of Teaching As Collective Leadership for teaching, for coaching teachers, for students, and for designing training institutes? What are the implications for supporting alumni (people who have completed their two-year fellowships with Teach For All partner organizations) to contribute to systemic changes that make these ways of teaching and learning easier?

Our aspiration with this guide is to catalyze collaboration and learning on precisely these questions among a wide range of roles in the education ecosystem. What are the implications of these insights for teacher recruitment, pre-service and ongoing teacher training, and measuring teacher and student outcomes?

To maximize the power of Teaching As Collective Leadership as fuel for a global engine of learning and innovation, please keep this critically important intention in mind:

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a set of global patterns meant to be evolved and contextualized locally.

This model does not ask, "Are you embodying these approaches well?" but instead asks, "What contextualized variations on these approaches do your students need?"

This model is a catalyst for contextualized reflection and design, not a prescriptive checklist. Unlike many teacher training frameworks, this model is not a "cut-and-paste" resource but is a "meta-framework" to help local teachers create their own tools and resources. The recent Focus to Flourish report from the Research to Improve Systems of Education, authored by Lant Pritchett, Kirsty Newman, and Jason Silberstein, stated:

> *We have explicitly kept our recommendations at the level of principles because there is no single blueprint for transforming an education system. One cannot simply adopt "what works" from elsewhere or faithfully implement a master plan. Rather, a shared trait of successful efforts is that they build in the capability to adapt to the circumstances continually. All countries have a unique history and hence a unique future.*

Given how much we all have to learn about what it takes to reimagine teaching and learning to realize students' potential in the face of our challenging world, we are designing Teaching As Collective Leadership to be locally contextualized.

Teach For All's Global Learning Lab aspires to work with people across and beyond our network who are eager to reimagine their program design, create teacher training sessions to shift new teachers' "lenses," create teacher rubrics to guide teacher growth, and more. Please join us.

A Guide to Tools and Resources

Working with many "early adopters" of this emerging model, we have developed a starter kit of tools and resources for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers. You can find these through Teach For All's Teaching As Collective Leadership section in the Learning & Insights Hub, but here is a quick overview of what's available.

Quick Summaries

If you are new to Teaching As Collective Leadership, start here.

- Intro Video
- Two-pager
- Website

Guide Chapters

The ultimate guide to our collective learning, the guide is full of voices from around the network, and links to videos, stories, and resources.

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Lenses
- Strategies
- Outcomes
- Learning About Learning

SHARE

Make your voice heard: Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people—teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

It got me thinking about how I can bring that community into my classroom to face the problems I was facing from communicating with students in the same language or just being a better teacher. One thing I noticed was it was hard to find something from Lebanon for Lebanon. It was always from these international journals and not translated well. We have a role to contribute to what education looks like in the community and not just in the classroom.

Josiane Attallah
Teach For Lebanon Alumna

It's this system that was not designed for us, our people were never at the table when it was created, but it still exists and it's all we know. We're trying to redefine that. Our hope is what we do here will unite other communities to do the same.

Kayla Begay
Navajo Nation

The reductionist approach to success has led to an economic and ecological crisis that we are experiencing today. What would it mean for us to see ourselves as custodians of life, custodians of this planet, and move from an egocentric definition to an ecocentric definition of success.

Vishal Talreja
Founder, Dream A Dream, India

The existing instructional strategies I know of are oriented toward kids achieving mostly academic outcomes. And while there is a lot of effort here and there on social-emotional learning strategies and trauma-informed development approaches, I do not see in the education landscape a shared narrative or a system that guides all of us on the teacher beliefs and practices, and the relationships among teachers, kids, schools, and communities, and the ideal enabling conditions for kids to be their full selves and to create a different today and tomorrow. Our learnings so far are valuable, but still too theoretical; they need the practical, sticky, easy-to-navigate, bitesize nature that many teacher development frameworks have.

Mi Zhenhua
Teach For All

The idea of having a classroom model is very important to me. As a student, I had to take part in decision-making courses because we will choose the best tools and learn from each other. We all have different backgrounds and experiences. We will take our perspectives to this place and it will be pure education for me.

Stanley Wang
Teach For Australia Alumnus

There are a lot of paradigms on how to create education. I was very excited because we are thinking with a diversity of contributors. The kind of education I want for my own daughter and other kids around the world is a kind of education I didn't receive but would've hoped to receive. It is much more collaborative, it's much more collective, and it's very relevant.

Franco Mosso
Enseña Perú

Imagine the possibilities if we have students alongside us to reimagine education. Imagine how much more quickly we will grow and learn and make real change. But right now, classrooms and schools are not recognizing the power in our children to lead us. Classrooms and schools and how we think about what "education" really means will need to radically change.

Shaheen Mistri
Founder and CEO of Teach For India

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet (here).

WHAT is our vision of student success?
WHO decides what determines student success?
HOW can teachers contribute to those questions?

PURPOSE

Students, teachers, families, and communities collectively develop locally rooted, globally informed visions of student success.

OVERVIEW
Get started with a summary of insights and a sampling of resources about purpose.

DISCOVER
Virtually visit classrooms and communities to see and feel these insights for yourself.

LEARN
Explore the key ideas emerging from our collective studies and what that means for teachers.

DO
Explore tools and resources to take action to reimagine purpose with students, educators, and families.

SHARE
Contribute to and explore incoming insights, challenges, questions, resources, and research.

PURPOSE   LENSES   STRATEGIES   OUTCOMES

STUDENTS
AS LEADERS OF A
BETTER FUTURE
*FOR THEMSELVES,
THEIR COMMUNITIES,
AND ALL OF US*

students as leaders
teachers as learners
community as power
our work as systemic

LOVE & CONNECT
LISTEN & ENVISION
LEARN & DESIGN
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE
REFLECT & GROW

WELLBEING
CONNECTEDNESS
AWARENESS
AGENCY
MASTERY

OVERVIEW

Transformational teachers collectively explore the purpose of education with students, families, and community members. These teachers align their daily efforts to a locally rooted and globally informed vision of student leadership emerging from those conversations.
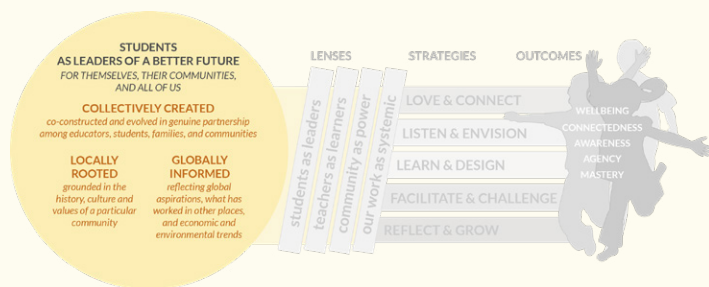
We center our core purpose around an ambitious and contextually relevant student vision. Our decisions stem from this vision—our organizational goals, priorities, and strategy. More importantly, we didn't create this vision from within the walls of our office. Instead, we partnered with our teachers, students, parents, and community members from over 150 partner communities. We know that the only way to facilitate real change in public education is by empowering the voices of the communities we serve and ensuring that they are at the forefront of creating this change.

Larisa Hovannisian
Founder & CEO, Teach For Armenia

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied, we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way.

We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this **Glossary**.

DISCOVER

Check out this compilation of student, teacher, and family voices from around the world, all asking what is the purpose of education, who decides this purpose and how, and what student outcomes align with growing students as leaders of a better future?

LEARN

Who decides why. Think of that as a statement, not a question. That idea is the starting point for teachers in classrooms that grow student leadership. These teachers critically question education's purpose as well as *who has been* and *who should be* at the center of determining that purpose. Transformational classrooms demonstrate perspectives, actions, and outcomes that align to a longer-term vision of student success that shares **three** characteristics:

- **COLLECTIVELY CREATED**: co-constructed and evolved in genuine partnership among educators, students, families, and communities
- **LOCALLY ROOTED**: grounded in the history, culture, and values of a particular community
- **GLOBALLY INFORMED**: reflecting global aspirations, what has worked in other places, and economic and environmental trends

DO

See how transformational practitioners and programs around the world are co-creating purpose by:

- Broadening perspectives
- Hosting dialogue and discussion
- Partnering with families and communities
- Critically examining history
- Collectively envisioning success

Explore a toolkit for reflecting on the implications of purpose and motivation.

See how partner organizations across the Teach For All network, from Empieza Por Educar in Spain to Teach For Armenia to Anseye Pou Ayiti (Haiti), are contextualizing these global insights to their local visions, values, and programs.

SHARE

Share your insights, questions, resources, and challenges related to developing visions of student success.

DISCOVER

Virtually visit transformational classrooms

Teaching As Collective Leadership emerged from listening to and observing inspiring educators, students, and community leaders around the world. Thousands of teachers, coaches, researchers, designers, students, and others joined in the process of identifying patterns in and around transformational classrooms. We invite you to join this collective learning process.

Virtually visit two or three of the transformational classrooms below and consider how they are similar and different. Please visit more than one. The power of these virtual visits is in seeing the contrasts and connections among these classrooms so that global patterns emerge among local examples.

Visions of student success from around the world

Through this video from 2018, virtually visit communities and classrooms around the world and learn from educators, families, and students about the power of asking *why. Explore the potential of contextualized visions* of student success to inform classroom practices. Who is deciding "the why"? How are these leaders encouraging and supporting these conversations?

Collectively discovering contextualized vision in Nepal

As shown in this video from 2018, Teach For Nepal has found it essential to examine the history that led to the marginalization of certain communities as a foundation for their work. By recognizing that we always come into any context with our own perspectives, values, and vision, we can start to recognize the limitations of our own perspective and more deeply appreciate the value of working collectively.

Community as the source of visions of student success in Haiti

Anseye Pou Ayiti (Haiti) has made collective co-construction of purpose a daily commitment. This video from 2018, explores recurring rituals that hold space for sometimes difficult conversations where educators and coaches seek to listen and understand local values, challenges, and aspirations.

GLOSSARY

Transformational classroom: Classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They seem to be making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Explore more about this concept in our **Glossary**.

Reflection Questions

- What thoughts and feelings do these classrooms and communities trigger for you?
- What conditions are enabling authentic, honest, collective conversations about the purpose of education?
- What was the original purpose that shaped ways of teaching and learning that you experienced? How does that shape your perspective?
- What do YOU think the purpose of education should be? Why?

Diverse perspectives to shape purpose in Mexico

A nation with tremendous potential to improve educational opportunities for its youth, Mexico also faces a diverse range of challenges. As shared by former Enseña Por México CEO, Erik Ramírez Ruiz, in this video from 2014, the key to improvement is embracing the idea that Mexico's diverse challenges require solutions from many different perspectives.

Engaging with families to explore purpose in rural China

Explore this video from 2013 that shows how Teach For China approached its work in rural Yunnan province. In this community, not every student had a spot waiting for them in middle school and rote learning is still the most dominant practice. Meanwhile, the economy and future of China have been changing before our eyes. What should a teacher and students work toward? Who decides?

Know of other great examples? Share them!

LEARN

Collectively contextualized visions of student success

When we asked the students, teachers, teacher coaches, community members, researchers, and others participating in our global learning loops what purpose was driving transformational classrooms and who was determining that purpose, four key ideas emerged.

1. Inherited models of teaching and learning are not preparing students for challenging and changing futures.

2. Rethinking teaching and learning starts with a collective inquiry into the purpose of education.

3. Education's purpose should be growing students as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us.

4. Classrooms that grow students as leaders of a better future demonstrate different purposes, lenses, strategies, and outcomes.

After 25 years, if there is one thing I could do differently from the beginning with Teach For America, it would be to ensure that everything we are doing is aligned to local, collectively contextualized visions of student success.

If we are all working as individuals, and we are fighting this massive problem, it's probably true that we cannot get there in our lifetime. But if we are working with our communities and students' families and students and other educators to ask about the purpose of education, if we together create a collective vision within that community that everyone is aligning their energies toward, then it becomes possible to see that vision realized in our lifetime.

Wendy Kopp
Co-founder and CEO, Teach For All

GLOSSARY

Contextualized Vision: A locally informed, collectively evolved picture of what education is aiming for.

Grow Students as Leaders: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Explore more about these concepts and other key language choices in our Glossary.

Well, there it is. That's basically the entire spirit of Teaching As Collective Leadership in a nutshell.

*We need a different social contract grounded in the idea that children are curious, capable, interested people, whose personhood needs to be respected and whose interests can be stimulated. Such a contract must start with giving students a clear purpose for their learning, moving from **what** they are learning to **why**. Purposes come in many shapes, and developing one is a critical starting point for any journey of consequential learning.*

Jal Mehta
Harvard University Professor, and researcher. (Quote taken from Possible futures: Toward a new grammar of schooling, 2022)

Sometimes adults feel that they cannot learn from students. However, students can have brilliant ideas to benefit the world and their own wellbeing, but they often go unheard and remain silent. School should not be a limitation; it should be a place where you learn and take those learnings outside to share with others. Education goes beyond culture, region, and economics. The school should not be a limitation, but unfortunately, it often is.

Mikaela Valenzuela
Student Leadership Program Participant at Enseña Perú

Most schools teach students to sit still, be quiet, and follow rules. And yet what the world needs is students who will stand up, speak out, and take action toward change. Our educational institutions must move out of the Industrial Revolution days of growing obedient factory workers, and instead learn to unleash the individual and collective leadership of our students so they can lead the world into a better place.

Sanaya Bharucha
Global Head, Student Leadership & Voice, Teach For All, 2009 Teach For India Fellow, Director, Maya musical

Key Idea 1
Inherited models of teaching and learning are not preparing students for challenging and changing futures.

The communities where the students of the Teach For All network's teachers live represent an incredibly diverse mosaic of cultures, languages, and values. Why, then, do the classrooms across those countries, communities, and cultures look so similar? What purposes drove the design of the teacher-in-front-of-children-at-desks-in-rows model of teaching and learning that we find on every continent in virtually every community?

We must start by examining what purposes have informed the ways of teaching and learning that we and our students are inheriting. Many of the classroom structures and education systems where the Teach For All network's teachers teach began in Europe early in the industrial age. Since then, external, colonizing forces imposed and spread these structures and systems. The purposes driving these classroom models included:

- Assimilating people with diverse cultures and languages into a single language and culture
- Preparing students for the rules and compliance necessary for industrial-age factory work
- Efficient building of basic literacy and math skills necessary for productive citizenship

These industrial-era systems are fundamentally ill-suited to the needs of our world today and the purpose of growing students as leaders. They are:

- Designed to achieve narrowly defined academic goals, sometimes at the cost of other important student leadership outcomes
- Dismissive of the importance of cultural identities and community values to helping students realize their potential
- Uninformed by a revolution in the science of learning and development

And yet, today's children are inheriting a rapidly changing and increasingly challenging world. Climate change, artificial intelligence, pandemics—we are handing children difficult local and global challenges to address. To create a more just, equitable, and sustainable society, today's students will need to navigate uncertainty, collaboratively solve complex problems, and create meaningful careers in a changing economy.

That's not what we are asking them to do in schools. Perfecting our inherited, colonized, compliance-focused, industrial-era ways of teaching and learning will *not* lead to an equitable, just, and sustainable future on this planet.

But, there is another way. Transformational classrooms in marginalized communities around the world are revealing how to support students to realize their potential as **leaders of a better future for themselves**, for their communities, and for all of us.

GLOSSARY

Leaders of a better future: A concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network.

Explore more about these concepts and other key language choices in our Glossary.

Key Idea 2
Rethinking teaching and learning starts with a collective inquiry into the purpose of education.
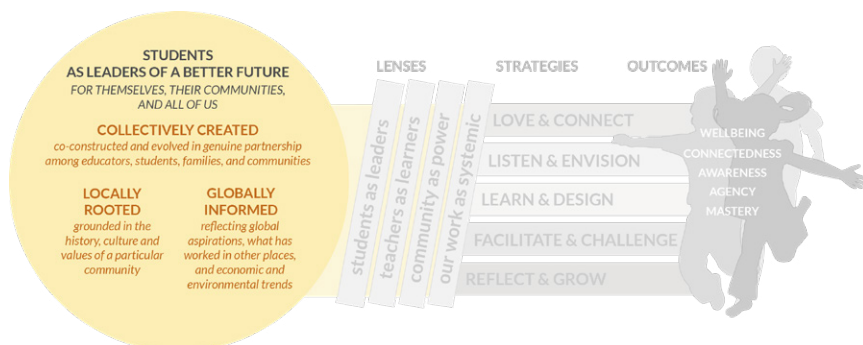
Too often and for too long powerful people and institutions (and often outsiders) imposed the aims of education rather than co-constructing the aims with students, families, and communities. When oppressed and marginalized voices join in on conversations about what education is for, education's purpose changes.

As you can see in the classrooms and virtual community visits in the previous section (Discover), these explorations of purpose have three common elements.

- **COLLECTIVELY CREATED:** Strong vision evolves in genuine partnership among educators, students, families, and communities. For educators, this means being open, humble, receptive, empathetic, and self-aware in ways that cultivate authentic human partnership.
- **LOCALLY ROOTED:** Strong visions emerge from the history, culture, and values of a particular community. For educators, this means listening and learning about systemic and historical trends and dynamics that have shaped current realities.
- **GLOBALLY INFORMED:** Strong visions reflect global aspirations, what has worked in other places, and economic and environmental trends that affect us all. For educators, this means looking out for concerning challenges that will face students' futures and for inspiration from other classrooms and communities that demonstrate what is possible.

Dehumanized by systemic oppression

Paulo Freire wrote that the purpose of education is for the oppressed to liberate themselves and their oppressor. In this video from 2010, Brittany Packnett, discusses her personal experience of being educated in the U.S. in systems built for oppressive purposes.

When you work with local people to create a shared understanding of the type of change that you want to see in the community, where our own idea and the idea of the community can come together to create a shared vision, then that allows you to become more effective in implementing that vision. That vision becomes the vision of the community you are working with.

Shisir Khanal
Former CEO of Teach For Nepal. (Quote taken from the 2005 video, "A collective, contextualized vision - Teach For Nepal")

The reductionist approach to success has led to an economic and ecological crisis that we are experiencing today. What would it mean for us to see ourselves as custodians of life, custodians of this planet, and move from an egocentric definition to an ecocentric definition of success.

Vishal Talreja
Co-founder & Trustee, Dream a Dream, Social Entrepreneur, Author

Our families get to sit and reflect and think about what are their hopes and dreams for their child's education. And many families say, "I have never been asked that before. I have never been asked by a teacher, by a school leader, or by a school about what my hopes and dreams are for my child. Thank you for giving me that opportunity, because it makes me step back and think about what is all this for, and what can education really do for my family and my child."

Veronica Palmer
Co-founder of RISE Colorado and Teach For America Alumna. (Quote taken from "The Power of Parents" 2014 video)

Key Idea 3
Education's purpose should be growing students as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us.

When students, teachers, families, economists, historians, and others come together and ask, "What is education really for?" The answer is often a variation of "Our children should be leaders of a better world."

In Armenia, those community-based conversations led Teach For Armenia to a call for education to support students' development as entrepreneurial creators of a new Armenia. In India, similar reflections led Teach For India to center student voices, ownership, and leadership in its classrooms.

Local versions of "students as leaders of a better future" are based on the history, values, and context of the classrooms and communities. Across cultural, historical, language, and geopolitical contexts, we see communities calling for education to better prepare students for the future they will inherit, navigate, and shape.

Our classrooms and the model of teaching has to change in a manner that children don't just come to school to acquire knowledge but rather come to school to try out the knowledge. Our schools must become hubs of solving community problems rather than just teaching about our problems.

Charles Obore
Teach For Uganda Alumnus

The fundamental question must be: What is the purpose of public schools in this nation-state? And if the purpose of public schools continues to be to create individual pathways out of poverty, we will never end poverty. The point of education is not to escape poverty. The point of education is to end it.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade
Founder of Roses in Concrete Community School. (Quote take from the video "Jeff Duncan Andrade The game is rigged (inequity by design)", 2017)

Understanding "education" as a matter of collective leadership and "teaching" as an intentional act of fostering student leadership is a radical and most positive shift for many reasons. Also re-balancing the dialectic between "center" and "periphery," between central institutions and community voices, is a fundamental step in the direction of more lively, inclusive and thus solid democracies–which per definition should be rooted in an empowered and informed citizenry. Though I have some concerns about anchoring the epicenter of education and the definition of its purpose in community voices, especially in the absence of explicit foundational values about human dignity and autonomy. In some cases, local communities have developed and crystalized problematic views that are perpetuating inequity. What if a significant portion of the population of a community believes that "some" people are inferior or superior to others according to the color of their skin, or their religion, or the social group the parents belong to and act accordingly? What if a significant portion of people in a community or a region believes and claims to have inherited exclusive rights on resources or land inhabited by others and act accordingly? Are we saying they are the source of the wisdom that should give shape and essence to education and therefore being the fundament of visions for student success and leadership? In my opinion, this is highly problematic. The considerations about the role of communities and their voices has to be built around the core value of human dignity. I see the "collective" leadership we want to foster starting with and around education as necessarily "discursive": including people, institutions, and instances who have perspectives from the community and beyond the community as well. For these reasons I would rather prefer to say and think "community as a partner" instead of "community as power."

Dr. Antonio Piscopo
Deputy CEO, Teach For Italy

Key Idea 4

Classrooms that grow students as leaders of a better future demonstrate different purposes, lenses, strategies, and outcomes.

When the purpose of a classroom is supporting students to realize their potential as leaders in their own lives and communities, the roles of the student and teacher change. The classroom's relationship to the community and its history and assets changes, as does the nature of the problem, and the work that is necessary. The actions teachers and students prioritize each day to grow and learn are constantly evolving. The design of training and support for teachers changes, and how we define and measure progress also changes.

When we aspire to grow students as leaders, teaching and learning change.

The following chapters of this guide are an exploration of those changes:

How we "see" ourselves and others changes.

In the LENSES chapter, we share what our collective studies reveal about perspective shifts that come from reimagining education's purposes as growing students as leaders of a better future. When teachers are committed to this purpose, they see students differently (as leaders), they see themselves differently (as learners), they see the communities where they teach differently (as sources of power), and they see the challenges they are addressing differently (as systemic).

What we do changes.

In the STRATEGIES chapter, we share how orienting to this vision of student success influences teachers' actions. We find teachers who are building meaningful relationships with students' families, validating and learning with and from students' cultures, and supporting students' rigorous engagement with meaningful learning by centering student voice, ownership, and discovery. We find teachers who are reflecting on and intentional about their own growth and development.

How we define success changes.

In the OUTCOMES chapter, we share ways transformational classrooms define and measure broader outcomes that align to the vision of student leadership.

In a sense, the entire Teaching As Collective Leadership framework is simply a **map** of the **implications** of purposefully committing to a **vision** that defines student success as developing **collective leadership**.

> **GLOSSARY**
>
> **Grow Students:** We have chosen to say "grow students as leaders" because we are looking for something more active and meaningful than traditional concepts and we are hoping to inspire a brief pause to think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.
>
> Explore more about these concepts and other key language choices in our **Glossary**.

DO

How-to guides: What pursuing "purpose" looks like in the classroom

Meaningful conversations about purpose are happening in and around transformational classrooms. Teachers, students, and families are critical contributors to those conversations.

In the Listen & Envision strategies of Teaching As Collective Leadership, you will find a concrete map of actions teachers use when they put the question "why" at the center of their teaching and learning:

Broaden perspectives
We seek insights and wisdom from multiple perspectives in diverse contexts to create a collective sense of possibility.

Host dialogue & discussion
We hold space for authentic dialogue and discussion by being fully present, listening deeply, and exhibiting curiosity over judgment.

Partner with families & community
We connect and collaborate with students' families and others in the community, engaging them in the classroom purpose and practices.

Critically examine history
We explore the systemic roots of inequality, listening closely to those with lived experience of inequity, and seeking to understand the assets of the community.

Collectively envision success
We listen and contribute to conversations among students, families, and educators about the purpose of education.

We are learning from the innovative ways partner organizations in the Teach For All network are adapting ideas about collectively developing visions of student success to their contexts:

exe

Empieza por Educar in Spain brought together students, families, and educators to reflect on how classrooms aligned and did not align with their collectively developed vision. Not only did the ritual help educators make adjustments in classrooms, but student and family input challenged and changed the vision of success, leading them to feel ownership of education's purpose.

TEACH FOR ARMENIA

Teach For Armenia explored education's purpose with members of the community. A vision emerged of students growing as entrepreneurial problem solvers who will build a new Armenia. Coaches and educators realized immediately that the vision would require the adoption of broader student outcomes (including critical thinking, for example) rather than the rote knowledge traditionally valued in the Armenian system.

Please share ways that your organization is engaging with students, teachers, and communities to collectively develop the purpose of education.

The process of collectively constructing visions of student success has practical benefits for teachers, teacher coaches, program designers, and policymakers:

What I have seen in schools that have a contextualized vision, you have this amazing synergy that happens from all folks rowing in the same direction. And while it takes more planning to make sure everyone has an oar and knows where we are heading, what you get when you are on the water and the water gets rough or the night gets dark is ... in the moments of greatest challenge you see the boat moving much more smoothly and much more swiftly because there is a shared sense that we all know where we are going.

Mike Johnston
Mayor of Denver, Colorado, USA, Teach For America Alumnus

ROLE	BENEFITS OF ENGAGING IN A CO-CONSTRUCTIVE **PROCESS**	A CO-CONSTRUCTIVE PROCESS GENERATES **KEY IDEAS AND INSIGHTS**
Teachers	• Builds credibility and trust with students and the wider community • Ensures what you are doing genuinely reflects the values of those you are working with • Engages you on a journey of continuous learning in partnership with the community	• Provides a foundation to assess student progress • Allows you to clearly communicate what you are aiming for • Serves as a support to bring you back to your core priorities
Teacher Coaches	• Connects your work with the students and communities you are working with	• Defines what you are aiming for, which allows you to plan for the development of teacher mindsets/skills/behaviors needed to get there
Program Designers	• Brings teams together around shared aims • Reduces risk of organization being seen as imposing on the community • Builds stronger relationships with key stakeholders	• Shifts the emphasis from the aims of a teacher to the aims of the community (and the teacher's role in contributing to those aims) • Shifts the emphasis from the aims of the organization to the aims of the community
Policymakers	• Ensures policies are based on the genuine interests of the community • Provides sources of innovation and diversity • Increases legitimacy of policy decisions	• Allows multiple stakeholders to unite around common aims • Provides a foundation for common evaluation of progress

TOOLKIT

Resources for reflecting on (hidden) purposes and motivations in our daily actions

To jumpstart the creation of a library of resources and tools, we have been working with partner organizations, teachers, and teacher coaches to experiment with various tools and resources.

Here are some prototype tools and resources to spark innovations. Both of these resources are personal reflection tools designed to surface ways that when our purposes and motivations are different, our daily actions are different.

[Implications of Purpose](#)

[Implications of Motivation](#)

Please share tools that help students, teachers, and communities to collectively develop the purpose of education.

We are also collecting (and will continue to share in this guide) variations on those prototypes that are arising as partner organizations in the Teach For All network adapt and contextualize this model.

SHARE

Make your voice heard: Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people—teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

Listening to explore purpose
The question is did someone really talk to the kids and the community, and ask them what they really want? Have you talked with the parents, with the community's authorities, and with the government's own teachers? Or do you sense what their problem is, and you think you can solve it?

Jorge Aliaga
Former RRCC Coordinator, Buenaventura

Shared vision determines pedagogy
So changing how teaching and learning take place and pedagogy are great and awesome and important. But at the end of the day, we need shared definitions and a clarity of vision toward getting to equity, justice, and liberation. And honestly, I think we've always wanted to get there as part of our earliest beginnings. But it's our community approach and having community as a unit of change that helped us be more clear and more strategic about making sure that's our ultimate goal.

Nedgine Paul Deroly
Co-founder and CEO, Anseye Pou Ayiti

Purpose lights the way
I was a teacher for 30 years. I remember very well what it means to not have a clear purpose. I felt as if I were trapped in a labyrinth.

Mirela Stetco
Training Director, Teach For Romania

Purpose shapes strategies
Without understanding what purpose an education system is currently pursuing, reformers cannot tack on new projects, programs, or policies (even those that have been shown to "work" in other contexts), and expect them to sustainably improve learning at scale.

Focus to Flourish, RISE

Who decides purpose?
Very often we see that some people are deciding a pathway for others, not even asking what they want for themselves. How can we think of our vision for students if we don't even think what are their dreams and aspirations?

Anush Kostanyan
Former Head of Training, Teach For Armenia

Preparing students for a challenging world
Students now live in a world plagued by complex global problems, including climate change, massive economic inequality, ideological warfare, and a technological revolution marked by a chaotic proliferation of sources of opinion, fact, myth, paranoia, and disinformation. The generation of students coming of age today will be asked to navigate, survive, and, if they can, help to heal the world they have inherited. Schools will need to do their part to develop skilled, creative, educated, informed, and empathetic citizens and leaders—the kind of people that our economy, society, and democracy demand.

Jude Heaton
From Teach For All
recommended Jal Metha and Sarah Fine's book "In Search of Deeper Learning"

Engaging with community to co-create purpose

I think that, in our case, not thinking we had to do everything ourselves is what worked. Secondly, we didn't deliberately build a vision of education for Áncash from Enseña Perú. That now seems a bit irrational to me. That an outside organization comes and says, "This is my vision for this area." We have never done that, but we had the patience to work the relationships, to integrate ourselves, and become part of the community over the course of some years, and when we are ready, we allowed ourselves our own strong vision of Áncash or Huari. One built by many people. That is, this whole vision of decentralizing the work of the organization, so that the organization is not at the center, has been important because it has enabled us to get involved with types of leadership that are very strong, who are not participants of the two-year program nor are they alumni, and who are amazing leaders from the area in all kind of roles.

Franco Mosso
Former CEO, Enseña Perú

Another education is possible

What is most alive for me is that another education is possible. It's happening. I am moved by the desire to learn and listen more. My vision of education based on what I have heard is that we should bet on education as a comprehensive learning experience, where our teachers are the classmates, the environment, the grandmothers. An education that is less academic and more at the service of the needs of communities, cities, and countries.

Grace
Student leader, Perú

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet (here).

LENSES

Transformational teachers see themselves, others, and their work differently, which enables different teaching and learning.

What perspectives are found in teachers who are helping students grow as leaders of a better future?

OVERVIEW
Get started with the key ideas of lenses and a toolkit of key resources.

DISCOVER
Virtually explore transformational classrooms to find distinguishing lenses.

LEARN & DO
Uncover the big ideas around the lenses that grow students as leaders, and find resources, learning theory, self-assessments, and other teacher-development tools around lenses.

SHARE
Contribute to and explore incoming insights, challenges, questions, resources, and research.

PURPOSE   LENSES   STRATEGIES   OUTCOMES

STUDENTS AS LEADERS OF A BETTER FUTURE
FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND ALL OF US

students as leaders
teachers as learners
community as power
our work as systemic

LOVE & CONNECT
LISTEN & ENVISION
LEARN & DESIGN
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE
REFLECT & GROW

WELLBEING
CONNECTEDNESS
AWARENESS
AGENCY
MASTERY
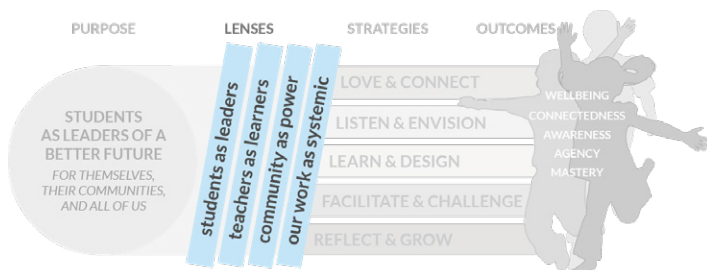
OVERVIEW

We are finding clear patterns in the ways transformational teachers make meaning of their experiences. These patterns show up in how they interpret and make sense of their students, their own role as teachers, their communities, and the challenges we all face.

PURPOSE　　LENSES　　STRATEGIES　　OUTCOMES

STUDENTS AS LEADERS OF A BETTER FUTURE
FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND ALL OF US

students as leaders
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MASTERY
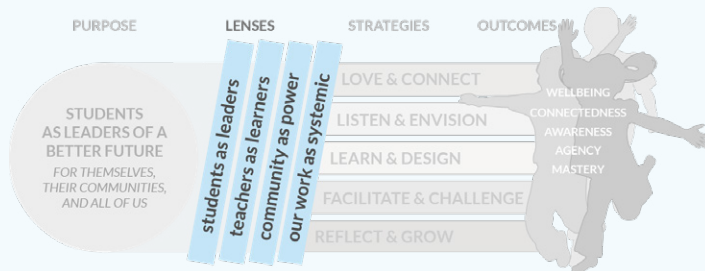
Lenses give not only a language but a perspective that we can bring into reflection, to coaching, to training—to all that we do. A unifying language that is more aligned with our vision.

Maria Azevedo
Co-founder and Head of Program,
Teach For Portugal

REFLECTION TOOLS

We have gathered tools to help provoke reflections that help shift lenses.

We have developed three different reflection exercises designed to help you (or to help you help others) become more aware of your own perspectives in hopes of helping to enable "lens shifts." You can find these tools in each of the lens "two pagers" linked below:

- Polarities—What is your perspective and why?
- Benefits and Costs—What value comes from having (and not having) this perspective?
- Enablers and Inhibitors—What conditions make shifting toward this lens possible?

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way. We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this Glossary.

DISCOVER

Watch and hear many voices bringing these lenses to life. To start, check out this compilation of student, teacher, and family perspectives.

LEARN & DO

When we commit to growing students as leaders, that purpose shifts our perspectives. And perspectives shift our actions.

These lens shifts are critical because they (a) help teachers navigate the complex and dynamic challenges of teaching, (b) help us see misalignment between our aims and our actions, and (c) surface assumptions about our students, ourselves, community, and work that we might not realize we carry.

Four ways of seeing and making meaning consistently show up in transformational classrooms:

STUDENTS AS LEADERS	TEACHERS AS LEARNERS
We see our students as whole and intelligent people who are capable of shaping their own lives and the world around them *. . . instead of as passive "vessels" to be filled with knowledge.*	We see ourselves as lifelong learners who respond to challenges with curiosity, humility, and creativity *. . . instead of as the sole source of knowledge and skill that students need.*
COMMUNITY AS POWER	OUR WORK AS SYSTEMIC
We see communities as sources of power and wisdom and recognize that lasting change requires authentic partnership with students, families, and other educators *. . . instead of as places with difficult challenges and unaddressed needs.*	We see our work as challenging root causes of injustices that inhibit students' potential—systemic barriers around us and limiting beliefs inside us *. . . instead of as getting students to work extra hard to adapt to injustices around them.*

Lenses have profound implications for teacher development. Learning new knowledge can come through exposure and practice. Developing new ways of seeing and interpreting the world comes through disorienting experiences and reflection.

SHARE

Share your insights, questions, resources, and challenges related to teachers' perspectives, lenses, and mindsets in our Co-Learning Padlet.

DISCOVER

Discover lenses for yourself

We think the best way to understand Teaching As Collective Leadership is to make the model your own, connecting it to your own context, your own experiences, and your own goals. So, clear your mind, settle in, and explore the stories below. See what patterns you discover.

Virtually visit two or three of the **transformational classrooms** below and consider how they are similar and different. Please visit more than one. The power of these virtual visits is in seeing their contrasts and connections so that global patterns and local contexts can come to light.

Learning to let go of fear

In this video from 2018, Óliver Jabato Rodríguez explains how when he let go of his fear of failure, he saw his students and himself transformed. To change what he was doing and how his students were learning, he found he had to shift his perspectives and ways of being.

Seeing the world with new lenses

Ako Mātātupu (New Zealand) trains participants to engage deeply with Maori communities. In this video from 2018, participant Jonathan Wieland shared that this training led to discovering assumptions he never knew he had and transformed his approach to teaching.

The lens through which we define success

In this video from 2018, then college student Elijah Miles challenged us to consider how identity, culture, and community shape how we see the world and the students we are working with.

GLOSSARY

Transformational classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in **our Glossary.**

REFLECTION TOOLS

- What patterns do you notice in how these educators see the world?
- What experiences have most shaped the lens they bring to their work?
- How are these lenses similar or different to your own lenses?
- What would it take to shift your own, or others' lenses?
- What other illustrations of these lenses come to mind? (Please share them with us!)

Gaurav and the garbage mountain

In 2009, Teach For India fellow Gaurav Singh spent a day working alongside the parents of his students. During this experience, he found his judgments about the community disappear. He replaced them with a clear idea of the systemic nature of cycles of inequity.

Want to explore more? Here are some fascinating stories to help you discover more about lenses:

- In 2018, Brittany Packnett, a powerful leader from the Black Lives Matter movement, explored how internalized injustice shapes our daily actions.
- Educators in New Zealand shared in 2018 how the Maori concept of ako allows us to open up a relationship of genuine dialogue with students.
- Miguel Ñique from Perú showed in 2018 how education can provide the tools to make us free.

HELP US DISCOVER & ILLUSTRATE

transformational teaching actions: Submit other examples.

LEARN & DO

Lenses are perspective-shifts requiring "unlearning" internalized assumptions about our students, ourselves, our communities, and our work—and they enable transformational action with students.

Every other chapter in this guide has separate "Learn" and "Do" sections. Why are they combined for this chapter? "Lenses" is our attempt to describe the place where learning and doing intersect. Learning IS the doing. Or, perhaps we should say "unlearning is the doing."

Why "Lenses"?
Purpose Shifts Perspectives . . . and Perspectives Shift Practices

Most teacher frameworks and rubrics center around actions. They attempt to answer the question, "What do teachers DO to get the results we want to see in classrooms?" This approach leads many frameworks to focus on creating "toolkits" for teachers—a set of actions or tactics or "moves" to learn, master, and apply. Guidance for new teachers on *what to do* is enormously helpful.

And yet, we are hearing from our collective explorations of transformational classrooms (and from the transformational teachers themselves) that "ways of making meaning" are even more foundational than "ways of doing."

We believe there are three reasons that lenses are proving so fundamental to transformational teaching and learning:

1. **The Complex and Changing Challenges of Teaching.** Teachers work in dynamic, constantly shifting environments, and teachers make thousands of decisions every day. This may be unsettling for new teachers to hear, but *no rubric or checklist of teacher actions can ever cover all the decisions and judgments of great teaching.* Teachers' "lenses," *the way they see and make meaning of people and the context around them,* inform all those (often unpredictable) decisions.

2. **Misalignment Between Inherited Systems and the Purpose of Growing Students as Leaders of a Better Future.** Most education systems are not designed to grow students as leaders of a better future. As a result, most transformational teachers are often making choices that are counter-systemic, choices not supported and encouraged by the systems around them. How transformational teachers see their students, themselves, their communities, and the education system around them gives them conviction and guidance when they find themselves "swimming upstream" against assumptions, policies, practices, and systems that are inhibiting students' growth as leaders of a better future.

3. **Unlearning Internalized Assumptions Creates Space for New Ways of Teaching and Learning.** From our own experience in and around schools and classrooms that were built for very different purposes, many of us have internalized assumptions that inhibit fully aligning our daily actions to growing students as leaders of a better future. Sometimes we do not even realize how deeply ingrained these ideas are:
   - *Are we more comfortable seeing students as empty vessels to be filled by teachers' knowledge? Or as whole people with the capacity to lead in the learning process?*
   - *How often do we default to seeing ourselves as sources of knowledge, instead of as facilitators of collective learning?*

GLOSSARY

Grow students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders of a better future: This concept emerged years ago when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in **our Glossary**.

LENSES

For me, one of the most striking (and challenging) insights from these crowd-sourced studies is that teachers' perspectives may be even more important to great teaching than teachers' practices. When I think about the ratio of energy in teacher training that goes to practices over perspectives, I wonder if we need to make some significant changes.

Steven Farr
Teach For All's Global Learning Lab.
Click here to hear Steven's story about the moment he realized how critical lenses are to transformational teaching.

- *What have we internalized about the deficits and challenges of our communities instead of seeing their assets?*
- *When are we assuming that our students' behaviors are problems within them, instead of reflections of systems around them?*

When we (as teachers, teacher coaches, program designers, CEOs, parents, researchers, policymakers, or any adult concerned about education equity) commit to growing students' leadership, we often realize that assumptions we have internalized are in conflict with that purpose.

Simply stated, **purpose shifts perspectives. And perspectives inform practices.**

So What ARE "Lenses"?
Seeing Our Students, Ourselves, Our Communities and Our Work . . . Differently

As thousands of students, teachers, teacher coaches, community leaders, and others have virtually visited transformational classrooms across the Teach For All network, they have helped us identify four key patterns in the ways of seeing and "making meaning" of these teachers.

STUDENTS AS LEADERS	TEACHERS AS LEARNERS	COMMUNITY AS POWER	OUR WORK AS SYSTEMIC
We see our students as whole and intelligent people who are capable of shaping their own lives and the world around them *. . . instead of as passive "vessels" to be filled with knowledge.*	We see ourselves as lifelong learners who respond to challenges with curiosity, humility, and creativity *. . . instead of as the sole source of knowledge and skill that students need.*	We see communities as sources of power and wisdom and recognize that lasting change requires authentic partnership with students, families, and other educators *. . . instead of as places with difficult challenges and unaddressed needs.*	We see our work as challenging root causes of injustices that inhibit students' potential—systemic barriers around us and limiting beliefs inside us *. . . instead of as getting students to work extra hard to adapt to injustices around them.*
A teacher who sees *students as leaders*, for example, might set up her classroom for active debate where students learn from one another, rather than looking to herself as the sole expert (even though that action wasn't on any teacher rubric she'd ever seen).	**A teacher who identifies as a *learner*** might, for example, stop a lesson that is not working well and vulnerably examine his lesson's shortcomings with students, modeling the reflective leadership he hopes to grow in students (even though that action wasn't taught in his training).	**A teacher who sees *communities as power*** might, for example, engage parents in co-creating a vision for students rather than doing it on her own (even though her university courses had suggested that she set classroom goals on her own).	**A teacher who sees her *work as systemic*** might, for example, inquire more deeply about what's going on in a child's home environment, rather than jump to conclusions when facing a disruptive child (even though some of the teacher's colleagues are jumping to conclusions about the inherent potential of the child to succeed in school).

To explore more deeply how our actions change when our lenses shift—and to find reflection tools to help shift our lenses—please check out each lens's "two-pager" with the links below:

STUDENTS AS LEADERS	TEACHERS AS LEARNERS	COMMUNITY AS POWER	OUR WORK AS SYSTEMIC

How Do We Shift Lenses?
Shifting Lenses Often Comes from Disorienting Experiences and Reflection

Learning Theory

Lenses have profound implications for teachers and teacher developers. They inform, shape, and drive skills and actions. And yet, lenses do not shift in the same ways that skills and actions develop.

As we explore more in the "Learning About Learning" section of this guide, shifting our lenses does not happen the same way building skills does. We cannot tell a teacher to "see students as leaders" and expect that to happen. And watching videos of someone with a particular lens does little to transfer that lens to the viewer.

While it is a bit of an oversimplification, it's helpful to note that skills and actions are often (but not exclusively) developed by watching someone model the skills and practicing the skills. By contrast, lenses most often shift when we have disorienting experiences or relationships and have the opportunity to reflect and make new meanings of those experiences and relationships.

And, as crudely illustrated in the (oversimplified!) visual below, shifting lenses and growing skills can be part of a powerful, interrelated cycle of development. What we do (experiences) gives us fodder for reflection, which yields new learning and knowledge that we can then practice to create new experiences.

Conflicting Reflecting on Enablers and Inhibitors of These Lenses

Shifting our lenses is **deeper work**. It requires us to confront fears, biases, or hidden commitments that we (in some cases) didn't even know we had and that might be serving our interests in ways that make us uncomfortable. For example, a teacher coming from a place of privilege may have lived an entire lifetime without any awareness of how vastly inequitable education systems are for many children. Coming to this awareness can be personally conflicting, as it may disrupt one's view of oneself, one's identity and place in the world, and one's views of the world at large. Similarly, a teacher whose identities have long been disempowered and oppressed may have internalized self-doubt and assumptions that "get in the way" of her work to fulfill her potential.

Factors within and around us might make it challenging to shift a perspective. For example, in early beta tests of the Teaching As Collective Leadership Framework, we asked teachers to reflect on what stops them from seeing themselves as learners. We watched as teachers began to discover some of the **factors around them that inhibit their actions and progress.** *"I have a head of school who doesn't like me asking questions,"* one teacher reported. *"Some parents expect me to be an expert,"* said another.

Becoming more aware of the "lenses" that inform how they see the world around them is also helping teachers discover the **factors inside them that inhibit their growth and development.** We hear things like *"I may have internalized an assumption that teachers should know all the answers"* or *"When I get scared or uncomfortable because a lesson isn't going well, I tend to try to take greater control and to take ownership of the learning away from students."*

I have mixed feelings about calling these ways of meaning-making and ways of being "lenses," because you can take your glasses on and off easily. The reality is that we all make sense of the world through a complex set of internalized and socialized assumptions, and "switching" those is not easy. Certainly not as easy as putting on a new pair of glasses.

Anasstassia Baichorova
Supporting organizations in the Teach For All network as they explore how to become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable

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If we want students to learn differently, teachers must learn differently. If teachers are going to learn differently, they may have to unlearn some of what they think they know about teaching and learning.

Laurelin Whitfield
Leadership Coach and Facilitator, Teach For All

Most teachers were teaching as they had been taught, short class periods inhibited in-depth explorations, district-mandated curricula, and teacher evaluation systems were not aligned with efforts to emphasize critical thinking, and parental and college pressures mitigated against change. In fact, we came to think that many of the most successful classrooms, extracurriculars, and schools that we encountered were successful because they had found ways to buffer the expectations of the external ecosystem in order to create space to do something different.

Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine
from In Search of Deeper Learning (2020)

When they come to the program and when they leave the program, they're not the same. But we never had the words to describe this change—we just say they've matured, they've grown, they're different. It appears to be a side effect, in a way, rather than an intended consequence.

Kristi Klaasmägi
Former CEO of Noored Kooli (Estonia)

Teachers can also use reflection on these lenses to discover **conditions that enable them to maximize their growth and development.** Some teachers realize the power of having *"a teacher coach who asks me every week what I am learning."* Others share more personal, internal enablers: *"My family and religious values emphasize service through humility"* or *"I have gone through discrimination as a child myself, and if I managed to get through that, I want to help others do the same."*

We are finding that having teachers reflect on each lens with the question, *"What around me and inside me is inhibiting or enabling my ability to see the world in this way?"* is a productive way to prompt important realizations that lead to meaningful growth and improved teaching.

In each of the lenses "two-pagers" (later in this chapter), you will find reflection exercises designed to help you (or help you help others) increase awareness of the perspectives you or others are bringing to our work. You'll find three kinds of exercises:

- **Exploring Lens Polarities.** *Where am I today in my perspectives? Where am I usually? Why? What changes my position on the lens spectrum?*
- **Exploring Lens Benefits and Costs.** *When do I find these different perspectives valuable? What are the costs? What are the benefits and costs of the "opposite" lens? How do these shape my actions with students?*
- **Exploring Lens Enablers and Inhibitors.** *What external conditions and internal factors maximize and minimize my ability to maintain this lens? In these exercises, we try to figure out what allows us to be where we want to be on a lens spectrum.*

The Power of Lenses for Teachers, Teacher Developers, and Program Designers

As teachers and program designers across the Teach For All network experiment with these lenses, we are seeing their profound and interconnected implications for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers. The links below lead to collections of insights, illustrations, resources, and tools for each of these audiences:

FOR TEACHERS

We are finding that lenses give a ***powerful language for growing awareness of our patterns of thought (we could call this our "metacognitive awareness")***. It helps us understand the ways we make meaning of the world that influence our daily actions. How can we use lenses to give new teachers a way to name, describe, and think about their own growth?

FOR TEACHER COACHES

The centrality of the lenses could ***dramatically change classroom observation and coaching conversations***. Instead of focusing primarily on what we see teachers doing, the lenses give us a path to exploring the underlying, internalized perspectives in a teacher that are shaping those actions. "Coaching" shifts toward more "inner" and "adaptive" work, with deeper, longer-term, and more powerful conversations on new teachers' growth and development.

FOR PROGRAM DESIGNERS

The importance of lens-shifting ***could lead us to rethink many elements of how teachers are trained and supported***. Consider how different a pre-service training might be if it focused not just on practicing skills but also on shifting mindsets. Shifting your perspective, or the lens through which you see the world often entails uncovering blind spots (areas we don't even know that we don't know) and this requires a different learning approach.

A CLOSER LOOK AT
STUDENTS AS LEADERS

We see our students as whole and intelligent people who are capable of shaping their own lives and the world around them, instead of as passive "vessels" to be filled with my and others' knowledge and skills.

Conventional classroom models assume students are "empty" and "passive" receivers of teachers' knowledge and skills. But students are capable of discovering, constructing, and creating learning as well. And, if our aim is for students to become leaders of a better world, the classroom needs to be a place to develop and practice leadership, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

What Happens When We See Students As Leaders?

Seeing all our students as "creative, curious, and capable" transforms our relationship to learning. Rather than bribing or coercing our students into learning, our challenge is to find ways to connect with them to cultivate intrinsic motivation and student voice, ownership, and leadership.

Here are some examples of the ways transformational teachers report that shifting their lens toward "students as leaders" has influenced their daily practice and accelerated students' mastery:

- **Curiosity Not Judgment**
  What are your students' previous experiences of schools? Seeing students as leaders means seeing them as whole people with complex past experiences that shape their learning today. What ideas about learning or about themselves have they internalized? Stay curious about your students' motivations and the roots of any disengagement.

- **Learning as a Web, Not a Ladder**
  Do you create curiosity in your subject? Seeing students as leaders means not seeing them as machines. Take time to think about how to introduce your subject in ways that inspire your students and have meaning and purpose. This might be connecting it to interests, questions, or concerns they already have or experiences they can relate to, or it might be about opening up new horizons in ways that puzzle your students. Bloom's Taxonomy is a handy tool for helping us think and plan for different levels of learning.

- **Get Out of the Way!**
  Do you create space for student leadership in learning? It can be tempting to step in too quickly as a teacher or to move the lesson on too fast. Sometimes a little silence goes a long way. Teachers who facilitate deep learning create time and space for authentic conversation between and among students.

I became aware of the lenses I was actually seeing my students through and faced my own fears around it. We don't question our mindsets enough and it's painful to face them. Seeing students as leaders goes beyond seeing them leading their team in the classroom, it is thinking about how they are going to impact their own community and their families.

Andrea Padilla
Primary school teacher, Enseña Perú Alumna and Leadership Coordinator of Principals Program at Enseña Perú

Even though I am a small child, I can help the community. Even though we are small, we have a power, a strength inside us. Everyone has a strength inside them. They just need time to show their strength....

Kusum
Former Teach For India student. (Quote taken from Kusum: "We have a power, a strength inside of us", 2018)

More Voices:
- Charles Obore (Uganda) on student leadership in the classroom
- Kids' Education Revolution (2018)

The best teachers we saw often started with a puzzling question or authentic overall task, then integrated the content and skill-building into the unit. As one observer quipped, most teachers saw the process as "Bloom as ladders"—basics now, higher-order skills later—whereas the most compelling teachers we saw seemed to have a "Bloom as web" approach, meaning that they were moving back and forth between lower-order and higher-order tasks.

Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine
from In Search of Deeper Learning (2020)

The first ingredient that I'm learning is that the adults involved in developing democratic education with teenagers have to unlearn all their previous notions about the role of students in education. No magic will happen unless adults can see each and every day a young person as a leader for today's world, not—as people like to say—the future of our society. This is a profound shift in mindset that impacts all planning and implementation of education.

Franco Mosso
Former CEO & Co-founder at Enseña Perú, Alumni from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Fellow from the Salzburg Global Seminar

REFLECTION TOOLS

We have developed three different reflection exercises designed to help you (or to help you help others) become more aware of your own perspectives on **students as leaders**:

- Polarities—What is your perspective and why?
- Benefits and Costs—What value comes from having (and not having) this perspective?
- Enablers and Inhibitors—What conditions (inside you and around you) make shifting toward this lens possible?

Shifting Lenses Changes the Questions We Ask...

Seeing students as leaders who are *whole and intelligent people who can shape their own lives and the world around them* influences how we "show up" in the classroom. We come into the classroom **asking different questions**:

- To what extent do I believe students can lead their own lives and shape the world around them?
- When teaching, how often do I lead from the front vs. stepping back to allow students to lead? What gets in the way of my doing this?
- Am I seeking and acting on feedback from students regularly?
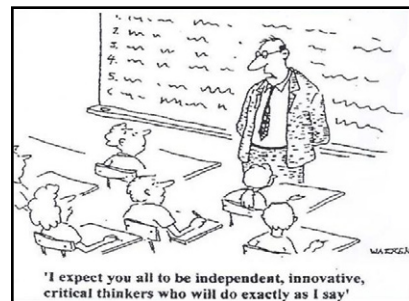
Comic strip by the artist Warren

...Which Changes the Actions We Take

Those questions and the mental narrative that comes with them **changes our behavior**. A teacher who sees students as leaders is more likely:

- To involve students in creating classroom norms, rituals, and systems
- To work toward a culture where students learn from each other
- To see assets students bring to the classroom rather than focusing on deficits

Why do we celebrate change-makers like Malala and Greta outside the classroom but not foster such leadership from inside the classroom?

The power of these lenses is that they **enable actions** aligned with growing students as leaders of a better future. In the next chapter on STRATEGIES, we explore the 25 actions that seem to distinguish the classrooms we have studied. While a "Students as Learners" lens boosts all of the Teaching As Collective Leadership actions, the following may be especially enabled:

LOVE & CONNECT	LISTEN & ENVISION	LEARN & DESIGN	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE	REFLECT & GROW
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	BROADEN PERSPECTIVES	BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE	FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY	TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
FOSTER BELONGING	HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION	PLAN BACKWARDS	MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS	PAUSE & REFLECT
NURTURE CULTURE	PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY	VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP	FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY	FIND & FOSTER ALLIES
KNOW YOURSELF	CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY	EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING	FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE	SEEK FEEDBACK
BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

A CLOSER LOOK AT
TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

We see ourselves as lifelong learners who respond to challenges with curiosity, humility, and creativity, instead of seeing ourselves as the source of knowledge and skill that students need and as the implementer of "what works."

We need to unlearn the idea that power lies only in the hands of teachers and pay attention to the complexity of the learning process where the two main roles, student and teacher, must be interchangeable.

Mălina Luciana Flocea
Teach For Romania Alumna

I used to think I had solutions for my students' crises. But even though we live in the same city, they experience very different crises. I shouldn't walk into my classroom with answers, I should walk in with questions. I am not a superhero, they are. This is where the idea of student leadership comes from.

Sara Kassab
Passionate educator in Lebanon who works to ensure quality holistic learning is delivered to all students regardless of their background

In conversations with transformational teachers, we frequently hear some version of "I hope my students are learning as much as I am. I became a great teacher when learning began flowing to and from students."

We are also learning from these teachers that *teaching as learning* is key to *loving* teaching. This work is more fun, exciting, and fulfilling when you are learning alongside and from your students.

What Happens When We See
Teachers As Learners?

Rigorous lessons involve teachers and students exploring topics together, with the teacher genuinely interested and invested in the learning journey.

Here are some examples of the ways transformational teachers report that shifting their lens toward "teachers as learners" has influenced their daily practice and accelerated students' mastery:

BRING POWERFUL QUESTIONS
What question is the lesson answering? Take time to explore why the lesson feels important and meaningful. Author Parker Palmer argues that the most inspiring lessons are dominated not by the student or teacher, but by the subject, the great thing that guides the inquiry.

DRAW ON YOUR INSPIRATION
What is your most powerful learning experience in your subject? If you have felt deeply inspired by your subject in the past, think back to when and why, and bring that energy to your classroom. Why do you care about the subject? What awakened your passion? Who were the people who inspired you to be an apprentice in your field? How can you create a similar learning journey for your students?

BE AN APPRENTICE
Whom can you learn from? How can you create space and time for your own learning? Can you create a peer support group? Open your class to visitors and fresh perspectives who will give you the "critical friendship" you need to help you learn and improve. Try to shift from any sense of defensiveness, to embrace failure and experimentation in service of continuously improving your practice as a teacher.

LISTEN AND CARE
Do you care what your students think? Do you want to learn from them? Are you genuinely interested? Students have a great radar for inauthenticity. If you really care about what they have to say and treat them with respect, including respecting them enough to challenge them, they will respond with engagement.

In 2012, Ignacio Brea (Argentina) asked for students' feedback, discovering solutions to his own challenges and serving as a powerful model for constant learning.

- Letting Go of Fear of Failure (Spain, 2018)
- Unlearning Historical Narratives (Navajo Nation, 2017)
- "Ako": Teaching IS Learning (Maori, New Zealand, 2018)
- Vulnerability and Healing in the Classroom (Romania)
- Overcoming Experiences of Inequity (Uganda)

In their research done for their book In Search of Deeper Learning, Harvard professors Jal Metha and Sarah Fine found that "Achieving deeper learning is challenging because it requires significant unlearning. For traditional teachers, moving toward giving their students deeper experiences in their domains entailed a substantial loss: of some breadth in pursuit of depth, and control, as teachers realized that being a teacher didn't always mean talking in front of the class. Making these shifts was difficult and painful, and even for our most successful teachers it often took many years."

Consider this powerful case study illustrating that point:

In more recent years, Mr. Fields had begun letting students pick the passages to discuss: "Actually learning to withdraw from the conversation, I think, is really essential. Learning to ask the question with passion because you do care about it, but to say, 'The reason it matters to me doesn't have to be the same reason that it matters to you'…"

*He found that decentering his role had both increased students' engagement—they were talking about the passages that mattered to them—and signaled his respect for his charges as people whose interests were as important as his own. This shift, while now foundational to his approach, had not come easily because it meant reconceiving his role as a teacher: "When I first started doing this, it felt revolutionary because I decided to go into the room and abandon what I knew about the text. I was no longer the authority on the text. I'm the teacher. **Your identity as a teacher is wrapped up in being the one who knows. I think that there's something terrifying about that because, for a teacher, you're walking in, saying to students, 'Well, I have my own thoughts about it but they're not actually what matter,'***…I think that's really scary for a lot of teachers 'cause basically what you're doing then is you're walking into a big question mark. In fact, you are the question mark."*

REFLECTION TOOLS

We have developed three different reflection exercises designed to help you (or to help you help others) become more aware of your own perspectives on **teachers as learners**:

- Polarities—What is your perspective and why?
- Benefits and Costs—What value comes from having (and not having) this perspective?
- Enablers and Inhibitors—What conditions (inside you and around you) make shifting toward this lens possible?

Shifting Lenses Changes the Questions We Ask...

- *How do I react when things get uncomfortable or tough? Do I approach these difficult situations with control or curiosity?*
- *How am I modeling the outcomes I want to grow in my students?*

...Which Changes the Actions We Take

Those questions and the mental narrative that comes with them change our behaviors. A teacher who sees herself as a learner is more likely:

- *To stop a lesson that is not working well and vulnerably examine her shortcomings with students, modeling reflective leadership.*
- *To design lessons where she is discovering alongside students.*
- *To seek critical friendship and feedback to guide daily improvements in the classroom.*

The power of these lenses is that they **enable actions** aligned to growing students as leaders of a better future, especially these:

LOVE & CONNECT	LISTEN & ENVISION	LEARN & DESIGN	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE	REFLECT & GROW
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	BROADEN PERSPECTIVES	BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE	FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY	TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
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KNOW YOURSELF	CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY	EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING	FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE	SEEK FEEDBACK
BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

A CLOSER LOOK AT
COMMUNITY AS POWER

We see communities as sources of power and wisdom and recognize that lasting change requires authentic partnership with students, families, and other educators instead of as a place with difficult challenges and unaddressed needs.

Many of us have internalized the persistent and unjust narrative that marginalized and oppressed communities are faulty, broken, and in need of saving by outside forces. Transformational teachers report, however, that once they "open their eyes" to community assets, collective wisdom, and potential, their approach to the classrooms changes dramatically.

What Happens When We See
Community As Power?

Teachers who connect what is happening in their classroom to the assets, values, and traditions of the communities they work with can draw on a deep well of knowledge and support. Those connections help make the learning relevant and meaningful to students.

Here are some examples of the ways transformational teachers report that shifting their lens toward "community as power" has influenced their daily practice: and accelerated students' mastery:

- Community as the Unit of Change in Haiti (2018)
- Mosaic of Global Voices on Community as Power (2018)
- Indigenous Education on the Navajo Nation
- Co-teaching with an Aboriginal Elder
- Parents Engagement in deeper learning

BRING COMMUNITY INTO THE SCHOOL

What opportunities are there to break down walls between school and community? Learning does not only happen in school. There are so many sources of insight within our communities, and the more students feel a sense of connection between their learning and the world outside, the better.

BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

What do people in the community want for their children? Parents and community members can be the most powerful advocates for change in a school. Take the time to understand what they want for their children, what their experience of school has been, and how they understand their future prospects. Is the current school system delivering for them? By starting with questions about the purpose of education, you can build up a shared vision with others, and then identify ways to meet that vision.

FIND COMMUNITY IN YOUR SCHOOL

Who are potential allies? Teacher and professor Taylor Delhagen has the following advice… "Find somebody at your school who has power and ask them to mentor you. Ask for space to take risks. Find ways to create space to take risks."

CREATE PARTNERSHIPS

What organizations can support the learning of your students? Some of the most powerful learning happens in partnership with local employers, museums, and civil society organizations. What existing relationships can you build on? How can you help set these up?

When we view the community as power, our classrooms become a mirror of the community itself. And so you are not showing up having to be someone different at school, whether you're the teacher or the child, you're just showing up as yourself. That sets everyone up to teach and learn more effectively.

Denisse Arias
Former Director of Equity & Belonging at Teach For All and Teach For America Alumna

At Teach For Nepal, we call ourselves a movement. What do we mean when we say it's a movement? Like whose movement? Who's leading this movement? You can't really say a movement has begun unless the ones who are affected are the ones who are leading the movement.

Swastika Shrestha
Co-founder, CEO and former Head of Training at Teach for Nepal. Click here to hear Swastika's story

We cannot achieve anything without working with our student's families and the larger community. And that's what Lugowski said, he said it to Albert, he said it to Piaget, even the conductive theories say that you have to link yourself in some other way with the community, because you can't leave aside that fundamental factor of what social is. So being social not only develops the person but also develops the cognitive part.

Roger García
Enseña Perú Alumnus

Only the hood can heal the hood. Our communities need to lead the way.

Michelle Johansson
Michelle is a Tongan mother, theatre-maker and educator working in Aotearoa New Zealand. She served as Kaitiaki at Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ, as a Director of Māia Centre for Social Justice and Education, and as the Creative Director of the Black Friars

REFLECTION TOOLS
We have developed three different reflection exercises designed to help you (or to help you help others) become more aware of your own perspectives on community as power:

- Polarities—What is your perspective and why?
- Benefits and Costs—What value comes from having (and not having) this perspective?
- Enablers and Inhibitors—What conditions (inside you and around you) make shifting toward this lens possible?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, after more than 260 days of distance education, we could start in-person classes on the second floor of the church of the community!

The collective effort and leadership of the parents allowed us to be the first class in the district to start in-person classes. The parents lead partnerships with the priest and the major. They prepared our classroom. They ensured that our space was safe. They guaranteed that every student came to class ready to learn.

For me, Nuevo Progreso and its members are power, inspiration, and an invaluable source of learning.

Alexandra Vassallo
Enseña Perú Alumna

Shifting Lenses Changes the Questions We Ask...
When we recognize that lasting change requires authentic partnership with students, families, and other educators we "show up" in the classroom differently. We come into the classroom **asking different questions**:

- *How well do I understand the history and context of this community?*
- *What assumptions and beliefs do I have about the community? Where do they come from? Could they be limiting me from fully supporting my students?*
- *When I interact with parents and other community members, do I come with an agenda or do I listen openly? What gets in the way of my listening?*

...Which Changes the Actions We Take
Those questions and the mental narrative that comes with them **change our behavior**. A teacher who sees community as power is more likely:

- To engage parents in co-creating a vision for students rather than imposing one
- To connect objectives to real-world opportunities and challenges in students' lives
- To live in and connect with the community in ways that help foster meaningful relationships with students and families

The power of these lenses is that they **enable actions** aligned to growing students as leaders of a better future, especially these:

LOVE & CONNECT	LISTEN & ENVISION	LEARN & DESIGN	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE	REFLECT & GROW
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	BROADEN PERSPECTIVES	BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE	FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY	TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
FOSTER BELONGING	HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION	PLAN BACKWARDS	MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS	PAUSE & REFLECT
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KNOW YOURSELF	CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY	EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING	FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE	SEEK FEEDBACK
BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

A CLOSER LOOK AT
WORK AS SYSTEMIC

We see our work as challenging the root causes of injustices that inhibit students potential and challenging systemic barriers around us and limiting beliefs inside us, instead of seeing our role as getting students to work extra hard to overcome their deficits to succeed in the system around them.

Remember those drawings of children on bicycles that we used to explore different paradigms of education equity? And how different children in those drawings had more and less conducive paths to success?

When our aim is to close achievement gaps between our students and children born with distinct advantages, we tend to put responsibility for overcoming that injustice on the children who are "behind." But as transformational teachers, we are learning to insist that many of the barriers to learning assumed to be in students are actually reflections of systemic challenges around them.

What Happens When We See Our Work As Systemic?

Inextricably intertwined with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the "our work as systemic" lens is about seeing often-hidden rules and expectations that society applies to children of certain identities and not to children of other identities. This "work as systemic" lens is about the often-unspoken motivations and purposes behind systems influencing our students. It's about seeing often-hidden rules and expectations that society applies to children of certain identities and not to children of other identities.

Here are some examples of the ways transformational teachers report that shifting their lens toward "community as powers" has influenced their daily practice and accelerated students' mastery:

- Roots of Inequity: Unlearning Implicit Bias (Global, 2018)
- Colonial Roots of Systemic Inequity in Uganda
- What Lenses Do I Have? (New Zealand, 2016)

PUSHING HARDER vs. COLLECTIVE EFFORT
How do systems actually change? The emerging science of systems change suggests that increasing pressure on one part of a complex system is unlikely to change the system, but a critical mass of people in the system doing things differently will change the system.

EMPATHY WITH STUDENTS
How can we work together to change the systems inhibiting our growth? "Zooming out" to see ourselves as part of and frustrated by the same systemic pressures as our students can be a way to build collective learning and action. How are some students' problematic behaviors and the teacher's frustrations with them actually emerging from the same root cause? How can they take that on together?

INNOVATION
How can we learn and experiment in ways that help us evolve beyond the system we work in? As products of the existing education system, unless we make a conscious effort to experiment we will simply perpetuate what we know and experience.

The point of education is not to escape poverty. The point of education is to end it. But we don't educate in this society. We school. We have built a system of schooling, and schooling is the process by which you institutionalize people to accept their proper station in life. Education is the process by which you teach people that they can fundamentally change society.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade
Founder of Roses in Concrete Community School in the USA. (Quote taken from "Jeff Duncan Andrade The game is rigged (inequity by design)", 2017)

I perceive my responsibility as centered around questioning. The teacher should initially establish a connection and then progressively introduce tension to a bearable level, enabling things to be set into motion.

Nicole Ames
Enseña Perú Alumna

REFLECTION TOOLS

We have developed three different reflection exercises designed to help you (or to help you help others) become more aware of your own perspectives on work as systemic:

- Polarities—What is your perspective and why?
- Benefits and Costs—What value comes from having (and not having) this perspective?
- Enablers and Inhibitors—What conditions (inside you and around you) make shifting toward this lens possible?

Systems Thinking for Collective Leadership

The deep changes necessary to accelerate progress against society's most intractable problems require a unique type of leader—the system leader, a person who catalyzes collective leadership. The entrenched and historic systemic injustices undermining the potential of many children across the world demand we think about leadership development that goes beyond the reach of current existing institutions and their fixed structures. The article "The Dawn of System Leadership" by Senge, Hamilton, and Kania, describes three core capabilities (and a subset of guiding ideas) that foster collective leadership:

- Seeing the larger system (the forest not only the trees), to build "a shared understanding of complex problems."
- Fostering reflection and more generative conversations (through a learner-centered approach, critical mirror exercises) for "building trust where distrust had prevailed and for fostering collective creativity."
- Shifting the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future.

Shifting Lenses Changes the Questions We Ask...

If we see our work as systemic, we come into the classroom **asking different questions**:

- What are the things that make it harder or easier for someone to succeed and where do they come from? What are the root causes of inequity?
- How do we define success? Whose interests does this vision include and exclude?
- Whom do I represent in the system? What biases and assumptions do I bring?

...Which Changes the Actions We Take

Those questions and the mental narrative that comes with them **change our behaviors**. A teacher who sees our work as systemic is more likely:

- To recognize students' misbehavior as expressions of frustration, fear, or trauma responses to challenges around them, and seek their root causes.
- To take time to critically examine the roots of inequity in the community.
- To realize that her own experience has led her to internalize assumptions about her students or herself or her community that she needs to work to "unlearn."

The power of these lenses is that they enable actions, especially these:

LOVE & CONNECT	LISTEN & ENVISION	LEARN & DESIGN	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE	REFLECT & GROW
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BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

SHARE

Make your voice heard: Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people—teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

LENSES GENERAL INPUT

The teachers who led these compelling classrooms differed from most of our teachers on a number of interrelated dimensions, which we call their stance toward teaching: they saw the purpose of what they were doing as less about covering material and more about inducting students into the work of their field; they privileged depth over breadth; they saw students as creators and not simply receivers of knowledge; they saw failure not as something to be avoided but as a necessary part of learning; and they tried to create an atmosphere of rigor and joy rather than compliance.

Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine
From In Search of Deeper Learning (2020)

Reflect at every moment to change the lenses with which we are seeing, and analyze if our gazes are correct. I must have spaces for constant reflection, even more so if we think that the dynamics of communities are changing due to circumstances and context. In that line, all the time we must enter and understand the realities of the community. We must know how important it is to have the student's vision to understand the change they want and what is really important for them.

Ricardo
Bolivia

I adjust the lenses to my own reality. They allow me to look into my daily challenges from a different perspective. This allows me to change my actions.

Juliana Canastra
Alumna of Teach For Portugal

I think that to a large extent I had some ideas or mentalities that are promoted in this space. What has changed is the level of awareness, keeping it present and visible since many times due to the sense of urgency, we overlook our deepest convictions.

Frederick
Panama

The lenses are not something that you have or do not have, they can be adjusted or "cleaned." There are processes that you had to go through to later realize, learn, and grow in a broader or deeper perspective. Not all of the above is bad.

Jaira Alencastre
Enseña Perú

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

I am also very aware of the "spectrums of leadership" that we saw (with the extremes of individual leadership and collective leadership); and I leave with the intention of positioning myself in a more conscious and fluid way from now on.

Jaffid
Chile

Teaching is first and foremost learning, and egocentric as it may sound, the teacher's chief area of study is herself or himself. Only as I discover my own prejudices, face my own fears, give play to my own strengths, and compensate for my deficits rather than denying them can I help my students do the same. It is both the blessing and the curse of teaching that the learning never ends. Every day, I must confront what I am as a teacher and what I hope to be. To do less is to be less of a teacher.

Author Unknown

People say that the teacher is an eternal learner, I learn from him and he learns from me.

Emmanuel Alexandre
Teacher-leader Anseye Pou Ayiti

That I can face my own mistakes from the past to see them as lessons and learnings and not as moments that I must hide so as not to face them. Before, I had never seen the opportunities that I lost when I was a PEP like this and I felt very frustrated because of that, it was something that constantly accompanied me and now I see it differently; it does accompany me but under a different lens.

Andrea
Perú

My mistakes are part of the process, as long as I reflect on them and get a result that allows me to continue moving forward.

Greta
Bolivia

U-School For Transformation by Presencing Institute: https://www.u-school.org/

STUDENT AS LEADERS INPUTS

In the program, we have three mandatory human development conversations across the two-year program: at the start, in the middle, and before they graduate. The human development conversations are spaces for our teacher fellows, not only to raise wellbeing concerns, but at the same time check in on their personal growth and development or personal leadership competencies, such as their self-awareness, their self-management, and their self-regulation skills. I just recently had my third human development conversation with a graduating cohort. So basically that conversation entails us stepping back and looking at their overall growth and development in their plan, in their perspective. That space is for us to really or for me to hear their perspective of how they've grown and changed the most in the fellowship program.

We really anchor our training on three focus areas, namely human development, transformational teaching, and teacher training. For teachers to really start with themselves and to really be able to lead themselves before they can lead their classrooms and then lead their community. We look at it as a ripple effect.

It's really like striking that balance, or having that equilibrium, and learning to manage themselves first before they can manage their students and manage their classrooms. Because from the stories that I heard from their year One, they tend to get overwhelmed easily. They tend to get stressed.

Vina Leonardo
Teach For The Philippines

I used to think I had solutions for my students' crises. But even though we live in the same city, they experience very different crises. I shouldn't walk into my classroom with answers, I should walk in with questions. I am not a superhero, they are. This is where the idea of student leadership comes from. I should walk into the classroom and ask my students, "What is your superpower? What do you want to do with it?" First step is their understanding they do have superpowers.

Sara Kassab
Educational Mentor at Teach For Lebanon

Every single big issue we solved in our country has been solved by young people. The civil rights movement, the peace movement, the LGBT movement, the women's movement–the young have always done it. They can be the change makers. They have the power to do it. We have to face history to make history.

Dolores Huerta
Leader in the Farmworkers' rights movement, U.S.

I think the most important thing has been to highlight the power of communities and students. We do not have nor are we the solution, we only accompany them and encourage them to generate positive change, respecting their roots, customs, and knowledge. At the same time, be receptive, listen and learn from the other.

On the other hand, how do we train our fellows; do we really show them this? How much autonomy do we provoke with our system? What should we focus on more?

Melisa
Chile

COMMUNITY AS POWER

I had this goal that I am going to make my students have more income, take care of their parents, have a stable job, have everything that city people have. I was so young and naive. But then when I went up there, and I talked to villagers and students, I unlearned that this is not what they want. It's not my job to define what they need to be. It's not me who can tell them what they should do.

Pao
Teach For Thailand

My perception of how to interact with communities has changed a lot, the importance of seeing beyond the participants and making the focus stronger on the students and everything that they can strengthen the organization.

Anahí
Bolivia

OUR WORK AS SYSTEMIC

It's this system that was not designed for us, our people were never at the table when it was created, but it still exists and it's all we know. We're trying to redefine that. Our hope is what we do here will unite other communities to do the same.

Kayla Begay
Navajo Nation

This [workbook](#), from The Society for Organizational Learning and the leaders behind Theory U, leads you through a three-part journey of sensing, presencing, and realizing to achieve profound systems change.

This toolkit provides resources to create a plan for action mapping, appreciative inquiry, and more.
 Systems thinking allows individuals and organizations to understand the complex relationships and contexts surrounding social issues in order to best influence and navigate the system. [FSG's Systems Thinking Toolkit](#) features helpful resources to create a plan for action, and to learn and refine as you go.

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet ([here](#)).

STRATEGIES

Five families of actions distinguish classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future.

What are teachers doing differently in classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future?

OVERVIEW
Get started with a map of teacher actions and a toolkit of key resources.

DISCOVER
Virtually explore **transformational classrooms** to find distinguishing strategies.

LEARN
Explore the **five families of actions** in classrooms that grow students as leaders and learn how to develop them as a teacher.

DO
Find actionable guidance for each of the **25 actions** as well as **contextualizable tools** for teachers and coaches.

SHARE
Share and explore incoming **insights, challenges, questions, resources, and research.**

OVERVIEW

Growing students as leaders of a better future calls for more relational, student-led, discovery-oriented teaching and learning.

It turns out, if you are a teacher working to help students improve their lives and their communities' futures, you do things very differently than teachers who are working to raise test scores.

Franco Mosso
Former CEO & Co-founder at Enseña Perú, Alumni from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Fellow from the Salzburg Global Seminar

DISCOVER

Check out compilation of clips from some of the teachers, students, classrooms, schools, and communities that were part of our "global learning loops." What do these classrooms have in common? What key strategies do you see?

[Explore More Transformational Classrooms and Communities]

LEARN

Map of Actions that Grow Students as Leaders
PURPOSE and LENSES enable 25 actions aligned to growing students as leaders of a better future.

LOVE & CONNECT to build culture	LISTEN & ENVISION to co-create purpose	LEARN & DESIGN to plan learning experiences	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE to inspire learning	REFLECT & GROW to fulfill potential
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	BROADEN PERSPECTIVES	BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE	FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY	TAKE CARE OF YOUSELF
FOSTER BELONGING	HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION	PLAN BACKWARDS	MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS	PAUSE & REFLECT
NURTURE CULTURE	PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY	VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP	FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY	FIND & FOSTER ALLIES
KNOW YOURSELF	CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY	EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING	FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE	SEEK FEEDBACK
BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

Key actions for new teachers. Add your own actions.

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied, we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way. We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this Glossary.

SHARE

Share your insights, questions, resources, and challenges related to developing visions of student success.

DO

- Explore the two-page "how- to" guides for each of the 25 actions that are emerging from practitioner insights from all over the world.
- Explore an emerging toolkit, including a prototype reference guide, self-reflection guide, and observation tool for teachers and teacher coaches to help align growing students as leaders of a better future.
- Find links to our latest collection of implications for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers, gathered as people adopt and change Teaching As Collective Leadership for their local vision, values, and context.
- Consider what forms of learning experiences best grow and develop these strategies and actions.

DISCOVER

Virtually visit transformational classrooms

Teaching As Collective Leadership emerged from listening to and observing inspiring educators around the world. Thousands of teachers, coaches, researchers, designers, students, and others joined in the process of drawing out patterns from the practice of these educators. We would like to invite you into this collective learning process.

When you close your eyes and imagine a classroom where students and teachers and families are working together to grow students as leaders of a better future, what comes to mind?

Virtually visit two or three (but not just one) of the transformational classrooms below and consider how they are similar and different. What patterns do you see?

"Ako" means teaching & learning

Kia Aroha is a public secondary school in South Auckland, New Zealand, working with Maori and Pacifica students. As shown in this video from 2015, the school has taken a radically different approach to education, focusing on bilingual, critically conscious, culturally responsive, and social justice-oriented education.

Centering student voice & ownership

Through this video from 2018, visit a classroom in Delhi where Pooja Chopra, a teacher with Teach For India, partnered with students to create their vision and community. As you watch, consider: What are students doing and what do they believe? What is the teacher doing to enable students to be a community of leaders?

Liberatory education

What does a liberatory education look, sound, and feel like? Observe, in this video from 2015, Wisdom Amouzou (Teach For America, Colorado) and his students explore one classroom that helps shed light on these questions.

GLOSSARY

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders of a Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our Glossary.

Culturally sustaining relationships

In this video from 2017, the million-dollar Global Teacher Prize winner Maggie Mac-Donnell puts relationships at the center of her teaching practice

A culture of rigorous questioning

Taylor Delhagen (Teach for America, New York) facilitates debate to develop students' critical thinking. Taylor provides concrete strategies for students to process information and develop their viewpoints.

Reflection Questions

- What are teachers and students doing similarly in these classrooms? How are those methods different from what you see in other classrooms?
- What actions do you infer created the culture, systems, rituals, and lessons that you are seeing?
- How are these classrooms similar and different from what you experienced as a student?

HELP US DISCOVER & ILLUSTRATE

Transformational Teaching Actions. Submit other examples!

LEARN

Five transformational teaching and learning strategies

When thousands of students, teachers, teacher coaches, community members, and researchers virtually visited and compared classrooms where students seem to be growing as leaders, they saw patterns in the actions teachers take in those classrooms.

Those studies suggest that five families of actions (which we are calling "strategies") distinguish transformational classrooms:

LOVE & CONNECT to build culture	LISTEN & ENVISION to co-create purpose	LEARN & DESIGN to plan learning experiences	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE to inspire learning	REFLECT & GROW to fulfill potential
Caring and authentic relationships foster the trust, understanding, and honesty necessary for my students, their families, my colleagues, and me to work together toward meaningful aims.	Perfecting current ways of learning and teaching will not fulfill my students' potential as leaders of a better future, so we collectively question and reimagine the purpose of our classroom, building sustainable coalitions for change.	Careful planning ensures that learning experiences align with our vision of students as leaders, students' needs, and how students best learn.	Our classroom creates opportunities for students (and the teacher) to joyfully and productively struggle with rigorous challenges and content at the frontiers of our knowledge and abilities.	Learning is a lifelong journey fueled by humility and curiosity, as we improve our knowledge and skills and grow our capacity for understanding ourselves, each other, and the world.

Under each of these five strategies, you will find five specific ACTIONS (for a total of 25 actions) often found in classrooms growing student leadership.* But before we double-click on each of these general strategies, let's take a moment to consider these five big ideas.

In the following few pages, you can explore each of these **five general strategies**, and find links to how-to guides for each of the five concrete actions aligned to each of those strategies.

As you explore that full map of TACL teacher actions, please keep in mind:

- **No single classroom in our collective studies embodied all these actions.** This map of actions is a *conglomerate* of strong classrooms and is a tool for reflecting on strengths and areas for growth, not a prescription for success.
- **These globally informed patterns need locally rooted contextualization.** Unlike many classroom excellence models, this framework not only asks "Is this teacher exemplifying this action in the classroom?" but asks "How is this teacher exemplifying and customizing this action with their students?"
- **The first two actions in each column teachers have identified as "most foundational."** If you're looking for a place to start or you're a new teacher, start with those.

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*This is an initial list of actions that have been found in classrooms growing student leadership, but it isn't a final list. Our aim for this list is to grow and evolve; you can contribute to this process by adding your own actions to our Co-Learning Padlet.

INTRODUCTION TO
LOVE & CONNECT TO BUILD CULTURE

Caring and authentic relationships cultivate the trust, understanding, and honesty necessary for students, their families, and teachers to work together toward meaningful aims.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
We take time to nurture authentic connections with and among all (including marginalized) students, families, colleagues, and others.

FOSTER BELONGING
We co-create with students an environment in which their identities, experiences, communities, and cultures are welcome and celebrated.

NURTURE CULTURE
We co-create and promote inclusive and welcoming norms, values, and expectations that encourage students to lead their own learning and support each other's growth.

KNOW YOURSELF
We build awareness of our own perspectives, biases, socialized oppressions, motivations, traits, and strengths as a foundation for connecting with others.

BE HUMAN
We model vulnerability, honesty, and humility as co-learners on a shared journey with our students.

[Jump to the whole set of "Love and Connect" actions]

Connection and love are the starting and ongoing check points in any education practice that dreams of being transformational. Why this is minimized by researchers, policy makers, publishers, education faculties, etc., is at best (I assume) based upon their discomfort in centering, naming, and validating such "soft" skills that evade standard measuring techniques designed for much less nuanced and complex data. Even the labeling of these relationship–building skills such as empathy and communication as "soft skills" and their associated value in the paid market place, only reflects how patriarchy constantly invades our language and value system. The most important lesson I have learned in the classroom is that love, which I will define as a deep caring and emotional investment from you towards your students to be masters of their own destiny, is the enduring rock that any decent education system stands upon.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

In a collaboration with Jim Collins, best-selling author of *Good to Great*, Teach For America studied "matched pairs" of teachers in the U.S. While both teachers in each pair attended the same training, were getting the same coaching support, and taught the same subjects in the same school, one of the teachers in each pair was leading students to dramatic academic progress and the other teacher was not. In this study, both teachers were interviewed, surveyed, and tested extensively to try to identify what differences between the teachers in each pair could account for those differences in student outcomes.

Among hundreds of data points, what most predicted student growth was not the teacher's coach or training curriculum. One of the data points most predictive of student success was how strongly the teacher agreed with this statement:

The students in my classroom are people that I would like my own children to get to know.

That small finding in that small study is representative of a massive theme in our crowd-sourced studies of strong classrooms: **Love and connection matter. Relationships, belonging, and trust are not nice-to-have additions to a good classroom; they are the foundation of great classrooms.**

Additional Research & Resources
- The Marshmallow Test Revisited.
- Transforming Teaching Through Understanding Trauma
- Dr. Pamela Cantor on the impact of stress on brain development.

INTRODUCTION TO
LISTEN & ENVISION TO CO-CREATE PURPOSE

Perfecting current ways of learning and teaching will not fulfill students' potential as leaders of a better future, so we collectively question and reimagine the purpose of our classroom, building sustainable coalitions for change.

When I first made my vision for my students, I didn't take into account the needs of the community. I didn't think about the things that the community already had. And so I had to do it all over again. . . . What I did was I talked with each of my students and their families. And listened, just listened a lot. I think that was the first step.

Miguel Ñique
Educator and social communicator. Specialist in designing learning ecosystems and a competency-based approach. Currently leading Training at Enseña Perú

Our families get to sit and reflect and think about what are your hopes and dreams for your child's education. And many families say "I have never been asked that before. I have never been asked by a teacher, a school leader, or a school about what my hopes and dreams are for my child. Thank you for giving me that opportunity, because it makes me step back and think about what all this is for, and what can education really do for my family and my child?

Veronica Palmer
Co-founder of RISE Colorado and Teach For America Alumna

GLOSSARY

Contextualized Vision: A locally informed, collectively evolved picture of what education is aiming for.

Explore more about this concept in our **Glossary.**

BROADEN PERSPECTIVES
We seek insights and wisdom from multiple perspectives in diverse contexts to grow a collective sense of possibility.

HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION
We hold space for authentic dialogue and discussion, by being fully present, listening deeply, and exhibiting curiosity over judgment.

PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY
We connect and collaborate with students' families and others in the community, engaging them in classroom purpose and practices.

CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY
We explore the systemic roots of inequality, listening closely to those with lived experiences of inequity and seeking to understand the assets of the community.

COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS
We listen and contribute to conversations among students, families, and educators about the purpose of education.

[Jump to the whole set of "Listen and Envision" actions]

In the first chapter of this guide, we explored the ways that PURPOSE is showing up in our collective studies of transformational classrooms. The teachers we have studied are questioning education's purpose (the WHY), and are asking who should define that purpose and who has historically done so (the WHO).

This classroom strategy, LISTEN & ENVISION, maps five concrete actions teachers can use to collectively develop and align actions to a clear vision of students' success.

Virtually visit communities and classrooms around the world, hearing from educators, families, and students about the power of asking WHY. Explore the power of **contextualized visions** of student success to inform classroom practices.

Tools for Aligning Actions to Vision
- Aligning actions with purpose.
- Daily implications of vision.
- Self-diagnosis on vision.

Additional Research & Resources
- Reimagining Education is a participatory process through which adolescents and young people with different trajectories and educational profiles, from all over Uruguay, create proposals to reimagine secondary education. (In Spanish)
- Core Insights: Locally Rooted and Globally Informed Visions of Student Success.
- Detailed Insights: A Collectively Developed Vision of Student Success.

INTRODUCTION TO
LEARN & DESIGN TO PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Most of the work of strong teaching happens before and after classroom lessons. Careful planning ensures that learning experiences align with our vision, meet the needs of all students, and align with how we best learn.

BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE
We develop expertise on the subjects we are teaching, in content pedagogy, and in child development.

PLAN BACKWARDS
We design and sequence lesson and unit plans with "the end in mind," ensuring that teacher and student efforts lead to classroom vision and goals.

VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP
We seek to understand our students' strengths, interests, experiences, and ways of learning to inform plans to maximize student growth and ownership of learning.

EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING
We design lessons that are built from students' understanding and application of new ideas to analysis, evaluation, and creation.

LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY
Intentionally chooses and metacognitively teaches learning principles to design experiences that accelerate student growth.

[Jump to the whole set of "Learn and Design" actions]

The transformational teachers studied in the Global Learning Lab's **"learning loops"** have described what we see in the classroom as the tip of the iceberg. Most of what we are seeing in those classrooms is the result of thoughtful preparation and planning, even if we're making adjustments as we implement those plans.

The LEARN & DESIGN strategy attempts to capture the most important actions surfacing in those studies of transformational classrooms and teachers, but perhaps the most important insight is that the preparation and planning of great teachers are too often undervalued.

In the words of the sixteenth U.S. president, Abraham Lincoln, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, I will spend the first four sharpening the ax."

Additional Research & Resources
- Planning and Reflecting with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.
- Deepening Learning with Understanding by Design.

GLOSSARY

Learning Loop: "Global Learning Loops" is what we have called the mini courses we host in which people from around the world virtually visit classrooms in different countries and share what they think we can learn from them. The Global Learning Lab has also worked with many partner organizations to host their "learning loops," where staff come together to learn from their strongest classrooms.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Being teachers during the pandemic challenged us to rethink how our students were learning. Despite being in different schools, we decided to plan learning experiences together, with one big idea in mind: putting the student at the center without neglecting pedagogical rigor.

With Leslie, a fellow that was placed in the same region, we learned the importance of proper planning, including what we called pre-planning, to design transformative learning experiences. Before starting the design process, we would analyze the context of our students, the resources they had access to, their interests, their relationship with their families, and their needs.

By taking all these factors into account, we were able to create meaningful and relevant learning experiences that catered to our students' unique circumstances. The collaboration and pre-planning allowed us to adapt our teaching methods and ensure that our students continued to receive a quality education, even in challenging times.

Alexandra Vassallo
Alumna of Enseña Perú

A teacher "teaches" so that the student needs him/her less with each lesson.

Mikaela Valenzuela
Student Leadership Program Participant at Enseña Perú

INTRODUCTION TO
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE TO INSPIRE LEARNING

Our classroom creates opportunities for students (and the teacher) to joyfully and productively struggle with rigorous challenges and content at the frontiers of our knowledge and abilities.

One of the most obvious distinguishing characteristics of transformational classrooms I visit around the world is that students are enjoying working together on difficult content. The work is hard. And the work is fun. Sometimes that learning is led by the teacher, sometimes by students—but in every case, students are enjoying wrestling with rigorous knowledge and skills. And I am always struck by how much the teacher is enjoying teaching with that aim.

Wendy Kopp
Co-founder and CEO of Teach For All

One thing was clear: To give our kids the kind of education they deserved, we had to first agree that rigor mattered most of all. That school existed to help kids learn to think. To work hard. And yes, to fail. That was the core consensus that made everything else possible.

Amanda Ripley
American journalist and author (Quote taken from *The Smartest Kids in the World: And How They Got That Way,* 2013

FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY
We communicate clearly, listen actively, and question strategically to build collective learning.

MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS
We co-create and uphold rituals and systems that minimize inefficient distractions and maximize productive engagement.

FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY
We create the conditions for collective student-led exploration by sharing responsibility and de-centering ourselves from the learning process.

FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE
We respond and adjust to students' needs while staying true to lesson objectives and purposes.

MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS
We check for learning during and after lessons, highlighting and celebrating progress while diagnosing root causes of learning challenges.

[Jump to the whole set of "Facilitate and Challenge" actions]

Robust, rigorous meaningful learning rarely happens when students are passively listening to or watching a teacher. (The same is true for adult learners. Passive listening is weak learning.)

If we are aspiring to grow students as leaders, and if we care about growing a broader set of student leadership outcomes, then classrooms must be built around active, collective, discovery-oriented learning. Students, not teachers, must "carry the weight" of the learning. Of course, knowledge, modeling, provocations, and resources come from the teacher, but in transformational classrooms, we see that the ratio of teacher-to-student ownership of learning time flips from the traditional model where the teacher talks a lot and then the student practices a little. In transformational classrooms, the teacher is the catalyst, the "space holder" and the facilitator of students' exploratory engagement with rigorous content.

Many of us were taught with an "I do, we do, you do" type classroom model. Many of us, as new teachers, were taught similar lesson-planning models. The truth is, that the conventional way of planning lessons is simpler and easier for new teachers, but it has enormous costs in the long run. Facilitating more active, discovery-based learning is much more engaging, enjoyable, and effective as a path to meaningful mastery through (not at the expense of) wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

Additional Research & Resources
- Research-Backed Strategies for Better Classroom Management.
- Student Motivation: Why Autonomy Matters.

INTRODUCTION TO
REFLECT & GROW TO FULFILL POTENTIAL

Learning is a lifelong journey fueled by humility and curiosity, as we improve our knowledge and skills and grow our capacity for understanding ourselves, each other, and the world.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
We commit to a sustainable plan of daily practices that support our wellbeing and growth.

PAUSE & REFLECT
We commit to a regular practice of pausing to process how our work is going.

FIND & FOSTER ALLIES
We seek and nurture relationships and networks that support and stretch us.

SEEK FEEDBACK
We welcome diverse sources of feedback and data from which to learn and co-create a culture in which students are doing the same.

LEARN & UNLEARN
We set aside time to develop our knowledge and skills, and to shift ways of being and perspectives that may be inhibiting growth.

[Jump to the whole set of "Reflect and Grow" actions]

One of the distinguishing characteristics of transformational teachers emerging from our "global learning loops" is that they identify as **learners**. As explored in the "Lenses" section of this model, we often hear the strongest teachers in the Teach For All network say something like "I hope my students are learning as much as I am."

Teachers who are growing students as leaders of a better future see themselves as lifelong learners who respond to challenges with curiosity, humility, and creativity. These teachers embrace this identity as learners intentionally, employing daily practices to fuel their growth.

Additional Research & Resources
- Cambridge Assessment International Education's guide to reflective practice.
- Treating Reflection as a Habit, Not an Event.
- *Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better* by Doug Lemov, Erica Woolway, and Katie Yezzi.

In this "go-go-go" world, where it feels as if everything is urgent, and we don't have a chance to slow down, this capacity to pause for a moment so we can reflect and grow is more important than ever. What the world needs from leaders today are those who can focus on the important not just the urgent, those who recognize that who we are is just as important as what we are doing, those who can frame challenges not as failures but as opportunities to learn and grow, those who have the humility and self-compassion to ask questions and reach out for support, and those who are both willing to learn new things and unlearn limiting beliefs that don't serve what they're up to in the world. This spaciousness is what we need to be able to live into our full creativity and reimagine education systems so that they create opportunities for ALL children.

Radha Ruparell
Head of Global Leadership Accelerator, Teach For All

Teaching As Leadership vs. Teaching As Collective Leadership

Teach For All's "global learning loops" are showing actionable similarities in classrooms all around the world where students are growing as leaders of a better future. And these classrooms are quite different from classrooms designed to close achievement gaps (as measured by standardized tests). They are more relational, more student-centered, more discovery-oriented, and more collaborative. In so many ways, these classrooms are welcoming, fulfilling, and joyful spaces for learning.

Teaching As Leadership (the book and rubric) has been used by many partners in the Teach For All network. That is a map of teacher actions that lead to dramatic academic achievement. Teaching As Collective Leadership is, however, a collectively developed map of what teacher and student actions, perspectives, and ways of being are growing students as leaders of a better future. *For a side-by-side comparison of the two models, check out this* one-pager.

Critical reflection is the process by which adults identify the assumptions governing their actions, locate the historical and cultural origins of the assumptions, question the meaning of assumptions, and develop alternative ways of acting (Cranton, 1996). Brookfield (1995, 2004) added that part of the critically reflective process is to challenge the prevailing social, political, cultural, or professional ways of acting. Through the process of critical reflection, adults come to interpret and create new knowledge and actions from their ordinary and sometimes extraordinary experiences. Critical reflection blends learning through experiences with theoretical and technical learning to form new knowledge constructions and new behaviors or insights.

Hibajene M. Shandomo
Associate Professor, Buffalo State College. (Quote taken from The Role of Critical Reflection in Teacher Education. Cited with permission)

DO

To support teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers, we have created two-pager how-to guides for each of the actions, prototyped tools, and gathered insights into how we can best develop these actions in ourselves and others. We are also beginning to collect ways practitioners and programs are contextualizing these strategies and actions for their local vision, values, and context.

Two-pagers of moves & guidance for each of the 25 actions

Explore how-to guides organized by the five strategies. Links to guidance for each action are in the table below.

Map of actions

LOVE & CONNECT to build culture	LISTEN & ENVISION to co-create purpose	LEARN & DESIGN to plan learning experiences	FACILITATE & CHALLENGE to inspire learning	REFLECT & GROW to fulfill potential
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	BROADEN PERSPECTIVES	BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE	FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY	TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
FOSTER BELONGING	HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION	PLAN BACKWARDS	MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS	PAUSE & REFLECT
NURTURE CULTURE	PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY	VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP	FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY	FIND & FOSTER ALLIES
KNOW YOURSELF	CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY	EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING	FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE	SEEK FEEDBACK
BE HUMAN	COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS	LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY	MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS	LEARN & UNLEARN

Remember: This map of actions is not a recipe or formula. It is a menu from which to choose and contextualize actions called for by you and your students' contexts and needs.

What two or three of these actions represent a real strength of yours, or of a teacher you are supporting? And how can you better leverage those strengths for student learning? What one or two of these actions represents an area you or teachers you support want and need to improve to accelerate student learning?

Inviting and gathering innovative teacher development tools

To jump–start the creation of a library of resources and tools, we have been working with some early–adopter partner organizations as well as beta-tester teachers and teacher coaches to experiment with various tools and resources. Here are some prototype tools and resources to spark innovations:

For teachers
TACL SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

For teacher coaches
TACL OBSERVATION TOOL

For everyone
TACL REFERENCE GUIDE

A toolkit of other resources

PURPOSE
- Implications of Purpose for Daily Actions
- Implications of Motivation for Daily Actions

LENSES

- [Reflection Exercises for Lenses](#)
- [Polarities](#)
- [Benefits & Costs](#)
- [Enablers & Inhibitors](#)

STRATEGIES

- [Self-Reflection Tool](#)
- [Observation Tool](#)
- [TACL Reference Guide](#)

OUTCOMES

- [Assessment Library](#) of tools for measuring student leadership outcomes

Learning theory, again: Guidance for developing these skills and actions in ourselves and others

In the LENSES chapter, we explored how learning theory is a critical element of figuring out what to "do" with the lenses. Similarly, the value of these strategies and actions depends heavily on our ability to develop and grow them in ourselves and others.

Building skills does not happen the same way shifting lenses does. We cannot "reflect" our way to great lesson planning, or checking for understanding, or classroom management. Therefore, we need to make intentional decisions on the most effective forms of training and support that help teachers develop these skills.

While it is a bit of an oversimplification, it's helpful to note (as we did in the LENSES chapter) that skills and actions are often (but not exclusively) developed by watching someone model the skills and practicing the skills. By contrast, lenses most often shift when we have disorienting experiences or relationships and have the opportunity to reflect and make new meanings of those experiences and relationships.

And, as crudely illustrated in the (oversimplified!) visual to below, shifting lenses and growing skills can be part of a powerful, interrelated cycle of development. What we do (experience) gives us fodder for reflection, which yields new learning and knowledge that we can then practice to create new experiences.
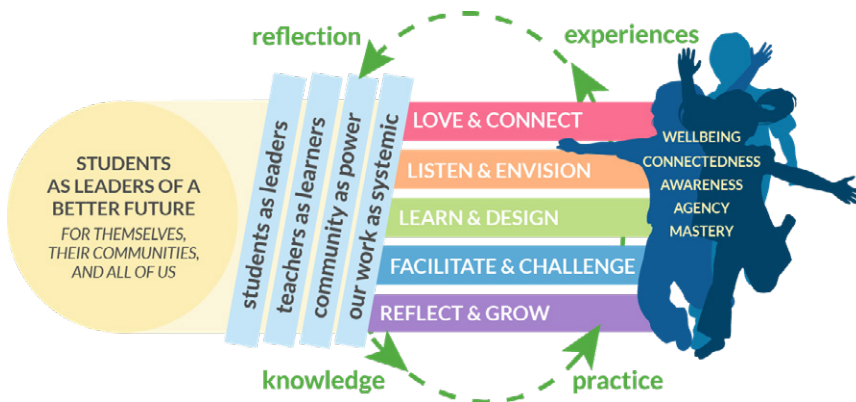
So how do we create learning experiences that promote that cycle of learning and improvement? Check out our Learning About Learning.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people – teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board," which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

STRATEGIES GENERAL INPUT

It turns out, if you are a teacher working to help students improve their lives and their communities' futures, you do things very differently than teachers who are working to raise test scores.

Franco Mosso
Enseña Perú

Contribute to our "Strategies" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

LOVE AND CONNECT

"There was lots of resistance at first with students communicating their needs. But I stayed with them, giving them tips, building trust and being open, and this has helped students gain confidence, and slowly but surely have become leaders. Some of the best discussions have been ideas proposed by students, it has been a very humbling experience. I have learned how to approach students from a different viewpoint. It's the students taking charge of the topics."

Teacher
(Global Teacher and Teacher Coach Study, 2022)

A recent study of over 25,000 students in the U.S. found that less than a third of middle-school students said they had strong relationships with their teachers. By high school, only 16 percent reported they had those relationships. And, for children in low-income communities, those numbers are even lower.

Eugene Roehlkepartain, Kent Pekel, Amy Syvertsen, Jenna Sethi, Theresa Sullivan, and Peter Scales
Relationships First: Creating Connections That Help Young People Thrive. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. 2017

One of my first graders lost his mom two years ago, as did I. On Wednesday, he gave me a handwritten card saying both of our moms are angels together. Through tears, I tell him I'm having trouble reading it. He says to me, "Just sound it out."

Michelle Dbelle
Taken from Twitter

"Don't be an asshole." All good teachers I meet fit this. Have we created a system that assholes like but non-assholes run from? "Don't be an asshole; be super curious."

Brent Maddin
Co-founder and Provost at the Relay Graduate School of Education

Contribute to our "Love and Connect" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

LISTEN AND ENVISION

Vision-aligned work calls us to look outward to have a systemic perspective on our work, seeing the complex histories and contexts in which we are working. And it requires us to look inward at the ways in which we are behaving, and the ways our own perspective and mindset might be replicating, or transforming, the systems in which we work. We see this type of vision-aligned approach as an essential ingredient in our aim to achieve our goals as a network.

Anonymous

Sometimes our job is just to turn up and be there, to be present, to listen. These moments are becoming more and more precious. Create a sense that you are not in this. Protect fellows and their time. This can be in tension with the idea of urgency, setting projects.

How are we showing up to a conversation? What can we do as organizations to make this a part of our culture?

Ulf Matysiak
EO Teach First Deutschland (Germany)

(NEPAL, Unicef) TELE LEARNING Program between moms and kids, improving literacy and relationships.

https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/tele-sikai-learning-new-reality

Swastika Shrestha, Community at the Centre of Movement Building in Nepal

https://vimeo.com/290068114

When you arrive in a community for the first time and you really want to generate systemic change that impacts at all levels, you have to start by attending the spaces that already exist. Don't create your own spaces. That's on the one hand. And on the other: When you design these spaces, not every space must have an agenda. I think that's a big mistake we make. Not all spaces have to have a detailed agenda with a clear goal and action plan. A lot of times, when arriving to a community, we have some spaces where we can listen to each other in an authentic way and where we can create these safe spaces that allow us to talk about our most intrinsic motivations. That's a great start.

Leidy Cabrera
Mexico

We center our core purpose around an ambitious and contextually relevant student vision. From this vision comes everything — our organizational goals, priorities, and strategy. We didn't create this vision from within the walls of our office. Instead, we engaged our fellows, teachers, students, parents, and community members from 85 of our partner communities. We know that the only way to facilitate real change in public education is by empowering the voices of the communities we serve, and ensuring that they are at the forefront of creating this change.

Larisa Hovannisian
Founder and CEO of Teach For Armenia

Contribute to our "Listen and Envision" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

LEARN AND DESIGN

"When you plan a lesson, you start with the information you want students to know by its end. As a next step, consider what the key question for that lesson might be and how you can frame that question so it will have the right level of difficulty to engage your students and so you will respect your students' cognitive limitations."

Daniel Willingham
Psychologist

Perspective taking vs. the one right answer
Debating things that are introduced (like moral stories) instead of being a "specific" takeaway; allowing for perspectives of the students' discussion and debate.

Nalika

Vertical Learning
Almost as if the teacher works smarter (and less) while the students are more engaged than ever! Also reminds me of Pooja's class!

Maggie MacDonnell

Contribute to our "Learn and Design" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

FACILITATE AND CHALLENGE

Movement Breaks
At any time, if you notice you are losing the class, take a movement break or an outside break. I would sometimes stop mid-lesson to take everyone outside for an impromptu game of street hockey or lie on the ground and sketch some clouds. It often helped to bring back the sense of team, increase mood, and process/ release any negative emotions that may have been building or that kids were carrying in with them.

Maggie MacDonnell

The One Thing All Great Teachers Do
Dr. Nick Fuhrman encourages us to recognize the profound personal impact that we can have on others — both in and out of the classroom.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwTpfVQgkUo

Regulation Stations
In my context where there were behavior issues and lots of "dysregulation" that often disrupted the classroom, what helped a lot was having "stations"/routines to help students independently calm down. This may be a journal for those who want to write privately, or a bean bag in a corner with some comic books, or a listening/headphone music corner, or even a basket with some quick snacks in it. When students arrived (mine often arrived late) they would choose a station and take like 10 minutes to independently relax then join the larger group.

Maggie MacDonnell

Contribute to our "Facilitate and Challenge" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

REFLECT AND GROW

The surgeon, writer, and public health researcher Dr. Atul Gawande has studied the pursuit of excellence across and beyond the medical field. One of his realizations: "If you want to get great at something, get a coach." Dr. Gawande has learned that a coach is key to several powerful levers of learning: providing a more accurate picture of our reality, instilling positive habits of thinking and breaking our actions down and building them back up again.

Anonymous

In designing learning, there's a delicate dance between meeting students where they are and opening up new horizons. A process of deepening and broadening understanding. In order to open up new thinking, think carefully about factors like what background knowledge might be needed and what developmental assumptions you might be making.

Jude Heaton
Teach For All

Two Feet, One Breath
I learned from a friend who is a very busy doctor about this practice of stopping at the doorway, settling both feet and taking one big intentional deep breath. I find that little pause does so much to clear and calm my mind as I move quickly from one challenge to another.

Radha Ruparell

Contribute to our "Reflect and Grow" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet (here)

INTRODUCTION TO
LOVE & CONNECT TO BUILD CULTURE

Caring and authentic relationships foster the trust, understanding, and honesty necessary for students, their families, and teachers to work together toward meaningful aims.

"HOW–TO" GUIDES

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
We take time to nurture authentic connections with and among all (including marginalized) students, families, colleagues, and others.

FOSTER BELONGING
We co-create with students an environment in which their identities, experiences, communities, and cultures are welcome and celebrated.

NURTURE CULTURE
We co-create and foster inclusive and welcoming norms, values, and expectations that encourage students to lead their own learning and support each other's growth.

KNOW YOURSELF
We build awareness of our own perspectives, biases, socialized oppressions, motivations, traits, and strengths as a foundation for connecting with others.

BE HUMAN
We model vulnerability, honesty, and humility as co-learners on a shared journey with our students.

Connection and love are the starting and ongoing checkpoints in any education practice that dreams of being transformational. Why this is minimized by researchers, policymakers, publishers, education faculties, etc., is at best (I assume) based upon their discomfort in centering, naming, and validating such "soft" skills that evade standard measuring techniques designed for much less nuanced and complex data. Even the labeling of these relationship-building skills such as empathy and communication as "soft skills" and their associated value in the paid marketplace, only reflects how patriarchy constantly invades our language and value system. The most important lesson I have learned in the classroom is that love, which I will define as a deeply caring and emotional investment from you towards your students to be masters of their own destiny, is the enduring rock that any decent education system stands upon.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

In collaboration with Jim Collins, best-selling author of *Good to Great*, Teach For America studied "matched pairs" of teachers in the U.S. While both teachers in each pair attended the same training, were getting the same coaching support, and taught the same subjects in the same school, one of the teachers in each pair was leading students to dramatic academic progress and the other teacher was not. In this study, both teachers were interviewed, surveyed, and tested extensively to try to identify what differences between the teachers in each pair could account for those differences in student outcomes.

Among hundreds of data points, what most predicted student growth was not the teacher's coach or training curriculum. One of the data points that were most predictive of student success was how strongly the teacher agreed with this statement: *The students in my classroom are people that I would like my own children to get to know.*

That small finding in that small study is representative of a massive theme in our crowd-sourced studies of strong classrooms: Love & Connection matter. Relationships, belonging, and trust are not nice-to-have additions to a good classroom; they are the foundation of great classrooms.

Additional Research & Resources
- The Marshmallow Test Revisited.
- Transforming Teaching Through Understanding Trauma
- Dr. Pamela Cantor on the impact of stress on brain development.

HOW TO
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Listen. Ask questions. Be yourself. Be vulnerable. Stay close. Building relationships in and around classrooms is no different from building relationships in other areas of our lives. When we are fully present with and for other people, meaningful relationships emerge. Relationships are not a means to an end; building relationships is the work.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
We take time to nurture authentic connections with and among all students, families, colleagues, and others.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Building Relationships

Contribute your own techniques for **building relationships** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

Beyond "How Are You?"

Build on previous knowledge about a student each time you interact with them. Don't say "How are you?" but instead "How is your parents' restaurant doing?" or "Last time we spoke you were tired. Did you get more rest?"

Oindrila Sanyal
Currently working at Teach For India towards fostering relationships with external organizations, fellows, and alumni anchored in strategic partnership

Daily Bridge Builders

Start each class with a five-minute connector that goes beyond "breaking the ice." Share something your class doesn't know about you. Invite a student to do the same with the class. Then have pairs do the same. Every day.

Jean Arkedis
Head of research at Teach For All and has taught in a bilingual school in the Dominican Republic

Be Close, Be Reliable

Figure out where your students congregate before, during, and after school, and make a point to be in that space once a day. Playground before school? Lunchroom? Sports after school? Pick one and be there each day.

Nene Ibezim
Social entrepreneur and a project officer at Global Schools, UN SDSN

We try and humble and ground ourselves. The two words that come out of my mouth the most often — whether that's to my team or to my fellows — are vision and relationships. Because I think we're very clear that if we're going to invest anywhere, yes, of course, strategy is important, management is important ... plans are important ... reflecting on data is important, but above all else, I think is vision and relationships—and we lead with those.

Khadija Shahper Bakhtiar
CEO & Founder, Teach For Pakistan

Other Sources

- Zero prep team building in the classroom "Would you rather ask questions?"
- Community Circles to engage with all students.

Relationship Mapping

I almost always worked with kids who did NOT want to be at school. They were often not interested in having a direct connection with me at all. I was a cultural outsider and associated with a school system that had a genocidal history in their context. Without being able to directly connect with them, I would mentally map out all the connections this kid might have. This could be parents, caregivers, grandparents, best friends, favorite cousin, favorite auntie, siblings, neighbor, a teammate, a coach—really any person of influence. In that mind map, I would also identify any bullies or challenging connections that they may also be dealing with. Then I would, with intent, begin to find ways to build relationships with whomever I could in their "circle" to eventually connect to that youth. I might begin by helping the grandmother carry groceries at the store, and then six weeks later finally get a connection to the kid and they are convinced to return to school.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Just Ask

Just ask what students like and listen. Sit down with them and interview them about what's happening in their lives. That builds relationships.

Anonymous

From the student perspective, I feel very protected when a teacher knows what is happening in my life. Often times teachers will ask about your home life but rarely does it influence how they treat you as a student. Teachers should try to get to know us and then let that inform our learning rather than use ice breakers just to feel acquainted. I believe knowing more about your students can help you better understand how they will respond to learning and allow the students to feel that their learning is important to you.

Ava Ward
Ava Ward is a Teach For All SLAC alumni and a current student at the University of Washington studying health sciences and biology

For my first three weeks, I just tried to learn from my students, to learn what they are like and what they like. I spent my first weekend up in the mountains where my students live, in their village. I slept there. I went to the farms. I met and talked to parents and community leaders about what students want and need. What are their dreams? I rented a house in the middle of the village, and I exercise every day by playing football with the community. I spent three weeks connecting, without focusing on teaching the content, but then my students knew me and I knew them. And now, it's more like we are doing this together...I don't think about my own wants and the community's wants and students' wants. Instead, we are doing this together.

Nopardol Boosatorn (Pao)
Alumnus Teach For Thailand (2018), where he learned that through collective vision and collective actions that enable everyone to be leaders, we can together achieve our goals

What Does Building Relationships Look Like?

Earning trust

Working to empower young people requires building relationships with them first. Explore how youth worker Susie Gray (TeachFirst, UK) has learned over time how to build relationships with vulnerable young people in this video from 2013.

Growing a learning community

In this video from 2015, Pooja Chopra (Teach For India) prioritized building relationships with students and their families with remarkable results.

Acknowledge trauma

In profoundly difficult circumstances but surrounded with loving relationships, Syrian refugee children Ahmad and Manal are not only coping but thriving.

The power of relationships in schools

Research shows that students who feel safe and supported by adults at school are better able to learn. Explore the power of relationships in schools in this collaboration between Turnaround for Children and Edutopia.

Other Places to See Building Relationships

- Isaac Pollack's (Teach For America) experience of building relationships as a foundation for rigorously engaging content (Video from 2013).
- Teach For Thailand "Selecting in Partnership With Community" project.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Building Relationships

- The 'How' of Building Relationships With Students, from Edutopia.
- Relationships First: Creating Connections That Help Young People Thrive. Research from the MN Search Institute (2017).

HOW TO
FOSTER BELONGING

Know, explore, and celebrate the identities that are important to students, especially those who are marginalized by the world around them. Create space to understand and appreciate the cultures and communities of students in school. Make your classroom a safe space for everyone, especially those who are different.

FOSTER BELONGING
We co-create with students an environment in which their identities, experiences, communities, and cultures are welcome and celebrated.

Contribute your own techniques for **fostering belonging** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

When I was given a safe space, I started working on what I believed in.

Rehan Shaikh
Student Leader, India
Quote taken from "Rehan: Student Leadership in Action" (2019)

Within the classroom itself, the learners have adopted a new collaborative behavior. They begin to see fellow learners as brothers and sisters.

Fenel Pierre
Training Director at Anseye Pou Ayiti (Teach for Haiti, 2013 up to now) and with experience working in strategic planning, and leadership development at the country management level

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Fostering Belonging

Invite Cultural Leaders to Class

I worked in an Indigenous community where colonial systems have rarely valued local knowledge in the same way as "settler knowledge." To try to counter this, I would invite elders/ community members who carried influence to come to the class to share stories, make traditional food recipes with us, sew with us, sing with us, basically anything they wanted to share.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Share Struggles

To reverse the shyness and fear of being wrong, openly talk about struggles, highlights, and funny stories that help build a connection with students so they're comfortable sharing what they feel.

Felicia Yoon
Co-founder of Arus Academy. Arus Academy provides meaningful education to vulnerable and underprivileged students in Malaysia.

Circle Time

Host a daily ritual of open space for sharing and practicing deep listening. For any age and any subject, circle time can be a foundation for building community.

Multiple Contributors

Personalized Walls

Let students see themselves in the classroom. Bring the walls alive with student artwork and photos. Include diverse images of success, so students see themselves, and people like them, in the physical environment.

Multiple Contributors

Maslow Before Bloom

Belonging is a fundamental human need; we need to consider people's need for safety, security, and community before we can push them to meet rigorous academics. Start the year and each class with strategies that get to know students and build community.

Multiple Contributors

Other Sources:

- Fostering belonging with classroom norms.
- Fostering belonging with music.
- Storytelling in the classroom.
- Shine a light on each student.

Identity, awareness, & agency via loving & connecting in the classroom

Award-winning teacher (and friend and collaborator of Teach For Romania) Anca Mezei shares her story of overcoming the discrimination that she faced as a Romani child and how this motivated her to work with her students and their families to reclaim pride in their identity and culture. Her journey and story are a powerful illustration of the interconnectedness among academic mastery, student leadership, and core issues of identity, wellbeing, awareness, and agency.

What Does Fostering Belonging Look Like?

Feeling like you don't belong

In discussions about education, student perspectives are rarely heard. Watch this short video from 2013 of Curtis, a young man growing up in Nottingham, England, to hear what he thinks about respect, relationships, and how feeling like he doesn't belong influences his perspectives about school and learning.

Creating belonging in the face of prejudice

When Samia Habli (Teach For Lebanon) started teaching in Sarafand she knew from personal experience that gender inequities both inside and outside of school affect many young people in Lebanon. Samia decided to create spaces, inside and outside of class, to explore the gender dynamics that affected their lives. These spaces provided opportunities for her students to develop the awareness and agency they needed to create change within themselves, their relationships, and the broader society.

We need to change the agreement that good teaching and learning evolve from a model that distances teachers from students, separates teaching from learning, alienates students from what is to be learned, and focuses on noncollaborative monodisciplinarity.

Laura Rendón

Student advocate, scholar, contemplative education, and author of *Sentipensante Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice, and Liberation.* (Photograph taken by Al Rendón)

GLOSSARY

Mastery: We settled on the word "mastery" to describe the meaningfully rigorous learning needed to prepare students for leadership in the future. The term signals a focus on deeper learning, surpassing many current education models and systems.

Agency: By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

I remember getting in trouble when I was invited to a birthday party of a kid in my class. They were from the Dominican Republic, and my family is also from there. My school principal said I was crossing a line by engaging with the family outside of school time. I tried to explain that culturally speaking, being present at these things is really important, that the family wants you there, and it will build trust. But I kept finding that I was discouraged from bringing in my own lived experience to guide me as a teacher — my family background, and my experience of learning English as a second language. Instead, I was expected to follow a narrow curriculum and put mastery ahead of any broader outcomes.

Denisse Arias
Former director of Equity & Belonging at Teach For All and Teach For America Alumna

Building a sense of belonging
Teach For Uganda teachers Charles Obore and Carolyne Seera worked together to ensure students and their families feel welcome in school. School attendance and engagement exploded.

Building marginalized students' sense of self-worth
As shown in this 2014 video, Special Education teacher Michael Mahoney is determined that his students, often marginalized because of their special needs, will be "proud of who they are and have a sense of dignity and worth." Mr. Mahoney builds students' sense of belonging by ensuring they understand "how they bring something incredible and special to the table that nobody else can bring."

Additional Research & Resources Related to Fostering Belonging
- Lessons from culturally sustaining classrooms.
- Tips from critical pedagogy on creating inclusive classrooms.
- Self-determination theory shows how meeting students' psychological need to feel "relatedness" is vital for developing self-determination, which has been found to contribute to a wide range of beneficial long-term outcomes.
- Teacher and Students Building Culture Together.
- Literature review on how to build a sense of belonging in schools.
- Lessons from a transformational classroom in Lebanon.
- Critical Practices for Social Justice Education.

HOW TO
NURTURE CULTURE

Work with students to co-create class rules, expectations, and norms that contribute to a culture of welcoming inclusiveness and trust. Determine together how progress and collaboration will be celebrated and conflicts will be resolved. Establish a regular (weekly) time to revisit, refresh, and practice those norms.

NURTURE CULTURE
We co-create with students the norms, values, and expectations that encourage students to support each other's growth and learning.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Nurturing Collective Responsibility

Contribute your own techniques for **nurturing culture** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Arrange Your Room To Reflect the Culture You Want

Desks in groups, or in circles, or in semi-circles. Change your seating arrangements regularly to reflect the tone and culture you are working on, and to foster the forms of student collaboration you want.

Oindrila Sanyal
Currently working at Teach For India towards fostering relationships with external organizations, fellows, and alumni anchored in strategic partnership

Peer-to-Peer/Buddy Systems

Make buddy systems with stronger students helping the others out. Peer-to-peer teaching/learning has worked well in multiple setups. It allows students to develop the confidence to teach and at the same time other students develop mastery in other subjects

Yen Ming Teo
Head of Design and Training at Teach For Malaysia

Model Classroom Values

Are the values I want my students to show clearly shown in my behavior as a teacher? If I want my students to be lifelong learners, I have to model it as well. Am I modeling empathy and curiosity to my students? Am I still curious? Simple things like speaking English among ourselves as staff members to develop our language skills. A student mentioned that the way she improved her English was actually by listening to the teachers speak.

Felicia Yoon
Co-founder of Arus Academy. Arus Academy provides meaningful education to vulnerable and underprivileged students in Malaysia

You create a powerful class culture by trying to see the community through the eyes of its most marginalized members—those who are most vulnerable, most often oppressed and excluded, and most often harmed by societal dynamics of power and privilege. Are students who are most on the "edges" of social inclusion feeling welcomed, seen, heard, and appreciated in your classroom community? What rituals and routines are you putting in place to nurture that inclusiveness? How are students, especially those with marginalized identities, helping shape those decisions? How are you modeling that inclusiveness? These questions are a big deal because your classroom culture is the foundation for students' growth.

Annasstassia Baichorova
Supports the Teach For All network as it explores how to become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable

Student Advisory Council and Roles

Creating roles and responsibilities for students. And give them a sense of pride when they hold those roles in their class. Having roles in the classrooms, e.g., blackboard, watering plants, and doing different things, always helps to build ownership, and it often leads to students sharing innovative ideas to do things even better.

Yen Ming, Sanaya, Mandira, Taylor, Kritika, Alejandra, Shaurya

Other Sources:

- Students as designers of their own vision (Video from 2015).
- Co-creating norms and values with students (Video from 2015).
- Team leaders inside the classroom (Video from 2015).

What I've learned the most from my students is that when we create a safe environment for them to express themselves and be who they are they can get so creative and do amazing things in the classroom. They surprise me with their unique way of expressing their talents and diverse perspectives and it feels magical when I see their work. They remind me that as adults we should embrace the wonder within and keep our inner child alive.

Albulena Ajeti
Teacher, Kosovo

Some of the best discussions have been ideas proposed by students, it has been a very humbling experience. I have learned how to approach students from different viewpoints. It's the students taking charge of the topics.

Teacher
Global Teacher and Teacher Coach Study
(2022)

As a teacher in Muwangi Village in Uganda's Luwero District, Teach For Uganda alumna Carolyne Seera recognized that focusing on gender dynamics was critical to addressing the inequities facing her students. The school and the community treated girls with less respect than boys, and they were often subject to unwanted physical attention.

Carolyne and her co-teacher Charles Obore decided that supporting the education and empowering the girls in their class needed to be a key component of their teaching and for the outcomes they envisioned for all of their students. In this video, Carolyne, a Teach For All Global Girls' Education Fellow, describes how she helped her students of both genders evolve their perspectives and behavior so that their classroom could be a safe, respectful, equitable place for everyone.

What Does Nurturing Collective Responsibility Look Like?

Welcoming culture for newcomers
This video project showcases the ways in which Michigan's Dearborn Public School District is helping its immigrant students succeed, featuring Salina Elementary School and Salina Intermediate School in the South End of Dearborn.

Culturally sustaining culture
Kia Aroha is a public secondary school in South Auckland, New Zealand, working with 300 students, mostly Maori or from the Pacific Islands. This video from 2017 shows how the school has taken a radically different approach to education, developing a special character and culture with its community that focuses on bilingual, critically conscious, culturally responsive, social justice education.

Pooja's favorite culture builders

We asked Pooja Chopra (whose powerful classroom culture you can learn about by exploring these videos from 2018 here and here) about her favorite strategies for building an inclusive culture of collective responsibility:

- **Ask children first.** What are their expectations of you as a teacher before you communicate yours? Once you are willing to listen, children are willing to reciprocate.
- **Co-create culture.** Have students help decide how the class celebrates success and the consequences when we disrupt the culture. Teachers and students should both be responsible for the culture, celebrations, and consequences. Have visual imagery in the classroom as a reminder of what was co-created
- **Daily reflection.** Use reflection as a daily tool for self-correction and appreciation.
- **Giving tree.** Get students to acknowledge where they witnessed values the previous day, write it, and post them on the tree. And/or a child writes the value they displayed the previous day outside the classroom.
- **Norms of the day by the mood.** Begin the day by setting the norms of the day by understanding the moods and emotions everyone is going through. Each day is different and starting the day by really understanding what each one in the classroom is feeling enables everyone to start from a space of empathy.
- **Team spaces.** Create spaces where children work in teams and groups. Enable each team to create their own culture, which aligns with the classroom culture but at the same time brings a different flavor.

Pooja Chopra is a Teach for India alumni. She co-founded Khwaab Welfare Trust to empower mothers from her student's community to become financially independent and dream big for their children. Pooja is currently the Program Head at The Circle, where she is working with entrepreneurs to design, launch, and run reinvented schools and after schools for children coming from low–income communities across India.

HOW TO
KNOW YOURSELF

The path to engaging authentically with others leads through knowing yourself. Take time to build awareness of your own perspective. Where does it come from? What are your blind spots? What motivates you? What identities do you have? How do they intersect? How has society supported or oppressed these identities?

KNOW YOURSELF
We build awareness of our own perspectives, biases, socialized oppressions, motivations, traits, and strengths as a foundation for connecting with others.

Contribute your own techniques for **knowing yourself** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

When you don't know yourself, you don't give yourself the value you deserve. When something good happens to you, you feel like you don't deserve it or sometimes you're unable to set your own boundaries. Teachers are like second parents, what they think of us is extremely important, whether it's a gesture or a reaction, all of that leaves a mark on the student: it can have a negative impact or help them continue to grow.

Mikaela Valenzuela
Participant in the Student Leadership Program in Enseña Perú

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

Tao Te Ching
Classic Chinese text and foundational work of Taoism

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Knowing Yourself

Examine Intersectionality

Invest in real-time reflecting on your own perspectives of privilege, marginalization, and oppression. How are your age, race, disabilities, education, sexual orientation, class relation, and lived experiences influencing you, and how do those dynamics play out in your classrooms? This is especially crucial for people who are in any way "outsiders" to the community where they are teaching.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Take a Breath
Whether it's taking three deep breaths when you start feeling angry, or longer meditation practice, taking a step back is one of the best ways to grow self-knowledge. Rather than identifying with your experience, just take time to notice what arises. For example, rather than saying "I am angry," try saying "I experience anger." Does this create space to learn and see what might be behind your emotion?

Know Your Strengths
Take a moment to reflect on when you've been at your best. Notice what this tells you about your strengths. Are you resilient, creative, kind, curious, disciplined, or something else? When faced with a challenging situation, remember to start by asking yourself: What strengths do I have within me that I can use in this situation?

Seek Diverse Feedback
The perspective of other people is vital in helping you to see yourself. But be careful to get the balance right. Too much challenge, and you'll constrict. Too much support, and you risk stagnation. Find the right balance for you, that helps you stretch but not freeze.

Try Journaling
If you let yourself write whatever comes to mind in a free flow, this can help you to gain a new perspective on yourself. Don't hold back or censor yourself, just take a few minutes each day to see what comes out.

Other Sources:
- 5 Ways to Become More Self-Aware (Harvard Business Review).
- 9 Best Self-Awareness Activities & Tools (Positive Psychology).
- Leading With Strengths.
- The Meaning Wheel.
- Strengths spotting.

When I was a teacher, one of the most shocking moments was in one class in which we were doing this kind of self-knowledge exercise and we had to draw ourselves. When we drew ourselves, we had to do it with a lot of detail. When I picked up the drawings, I started seeing that a lot of the drawings didn't look like my students. Many of them had drawn themselves with a lighter skin color, blond, and with their eyes blue. We asked them what from their body they didn't like and what they would change about themselves. The answer that caught my attention the most was one of my students' answers. She told me: "I would change the color of my skin because I want to look more like," and she mentioned a TV star, "and because I don't like neither the color of my skin nor my eyes." And as for her response, there were a lot of similar answers.

I began to question a lot of things because everywhere I looked there were these types of models that looked nothing like my students. I saw them in the books delivered by the Ministry, on the TV, on the Ministry of Health Campaigns, they were everywhere (…). Every message was like, "The way you look is not pretty." That was hard at that moment and made me think about what messages we are giving our students so that they love themselves and that made me think about how I felt that way in high school… At that point, I didn't have much awareness of privilege and oppression. With time, I started to find out that I was in a privileged situation compared to other people, but that I was also in situations of oppression against other people.

Miguel Ñique
Educator and social communicator. Specialist in designing learning ecosystems and a competency-based approach. Currently leading Training at Enseña Perú. Explore Miguel's reflections more deeply through this video.

I had to take what they already had and say, "This is enough. You are enough just as you are. And you bring your good, I'll bring my good, and let's see if we can add to each other."

Esther Rakete
Ako Mātātupu Teach First NZ Alumna. Quote taken from "Esther Rakete: The Conflicting Pathways of Success" (2018)

Other Places to See *Know Yourself*

- My Stroke of Insight, brain scientist Jill Bolt Taylor's astonishing story of learning about herself after having a stroke.
- The Power of Self-Awareness, a TED talk in which a professor explores what we can learn from our shadow.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Knowing Yourself

- From Maggie MacDonnell: *I am a facilitator of TRUE COLORS one-day workshops. I have found this to be a fantastic way to jump into personal and group discovery. The model can be adapted for teachers and students.*
- What Is Intersectionality?
- A deeper look at intersectionality.
- Research paper on how to measure self-awareness, and the effects of self-awareness.
- Literature review of self-awareness in the context of adult development.
- Bring your strengths to life through the VIA Institute on Character resources and free survey.

What Does Knowing Yourself Look Like?

Change yourself first
Explore Ignacio Brea's (Enseña Por Argentina) path through this 2014 video. At first, he felt like he was failing his students. His classes lacked direction, students were not engaged, and he was miserable. His first breakthrough was realizing that he could never motivate them without understanding their reality. His second breakthrough was realizing that he would have to better know himself.

The power of shared identities
As mentioned in this video from 2018, lived experience of inequities and shared identity with students can provide additional value to cultivating belonging and building relationships that promote rigorous learning.

HOW TO
BE HUMAN

It might seem absurd that "being human" needs a "how-to guide," but for many of us being our honest, vulnerable, true selves as teachers requires intentional effort. Our egos, anxieties, and self-doubts may make us want to invent a separate "teacher persona" that is more confident, more strict, or more certain than we feel inside. What we see in transformational classrooms, however, are teachers who manage to be themselves.

BE HUMAN
We model vulnerability, honesty, and humility as co-learners on a shared journey with our students.

Contribute your own techniques for **being human** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

GLOSSARY

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

I was living in an Awajun community in the jungle. I was an outsider, and there was distance between me and my students. I was working very hard, and it was very challenging. One day, in a moment of frustration, I broke down and told my students that I was struggling and I said "I can't do this alone." When I look back on that year, I think it was showing vulnerability that helped bring us closer. After I shared that the students started working together, and together with me, in a different way. And that opened up other conversations. I started having more conversations with the community and gained informal authority to start hard conversations with them.

Angela Morales
Enseña Perú Alumna and Social Communicator, with experience in project management and development of educational ecosystems

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Being More Human

Make Mistakes, On Purpose
To help my students feel confident in speaking up, and to recognize the knowledge they already had, I would deliberately make mistakes when writing on the board. I would wait for students to challenge me. If they didn't, I would turn around and ask if they saw a mistake. To begin with, they said they had seen a mistake, but didn't think it was right to challenge the teacher. I would then use Socratic dialogue to help the students see the value of challenging me.

Zain Maken
Teach For Pakistan Alumnus (2013)

Say "I Don't Know"
Consistently this same phrase is coming up...at some point, you need to say out loud to students... "I don't have all the answers." I admitted that I did not know everything, I did not have all the solutions to solve challenges. Tap into the wisdom of the students in your classroom. The students are your greatest asset and can solve the challenges occurring in the classrooms. Teachers can choose to co-create alongside their students.

Multiple Contributors

Apologize
So often, students expect us teachers to have the answers and be sources of authority. However, this positions an uneven power dynamic in and out of the classroom. When we cause harm, accidentally or purposefully, we must apologize. This seemingly simple action 1) allows our students to see us as human, imperfect, and willing to love ourselves even when we make mistakes and 2) models not just a behavior we might hope to see replicated, but also a way of walking through this world.

Multiple Contributors

Ask About Feelings
My best teachers speak from their emotions. How do you feel today? How does the topic we are going to talk about make you feel? Asking questions and discussing issues from their experience and what they would do by solving situations.

Former student of an Enseña por Colombia fellow

Ask for Help (From Students)

Be honest to your students about your problems; allow them a problem and how the whole class as a team needs to work towards it.

Pooja Chopra
Alumnus of Teach for India from the 2013 cohort, co-founder of the Khwaab Welfare Trust and currently serving as the Program Head at The Circle

What Does Being More Human Look Like?

Brené Brown on Teaching with Vulnerability

What would it mean for our schools and classrooms if we showed up for tough, <u>honest conversations about what it takes to bring our best</u>, most authentic selves to work? These conversations may sound risky and vulnerable, but risk and vulnerability are essential to courageous schools. A daring classroom is a place where both teachers and students commit to choosing courage over comfort, choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy, and practicing values rather than professing them.

Brené Brown
Research professor at the University of Houston. Photo from Kristina Bowman Photography

My students were interested in so many things in which I had LITTLE to NO expertise. For example, my students wanted to run half marathons, become bike repair experts, crochet, sew fur-lined winter parkas, hunt geese, make sushi, write and perform rap music, create stained glass, become nail art/manicure technicians, and more! In order to support their interests, I had to follow their passions and try to learn enough about these subjects to at least be able to facilitate a learning environment on the topic. This generally meant I was operating outside of my comfort zone A LOT! I made this clear to my students. I laughed openly and HARD at my own mistakes as I bumbled through things. I tried to model that learning is not direct/linear — that you have all sorts of mistakes and "mini-failures" along the way — and one of our greatest strengths is to keep trying.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

We all, myself included, shared deeply personal experiences of our younger selves, of when we were at school. The good and the painful were equally welcomed and equally valuable. We heard of teachers who attended classes 30 or 40 years ago and experienced physical punishment, humiliation, and a complete lack of agency in their own process as students. We also delved into stories where teachers reminisced about the most magical interactions that produced learning for them. We jointly were striving to create a safe environment for us to share authentically, change opinions, and evolve new mindsets. It's through the discomfort of shifting your mindset that you can create change.

Franco Mosso
Former CEO & Co-founder at Enseña Perú, Alumni from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Fellow from the Salzburg Global Seminar. <u>Learn more</u> about Franco's reflection on how agency can lead to systemic change, at scale

Other Places to See *Being Human*

- <u>Teachers Are Humans Too!</u>
- <u>"Trust-Based Collective Leadership: Mobilizing Through Real Connections."</u> Essay (Page 137).
- <u>Mindfulness</u> and other social-emotional exercises to connect on a more human level

Additional Research & Resources Related To Being More Human

Researchers <u>Margaret Bearman and Elizabeth Molloy</u> recommend intellectual candor because they found that to help students learn to cope with feedback, teachers should open up about their own failures.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people: teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board," which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

LOVE AND CONNECT

#NurtureCulture

"There was lots of resistance at first with students communicating their needs. But I stayed with them, giving them tips, building trust and being open, and this has helped students gain confidence, and slowly but surely have become leaders. Some of the best discussions have been ideas proposed by students, it has been a very humbling experience. I have learned how to approach students from a different viewpoint. It's the students taking charge of the topics."

Teacher
(Global Teacher and Teacher Coach Study, 2022)

#FosterBelonging

Art-based therapy session. Small group session with eight children. Include what the children want in the session. Every session, 5 to 10 minutes, children would share what they would like to do. Goal is shared belonging in the group.

Drashti

Contribute to our "Love and Connect" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

#BuildRelationships

A recent study of over 25,000 students in the U.S. found that less than a third of middle-school students said they had strong relationships with their teachers. By high school, only 16 percent reported they had those relationships. And, for children in low-income communities, those numbers are even lower.

Eugene Roehlkepartain, Kent Pekel, Amy Syvertsen, Jenna Sethi, Theresa Sullivan, and Peter Scales
Relationships First: Creating Connections That Help Young People Thrive. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. 2017)

#BeHuman

"Don't be an asshole." All good teachers I meet fit this. Have we created a system that assholes like but non-assholes run from? "Don't be an asshole, be super curious."

Brent Maddin
Co-founder and Provost at the Relay Graduate School of Education

#BuildRelationships

Develop relationships with each student. Two ways: They should know you as well as you know them and go on the learning journey with the students.

Sanaya

INTRODUCTION TO
LISTEN & ENVISION TO CO-CREATE PURPOSE

Perfecting current ways of learning and teaching will not fulfill my students' potential as leaders of a better future, so we collectively question and reimagine the purpose of our classroom, building sustainable coalitions for change.

LISTEN & ENVISION
to co-create purpose

BROADEN PERSPECTIVES
We seek insights and wisdom from multiple perspectives in diverse contexts to grow a collective sense of possibility.

HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION
We hold space for authentic dialogue and discussion by being fully present, listening deeply, and exhibiting curiosity over judgment.

PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY
We connect and collaborate with students' families and others in the community, engaging them in classroom purpose and practices.

CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY
We explore the systemic roots of inequality, listening closely to those with lived experiences of inequity and seeking to understand the assets of the community.

COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS
We listen and contribute to conversations among students, families, and educators about the purpose of education.

When I first made my vision for my students, I didn't take into account the needs of the community. I didn't think about the things that the community already had. And so I had to do it all over again... What I did was–I talked with each of my students and their families. And listened, just listened a lot. I think that was the first step.

Miguel Ñique
Educator and social communicator. Specialist in designing learning ecosystems and a competency-based approach. Currently leading Training at Enseña Perú

Our families get to sit and reflect and think about what are your hopes and dreams for their child's education. And many families say "I have never been asked that before. I have never been asked by a teacher, a school leader, or a school about what my hopes and dreams are for my child. Thank you for giving me that opportunity, because it makes me step back and think about what is all this for, and what can education really do for my family and my child."

Veronica Palmer
Co-founder of RISE Colorado and Teach For America Alumna

In the first chapter of this guide, we explored the ways that PURPOSE is showing up in our collective studies of transformational classrooms. The teachers we have studied are questioning education's purpose (the WHY), and are asking who should define that purpose and who has historically done so (the WHO).

This classroom strategy, LISTEN & ENVISION, maps five concrete actions teachers can use to collectively develop and align actions to a clear vision of students' success.

GLOSSARY

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Leaders of a Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Contextualized Vision of Student Success: A locally informed, collectively evolved picture of what education is aiming for.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Collective, Contextualized Vision

Through this video from 2014, virtually visit communities and classrooms around the world, hearing from educators, families, and students about the power of asking WHY. Explore the power of contextualized visions of student success to inform classroom practices.

Tools That Help Align Daily Actions to the Classroom Vision of Student Success

ALIGNING ACTIONS WITH PURPOSE

DAILY IMPLICATIONS OF VISION

SELF-DIAGNOSIS ON VISION

HOW TO
BROADEN PERSPECTIVES

Be with (and help students be with) people with different life experiences than your (their) own. Listen intently. Reflect on how and why you see and make meaning of the world differently from others.

BROADEN PERSPECTIVES
We seek innovations and insights from multiple perspectives in diverse contexts to grow a collective sense of possibility.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Broadening Perspective

Contribute your own techniques for **broadening perspective** to our growing library...and see what others have contributed here.

Community Connections
Invite community members into school to give presentations or to be part of events. Make community interviews part of the assignments. I have heard of school libraries that don't just have books but have "community experts" that students or a class can reserve time with. This could be an artist, an author, a grandmother, a small business owner, etc. So cool!

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Guest Instructors
Sometimes there were some topics that I was not confident about. Invite other people who can deliver those contents to them. More exposure for students as well. Learning needs to go beyond the teacher and the four walls of the classroom. We need to enable students to learn from diverse people and immerse in spaces around them, especially their community — that is when education gets real and relevant and children are inspired to be changemakers.

Pooja Chopra
Teach For India Alumna, co-founder of Khwaab Welfare Trust, and Program Head at The Circle

Listening With an Open Mind
Plan to listen and take your time. Digest every word of student participation. Accept a variety of participation methods while encouraging all students to contribute. Avoid linking participation to grades/marks.

Taylor Delhagen
Former professor at Relay Graduate School of Education and Teach For America Alumnus

Every time I [engage with the Maori community], I learn so much. A lot of what I learned is to actually let go. To actually be able to listen to what people want to say instead of me setting the agenda about what there is to learn. I have to be honest, it's really really difficult as a Pākehā [New Zealander of European descent] to do that. It's really hard because I think I know what I want to learn. And I'm always delighted to discover that that wasn't actually the learning at all, and I learned something completely different. And it's wonderful.

Mike Hughes
Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ Alumnus. (Quote taken from "Letting go of the agenda," 2015)

Other Sources:
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Guide.
- Learning walks for broadening perspectives between teachers.

ART AS INSTIGATOR
Using visual art, poetry, or a song can be a very effective way to open up discussion when you are with your students or engaging in a group setting with community members.

CLASSROOM VISITS
Observe and help in other classrooms. Notice how other teachers do things differently and why. Reflect on what you want to learn and borrow from those other classrooms.

Collectively discovering contextualized vision in Nepal

Teach For Nepal has found it essential to understand the historical context of marginalization as a foundation for their work. Explore this video from 2015, to learn how by recognizing that we always come into any context with our own perspectives, values, and vision, we can start to recognize the limitations of our own perspective and work towards a deeper collective effort.

It's never too late to think big. Widen your horizons. Look beyond your normal limits. See things in a larger picture. Consider the next step. The flow-on effect. Opportunities will become evident. Motivations will become clear. Perspective will emerge. One must live the way one thinks or end up thinking the way one has lived.

Paul Bourget
Nobel Prize-winning French poet and novelist

What Does a Broadening Perspective Look Like?

Hearing the wisdom of community elders

Through this video from 2019, visit a classroom and community in the desert center of Australia and see how a new teacher connects, listens to, and collaborates with a veteran leader in the community to build pathways for student success.

The Danger of the Single Story

Our lives, and our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

Community as the source of visions of student success in Haiti

Anseye Pou Ayiti has made collective co-construction of purpose a daily commitment. Watch this video from 2017, on how through recurring rituals that hold space for sometimes difficult conversations, educators and coaches seek to listen and understand local values, challenges, and aspirations.

Diverse perspectives to shape purpose in Mexico

A nation with tremendous potential to expand and improve educational opportunities for its youth, Mexico also faces a diverse range of challenges. In this video from 2014, Enseña Por México's former CEO, Erik Ramírez Ruiz, shares that the key is embracing the idea that Mexico's diverse challenges require solutions from many different perspectives.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Broadening Perspective

- Reimagining Education is a participatory process through which adolescents and young people with different trajectories and educational profiles, from all over Uruguay, create proposals to reimagine secondary education. (In Spanish.)
- Listen as Delia, a public school teacher of the Cajamarca Region in Peru, reflects on the power of broadening her perspective. (In Spanish with optional English subtitles.)

When you arrive at a community for the first time and you really want to generate systemic change that impacts at all levels, you have to start by attending to the spaces that already exist. Don't create your own spaces. That's on the one hand. And on the other: when you design these spaces, not every space must have an agenda. I think that's a big mistake we make. Not all spaces have to have a detailed agenda with a clear goal and action plan. A lot of times, when arriving in a community, having some spaces where we can listen to each other authentically and where we can create these safe spaces allows us to talk about our most intrinsic motivations.... That's a great start.

Leidy Cabrera
Alumna of Enseña Por México, collaborated for five years as a regional director in the same organization, and is a co-founder of Casa Mujer

HOW TO
HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION

Learn to listen. Listen to learn. Lead with questions. Create the conditions in which students are learning from each other, and you are stoking, shaping, and guiding that learning.

HOST DIALOGUE & DISCUSSION
We hold space for authentic dialogue and discussion by being fully present, listening deeply, and exhibiting curiosity over judgment.

Contribute your own techniques for **hosting dialogue and discussion** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.
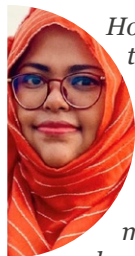
Holding space means treating all the participants as humans. It means we listen to each other and feel beyond each others' words. This means everyone will have their own emotions, histories, and understandings of life. Holding spaces come with all these human elements, which I sometimes find missing in other technical spaces.

Maliha Fawzia
Former Senior Director of Programs, Teach For Bangladesh & 2015 Alumna

GLOSSARY

Holding Space: This phrase refers to a facilitator's role and responsibility to create conditions that allow for genuine and authentic learning.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Hosting Dialogue & Discussion

Crafting Spice Questions
This is one of the most important aspects of our role as facilitator. We need to ask students something that is worth asking. Something provocative and responsive to who they are. It's our job to plan purposeful questions that reach a multitude of Bloom's taxonomy (identify, summarize, evaluate, interpret). It's a massive misconception to believe this happens naturally. We must prepare, pre-think, and practice text-based conversations with fellow teachers and/or small groups of students. Test-drive it again and again not to ensure students answer in a cookie-cutter fashion, but to become fluent in the text yourself so you can somehow meet the creativity we know is waiting to be unleashed in our classrooms.

Taylor Delhagen
Former professor at Relay Graduate School of Education and Teach For America Alumnus

Teacher/Student Circle Time
Create space to share about life experiences, because leaders do need empowerment sessions, and even they have feelings. Topics are what resonates with them/what they feel is relevant for the class. This is a space that builds community as students become problem solvers.

Former students of Teach For India fellows

"We Interrupt Our Regularly Scheduled Programming..."
Take "responsive" space during classes to stop the regular plan in order to discuss and hear your students, perhaps an issue has arisen. Things that might not matter to the particular goal of a class, but matter to students.

Leo Graham
Teach First (UK) Alumnus

The Issues Jar
We had a jar where we wrote anonymously the issues we struggled with. Personal or with someone else. At least once a week we'd discuss one issue from the jar and discuss practical approaches to addressing it. It helped the students realize I didn't have all the answers, and that their peers were caring and able to provide potential solutions

Anjali Sabnani
Teach For India

Other Sources:
- Tips for encouraging speaking and listening between students.
- Write, pair, share, and other actionable techniques.
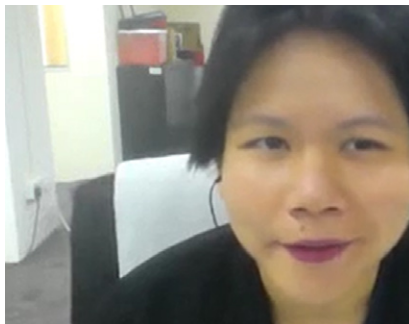
The art of "holding space"

Educators and teacher coaches from across the Teach For All network came together to explore what facilitating meaningful reflection, dialogue, discussion, and learning looks like, why it is important, and how those spaces are best created. You can watch this video synthesis from 2019 with key insights from those workshops here.

Engaging with families to explore purpose in rural China

This video from 2013 explored how Teach For China approached their work in rural Yunnan province. In this community, not every student had a seat waiting for them in middle school and rote learning was still the most dominant practice. Meanwhile, the economy and future of China were changing before their eyes. What should a teacher and students work towards?

How To Host A Dialogue On A Difficult Topic

When hosting dialogues about difficult topics, there are several aspects to consider. One of the most important factors, even before the dialogue takes place, is the willingness of people to be there. Not everyone will arrive at the meeting with the desire to attend; it may be challenging for some participants to show up. In such cases, it may be necessary to have preliminary conversations with these individuals and remind them why it is so relevant for their voices to be heard in that space. Ideally, there should be a shared level of willingness among the participants, and we should be open to accepting that it's ok if they don't agree or have different opinions than ours.

Ángela Morales
Enseña Perú Alumna and social communicator, with experience in project management and development of educational ecosystems

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What Does Hosting Dialogue & Discussion Look Like?

Ako–Responsive, reciprocal learning relationships

Through this video from 2015, learn about a community of educators and students who are hosting dialogue and discussion in ways that affirm the knowledge, experiences, culture, and identities of the students.

Questions as the currency of a classroom

In his history class, Teach For America alumnus Taylor Delhagen facilitated discussions with a combination of provocative sources and questions. Watch this video from 2013 on how he uses a Socratic approach to create dialogue that grows students' critical thinking skills.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Hosting Dialogue & Discussion

- Dispute resolution: The science of influence. Using six principles of persuasion to negotiate and mediate more effectively.

Other Places to See Dialogue & Discussion

- A Case Study on Holding Space: Learning to Listen; Listening to Learn at Teach for Bangladesh and Enseña Ecuador.

HOW TO
PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

Connect with students, their families, their supporters, and other members of the community. Spend time in their presence in their community, and bring them into the classroom to learn and share together.

PARTNER WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITY
We connect and collaborate with students' families and influencers and others in the community, engaging them in classroom purpose and practices.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Partnering with Families and Communities

MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE
Help remove barriers that prevent parents and community members from being involved with school by learning through what channels they communicate and their schedule. Engage through those channels. If they are active on social media use it too!

BRING THE SCHOOL TO THE HOME
Focus on building a relationship outside the school gates. So instead of asking parents to come to the school, plan visits to their homes. This helps build the trust needed to create pathways of collaboration and ways of partnering.

BUILD SHARED PURPOSES
Start by engaging in conversations with parents about their own (and their kids') expectations, dreams, interests, and struggles. After this, define (together) one first thing you want to change or improve and make it a collective purpose by designing a small plan and defining responsibilities. In the process, celebrate the small wins!

Contribute your own techniques for **partnering with families and communities** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

What we know is that so many of the solutions and so many of the strengths of our people happen in community. And so at the end of the day, Anseye Pou Ayiti is measuring progress by seeing the extent to which we can tear down the wall that's been erected, built up between the classroom and the community. At the end of the day, we want the classroom and community to be indistinguishable from each other. Because if we're really doing our work well, so much of the power and the solutions and the cultural assets that exist in the community will show up every single day in the classroom.

Nedgine Paul Deroly
Lifelong educator and co-founder/CEO of Anseye Pou Ayiti

> *Working collectively within the school is important to me because it's like the legs of a table: if we're missing one leg, the table will simply collapse. One leg represents the student, another leg represents the teacher, another leg represents the parent, and the last leg represents the resources available to the school. If we manage to make these legs work together, then we'll be standing on a solid table. Otherwise, it will eventually collapse.*

José Goicochea
Parent of a participant of the Student Leadership Program in Enseña Perú. (Quote taken from "Colaborar para la transformación: Un criterio clave para liderar en colectivo por la educación", 2022)

Other Sources:
- A playbook for family-school engagement (Brookings).
- Principles of effective family engagement, by NAEYC Engaging Diverse Families (EDF) project.

The biggest lesson we've learned as we've done this work [in Chicago] is we didn't create an enduring coalition for change. . . . So much of this work was done in spite of students, families, and community leaders' wishes, desires, and will. And as a result, what you see is a lack of trust amongst different stakeholders. Chicago is a city of 77 neighborhoods, each with its own unique and distinct culture. And so we thought it was important that we start to immerse our corps members in those neighborhoods. We piloted that approach in a couple of neighborhood contexts last year and moving forward we're going to scale that up to be a part of how we do our program model for every single corps member that comes in. And the idea is you pair that with leadership development opportunities that build the skills and orientation of our corps members to center family and community perspective and build trust across multiple stakeholders and view them as assets in our children's education.

Aneesh Sohoni
CEO of One Million Degrees, an organization focused on supporting community college students on their career pathways to upward mobility, and the former Executive Director of Teach For America for Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana

What Does Partnering with Families and Communities Look Like?

Reducing school violence through parental engagement
Explore how a group of dads from Louisiana are transforming a crisis of violence and changing a whole school culture.

This project creates a bridge between the school and the family
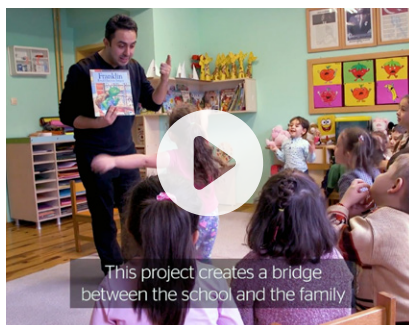
"Daddy, tell me a story"
To remedy the low level of family participation in children's education, Global Teacher Prize Winner Nurten Akkus started a program in Turkey called "Daddy, Tell Me A Story." This led to fathers' participation in education, both in her county and across Turkey. As a result of seeing their fathers in class, the children's motivation and engagement with education increased dramatically.

Starting from the bottom and working with the local leaders is very important. And this is what we did since we started with Teach For Morocco and we were able to sign different agreements with community councils and with district councils that allowed us to move to the regional level. And we moved to the regional level with a very strong foundation. We have partnerships with the community leaders, the parents' associations, and all the other stakeholders locally. And we moved to the academy and the regional academies. We were able also to convince them that there is a high demand from the public, and they need us. And moving from the academy to the regional level, then we move to the Ministry of Education.

Mohamed El Idrissi
Social entrepreneur, public servant, and a lifelong learner. Former Mayor of Nador for more than 10 years, in charge of overseeing the local governance and public service of a municipality

Other Places to See Partnering with Families and Communities
- A school garden brings together Spanish-speaking parents and English-speaking teachers.
- Tele-sikai: Learning in a new reality.
- Growing With Love: Teachers in partnership with volunteers from different regions work together to strengthen socio-emotional bonds between parents and their kids. (In Spanish.)

Additional Research & Resources Related to Partnering with Families and Communities
- From the Inter-American Development Bank blog, "Rebuilding the relationship between parents and school to enhance learning." (In Spanish.)

HOW TO
CRITICALLY EXAMINE HISTORY

Study the history of the education systems you are working in today and those that you experienced as a student. Support students to question the design and choices behind what they are learning.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Critically Examining History

BRING HISTORY TO YOUR SUBJECT
Whatever the subject matter, use the ways people have seen those ideas differently over time (even math and science) to foster students' critical thinking about their own and others' perspectives.

Contribute your own techniques for **critically examining history** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

Learning History from Local Community Leaders
Support students to interview community members about their experience of a historic event. Open dialogue can surface how historical events impact community members differently and continue to have significance today.

Jared Hove
Leadership Director, Global Leadership Accelerator, Teach For All

Study Local History
At Anseye Pou Ayiti we firmly believe that the education system is a direct result of colonial heritage. It is not enough to talk about active pedagogy, learner equality, and transformational leadership, without understanding the historical roots of our current reality. We need to dive deep into the current reality, we need to understand very clearly what inequity is… equity, oppression, slavery, settlers — we need to discuss all these aspects.

Nedgine Paul Deroly
Lifelong educator and co-founder/CEO of Anseye Pou Ayiti

To harness the power of education for social change, educators must consider how we — as individuals and school communities — are shaped by our own social and historical contexts. In this workshop from 2020, the Global Learning Lab collaborated with Facing History and Ourselves to learn from educators in South Africa and Colombia about the powerful role of educator reflection in creating and sustaining inclusive and equitable learning environments.

Other Sources:
- Exploring complex issues.

It is dangerous when we are unaware of the wounds caused by the educational system. For many years, schools have been useful to colonial interests and have contributed to the spread of racist and classist ideas, along with the erasure of cultures under the pretext of "civilizing" people. The educational system has a lot to repair because it has its roots in colonialism, and by accepting this, as painful as it may be, we can better understand the wounds that teachers, students, parents, and, of course, our own wounds have because we have also been socialized within this educational system. If we want to collaborate in educational transformation, it is not enough to simply ask, "What are we going to transform?" We must also ask, "What do we need to heal? What do we need to repair?" To address these issues, I believe that we could start by investing time and resources in listening and observing deeply.

Miguel Ñique
Educator and social communicator. Specialist in designing learning ecosystems and a competency-based approach. Currently leading Training at Enseña Perú

It opened my mind a lot. You can't really just believe everything you read, everything you hear, everything you see. I am more open to looking at things from my perspective, and not just what someone has told me.

Khyna Davis
Former student of U.S. History teacher and Teach For America alumnus Taylor Delhagen. (Quote taken from the video More than a Number, 2013)

Check out this virtual visit to Taylor's classroom, exploring ways to help our students understand the challenges they face within a historical narrative.

What Does Critically Examining History Look Like?

Colonial roots of inequity in Uganda

In this video from 2020, Charles Obore (Teach For Uganda alumnus) shares a powerful reflection on the colonial roots of inequity in Uganda and the need for culturally relevant education and community-centered leadership.
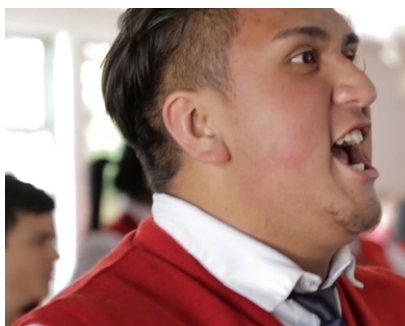
Decolonizing education in New Zealand

Kia Aroha is a public secondary school in South Auckland, New Zealand, attended by 300 students, mostly Maori or from the Pacific Islands. Watch in this video from 2017, how Kia Aroha focuses its curriculum on a critical analysis of the historical and present realities that affect students' lives, empowering them with the skills and knowledge to explore their experiences, contextualize them, and examine how they have shaped their sense of self.

To change the future we need to know our past

"It is not enough to talk about active pedagogy, learner equality, and transformational leadership, without understanding the current reality. We need to dive deep into the current reality, we need to understand very clearly what inequity is. Equity, oppression, slavery, settlers — we need to discuss all these aspects." See what that looks like at Anseye Pou Ayiti (Haiti) in this 2022 video.

Understanding indigenous histories

In this video from 2017, Shayla Yellowhair (Teach For America - New Mexico alumna) explains why teachers who are coming to work in Native communities need to first understand the history and be willing to learn from the community. She talks about what it means to come from a Wester–dominant system and then "do the work" acknowledging that there is shared learning between teachers and the community.

Other Places to See Critically Examining History

- Historical inequities' influence on today's education system in Colombia (Enseña Por Colombia, 2018).
- Teach For Malaysia's examination of local history and its implications for its work to improve education (2020).
- Teach For Australia: Aboriginal Studies Class (2018).
- Teaching resources for activist history.
- Using a barometer exercise for students to map perspectives and opinions.
- How to Broaden Students' Sense of History.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Critically Examining History

- Research on why talking about historical systemic social barriers can have important long-term benefits.
- Research on the role of teachers in decolonizing education.

If you know the history of public schools in this country, you know exactly what public schools were designed to do. You know that they are doing exactly what they were designed to do. And you know that they were designed to create this social hierarchy that is, by design, unequal, unfair, structurally unjust, that created an unequal distribution of resources and opportunity and at the same time normed that in society such that there is not massive social unrest. It was completely deliberate.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade
Founder of Roses in Concrete Community School in the USA. (Quote taken from "Jeff Duncan Andrade: The game is rigged (inequity by design)," 2017, a video on the oppressive history of public schooling)

HOW TO
COLLECTIVELY ENVISION SUCCESS

Join and facilitate exploration of education's purpose, and who decides that purpose. Consider the community's history, future, assets, and challenges alongside students and their families. Develop and evolve a clear vision of student success.

COLLECTIVELY
ENVISION SUCCESS
We listen and contribute to
conversations among students,
families, and educators about
the purpose of education.

Contribute your own techniques for **collectively envisioning success** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed [here](#).

When I went to their home, I asked about their childhood. I asked about what responsibilities they have at home. What's the relationship between the parents and the student? What is the parents' philosophy or expectations for their kids?

Cai Hanyun
Teach For China Alumna. (Quote taken from [“A vision for rural China,”](#) 2013)

Something very important when (our new teachers) arrive in their community is for them to understand the context, the strengths in that context, and the areas of opportunity and to achieve an impact in the areas where it is more needed. It has to be something that lasts, and for that we have to involve the students' circle of influence.

Marta Pujado Morato
Tutor, Enseña Por México.
(Quote taken from [“Agents of Change: Building a Vision for Mexico,”](#) 2014)

Other Sources:
- [Globally Informed, Locally Rooted Visions of Student Success](#)
- [Detailed Insights: Visions of Student Success](#)

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Collectively Envisioning Success

MEET FAMILIES ON THEIR TERMS
Talk to parents. Rather than trying to persuade or enlist parents, let go of the agenda and hold space to listen to what they most want. Have the conversation somewhere they feel most comfortable.

ASK & LISTEN
Ask your students. Take the time to ask students what they want from education, and share your own perspective with them.

PRACTICE PROXIMITY
Go where the action is. Where do parents and other members of your community talk and share their point of view? Find those places, and go there to listen and learn.

Create Rituals to Revisit
Describing co-creation to the fellows, I drew a diagram starting with a stick figure with a speech bubble. This speech bubble represents what you yourself really really want. But then there are two other stick figures, and they have their own speech bubbles. And these three bubbles form a Venn diagram together. So your task is to not just move towards your own speech bubble but to understand what is the Venn diagram of the visions of those different people. How can you go forward together? And what we experience is that it's immensely difficult to give up what you want and to create something together with other people.

Kristi Klaasmägi
Former CEO, Noored Kooli

Success for my students is to get to know what they really want and to set a goal that they can achieve thanks to their academic development. To decide who they are and where they come from, so they have the social awareness to search for solutions for their community. It's not just numbers. It's not just graphics. It can be turned into reality.

Jacobo Mendoza Saul Alvarez
Enseña Por México Alumnus. (Quote taken from [“Agents of Change: Building a Vision for Mexico,”](#) 2014)

What Does Collectively Envisioning Success Look Like?

Contextualized local visions of success around the world

Check out this compilation from 2015 of powerful reflections from teachers all around the world who are collaborating with students, families, and communities to envision student success.

The role of respect and relationships in envisioning success in Nepal

What does it take to develop a locally rooted vision? What becomes possible when you approach education in a way that listens deeply to the community? In this video from 2015, Shisir Khanal of Teach For Nepal argues that while this takes time and patience, the outcome is an approach to education that is sustainable, as everyone is invested in the work.

My vision for my students has been evolving ever since I joined them. They were moving at a really fast pace, but I kept thinking, what's next? Fine, they can read and they speak, but how much do they understand? How much can they think critically? What can they do on their own? How brave are they in front of other people? It was something that was evolving from being with them. It was consciously not planned. I just see change happen and it makes me want to go back and redraw what I want for them.

Nirali Vasisht
Teach For India Alumna. (Quote taken from My Vision: 'No limits!'," 2012)
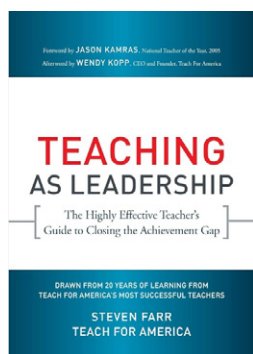
What's the difference between BIG GOALS and VISION?
Many organizations in the Teach For All network have used Teaching As Leadership's concept of "big goals" to show new teachers how clear, ambitious aims can help align and motivate hard work in the classroom. Our collective studies of transformational classrooms are confirming that ambitious aims are powerful but also that who decides those aims is just as important. Rather than the teacher deciding the "big goal," educators should host ongoing conversations among students, families, and communities about how, together, they are defining student success.

Other Places to See Collectively Envisioning Success
- Wendy Kopp's reflections on a community-based exploration of purpose in North Carolina.
- Stories on Vision: "Why Is this Family So Satisfied, and Why Is This Teacher So Angry?"

In Spain, Empieza Por Educar brought together students, families, and educators to reflect on how their classrooms were and were not aligned with the collectively developed vision. Not only did educators report the ritual helped them make adjustments in classrooms, but student and family input challenged and changed the vision of success, empowering them to feel ownership of the education process.

Anseye Pou Ayiti (Haiti) has made collective co-construction of purpose a daily commitment. Local relationship building is the foundation. Grandmothers, students, and others have space to collaborate in the organization's offices. Through recurring rituals that "hold space" for sometimes difficult conversations, educators and coaches seek to listen and understand about local values, challenges, and aspirations.

Against the backdrop of a history of genocide, enormous national pride, and a struggling post-Soviet economy, **Teach For Armenia** facilitated conversations with students, families, historians, economists, educators, and staff members about the purpose of education. An evolving collective vision has emerged of students as the builders of a new Armenia — entrepreneurial problem solvers who are not only providing for themselves and their families but also advocating for education for all children in Armenia and "contributing to the systemic development of Armenia and her position in the changing global economy."

This vision is helping Teach For Armenia recognize ways that the country's current classroom models are falling short of — if not inhibiting — that vision. Now, Teach For Armenia is critically reimagining everything from student outcomes to teacher development to education policy by asking, "How do we align ourselves to that collective vision?"

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership has been collectively developed with input from teachers, teacher coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. We intend to continue that collective development as it is being tested, contextualized, and implemented. We encourage you to make this possible!

Below is our "digital bulletin board," which we are constantly building (and rebuilding) with the input of generous readers who share their ideas in our **Co-learning Padlet**. Contribute to the evolution of the model by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links in our Co-learning Padlet.

LISTEN AND ENVISION

#CollectivelyEnvisionSuccess

Swastika Shrestha, Community at the Centre of Movement Building in Nepal

https://vimeo.com/290068114

#PartnerWithFamilies AndCommunities

BRAZIL: Mom literacy program to combat school dropout rates of youth.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hq5Ghjz8K6c

#CollectivelyEnvisionSuccess

Vision-aligned work calls us to look outward to have a systemic perspective on our work, seeing the complex histories and contexts in which we are working. And it requires us to look inward at how we are behaving, and the ways our own perspective and mindset might be replicating, or transforming, the systems in which we work. We see this type of vision-aligned approach as an essential ingredient in our aim to achieve our goals as a network.

Anonymous

#CollectivelyEnvisionSuccess

(NEPAL, Unicef) TELE LEARNING Program between moms and kids, improving literacy and relationships.

https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/tele-sikai-learning-new-reality

#CollectivelyEnvisionSuccess

Sometimes our job is just to turn up and be there, to be present, and to listen. These moments are becoming more and more precious. Create a sense that you are not alone in this. Protect fellows and their time. This can be in tension with the idea of urgency, setting projects.

How are we showing up to a conversation? What can we do as organizations to make this a part of our culture?

Ulf Matysiak
CEO Teach First Deutschland

#Collectively Envision Sucess

REVITALIZE LANGUAGE: Indigenous Rural Canada

Award-winning teacher using lots of the language that TFA likes. Could also be a spotlighted "music teacher' as that part gets developed.

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6-m7397CCkE

Maggie MacDonnell

Contribute to our "Listen and Envision" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

INTRODUCTION TO
LEARN & DESIGN TO PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Most of the work of strong teaching happens before and after classroom lessons. Careful planning ensures that learning experiences align with our vision, meet the needs of all students, and align with how we best learn.

LEARN & DESIGN
to plan learning experiences

BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE
We develop expertise in the subjects we are teaching, in content pedagogy, and in child development.

PLAN BACKWARDS
We design and sequence lesson and unit plans with "the end in mind," ensuring that teacher and student efforts lead to classroom vision and goals.

VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP
We seek to understand our students' strengths, interests, experiences, and ways of learning to inform plans to maximize student growth and ownership of learning.

EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING
We design lessons that build from students' understanding and application of new ideas to analysis, evaluation, and creation.

LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY
Intentionally chooses and metacognitively teaches learning principles to design experiences that accelerate student growth.

Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.

Pablo Picasso
Artist

Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.

Gloria Steinem
Civil rights leader

The transformational teachers studied in the Global Learning Lab's "learning loops" have described what we see in the classroom as the "tip of the iceberg." Most of what we are seeing in classrooms is the result of thoughtful preparation and planning, even if teachers are adjusting those plans as they implement them.

The LEARN & DESIGN strategy attempts to capture the most important actions surfacing in those studies of transformational classrooms and teachers, but perhaps the most important insight is that the preparation and planning of great teachers are too often undervalued.

In the words of the 16th U.S. president, Abraham Lincoln, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, I will spend the first four sharpening the ax."

Being teachers during the pandemic challenged us to rethink how our students were learning. Despite being in different schools, we decided to plan learning experiences together, with one big idea in mind: putting the student at the center without neglecting pedagogical rigor.

We learned the importance of proper planning, including what we called "pre-planning," in order to design transformative learning experiences. Before starting the design process, we would analyze the context of our students, the resources they had access to, their interests, their relationship with their families, and their needs.

By taking all these factors into account, we created meaningful and relevant learning experiences that catered to our students' unique circumstances. The collaboration and pre-planning allowed us to adapt our teaching methods and ensure that our students continued to receive a quality education, even in challenging times.

Leslie Ordinola and Alexandra Vassallo
Alumnae of Enseña Perú

HOW TO
BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE

Study both the content you will be teaching and how your students will perceive and misperceive that content. Familiarize yourself with the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development milestones of your students.

BUILD CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE
We develop expertise on the subjects we are teaching, in content pedagogy and in child development.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Building Critical Knowledge

BE A STUDENT OF YOUR CONTENT
Find an online course, a website, a book. Stretch your own knowledge of your subject matter while you are asking students to stretch theirs. Khan Academy's free online repository of rich content lessons (and others like it) is a favorite resource for teachers who need to refresh their own understanding of content.

ACKNOWLEDGE TO STUDENTS YOU ARE LEARNING TOO
The strongest teachers acknowledge to their students they do not know all the content and invest students in helping them learn it together. Call out when you don't know something. Call out when you make a mistake you are learning from. Celebrate moments when students are helping you learn the content.

Nerd Out With Colleagues

Find a park or pub or any space and regularly nerd out with other colleagues who teach and love the content they are teaching. VISIT THEIR CLASSROOMS. This will bring out the passion you bring to the classroom!

Brent Maddin
Executive Director, Next Education Workforce Initiative at Arizona State University

Walk the Talk

Always complete assignments yourself before teaching and assigning them. You'll better understand how students will receive, understand, and misunderstand your lessons.

Nancie Atwell
Global Teacher Prize Winner. Quote taken from Teach For All Talks (2016)

Guess the Confusion

When planning the lesson, try and figure out where students might be most confused. You can then prepare in advance to address these troublesome spots. After class, reflect on how accurate your guesses were and refine your lesson for the future.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education

Contribute your own techniques for **building critical knowledge** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Our own content knowledge affects how we interpret the content goals we are expected to reach with our students. It affects the way we hear and respond to our students and their questions. It affects our ability to explain clearly and to ask good questions. It affects our ability to approach an [new] idea flexibly with our students and to make connections. It affects our ability to push each student at that special moment when he or she is ready or curious. And it affects our ability to make those moments happen more often for our students.

Glenda Lappan
Former President of the U.S. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Critical thinking only develops when we have a strong foundational knowledge of content to think about.

Doug Lemov
Author of Teach Like a Champion

Get "Meta" About Your Content

Explore how the subject is taught in different countries. Explore how it has been taught in different historical eras. At a minimum, you will gain a deeper understanding of curriculum choices, and at best you will get lots of enhancements to use in your own teaching.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

Recommended Resources for Teachers Who Want to Refresh Their Content Knowledge

Reading & Writing
- Literacy Strategies That Work
- Supporting Equitable Literacy Instruction through Text Selection, Analysis, and Use
- Bridging Foundational Reading Gaps in Middle School

Science & Math
- Khan Academy
- How to Learn Math: For Students
- Designing Effective Numeracy Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
- The Liberating Quality of Open, Creative Mathematics

Art, Drama, Physical Education
- Art & Ideas: Teaching With Themes (MoMa)
- Teaching Critical Thinking Through Art With the National Gallery of Art

What Does Critical Knowledge Look Like In the Classroom?

Prapti's STEM classroom
Teach For India Alumna Prapti Bhasin used active, discovery-based, collective learning to help students learn square roots.
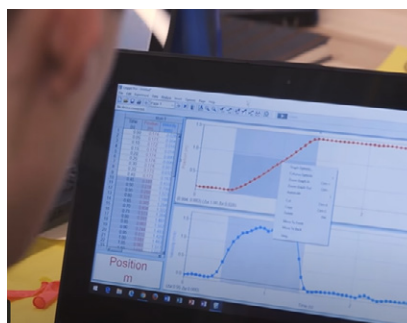
Mission to Mars
Physics students in the U.S. learn physics by assuming the role of aerospace engineers to explore the real-world problem of how to land a rover on Mars.

Kenyan science classroom

Global Teacher Prize Winner Peter Tabichi engages with the community and families to draw students into rigorous science content in and outside of his classroom.

Singapore's education revolution

By cultivating strong school leadership, committing to ongoing professional development, and exploring innovative models like its technology-infused Future Schools, Singapore has become one of the top-scoring countries on the PISA tests. Check out a rich, fun, activity-driven primary math classroom here. And check out an overview of Singapore's 21st-Century Teaching Strategy here.

Other Places to See How Teachers Build Critical Knowledge

- Insights from Teach For All's "Global Learning Loop" on Rigor in STEM.
- Thinking, Doing, Talking Science, an Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) program that makes lessons in primary schools more practical, creative, and challenging.

Children know what's best for them. They need to play. They need to learn. They need to be physically active. So, today we are in our math class, but we are outside because we are combining mathematics and physical activity and movement... They are finding out how these lines need to be parallel and vertical. They are doing it by themselves. This is very important for the kids because of their self-confidence. They are finding it out and having a successful feeling.

Marie-Christine Ghanbari Jahromi
Teacher, Germany. Quote taken from Raising self-esteem with sport (2018)

HOW TO
PLAN BACKWARDS

Clarify your daily objectives and unit/year goals and concretely imagine and design how you will know your students have reached them. Plan classroom learning experiences to lead students to succeed on those measures.

PLAN BACKWARDS
We design and sequence lesson and unit plans with "the end in mind," ensuring that teacher and student efforts lead to classroom vision and goals.

Contribute your own techniques for **planning backwards** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

What we need to see more clearly is that the common learner's failure to transfer is not a student weakness or a teaching deficit but a mistake in planning. You have to design backward from the goal of transfer if you want to achieve it. Too often, though, teachers merely teach, then ask in their tests: Did you learn my lesson?

Grant Wiggin
President and director of programs for the Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS). Author of Understanding By Design. Quote taken from "What is UbD? Grant Wiggins Answers, with Video Cases," (2012)

TRADITIONAL LESSON DESIGN	BACKWARDS DESIGN
• Decide on the content that needs to be covered. • Plan a series of lessons that cover that content. • Create an assessment to cover that content.	• Identify what students should know and can do by the end of the learning cycle. • Create an assessment to measure that learning. • Plan a sequence of lessons that prepares students to successfully complete the assessment.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Planning Backwards

Exit Tickets

Start with thinking about the bite-sized objective of a lesson and what opportunities students have to demonstrate that learning. Build your lessons backward from there, providing enough time for students to engage with content and material. Think beyond little surveys to multiple forms of authentic checks for understanding.

Robbie Dean
Director of Research, Evaluation, and Network Learning at Teach For All

Walk Through Your Plans

Don't ask students to do anything you wouldn't do or haven't done. Follow your own instructions and complete your own assignments when planning to identify gaps and misconceptions prior to rolling them out with students.

Wisdom Amouzou
Full-time artist at Remix Designs, 10 years of experience working within the public education system

Two Key Questions

To plan any learning experience (a lesson, a unit, a year) start by answering two key questions: (1) After this learning experience, what will students know and be able to do that they couldn't before? and (2) How will I know that they know/can do this?

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education

Know and Show What "Good" Looks Like

Have a clear example of what success looks like at the end of a learning experience. These could be examples of exemplary student responses or finished projects. Show them to the students at the start (show; don't just tell) so they can tangibly see what success looks like. Tangible examples give clarity and motivation.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

Activate Prior Knowledge

Before covering new content, encourage students to share what they already know about this topic. This could be through KWL charts (Know; Want to Know; Learned), word splashes, or guessing games. This helps students connect new learning to existing knowledge.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

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We asked students in some of the **transformational classrooms** studied in our **learning loops** about how they experience backward planning:

- *I appreciate when my teacher co-creates timetables with us at the beginning of the day, and we have goals to complete by the end of the week.*
- *I like when we can manage our own time and day in school. We were given a checklist to finish by the end of the week.*
- *My teacher let us, the students, set our goals and make plans to reach the goals, and after one week, we will review it.*

Backward Design Steps

#1 Identify Desired Results

#2 Determine Assessment Evidence

#3 Plan Learning Experiences
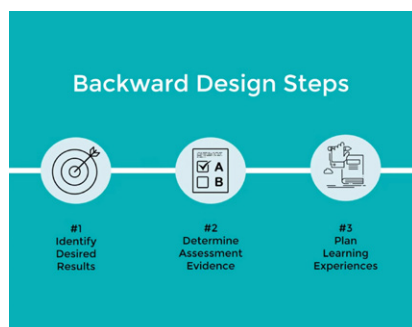
Guide to backward design with examples

Designing lessons with the end in mind is different from traditional lesson planning. This video explores those differences.

Backward design: A great way to move forward

Canadian educator Shelley Moore explores and illustrates backwards planning, suggesting that the first step in making curriculum responsive is to make a plan and know what curricular goals we are aiming to achieve. This video also emphasizes the importance of communicating clear goals to students and their families, because if the learning intention is clear, we can figure out multiple ways to get there.

GLOSSARY

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Global Learning Loop: This concept is what we have called the mini-courses we host in which people from around the world virtually visit classrooms in different countries and share what they think we can learn from them. The Global Learning Lab has also worked with many partner organizations to host their "learning loops," where staff come together to learn from their strongest classrooms.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Other Places to See Backwards Planning

- *Teaching As Leadership* chapter on Backwards Planning.
- Backwards Planning Takes Thinking Ahead.
- Jay McTighe's The Fundamentals of Backward Planning.
- Deepening Learning With Understanding by Design.

Design thinking for educators
Design experts at IDEO have created a set of tools and resources to help teachers bring design thinking to their classrooms.
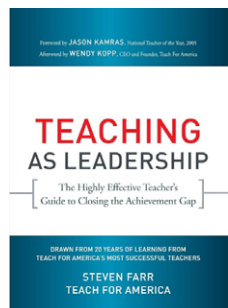
Success in any meaningful endeavor — from brain surgery in the operating room to brain development in the classroom — begins with purposeful planning. Before taking any action, strong leaders define the ultimate result they want, make clear how they will know they have succeeded, and only then choose and design strategies to that end. Mapping a path to success means imagining, with all the gritty detail possible, leading your team to that vision of success.

From *Teaching As Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap*

Tools That Help Align Daily Actions to Classroom Vision of Student Success

ALIGNING ACTIONS WITH PURPOSE

DAILY IMPLICATIONS OF VISION

SELF-DIAGNOSIS ON VISION

HOW TO
VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY AND OWNERSHIP

Informed by your understanding of your student's strengths, needs, interests, and challenges, give students choice and responsibility wherever possible–content, process, rules, learning styles, and routines.

VALUE LEARNER VARIABILITY & OWNERSHIP We seek to understand our students' strengths, interests, experiences, and ways of learning to inform plans to maximize student growth and ownership of learning.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Valuing Learner Variability & Ownership

ALLOW FAILURE AND REFLECTION
Plan moments that allow your students to embrace failure and reflection. Having the freedom to fail is as important as having the time to reflect and learn from their experiences.

Contribute your own techniques for **valuing learner variability and ownership** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Choice, Choice, Choice

Many of the teachers we studied emphasized the power of involving students in key decisions, classroom design, research topics, challenge problems, classroom roles, etc. And give space for students' passions.

Franco, Ale, and Morayma
Teach For All network members

Have Students Teach!

Encourage students to conduct research on the designated topic and exchange their findings with one another.

Nicole Ames
Enseña Perú Alumna

Active Learning as a Way to Be Inclusive

In my school, there are many students with special educational needs. Several of them are mathematically gifted. But there are also many students who have great difficulty in learning mathematics.

One of my biggest challenges was finding a compromise in teaching math to students of all abilities while developing 4Cs competencies. I realized that in order to make math education more inclusive, I needed to focus on project-based learning.

Patrycja Janekankit
Teach for Poland fellow. Quote taken from the article "STEAM projects are a pathway to modern education"

Other Sources:

- 10 Ways to Empower Students With Choice.
- Self-Paced Learning in Middle School Math.
- Differentiation to challenge.

On an individual scale, we start from the cognitive and social science premise that a multitude of factors influence learning. For example, processing and attention differences, mental health, cultural and stereotype threats, and socioeconomic status all contribute to one's ability to access, process, and retain information. In a given setting, individual students widely differ in how they read, understand lectures, take notes, retrieve and link knowledge, and communicate with others. Research has demonstrated that individual learner variability in a classroom, or any environment, is the norm.

Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, & Equity
Quote taken from "Student Engagement in Assessments: What Students and Teachers Find Engaging," (2016)

GLOSSARY

Agency: By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

Explore more about this concept and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Other Places to See Learner Variability and Ownership
- Four Simple Steps to Providing Free-Choice Learning.
- Self-Paced Learning in Middle School Math.
- Seven Things that Happen When Students Own Their Learning.
- Europass: The Seven C's of 21st-Century Teaching and Learning.

How do you inspire self-efficacy in students who have spent years believing they have limited potential? How do you build students' courage to dream when they've been deprived of opportunity? How do you develop the independence and leadership in students that are necessary for them to take ownership of their dreams and make them a reality? These are the hard questions Claudia Araya (Enseña Chile, 2012) confronted when she first met her students in Limache, Chile. Claudia started to think about how she could create a space in her classroom for students to build confidence and develop independence in order to successfully pursue an unlimited vision for their own lives.

What Does Valuing Learner Variability & Ownership Look Like?
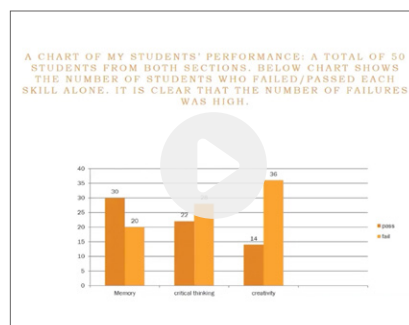
Metacognition fosters learner ownership
Metacognition, or "learning to learn," is a critical component for supporting students to grow and develop their own agency and awareness of who they are and how they learn. Watch this video from 2020 summarizing a Teach For All workshop, hosted by Rachel Brody, to reflect on your own learning and hear from Teach For Lebanon alumna and 2020 Oak Foundation Fellow Lubna Al Majthoub on how she applied metacognitive practices in her own classroom.

What do students want to learn?
Consider giving students the opportunity to communicate to your classroom or the school what they are interested in learning.

Students describe their need for ownership
In this video from the National Institute for Excellent Teaching, you can hear students' experiences with learning, experiences that do and do not center their agency, as well as concrete advice from students for teachers about how to ensure student ownership.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Valuing Learner Variability & Ownership

In 2022, Teach For All network partner teachers and teacher trainers participated in the Global Teacher and Teacher Coach Study, beta-testing classroom observation and reflection tools built from these Teaching As Collective Leadership insights. Among the recurring themes in that study was the importance of student ownership and differentiation. As one teacher in the study put it:

> *There was lots of resistance at first with students communicating their needs. But I stayed with them, giving them tips, building trust, and being open, and this has helped students gain confidence, and slowly but surely become leaders. Some of the best discussions have been ideas proposed by students, it has been a very humbling experience. I have learned how to approach students from different viewpoints. It's the students taking charge of the topics.*

In reading, I would often bring four different stories and students would get to choose the one that captured their interest. I had chosen the stories so that all of them were at the same level of content/rigor, but their ability to choose added to their motivation.

Morayma Jiménez
Certified bilingual teacher for primary school, 2011 Teach For America Alumna, Enseña por México former Head of Training, and current Global Lead, Participant Leadership Development at Teach For All

HOW TO
EXPECT HIGHER–ORDER THINKING

Build your awareness of the ratio of student effort that focuses on understanding, remembering, and applying rather than analyzing, evaluating, and creating. And design lessons that balance that ratio.

> EXPECT HIGHER-ORDER THINKING
> We design lessons that build from students' understanding and application of new ideas to analysis, evaluation, and creation.

Contribute your own techniques for **expecting higher–order thinking** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Too many students are in classrooms that center on basic remembering and understanding (at the bottom of Bloom's), and never draw students farther toward higher cognitive demand of application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. While we should not "skip" the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, we cannot stop there if we aspire to grow students as leaders of a better future.

GLOSSARY

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders Of A Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Image source: Bloom's taxonomy by Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (adapted).

If you are not familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy, check out this Teacher's Guide to Bloom's Taxonomy.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Expecting Higher–Order Thinking

Lean Toward "Open" Assignments

Sometimes I give pretty detailed instructions about how students need to complete a project. But I also try to give more open tasks where our focus is on the goal and outcome and students have to figure out the path.

Sahithya Anumolu
Co-founder at Inqui-Lab Foundation

Delay the Answer

The moment the right answer comes out in the class, everyone stops thinking. Delay the right answer for as long as possible to promote thinking. You do this by asking a question and giving students thinking time and giving hints to encourage all students to think.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

No One Answer!

Ask students questions that have multiple answers, and have them explain their thought process on how they arrived at said answer.

Claudia Anthony
Teach For Malaysia Alumna

Teach Design Thinking

Teach students skills of design thinking. Identify a problem, define the problem, come up with an idea, and prototype the idea. Both techniques and processes and to build a problem solver mindset.

Sahithya Anumolu
Co-founder at Inqui-Lab Foundation

Expectations Rubrics

Giving a rubric of what is expected, setting students up to do independent projects and figure out how to fulfill that rubric (without the teacher).

Anjali Sabnani
Teach For India

Other Sources:

- Teaching Strategies That Enhance Higher–Order Thinking.
- "Essential Questions" as Foundation for Higher-Order Thinking.

Classrooms Meet Higher Order Thinking

Amsterdam educator Dylan Hyman wants to inspire teachers and students to create their own world and practice the sort of thinking skills they will need to make their wildest dreams a reality. She incorporates activities that encourage higher-order thinking in the classroom and is a champion of bringing innovative "20 percent time" to schools.

If he would just tell me what he thought, I wouldn't really think about what I think. I wouldn't have an opinion. I feel like I would be a robot just listening to whatever he is saying… but I would still have my own opinion in my head that I couldn't really share.

Chandler Palmer
Former student of Taylor Delhagen (Teach For America alumnus) who uses difficult, probing, critical questions to help students develop critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills. Quote taken from "Critical Minds" (2014)

Additional Research & Resources Related To Expecting Higher Order Thinking
- Factors Influencing Students' Higher Order Thinking Skills Development.
- Using Visual Thinking Strategies in the Classroom.

Encouraging critical thinking
What kind of questions teachers and parents ask children has a great effect on whether they can develop critical minds. In this TEDx talk from Xiguan, China, teacher evaluator Brian Oshiro shares what he has observed in the classroom that contributes to higher-order thinking and offers three simple questions we can ask to encourage critical thinking by the children and ourselves.

What Does Expecting Higher-Order Thinking Look Like?

Real-world problem solving in Thailand's alternative schools
From hands-on lessons in the river, to teaching students to cook their own lunch as well as other survival skills, here's how Thailand's alternative schools take a different approach to education from mainstream schools.

Design for change: Feel-Imagine-Do-Share
This simple design-thinking framework cultivates the "I Can" mindset in all children and centers teaching and learning in higher-order thinking. This approach builds "Creative Confidence" in children.
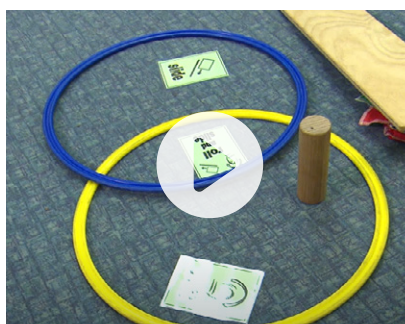
Expecting higher-order thinking with younger students in Australia
Virtually visit a classroom where the teacher is using critical thinking, discovery, analysis, and evaluation even with young students. Notice how much the students (and teacher) enjoy learning in these ways.

Other Places to See "Developing Higher-Order Thinking"
- Video introduction to Bloom's Taxonomy.
- A Pixar movie's illustration of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- "Vertical learning" – A model of collective critical thinking.

HOW TO
LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY

Make the lesson fun. Connect to students' lives. Invite debate and multiple perspectives. Be clear on the question you want students to explore. Design space for students to make their own meaning. Challenge student assumptions. Use principles from development theory to help structure your design.

LEVERAGE LEARNING THEORY Intentionally choose and metacognitively teach learning principles to design experiences that accelerate student growth.

As we have studied the growth journeys of transformational teachers across and beyond our network and married those stories and experiences with expertise and research in adult learning and development, several key qualities of transformational learning experiences have emerged. We are expressing those insights as **"polarities,"** since it seems that the most powerful learning experiences capture healthy tensions between two ideas that might, at first, seem incompatible. These polarities are "yin/yang" not "good/bad." They are "interdependent opposites" not a "spectrum."

We are finding that the key to designing exceptional, meaningful, transformational learning experiences is to think AND not OR. Transformational classrooms seem to create learning experiences for students that are both:

WELCOMING *ensuring safe inclusion for all identities*	**&**	**DISORIENTING** *dismantling assumptions that inhibit growth*
COLLECTIVE *learning with and from each other*	**&**	**PERSONAL** *learning in our own best way*
DIRECTIVE *communicating, showing, and telling in clear and accessible ways*	**&**	**EXPLORATORY** *questioning, exploring, and discovering in unexpected ways*
STRUCTURED *building in planned and predictable ways on what is known*	**&**	**RESPONSIVE** *adjusting to address learners' curiosity, questions, and confusion*
REFLECTIVE *gaining awareness of ourselves and others*	**&**	**ACTIVE** *applying, practicing, and creating*

For a much deeper exploration of these learning principles, and some foundational insights about how humans learn (that we are conditioned to ignore), go to our chapter on "Learning About Learning."

Contribute your own techniques for **leveraging learning theory** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

I never attempt to teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.

Albert Einstein
World famous physicist

In designing learning, there's a delicate dance between meeting students where they are and opening up new horizons. A process of deepening and broadening understanding. In order to open up new thinking, carefully consider what background knowledge might be needed and what developmental assumptions you might be making.

Jude Heaton
Former partner, Learning Design Through Insights & Storytelling, Teach For All. Worked on developing Teaching As Collective Leadership for the last six years

Structure your lessons the way stories are structured, using the four Cs: causality, conflict, complications, and character. This doesn't mean you must do most of the talking. Small group work or projects or any other method may be used. The story structure applies to the way you organize the material that you encourage your students to think about, not to the methods you use to teach the material.

The material I want students to learn is actually the answer to a question. On its own, the answer is almost never interesting. But if you know the question, the answer may be quite interesting. That's why making the question clear is so important. I sometimes feel that we, as teachers, are so focused on getting to the answer, we spend insufficient time making sure that students understand the question and appreciate its significance. To us, the question and its importance are obvious. To them, they aren't.

Daniel T. Willingham
Cognitive Scientist at the University of Virginia. Quote taken from his book *Why Don't Students Like School?* (2009)

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Leveraging Learning Theory

Get Students to Present and Teach

Ask them to write to someone/something that will be shared and presented to an actual audience. This helps make the task real.

Sahithya Anumolu
Co-founder at Inqui-Lab Foundation

Let Students Explore and Discover

The thing I found the most fun learning at school, for example, my history teacher would teach us a topic, supposing it's WWI and she would show us a video instead of explaining everything in detail and she would always start the class with music, the music from that period.

Mihaan
Student

Plan Your Lesson Like a Journey

Think of the different stages of the lesson and how it fits together. Think of the different energy needed at each stage. Think of the emotional journey. That doesn't mean you have to map out each part, but it helps you put yourself in the learners' shoes, and think of the lesson as a whole. It also gives a structure to balance different elements like times of uncertainty and disorientation, alongside discovery.

Jude Heaton
Former partner, Learning Design Through Insights & Storytelling, Teach For All. Worked on developing Teaching As Collective Leadership for the last six years

Don't Be Boring

Research tells us that if we fail to invest our students within the first five minutes of class it is nearly impossible to hook them back to our topic. Thus, we cannot be boring. Our time with our students is immensely precious and we all deserve time that is fun, exciting, and worth digging into.

Virtually every teacher and student we have studied and spoken with

Manage Pace

The solution to working memory overloads is straightforward: slow the pace, and use memory aids such as writing on the whiteboard to save students from keeping too much information in working memory.

Daniel T. Willingham
Cognitive Scientist at the University of Virginia. Quote taken from his book *Why Don't Students Like School?* (2009)

Other Sources:
- Vertical learning.
- Sharing your planning.
- Learning stations.

Other Places to See Leveraging Learning Theory
- Strategies for Teaching Metacognition in Classrooms.
- Insights from Teach For All's Global Learning Loop on Metacognition.
- Metacognition_and_Self-Regulated_Learning_in_Student-Centered_Learning_Environments.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership has been collectively developed with input from teachers, teacher coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. We intend to continue that collective development as we test, contextualize, and implement it. We encourage you to make this possible!

Below is our "digital bulletin board," which we are constantly building (and rebuilding) with the input of generous readers who share their ideas in our **Co-learning Padlet**. Contribute to the evolution of the model by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links in our Co-learning Padlet (here).

LEARN AND DESIGN

#PlanBackwards

"When you plan a lesson, you start with the information you want students to know by its end. As a next step, consider what the key question for that lesson might be and how you can frame that question so it will have the right level of difficulty to engage your students, and so you will respect your students' cognitive limitations."

Daniel T. Willingham
Cognitive scientist at the University of Virginia. Quote taken from his book *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom*

#ExpectHigherOrderThinking

Education Buzzwords Defined: What Is Blended Learning?

Blended Learning Visual Thinking

#LeverageLearningTheory

Perspective taking vs. the one right answer

Debating things that are introduced (like moral stories) instead of being a "specific" takeaway; allowing for perspectives of the students; discussion and debate.

Nalika

#ValueLearnerVariability andOwnership

The 20-Minute Rule: While still debated, I found on average, my students' attention will fade every 20 minutes (or less). This is true even for mature adults with fully developed brains! So try to imagine you are a youth, still developing so many skills and literally growing your brain and neuro pathways! So, when designing a class, break it down into smaller 20-minute (or less) blocks/activities. Create little transitions between these blocks. Like telling a funny story, having a stretch, laughing at a meme, playing 60 seconds from a popular song, etc. Also, the more you lecture the more attention issues you may have. The more "active learning," the more focus you will have.

https://www.teachstarter.com/us/blog/10-ways-to-improve-student-concentration-us/

#LeverageLearningTheory

Vertical Learning

Almost as if the teacher works smarter (and less) while the students are more engaged than ever! Also reminds me of Pooja's class!

Maggie MacDonnell

#ExpectHigherOrderThinking

PHILIPPINES SCHOOL: The video states that the teachers integrated their various subject expertise, but did not give examples, because it is like a 3-minute video. But I think the scale of this project and the meaning just demand excellence and show how learning can come alive.

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=-FCfcB-OueU&pp=QAFIAQ%3D%3D

Maggie MacDonnell

Contribute to our "Learn and Design" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

INTRODUCTION TO
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE TO INSPIRE LEARNING

Our classroom creates opportunities for students (and me) to joyfully and productively struggle with rigorous challenges and content at the frontiers of our knowledge and abilities.

FACILITATE & CHALLENGE
to inspire learning

FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY
We communicate clearly, listen actively, and question strategically to build collective learning.

MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS
We co-create and uphold rituals and systems that minimize inefficient distractions and maximize productive engagement.

FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY
We create the conditions for collective student-led exploration by sharing responsibility and de-centering ourselves from the learning process.

FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE
We respond and adjust to students' needs while staying true to lesson objectives and purposes.

MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS
We check for learning during and after lessons, highlighting and celebrating progress while diagnosing root causes of learning challenges.

GLOSSARY
Explore more about our definitions of Agency, Mastery, Transformational Classroom, Grow Students, and other linguistic options in our **Glossary**.

Robust, rigorous meaningful learning rarely happens when students are passively listening to or watching a teacher. (The same is true for adult learners. Passive listening is weak learning.)

If we are aspiring to grow students as leaders, and if we care about growing students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery, classrooms must be built around active, collective, discovery-oriented learning. Students, not teachers, must "carry the weight" of the learning. Of course, knowledge, modeling, provocations, and resources come from the teacher, but in transformational classrooms, we see that the ratio of teacher-to-student ownership of learning time is flipped from the traditional model where the teacher talks a lot and then the student practices a little. In transformational classrooms, the teacher is the catalyst, the "space holder" and the facilitator of students' exploratory engagement with rigorous content.

Many of us were taught with an "I do, we do, you do" type classroom model. Many of us, as new teachers, were taught similar lesson-planning models. The truth is, that the conventional way of planning lessons is simpler and easier for new teachers, but it has enormous costs in the long run. Facilitating more active, discovery learning is much more engaging and enjoyable, and effective as a path to meaningful mastery through (not at the expense of) wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

One of the most obvious distinguishing characteristics of transformational classrooms I visit around the world is that students are enjoying working together on difficult content. The work is hard. And the work is fun. Sometimes that learning is led by the teacher, sometimes by students, but in every case, students are enjoying wrestling with rigorous knowledge and skills. And I am always struck by how much the teacher is enjoying teaching with that aim.

Wendy Kopp
Co-founder and CEO, Teach For All

Author Amanda Ripley studied exceptional schools around the world

One thing was clear: To give our kids the kind of education they deserved, we had to first agree that rigor mattered most of all. That school existed to help kids learn to think. To work hard. And yes, to fail. That was the core consensus that made everything else possible.

Amanda Ripley
American journalist and author. Quote taken from *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way* (2013)

HOW TO
FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY

Try to see and hear yourself as your students see and hear you, focusing on what you and your students are learning. Emphasize questions over answers, student voice over your own, and discovery over delivery. Give instructions clearly, hold space for students to lead learning, and check for understanding.

FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY
We communicate with clarity and authenticity, actively listen to students, and regularly check for understanding.

Contribute your own techniques for **facilitating effectively** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

GLOSSARY

Agency: By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

Mastery: We use this word to describe the meaningfully rigorous learning needed to prepare students for leadership in the future. The term signals a focus on deeper learning, surpassing many current education models and systems.

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders Of A Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our Glossary.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Facilitating Effectively

Vary (Very) Clear Instructions

I plan for and practice giving clear instructions, but try to do so in different ways. Sometimes we use call and response. Sometimes students give instructions. I also was trying to find the balance between giving freedom but also providing a structure that enables exploration.

Felicia Yoon
Co-founder of Arus Academy. Arus Academy provides meaningful education to vulnerable and underprivileged students in Malaysia

Gaurav's Top Tips

The aim of good facilitation is to activate student thinking. Success is not measured in how engaging your performance is but in how much you get students to think.

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

These are Gaurav's top tips:

WAIT FOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OF UNDERSTANDING
The most common mistake with Check for Understanding is that the teacher repeats the learning instead of the student doing it. Do not repeat and move on until students can correctly share their understanding.

DELAY THE ANSWER
The moment the right answer comes out in the class, everyone stops thinking. Delay the right answer for as long as possible to promote thinking by asking a question and giving students thinking time, giving hints to encourage all students to think, and not going immediately to the student who might have the right answer.

TEMPERATURE CHECK
During planning, decide on three to four questions you will ask to get a good sense of student understanding. Use methods that show you all students' answers: hand signals, red-green cards, and student boards. Then adjust as needed by addressing misconceptions, moving on, etc.

WHAT COULD BE CONFUSING?

Ask students to guess something that someone might be confused about (no naming, pointing) and how to clarify that confusion. This improves student understanding and will bring out points of confusion that you could never have anticipated.

EXPLORE MISTAKES, TOGETHER

When a student gives a wrong answer, instead of immediately supplying the right answer, explore the mistake. This helps everyone learn from it. Ask students for alternative responses, ask students to compare the different responses, and share their views on them.

GLOW & GROW

When giving feedback to students, instead of just correcting their mistakes also tell them all the things they did well. Maintain a good balance of encouragement and nudging. The student gets tangible evidence of their success and a clear direction to move toward for improvement.

RIGHT, WRONG, RIGHT

Demonstrate new skills by showing the right way to do something, the wrong ways to avoid, and then ending with the right way again. This way students will know what not to do but you start and end with what's right.

SPOTLIGHT

Ensure that all students are paying attention by letting them know that you can put the spotlight on anyone at any time. Give students a heads-up before turning on the spotlight. Ask a question, give some wait time, and then you can select a student to answer (spotlight).

Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* is a widely used guide to the basics of strong teaching. Doug and his colleagues made a list of indicators of rigor:

- Students process academic ideas in writing that requires complete sentences.
- Students discuss ideas using technical vocabulary.
- The teacher consistently asks students to improve and develop their own and their classmates' initial answers.
- About 75 percent of the time students are doing cognitive work (writing, reading, problem-solving).
- Students read challenging texts and answer text-dependent questions about it.
- Students consistently give evidence for their answers.
- The teacher asks at least five why/how questions.

What Does Facilitating Effectively Look Like?

Connect learning to culture
Global Teacher Prize winner Jesus Insilada in the Philippines uses indigenous textile patterns to use students' own cultural heritage to bridge their anxieties about learning math.

Additional Research & Resources Related To Facilitating Effectively

- Five keys to rigorous project-based learning to grow lifelong learners for the real world.
- Teach Like a Champion Online offers shared online resources for practicing and supporting teaching fundamentals and content pedagogy virtually and without students.
- Firki is Teach For India's online teacher training portal.
- Impulso Docente is an organization led by an Enseña Chile Alumnus focused on building foundational teaching skills (in Spanish).
- How Productive Struggles Fires Up Learners.
- The Power of Productive Struggle.
- Exploring Productive Struggle in Math.
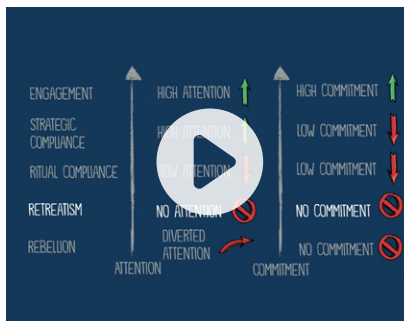
Critical questioning and learning failure as a path to rigorous engagement

In this video from 2014, Taylor Delhagen helps students develop critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills with curiosity and critical questioning and valuing the teachable moments in failure.

Schlechty's Levels of Engagement

This model provides a useful framework for thinking about what it means for students to be genuinely engaged in their learning. Schlecty defined it this way, "Engagement is active. It requires the students to be attentive as well as in attendance; it requires the students to be committed to the task and find some inherent value in what he or she is being asked to do. The engaged student not only does the task assigned but also does the task with enthusiasm and diligence."

Other Places to See Facilitating Effectively

- How to Give Feedback to Develop Great Learners.
- The Ultimate Guide to Academic Rigor.

Research Into The Power Of "Productive Struggle"

The idea that struggle is essential to intellectual growth has a long history. Dewey referred to the process of engaging students in "some perplexity, confusion, or doubt" (1933, p. 12) as essential for building deep understanding while Piaget (1960) wrote of learners' struggle as a process of restructuring their disequilibrium toward new understanding. Cognitive theorists have referred to cognitive dissonance as an impetus for cognitive growth (e.g., Festinger, 1957) while others have identified experimentation (Polya, 1957) and sense-making (Handa, 2003) as important ingredients for understanding (Hatano 1988) related cognitive incongruity with the development of reasoning skills that display conceptual understanding. Brownwell and Sims (1946) argued, like Dewey, that students must have opportunities to "muddle through" (p. 40) in the process of resolving problematic situations rather than conditioning students through repetition. More recently, Hiebert & Wearne (2003) stated, "All students need to struggle with challenging problems if they are to learn mathematics deeply" (p. 6).

Hiroko Warshauer
Associate Professor at Texas State University. Quote taken from "The Role of Productive Struggle in Teaching and Learning Middle School Mathematics" (2011)

HOW TO
MANAGE NORMS & RITUALS

Choose a small number of logistical and cultural challenges in your classroom that are most likely to interfere with collaborative learning if not done well. Attendance? Grading? Getting started? Ending class? Co-design with students simple systems to limit their distraction and maximize the benefit of your classroom's inclusive culture of rigorous engagement.

MANAGE NORMS
& RITUALS
We co-create and uphold rituals and systems that maximize welcoming and productive engagement for all students.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Managing Norms & Rituals

Contribute your own techniques for **managing norms and rituals** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

Secret Signals to Colleagues

I had a secret plan with my principal where we would "catch" my students doing good! When my students were engaged in something really positive, I would send my principal the signal. He would leave his office and appear to randomly "drop in" on my class and "catch" my students doing amazing work. Then, in front of all of them, he would shower them with praise! My students were used to being the number one students in school suspensions. They had hostile relationships with most teachers and the administration. So this new interaction was such a game changer. Over a few months they built very endearing relationships with the principal. And it changed everything for us at the school.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

(Students) behavior is key to the success of most classroom outcomes. What we call behavior is actually the sum of an enormous number of habits and attitudes and skills that adults frequently take for granted. None of these factors are innate, and they must be imparted or taught in some way.

Tom Bennett
Director and founder of researchED. Quote taken from The Beginning Teacher's Behaviour Toolkit

The Warm Welcome Doorway

Stand at the door to the classroom every time students are coming in or going out and say something personal to each and every one of them. It changes the culture so quickly.

Multiple teachers and students

Redirect Behavior with Student Agency

When a student does behavior that goes against the class norms, you can help the student correct it while maintaining their agency. Some ways to do it: Offer choice ("X, you can put it away or give it to me"), Offer help ("How can I help you with this, Y?")

Multiple teachers and students

Student Captains of Key Logistics

Students can take roll (silently with a clipboard; it takes 60 seconds), collect homework, and clean up the classroom. They want responsibility and, after some practice, they save lots of time.

Multiple teachers and students

Because the teacher respects each child and refrains from interference, the children treat one another with the same respect and kindness.

Maria Montessori
Italian physician and educator.

Hanan Al Hroub grew up in a refugee camp in Palestine. As a teacher, she won the Global Teacher Prize for her work to center norms and rituals that promote non-violence, despite the trauma and oppression she and her students are experiencing. She has inspired her colleagues to review the way they teach, their classroom management strategies, and how they work with students. Check out the classroom systems she uses in her "Play and Learn" classroom.

Other Sources:

- 60 Must-Teach Classroom Procedures and Routines
- How to make your classroom a healing place
- The power of humor to manage classrooms

What Does Managing Norms & Rituals Look Like?

Morning meeting
This may be the mother of all daily routines and is not just for young students. This Edutopia video shares some of the basics of strong, culture-building meetings that encourage collaborative learning.

Daily routines that create a collaborative culture of achievement
Take a virtual tour of a dozen powerful classroom routines this teacher uses to keep students focused on learning and growing.

Creating classroom rules
In this clip, watch a veteran teacher host a conversation with students about how to organize and categorize all the possible rules that they proposed for the classroom.

Research On Culturally Sustaining Classroom Management

Building from the literature on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010; Milner, 2010), Weinstein et al. (2004) conceptualized several principles that shape what they called culturally responsive classroom management when they introduced the theory in an article published in the Journal of Teacher Education: (1) recognition of teachers' own ethnocentrism; (2) knowledge of students' culture; (3) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political systems in education; (4) appropriate management strategies; and (5) development of caring classrooms. Weinstein et al. (2004) stressed that developing and implementing culturally responsive classroom management is a frame of mind more than a set of predetermined skills, actions, ideas, or strategies, which is why it is so essential that teachers develop a set of understandings, beliefs, and mindsets to advance equitable classroom management strategies. When teachers develop mindsets that allow them to negotiate power structures, they reject attempts to control students. Culturally responsive management frameworks "incorporate elements of students' home, personal, and community lives into the classroom" (Monroe & Obidah, 2004, p. 259).

H. Richard Milner IV
American teacher educator and scholar of urban teacher education on the tenured faculty at the Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Quote taken from Culturally Responsive Classroom Management, Oxford 2019

Other Places to See Managing Norms & Rituals
- Research-Backed Strategies for Better Classroom Management.
- Five Principles of Outstanding Classroom Management.

HOW TO
FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY

Whatever your content area, ask "How can my students experiment to discover (and not just be told and shown) these insights and skills?" Intentionally guide practice, and enable students to lead learning and check for understanding. Organize learning around real-world questions that call for genuine exploration.

> FOSTER COLLECTIVE DISCOVERY
> We create the conditions for collective student-led exploration by sharing responsibility and de-centering ourselves from the learning process.

Contribute your own techniques for **fostering collective discovery** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

The test of a good teacher is not how many questions he can ask his pupils that they will answer readily, but how many questions he inspires them to ask him, which he finds it hard to answer.

Alice Wellington Rollins
Late-19th century American feminist writer, novelist, and educator

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Fostering Collective Discovery

Let go of the bias that learning is dependent on the teacher; learning can happen both in the presence and absence of the teacher. Once the child learns how to learn, then they can attain infinite knowledge.

Pooja Chopra
Teach for India Alumna from the 2013 cohort, co-founder of Khwaab Welfare Trust, and currently serving as the Program Head at The Circle

We asked Pooja to share her advice for teachers aiming to foster collective discovery in their classrooms. These were her top tips:

MAKING MISTAKES AND CELEBRATING FAILURES
Encourage students to make mistakes and to see them as a key tool of learning in life. Shift students' focus toward effort and intention. Celebrate failures for the learning they offer.

IDENTIFYING AND MAPPING STRENGTHS
Identify the strength of all children, every child is good at something. Throughout the day, map these strengths to different parts of the day and allow children to lead in their areas of strength. For example, in my classroom, Faiza started the day by leading the entire class to play football, followed by Rtika who led them with ballet, followed by Meenu, Shagun, Radha, and Adiba as team leaders during classes, and Nandini in between classes to do energizers. Also, create spaces where they learn to take and incorporate feedback to lead their class better.

LEARNING CIRCLES
Each day or week have children sit in a circle and discuss something. The topics can vary across circles and each circle can last for 15 minutes. Each circle can have a leader/moderator who plays the role of ensuring learning happens; everyone voices their opinion. Encourage children to agree to disagree. Have each circle present their learnings on charts and get each circle to move around to see what the others have written. The circles can be imaginative, explorative, academic, creative, and a lot more. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator and observer. The teacher works closely with the moderators before and after to enable them to facilitate learning and discovery in their circles.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH REAL-LIFE PROJECTS. DESIGN FOR CHANGE
Discuss real-life problems that exist in the lives of the children and their communities, encourage them to voice their opinions for the same, and ask those tough questions even outside the classroom. Group children based on what makes them most angry among all the problems and get them to work on solving these problems over the course of time using the Feel-Imagine-Do-Share process. Create spaces where children can come together to work on their problems, prototype, experiment, fail, reimagine, and share results. These spaces work well outside the classroom.

EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN

Expose children to situations where they don't have the answers but will have to find them. Don't give them the how but the why. Put them together in groups and let them explore possibilities that might work or not. Enable them to experience friction in working together and coming up with solutions to enable co-learning.

SILENT SPECTATOR

Have parts of the day where you become invisible. You are there in the class but only as an observer, listener, and learner. Start small and grow these periods over time. They can help you truly understand what knowledge, values, skills, and strengths the children are internalizing.

In Egoitz Etxeandia's classroom in Spain, students are growing mushrooms in a "Funghi Thinking" project, which is used to teach objectives from reading to writing to math to science. And, as you'll see in this video, the students are also raising their awareness of social challenges, learning to collaborate and solve problems, and having a lot of fun. And, so is Mr. Etxeandia.

Other Places to See Fostering Collective Discovery

- Five Keys to Rigorous Project–Based Learning.
- A high–tech teacher's strategy: Curiosity time.
- Applying math to community challenges: Max's story on how he and his classmates cleaned a beach using math. (In Spanish)

What Does Fostering Collective Discovery Look Like?

Teaching with real-world problems

Débora Garofalo (Brazil) was a finalist for the Global Teaching Prize the million-dollar Global Teacher Prize for her discovery-oriented classroom in which students used the problem of garbage in the community as a challenge to address using robots. As she describes in this video, the project had a wide range of positive influences on student growth.

Engaging with and learning alongside the community

Peter Tabichi's classroom in Kenya lacks the resources of many schools, but he finds ways to use the local community resources and needs as opportunities (farming, health, etc.) to help students explore and learn. "To be a great teacher," he says, "you have to do more and talk less."

Teaching with critical questions

In this video from 2014, watch Taylor Delhagen use challenging questions to put students' thinking and discovery at the center of learning.

They were infected by something I call the "I can" bug.... I got infected as a student at a design college, and I encountered adults who actually believed in my ideas, challenged me, and had lots of cups of chai with me. I was struck by just how wonderful it felt. And how contagious that feeling was. I also realized that I should have gotten infected when I was 7. So when I started Riverside School... it became a lab—a lab to prototype and refine a design process that could consciously infect the mind with the "I can" bug. I uncovered that if learning is embedded in a real-world context, that is if you blur the boundaries between school and life, then children go through a journey of aware (where they can see the change), enable (be change), and empower (lead the change). And that directly increased students' wellbeing. Students became more competent and less helpless.

Kiran Sethi
Founder of Riverside School (India). Quote taken from her TEDTalk "Kids, take charge"

Additional Research & Resources Related to Fostering Collective Discovery

- The learning theory of constructivism.
- "The children said, 'How do we do that?' I said, 'I don't know, actually' and I left." — What happens when students learn from the internet on their own.
- Self-determination theory — Shed light on how supporting student autonomy is vital for learning.
- Research into the power of curiosity in the classroom.
- Student Motivation: Why Autonomy Matters.

HOW TO
FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE

Read the room, check for understanding, and make adjustments. If students demonstrate mastery sooner or later than you imagined, your plans need to change. Take advantage of teachable moments.

FLEXIBLY ADJUST COURSE
We respond and adjust to students' needs while staying true to lesson objectives and purposes.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Flexibly Adjusting Course

SEIZE UNEXPECTED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
As one teacher put it, when you "keep your eye on the prize—focusing on the purpose of the lesson," you will see opportunities to adjust how you get to that objective.

CHECK FREQUENTLY FOR UNDERSTANDING
Plan for regular opportunities for students to demonstrate what they are learning and expect to adjust your next moves based on what you learn. (Do not ask, "Do you understand?")

CHANGE AND VARY PACE
A key variable a teacher can adjust is how quickly or slowly they move through learning engagements, based on students' confidence and mastery.

EXPERIMENT, EACH DAY
"What worked yesterday may not work today." Strong teachers exhibit flexibility by trying new approaches and feeling out what works and doesn't work.

Contribute your own techniques for **flexibly adjusting course** to our growing library…and see what others have contributed here.

I think one of my biggest lessons is the importance of thinking about how we seize the opportunities that emerge in front of us? If we're working collectively and if we're really working along with our communities, we can't just strategically plan and sequence the universe for impact and change. We're in an ongoing process of learning and discovering and finding out what works for the context of the community or the system. So, I think it's important to plan. Right. We've got to know, and have a direction of where we're going, but also have the ability to be agile and shift according to what emerges.

Chan Soon Seng
2012 fellow and current CEO of Teach For Malaysia

My context demanded that I be extremely flexible. Class numbers were always unpredictable, varying between three and 20 students who would arrive within a two-hour morning window. My students were living in vulnerable conditions so it was very likely that at least some of them would arrive hungry, tired, or having recently witnessed a traumatic event such as domestic violence. Initially, trying to be steadfast about narrow "academic–centered" goals while dealing with the irregularity of my students and their "baggage" was overwhelming. But I figured out there was something within my control: my personal mindset. I let go of any expectation that a day or week would go 1-2-3/A-B-C. My class would not be a "Pinterest cookie cutter class with beautiful, color-coded structures every day." I needed to be dynamic to react to how many of my students would arrive and what would be in their "backpack." I needed to meet them where they were at that day, not where the workbook said we should be. I needed to have plans A, B, C, and A1, A2, A3, etc.! Once I embraced this, things really started to flow!

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Other Sources:
- A guide to flexibility in the classroom.
- Flexible classrooms as the path to student voice.

When active listening is present, we can question ourselves and improve at the moment. It gives us the possibility to realize when our participants need something more or even when we need to raise the bar.

Miguel Ñique
Educator and social communicator. Specialist in designing learning ecosystems and a competency-based approach. Currently leading Training at Enseña Perú

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles Darwin
English naturalist, geologist, and biologist

There are hundreds of paths up the mountain, all leading to the same place, so it doesn't matter which path you take. The only person wasting time is the one who runs around the mountain, telling everyone that his or her path is wrong.

Hindu proverb

Plans don't always go the way you imagine, you have to adjust plans and always find a way, even if it isn't the first option.

Edorela Beqiraj
Teacher, Kosovo

The work of teachers is we are making 1,000 mental calculations at any given moment. During class time, when I find that discussions are going on longer than I anticipated, I'm trying to, at the moment, negotiate and prioritize. What I'm doing in those moments, I'm listening to them and really trying to note and to capture what is at the heart? What is the common thread across the different comments, questions, and reflections that are being shared? And oftentimes what I will do in those moments is literally flip through my notes in my PowerPoint slides and make some decisions. I will do things like place stars next to 'OK, I know I want to get to this idea. Do I need the slide, or can I find a way to insert it into this discussion?' Maybe we won't get to this entire section, these 12 slides might be cut.

Christina Villareal
Harvard Graduate School of Education. Quote taken from Instructional Moves: Adjusting lesson plans in real time

What Does Flexibly Adjusting Course Look Like?

Celebrate mistakes
Great teachers are watching for teachable moments in students' efforts and adjust course to celebrate and learn from mistakes. This video shares ways to build a classroom culture that welcomes effort and errors.
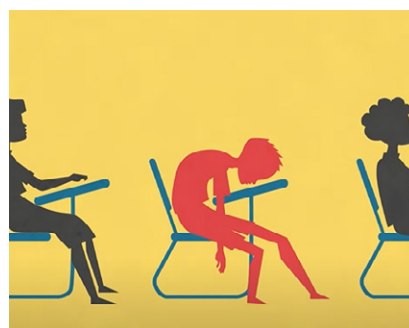
Differentiate in the moment
Differentiating content and process does not have to be a major ordeal but can be a way of thinking that leads to in the moment adjustments. Check out this video for concrete examples of flexibly differentiating in the moment.

Other Places to See Flexibly Adjusting Course
- Cognitive Flexibility and Adaptive Teaching: How Mental Flexibility Makes You a Stronger Educator.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Flexibly Adjusting Course
- Lead with "the why" and adjust the "what and how" as needed. Watch one of the most popular TED talks of all time, in which Simon Sinek describes how great leaders lead with the *why*, and let the *what* and *how* follow from that focus on the why.

HOW TO
MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS

Take stock of student growth–daily, weekly, and monthly. Publish that progress in ways that motivates students. Adjust your plans in light of incoming data and feedback.

MONITOR LEARNING & PROGRESS
We check for learning during and after lessons, highlighting and celebrating progress while diagnosing root causes of learning challenges.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Monitoring Learning and Progress

STUDENT REFLECTING & SUMMARIZING
After engaging with complex content, ask your students to reflect on what they have learned and summarize it in whichever way they prefer (text, a graphic organizer, a comic, etc.) and to share it with their peers.

Progress Principle

Motivation increases when we recognize progress toward an important goal. Schedule a consistent time (daily or weekly or monthly) when the class marks their progress. Pick meaningful measures of progress — topics mastered, task completion, lessons learned. Structure the reflection at an individual, group, or class level. Or a mix of all of them!

Gaurav Singh
A Teach For India Alumnus and the founder of 321 Education, an organization built around helping teachers facilitate effective learning

Showcase Events to Celebrate Progress

I sought out or created ANY type of event to showcase what my students were doing. This could even be some photos on a Facebook/social media post from the classroom celebrating what students were doing and sharing that with a wider community. It could be sharing classroom news on the community radio. It could also mean showcasing student work in different places in the community — from the grocery store to a youth house.

Maggie MacDonnell
Global Teacher Prize Winner, Inuit Community north of the Arctic Circle

Contribute your own techniques for **monitoring learning and progress** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Many studies indicate that the most effective feedback is given immediately rather than a few days, weeks, or months later. Focusing on what students did correctly is far more powerful than focusing on what is wrong. Students can become defensive and anxious and blame others when what they have done incorrectly is pointed out and this often decreases resilience. Remember to notice extra effort or risk-taking.

Karen Tui Boyes
New Zealand Educator of the Year. Quote taken from Feedback in the Classroom (2018)

Toolkit: Assessment Bank
Teach For All's Global Learning Lab is building a library of tools for measuring students' growing wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. Choose and contextualize these tools to help track and monitor student progress to inform adjustments to plans.
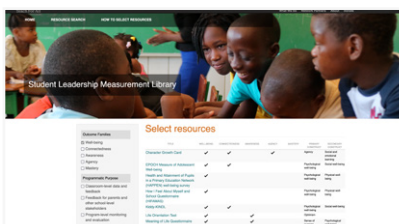
While asking questions may seem a simple task, it is perhaps the most powerful tool we possess as teachers. If we ask the right question of the right student at the right moment we may inspire her to new heights of vision and insight. A good question can excite, disturb, or comfort, and eventually yield an unexpected bounty of understanding and critical awareness. But even apart from such serendipitous moments, question-asking serves many functions that make it the stock in trade of the skillful teacher.

Brandon Cline
Chicago Center for Teaching, University of Chicago. Quote taken from Asking Effective Questions

Additional Research & Resources Related to Monitoring Learning and Progress

- Better Ways to Measure Student Progress by Matthew Campbell.
- A Restorative Approach to Grading by Juliana Ewing.
- Rebeca Anijovich and Graciela Cappelletti (2020). La retroalimentación formativa: Una oportunidad para mejorar los aprendizajes y la enseñanza. Revista Docencia Universitaria, 21(1), 81-96. (In Spanish)
- Empowering Students to Own the Assessment Process.

What Does Monitoring Learning and Progress Look Like?

Improving practice through student feedback
This animated video shares best practices for improving classrooms based on student input and progress.
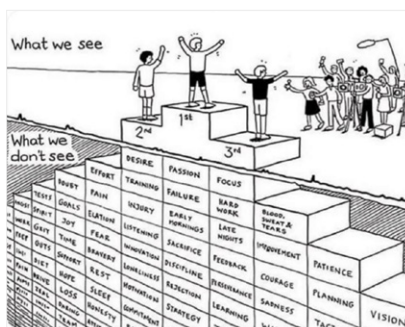
"What feedback did you receive today to help you in your learning?"
New Zealand educator Karen Tui Boyes explores this question. She identifies concrete ways to act on student feedback and progress.

Monitor progress through feedback conversations with students
Giving strong feedback to students depends on knowing what they are finding easy and challenging, and their misperceptions and assumptions. World-renowned education researcher John Hattie shares what the research says about providing student feedback that influences student growth.

Other Places to See Monitoring Learning and Progress

- The One Thing All Great Teachers Do.
- Innovative ways to measure student progress.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people — teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" that we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

FACILITATE AND CHALLENGE

#FlexiblyAdjustCourse
Movement Breaks

At any time, if you notice you are losing the class, take a movement break or an outside break. I would sometimes stop mid-lesson to take everyone outside for an impromptu game of street hockey, or lie on the ground and sketch some clouds. It often helped to bring back the sense of team, increase mood, and process/release any negative emotions that may have been building or that kids were carrying in with them.

Maggie MacDonnell

#ManageNorms&Rituals
BRAIN BREAKS

https://www.edutopia.org/article/brain-breaks-restore-student-focus-judy-willis

#FosterCollectiveDiscovery

Lead with "the why" and adjust the "what and how" as needed. Be "tight" on your goals but flexible and adaptive in how you reach them. Think of yourself as a captain of a sailboat who, to reach your destination, must frequently adjust course based on changes in winds and currents around you.

#FosterCollectiveDiscovery
Design Lessons with Room to Breathe

I used to work on a residential program to support young people's access to university. A highlight for me was film night. I meticulously designed the session. What I lost sight of in the planning was holding space for the students' creative reactions to the film. The focus was on what I wanted to teach, not what they were learning. After the session, I realized a beautiful moment had opened up as a student shared their reaction, and rather than building on that to branch out into broader themes, I had moved along to the next stage of my plan. The next year, my design looked totally different. It was more modular and open. I still had a really clear set of goals, and a whole bunch of content in my back pocket, but there was much more freedom as to how we might get there. I also focused on my own state of mind: rather than performing a lesson, being open and relaxed to respond to what emerged. Sure enough, the session really came alive!

Jude Heaton
Teach For All

#FlexiblyAdjustCourse
Regulation Stations

In my context where there were behavior issues and lots of "dysregulation" that often disrupted the classroom, what helped a lot was having "stations"/routines to help students independently calm down. This may be a journal for those who want to write privately, a bean bag in a corner with some comic books, a listening/headphone music corner, or even a basket with some quick snacks in it. When students arrived (mine often arrived late) they would choose a station and take like 10 minutes to independently relax then join the larger group.

Maggie MacDonnell

Contribute to our "Facilitate and Challenge" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

INTRODUCTION TO
REFLECT & GROW TO FULFILL POTENTIAL

Learning is a lifelong journey fueled by humility and curiosity, as we improve our knowledge and skills and grow our capacity for understanding ourselves, each other, and the world.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of transformational teachers emerging from our "global learning loops" is that they identify as learners. As explored in the "Lenses" section of this model, we often hear the strongest teachers in the Teach For All network say something like, "I hope my students are learning as much as I am."

Teachers who are growing students as leaders of a better future see themselves as lifelong learners who respond to challenges with curiosity, humility, and creativity. These teachers embrace this identity as learners intentionally, employing daily practices to fuel their growth.

In this "go-go-go" world, where it feels as if everything is urgent, and we don"t have a chance to slow down, this capacity to pause for a moment so we can reflect and grow is more important than ever. What the world needs from leaders today are those who can focus on the important not just the urgent, those who recognize that who we are being is just as important as what we are doing, those who can frame challenges not as failures but as opportunities to learn and grow, those who have the humility and self-compassion to ask questions and reach out for support, and those who are both willing to learn new things and unlearn limiting beliefs that don't serve what they're up to in the world. This spaciousness is what we need to be able to live into our full creativity and reimagine education systems so that they create opportunities for all ALL children.

Radha Ruparell
Head of Global Leadership Accelerator, Teach For All

Additional Research & Resources
- Cambridge Assessment International Education's Getting Started With Reflective Practice.
- Treating Reflection as a Habit, Not an Event Habit, from Edutopia.
- *Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better* by Doug Lemov, Erica Woolway, and Katie Yezzi.

REFLECT & GROW
to fulfill potential

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
We commit to a sustainable plan of daily practices that support our wellbeing and growth.

PAUSE & REFLECT
We commit to a regular practice of pausing to process how our work is going.

FIND & FOSTER ALLIES
We seek and nurture relationships and networks that support and stretch us.

SEEK FEEDBACK
We welcome diverse sources of feedback and data from which to learn and co-create a culture in which students are doing the same.

LEARN & UNLEARN
We set aside time to develop knowledge and skills and to shift ways of being and perspectives that may be inhibiting growth.

Critical reflection is the process by which adults identify the assumptions governing their actions, locate the historical and cultural origins of the assumptions, question the meaning of assumptions, and develop alternative ways of acting (Cranton, 1996). Brookfield (1995, 2004) added that part of the critically reflective process is to challenge the prevailing social, political, cultural, or professional ways of acting. Through the process of critical reflection, adults come to interpret and create new knowledge and actions from their ordinary and sometimes extraordinary experiences. Critical reflection blends learning through experiences with theoretical and technical learning to form new knowledge constructions and new behaviors or insights.

Hibajene M. Shandomo
Professor in the education department at Buffalo State College. Quote taken from The Role of Critical Reflection in Teacher Education

GLOSSARY

Global Learning Loop: This concept is what we have called the mini-courses we host in which people from around the world virtually visit classrooms in different countries and share what they think we can learn from them. The Global Learning Lab has also worked with many partner organizations to host their "learning loops," where staff come together to learn from their strongest classrooms.

Transformative Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders Of A Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

HOW TO
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Manage your wellbeing, energy, and health so you are available to support others. The key to taking care of yourself is figuring out your unique ways to relax, re-energize, and replenish yourself.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
We commit to a sustainable plan of daily practices that support our wellbeing and growth.

Contribute your own techniques for **taking care of yourself** to our growing library…and see what others have contributed here.

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

Howard Thurman
Author, philosopher, theologian, ducator, and civil rights leader (United States)

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Taking Care Of Yourself

SCHEDULE WELLBEING
In the same way you would reserve time for any important event, set aside time for wellbeing in your calendar and honor it.

CHUNKING WELLNESS
List things you can do for your wellbeing that take five, 10, and 30 minutes. That way, if you find that you have a bit of extra time, you have a quick list you can go to that will also nourish you.

REFRAMING
Practice noticing your cognitive distortions and thought patterns, and develop healthier responses to them.

WHAT KIND OF WELLBEING?
Take the POISE survey to explore different components of wellbeing (physical, occupational, intellectual, etc.) and discover what's most present for you.

Other Sources:
- Teachers of the year reflecting on self-care (U.S.).
- Edutopia's guide to Teacher Wellness.
- Columbia University's guide to Teaching in Times of Stress and Challenge

What happens when one million black women across the USA start walking in their communities? Morgan Dixon (Teach For America alumna) and Vanessa Garrison created an organization to find out. This video from 2016 shows how Dixon and Garrison, are fostering self-care and collective action toward building a grassroots health movement in African–American communities in the U.S. They founded GirlTrek, started walking in their neighborhood, and invited others to join them. Two years later GirlTrek had grown into a movement of 35,000 neighborhood walkers across the country who have made a personal commitment to living their healthiest, most fulfilled life.

What Does Taking Care Of Yourself Look Like?
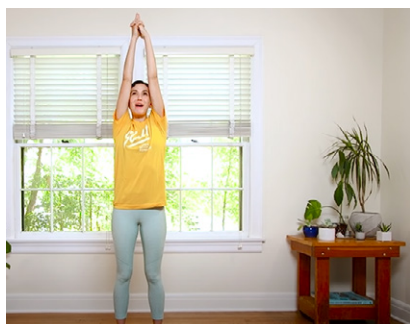
Classroom yoga
A yoga instructor leads a simple 10-minute standing yoga sequence designed especially for teachers.

Working with my hands is my self-care
"That stress weighs heavy," explains veteran teacher Kenneth Robinson (Teach For America, '93). "It weighs so heavy. And if you don't have some type of self-management, you start having a displacement of aggression." Robinson draws on a combination of art and exercise to stay centered in the face of daily challenges.

The importance of self-care for teachers
Self-care is proving to be difficult to master and weave into our teachers' frantic lives. As human beings, we must prioritize our own wellbeing and as teachers as well we can begin to place the same emphasis on staff wellbeing in our schools as we do for the mental health of the children we teach. Self-care starts with you and small acts every single day.

Other Places to See Taking Care of Self
- The Virtuous Cycle of Fostering Wellbeing in Our Schools.
- Teachers as Healers – Wellbeing Summit session.
- Teach For Malaysia teacher wellbeing playbook.

"No Nonsense Nurturing" A Call To Everyone To Help Teachers Take Care Of Themselves
Former diplomat in West Africa, Nataki Gregory has built a career training, coaching, and supporting teachers. In this TED talk, she calls on everyone to "choose a nurturing activity that is close to who you are" and bring it to teachers around you.

Additional Research & Resources Related To Taking Care Of Yourself
- TeacherWISE: Wellbeing in School Environments.
- Six Causes of Burnout, and How to Avoid Them.

HOW TO
PAUSE & REFLECT

Slow down to go deeper and further. Adopt smaller and bigger habits and rituals that help you step out of daily work to consider your purpose, progress, and growth—and invest your students in those practices.

PAUSE & REFLECT
We commit to a regular practice of pausing to reflect on our purpose, practice, and progress.

Contribute your own techniques for **pausing and reflecting** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Engaging in the work of institutional transformation, such as creating a new dream of teaching and learning, can be exciting and fulfilling, yet difficult, painful, and frustrating. The examination of our own positionality is an important aspect when considering how to change what we do in the classroom—the curriculum, the way we engage with students, how we choose to share power, and so forth. Taking time to slow down and reflect is as important as spending time and energy in action to transform the institution.

Laura Rendón
Student advocate, scholar, contemplative education, and author of *Sentipensante Pedagogy: Educating for Wholeness, Social Justice, and Liberation.* (Photo by Al Rendón)

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Pausing & Reflecting

Most Important Question

Pick one question to reflect on and set aside five-15 minutes a week individually or with a colleague to reflect. It could be as simple as: What did I learn this week? Try to tie it to another existing habit (e.g., your morning cup of coffee or commute) so you stick to it.

Radha Ruparell
Head of Global Leadership Accelerator, Teach For All

Get Meta for You & Your Students

Call "time out" with students to reflect on how learning is happening, what is working and not working, and what patterns do students see in how they best learn. Ask yourself the same questions.

Alexandra Vassallo
Enseña Perú Alumna

Morning Reflection

"Circle time" to look where we've been and where we are headed, to feel gratitude, and to declutter our minds is not just for students. I am best on days when I take time early in the day to think intentionally about my ways of being and goals for the day.

Sanaya Bharucha
Global Head, Student Leadership & Voice, Teach For All, Teach For India Alumna, and Director of Maya the musical

Read Fiction

Reading fiction is a brilliant way to understand the different perspectives that exist. It humanizes people. You can step into 1,000 different shoes, and see 1,000 different lenses without deeming one right or wrong.

Zain Maken
Teach For Pakistan Alumnus

In Japanese Zen Buddhism, the term "Mushin" describes a mind free of thoughts and distractions, and it can be useful to think of this concept when approaching Pause & Reflect; it can help clear the path for the adoption of a beginner's mind. A beginner's mind is another concept from Zen Buddhism that encourages openness, enthusiasm, and a denial of preconceived ideas or attitudes. It is in stark contrast to an expert's mind or the notion of having expertise. When an individual or an organization is considered to be an expert, it closes doors to possibility and may also be the curse of knowledge. When organizations [or individuals] are open to possibility and adaptation, then opportunities for adaptation and improvement are more available to them.

The Curve–A Guide to Pause & Reflect: Pragmatic Advice for Practitioners

What Does Pausing & Reflecting Look Like?

Pause, Reflect, and Adjust

In this blog post, an exhausted teacher describes various ways to pause and reflect, and how those methods can lead to new perspectives and changed behaviors.

Reflecting on one's perspectives

In Ako Matatupu's (Teach First New Zealand) training, participants engage deeply with Maori communities. For participant Jonathan Wieland, this triggered personal reflections that helped him discover assumptions he never knew he had and transformed his approach to teaching.
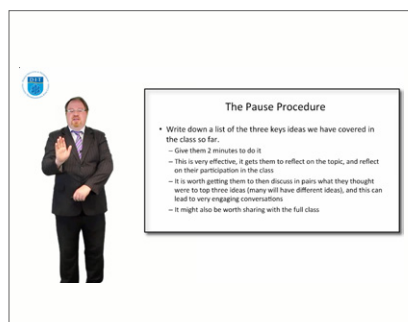
The pause technique

Watch Irish educator Damion T. Gordon introduce a very simple technique for boosting active learning in the classroom. The pause procedure (sometimes called Clarification Pause) is a strategy that uses strategic pauses in a lecture to provide students with time to review their notes, discuss in pairs, and clarify, assimilate, and retain the lecture material.

We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.

John Dewey
Philosopher and educator (United States)

Practice Awareness & Understanding Self Exercises (PAUSE)

By practicing mental wellness exercises together, teachers and students can boost mental and physical health, coping skills, and a positive outlook. This article at Edutopia suggests small changes that help rewire our brains and develop new habits.

At its simplest, reflection is about careful thought. But the kind of reflection that is really valuable to leaders is more nuanced than that. The most useful reflection involves the conscious consideration and analysis of beliefs and actions for the purpose of learning. Reflection gives the brain an opportunity to pause amidst the chaos, untangle and sort through observations and experiences, consider multiple possible interpretations, and create meaning. This meaning becomes learning, which can then inform future mindsets and actions. For leaders, this "meaning-making" is crucial to their ongoing growth and development.

Jennifer Porter
Quote taken from the Harvard Business Review article Why You Should Make Time for Self-Reflection (Even If You Hate Doing It) (2017)

Other Places to See Pausing & Reflecting
- Stop and Think: Teaching Students to Reflect — Responsive Classroom.
- Extending Silence.
- The Value of Silence in Schools.

HOW TO
FIND & FOSTER ALLIES

Without allies, working to grow collective leadership can be exhausting and isolating. Take time to nurture friendships and support groups, as they will be essential for your growth, wellbeing, and sustainability. Find others who can both support you and push you. People who help you connect to what you most value, and help you to intentionally pursue these values.

FIND YOUR ALLIES
We prioritize nurturing relationships and networks that support and stretch us.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Finding Your Allies

SET UP A PLC
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a powerful way to learn and build connections. There are many different forms this can take, depending on your needs and resources. Many network partners use this as a foundation for their fellows. Click here to learn more.

MEET REGULARLY
It's so easy to deprioritize meeting with valued colleagues and friends. It can get pushed aside by what feels urgent. But schedule time to regularly connect, and protect that time in your diary.

RELATIONAL, NOT TRANSACTIONAL
When you meet with your trusted circle, take the time to really listen and get to know each other. Try not to fill the agenda with things to do.

MAKE THE FIRST MOVE
When you meet colleagues who you really connect to or whose practice interests you, be bold and ask for time to connect. You'll be amazed at how positively people react and what can grow out of those connections.

MAP YOUR ALLIES
Take the time to think through who are the people or groups who share your views on a particular issue. To learn more, try out this Spectrum of Allies activity.

Other Sources:
- Developing Voices: Students Are Your Allies.

Contribute your own techniques for **finding and fostering allies** to our growing library... and see what others have contributed here.

While we are convinced we can't ask others for help, we long to help those we love; hell, we even love helping strangers. Helping others is one of the things (and research bears this out) that settles our nervous systems into its "rest and digest" mode, and it brings us into closer, stronger relationships with one another when we do. When we don't ask for help, we're not just continually choosing the stress, overwork, feelings of isolation, and the like, but we're also robbing those close to us of the transformative energy of helping and getting closer to us. We're playing a role, whether we want to admit it or not, in continuing the toxic individualism that is poisoning our land, acidifying our oceans, and keeping us locked in "power over" dynamics in our relationships.

Athena Palmer
Leadership coach and founder of No Ducks Coaching, and former Memphis Teach For America Executive Director

In my two years as a teacher in Nuevo Progreso, my great ally was the teacher with more years at the school. We shared a lot of common worries about parents' involvement with their kids' education, which pushed us to work together and co-design with the community [Growing with Love](#). When I returned to the community, I got a surprise to find the room I rented didn't have a door or windows installed because the carpenter had died from Covid. For weeks I used a whiteboard to cover the wind and the cold weather until Nilton offered to come and install the door. He was there not only as a professional ally but also as a friend!

Alexandra Vassallo
Alumna of Enseña Perú

At Teach For India Delhi, every member from a student to a staff member works towards building and strengthening their tribe of 20.

Mansi Joshi
Former City Director, Teach For India. At Teach For India, Mansi led regional strategy and operations in Delhi, managing a team of over 300 Fellows and impacting more than 10,000 students in the region

What Does Finding Your Allies Look Like?

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO ACCELERATE TO DEEPER LEARNING
As a teacher in the community of Catayoc (Perú), Nicole has seen enormous value in connecting subjects to the context and families of her students. In this sense, she works in partnership with families in the process of designing and implementing learning experiences. For example, while her students were doing research on the use of wood for cooking in the community, they conducted fieldwork to observe how the moms cooked and interviewed them. With that information, they developed charts and analyzed information.

Moving forward with her students and the community
When the principal resigned from this community-led school, Angela, a first-year fellow, relied on her students and community leaders to learn how to manage the school. Together, they redesigned their working methodology and started their journey to be recognized by the Regional Education Direction as a public school and gain access to government funding (which they achieved a few years later!).

Promoting a green and sustainable school through powerful partnerships
Seven years ago, Mauricio Bayona, an Enseña Por Colombia alumnus, decided to partner with the teachers at his school and local companies to build awareness among his students around the environmental issues of the city of Barranquilla. The impact of this partnership allowed the project to grow and went from involving 20 students to, seven years later, having more than 200 students leading the project and the school becoming a center for residues management for the community.

Other Places to Find Your Allies
- [Parents' engagement in school](#) (in Spanish).

Additional Research & Resources Related to Finding Your Allies
- [Trust–Based Collective Leadership: Mobilizing Through Real Connections](#) Essay (Page 151).

HOW TO
SEEK FEEDBACK

Seek out regular critical friendships with colleagues, students, and others. Work on softening feelings of defensiveness, so that you can learn from what you hear. Take time to process setbacks and successes. Let go of perfectionism and focus on the process of improvement.

SEEK FEEDBACK
We welcome diverse sources of feedback and data to learn from and co-create a culture in which students are doing the same.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques for Seeking Feedback

GET FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND COLLEAGUES (MORE THAN YOUR MANAGER)

Defining moments throughout the year when you will seek feedback is important. Approach these conversations with an open mind and encourage others to share their opinions regarding your strengths and areas for improvement.

DON'T ASK FOR "FEEDBACK." BE MORE SPECIFIC

A phrase like, "Do you have any feedback for me?" is bad, says *Radical Candor* author Kim Scott, because most people will simply respond "No." It's easier to pretend everything's fine than to enter the awkward zone of giving criticism. Better to ask, for example, "What can I do, or stop doing, to make it easier to work with me?"

MODEL RECEIVING FEEDBACK WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Ensure the feedback cycle is targeted and productive by modeling feedback. As an option, you can provide sentence starters to help your students to gain more confidence on how to deliver feedback.

MAKE YOUR OWN FEEDBACK WITH DATA

Use the data from your students' progress and your own progress to identify your strengths and areas of improvement. Consider this information to make decisions about the next steps in your personal and professional growth.

Contribute your own techniques for **seeking feedback** to our growing library… and see what others have contributed here.

Critical feedback is an act of love.

Allison Ohle
Executive Director, Diamond Educational Excellence Partnership (DEEP)

[Our teacher] Nacho always makes surveys and questions about our opinions of him. So we always tell him what bothers us or what is missing and he always tries to fix it. He is an example. He changed gradually. He is showing us that we can change and adapt ourselves to other things.

Ana Laura Aranda
Former student of Ignacio Brea, Enseña Por Argentina Alumnus. Quote taken from "Cambia Tú Mismo Primero (Change Yourself First)"

Close Every Class with Feedback

End every day by asking the students for feedback. What did they do well and what could they do better; what did you (teacher) do well and what could you do better. Then act on the feedback!

Sanaya Bharucha
Global Head, Student Leadership & Voice, Teach For All, Teach For India Alumna, and Director of "Maya" the musical

Other Sources:

- A Report Card for the Teacher: Five Tips for Getting Feedback From Students.
- Feedback That Empowers Students.
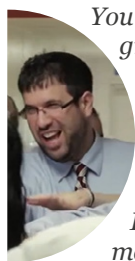
You can't expect kids to grow if we don't expect ourselves to grow. If we see ourselves as developing, then the kids see themselves as developing. . . . It's messy. Love the messiness of it. And just try to be better tomorrow than you are today.

Isaac Pollack

Former principal of New Orleans' Carver High School and Teach For America alumnus. Quote taken from Growth, not perfection. Check out this video from 2010 with powerful reflections from Pollack, his colleagues, and his students about the role of students' voices in shaping teacher development.

GLOSSARY

Agency: By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

Mastery: We use the word "mastery" to describe the meaningfully rigorous learning needed to prepare students for leadership in the future. The term signals a focus on deeper learning, surpassing many current education models and systems.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our Glossary.

Additional Research & Resources Related to Seeking Feedback

- Research on centering student voice and learning in Asian classrooms.
- Cultural Variation in the Effectiveness of Feedback on Students' Mistakes.
- Impact of teacher feedback on learning in Vietnam.
- Avraham Kluger's research finds that feedback is usually ineffective and offers an alternative. We think highlighting a problem will lead to a change, but the real problem is often that people "don't have the inner resources to change."

Student Surveys As Feedback Tools

Check out Teach For All's growing library of assessment tools that measure progress on students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. In some cases, those student assessments are in the form of student surveys that also provide valuable feedback for teachers.

What Does Seeking Feedback Look Like?

Austin's butterfly

Watch a teacher lead a powerful lesson with young students that models the value of loving feedback for learning. In just 10 minutes, the teacher engages student perspectives in ways that excite them about giving and receiving feedback.

"The flock" – teachers getting feedback from other teachers

In this Edutopia video, groups of teachers build circles of support for critical friendship. Teachers report both improved effectiveness and happier, more fulfilled work experiences.

Using anonymous surveys and their impact on learning

One physics teacher at Trinidad Garza High School in Texas was concerned about student performance and motivation. He implemented a system of anonymous surveys that not only changed his approach but dramatically increased student ownership.

Other Places to See Seeking Feedback

- How to Get the Feedback You Need — Harvard Business Review.
- Simple Ways to Solicit Peer Feedback.
- Take an implicit bias test and reflect on both the results and your response to them.

HOW TO
LEARN & UNLEARN

Stay curious. Seek out your own blind spots and seek out new perspectives. Ask questions and lean into discomfort. Find a diverse community to support and challenge you. And as you grow your awareness, practice, practice, practice!

LEARN & UNLEARN
We set aside time to develop knowledge and skills, and to shift ways of being and perspectives that may be inhibiting growth.

Concrete, Actionable Techniques For Learning & Unlearning

Bernice Han, a fellow with Teach For Malaysia, found that adopting the lens of teacher as learner was a powerful way to develop literacy with her students. She took the time to learn the language of the local indigenous community where she was teaching: "I believe that if I want them to learn a language that is foreign in their environment, I must also learn their language. And when I started speaking Temiar, it made them feel safe, seen, and heard," she said.

"What Did You Learn Today?"

I heard Jim Collins suggest that all work meetings should start not with "What have we accomplished?" but "What have we learned?" I tried that with my students and colleagues and it really changes the culture of our collaborations.

Anonymous

Lean Into Discomfort

Supporting teacher development in growing awareness of these issues takes two approaches: examining one's positionality and the roots of injustice within a given context, and the pedagogy of discomfort. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive; indeed, one way for discomfort to be generated is through inquiry.

Mark Boylan and Ian Woolsey
Quote taken fom Teacher education for social justice: mapping identity spaces by Mark Boylan and Ian Woolsey. (Published in Teaching and Teacher Education, February 2015)

Other Sources:
- Learning How to Learn (a TED talk with Barbara Oakley).
- Using Video to Practice Practice.

Contribute your own techniques for **learning and unlearning** to our growing library…and see what others have contributed here.

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Alvin Tofler
American writer, futurist, and businessman. Quote taken from his book *Future Shock* (1970)

Intelligence can only be led by desire. For there to be desire, there must be pleasure and joy in the work. Intelligence only grows and bears fruit in joy. The joy of learning is as indispensable in study as breathing is in running. Where it is lacking there are no real students, but only poor caricatures of apprentices who, at the end of their apprenticeship, will not even have a trade.

Simone Weil
French political activist and philosopher. Quote taken from *Waiting for God* (1950)

Teaching is the art of sharing not just what you know but what you don't know. I think I am becoming a better teacher because I am becoming a better student. I used to walk into a classroom . . . to tell them what I know. Now I come in to share what I know in hope of sharing what they know because I want to learn too. So I show up for a class with the desire to learn. The only reason to share whatever thoughts or ideas or knowledge I have is so that together we can grow. It's made me a better teacher for sure. I think all the best teachers are the best students.

Simon Sinek
Author of *Start With Why* and proponent of The Golden Circle centers WHY over WHAT and HOW. Quote taken from How To Be a Better Teacher by Not Being the Expert (2014)

What Does Learning & Unlearning Look Like?

The backwards brain bicycle
A learning-oriented engineer shares an amazing experiment in "learning" using a modified bicycle: "I had set out to prove that I could free my brain from a cognitive bias, but at this point, I'm pretty sure that all I've proved is that I can only redesignate that bias."

Implementing strong learning theory to develop teachers
Hear, in this video from 2018, from teacher developers in Bangladesh, Mexico, and the U.S. about how they are innovatively acting on learning principles in their training and support programs for new teachers.

Learning to embrace mistakes as learning
This video from 2018 shows how when Óliver Jabato Rodríguez embraced learning and unlearning with and from his students, he turned around his dysfunctional classroom.

Other Places to See Learning & Unlearning
- The Brain Science Behind Habits.
- "Ako" — Responsive, Reciprocal Learning Relationships (New Zealand, 2015).

Additional Research & Resources Related To Learning & Unlearning
- Best-selling author and researcher Jim Collins (*Good to Great*) worked with us to study how we develop teachers. In this video from 2018, he challenges us to realize the need for more collective learning.
- Take a more in-depth visit to Enseña Por Mexico, through this 2019 video, to learn how that program is reimagining teacher development with these learning principles.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people — teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" that we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

REFLECT AND GROW

#LearnAndUnlearn

Dr. Gawande has studied the pursuit of excellence across and beyond the medical field. One of his realizations: "If you want to get great at something, get a coach." Dr. Gawande has learned that a coach is key to several powerful levers of learning: providing a more accurate picture of our reality, instilling positive habits of thinking, and breaking our actions down and building them back up again.

Anonymous

#PauseAndReflect

Two Feet, One Breath: I learned from a friend who is a very busy doctor about this practice of stopping at the doorway, settling both feet and taking one big intentional deep breath. I find that little pause does so much to clear and calm my mind as I move quickly from one challenge to another.

Radha Ruparell

#FindAndFosterAllies

There are no words to express the abyss between isolation and having one ally. It may be conceded to the mathematician that four is twice two. But two is not twice one; two is two thousand times one.

G. K. Chesterton

"We need more leaders like Delia: leaders from the community itself working to develop even more leadership from within; unstoppable at creating collaboration; humble but extraordinary at believing in and energizing others, especially in the parents, teachers, principals, and students; wise in crafting flexible teams that work across different groups of people; leading with an open heart and mind and an infinite ability to grow."

Franco Mosso
Former CEO of Enseña Perú, referring to Delia Cieza, Director of Pedagogical Management at the Cajamarca region (Perú), in What Leadership Do We Need Now?

#LearnAndUnlearn

In designing learning, there's a delicate dance between meeting students where they are and opening up new horizons. A process of deepening and broadening understanding. To open up new thinking, it's vital to think carefully about factors like what background knowledge might be needed and what developmental assumptions you might be making.

Jude Heaton
Teach For All

#PauseAndReflect

The more their lives speed up, the more they feel hurt, frightened, and isolated. Despite their good hearts and equally good intentions, their work in the world rarely feels light, pleasant, or healing. Instead, as it all piles endlessly upon itself the whole experience of being alive begins to melt into one enormous obligation. It becomes the standard greeting everywhere: I am so busy.

Wayne Muller, *Sabbath*

#LearnAndUnlearn

I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept the simplest and most obvious truth if it is such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions that they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabrics of their life.

Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*

Contribute to our "Reflect and Grow" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

How can we know students are growing as leaders of a better future?

OUTCOMES

Students' increasing wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery indicate they are growing as leaders of a better future. Deep learning and mastery are attained through, not at the expense of, broader student leadership outcomes.

OVERVIEW
Get started with a **summary** of **insights and resources** about student leadership outcomes.

DISCOVER
Virtually visit **transformational classrooms and communities** to find these families of outcomes for yourself.
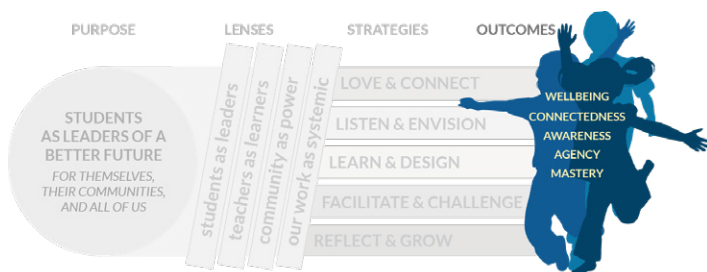
LEARN
Explore **wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency,** and mastery with guidance from teachers and students.

DO
Use Teach For All's growing **library of assessment tools** to contextualize your own ways to measure students' growth.

SHARE
Contribute to and explore **incoming questions, challenges,** and **resources** related to student outcomes.

OVERVIEW

Five areas of student growth–wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery–suggest students are growing as leaders of a better future. Mastery is not diluted but is enhanced when pursued with other outcomes.

PURPOSE   LENSES   STRATEGIES   OUTCOMES

STUDENTS AS LEADERS OF A BETTER FUTURE
FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND ALL OF US

students as leaders
teachers as learners
community as power
our work as systemic

LOVE & CONNECT
LISTEN & ENVISION
LEARN & DESIGN
FACILITATE & CHALLENGE
REFLECT & GROW

WELLBEING
CONNECTEDNESS
AWARENESS
AGENCY
MASTERY
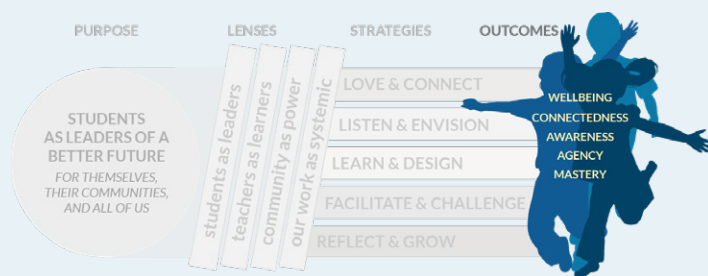
DISCOVER

What Is Student Leadership and Why Does It Matter?
In this 2014 compilation video, you will hear and see examples of students from around the world growing as leaders of a better future. What inferences can you make about what these teachers and students are valuing?

(Explore other provocative illustrations of student leadership outcomes.)

LEARN

Five Student Leadership Outcomes
Students and teachers in transformational classrooms around the world value similar areas of growth as indicators of student leadership development. Our crowd-sourced studies are suggesting that rigorous mastery is achieved through, not at the expense of, other key outcomes, including wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

Wellbeing
Students feel secure and loved, empowering them to be themselves, try new things, and make mistakes in ways that encourage deeper learning.

Connectedness
Students seek and value the perspectives and experiences of others as they work collaboratively toward a common good.

Awareness
Students are aware of inequity and celebrate their and others' unique strengths and identities as assets for navigating challenges in pursuit of their growing sense of purpose.

Agency
Students take independent or collective action toward shared goals to cause positive change in their own lives or the lives of others.

Mastery
Students attain higher-order command of knowledge and skills as a means to create new opportunities and solutions to challenges.

DO

Explore illustrations and "research constructs" related to these broader student leadership outcomes.

Find and adapt assessments from our global library of tools for measuring students' growing wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery.

My response to the question, "What should we measure"? depends on who is asking. When someone is saying, "We have to know students' ability to read, write, and do math are improving dramatically," I tend to say "yes and," to push on the need for student creativity, self-worth, collaboration, and sense of justice and equity to complement that rigorous mastery. And when someone is pushing on social-emotional skills or "holistic outcomes," I'm the first one to say, "Yes, and we have to support and expect rigorous engagement with rigorous content to grow critical thinking readers, writers, mathematicians, and scientists." To me, there is nothing incompatible or hypocritical about those two messages because the path to rigorous mastery of reading, writing, math, and science is through, not separate from, student ownership, critical consciousness, empathy, and belief in themselves.

Taylor Delhagen
Former professor at Relay Graduate School of Education and Teach For America Alumnus

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied, we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way. We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this **Glossary**.

SHARE

Contribute your insights and see others' questions, resources, and challenges related to student leadership outcomes.

DISCOVER

Virtually visit classrooms growing student leadership outcomes

We can orient ourselves to purpose, we can become aware of and shift our lenses, and we can act on all the strategies in the previous sections. But how can we know if students in our classrooms are really growing as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us? These classroom leaders and classrooms help visualize student leadership outcomes.

GLOSSARY

Grow Students: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Leaders Of A Better Future: This is a concept that emerged years ago, when Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others.

Transformational Classroom: These are classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They are making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our **Glossary**.

Why Student Leadership Matters

As you virtually travel around the world in this video from 2018, meeting and learning from transformational students and teachers, think about what gives you confidence that these students are getting on a path to improving their and their community's future.

Students as Culturally Sustaining Agents of Change

Kia Aroha is a public secondary school in South Auckland, New Zealand, working with 300 students, most of them Māori or from the Pacific Islands. As shown in this video from 2018, the school has taken a radically different approach to education, focusing on bilingual, critically conscious, culturally responsive, and social justice education.

Critical Thinking for Mastery

Explore this video from 2013 on how Teach For America alumnus Taylor Delhagen (New York, United States) facilitated debate to develop students' critical thinking. Taylor provided concrete strategies for students to process information and develop their own viewpoints.

Building Collective Ownership and Leadership

In this video from 2019, former fellow from Teach For Armenia Arusik explores definitions of global citizenship with her students and what it means to be globally informed.

In 2012, Curtis was a young man growing up in Nottingham, England. He experienced and felt the oppression of complex systems around him, except in Mr. Boss's class, where Curtis found respect and his voice.

Reflection Questions

- What common patterns do you see in these classrooms related to the areas of growth that students, families, and teachers are working toward?
- When you think about "students as leaders of a better future," what indicators do you want to see in students today? How do those indicators show up in these videos?

Discovering Your True Potential

Created more than eight years ago, Maya (Teach For India) was a game-changing exploration of what an excellent education can look like when you integrate values and mindsets, exposure and access to the arts, and rigorous academics.

HELP US DISCOVER & ILLUSTRATE

transformational Teaching Actions. Submit other examples!
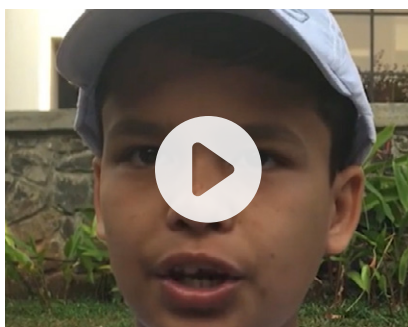
Challenging Garbage Mountain

Meet a young leader in India who is working to make a better future for his community. Rehan shares his work to improve education and address pollution for his community through this video from 2019. He also shares how his determination spurs him on despite challenges.

Identity and Student Leadership

In this video from 2014, college student Elijah Miles of Baltimore, Maryland, U.S., sparks an important conversation about identity, culture, community, and the importance of how we define success. Elijah challenges us to consider how we define success for our students, ourselves, and our communities.

LEARN
Rejecting the false dichotomy: mastery is achieved through, not at the cost of, other important student outcomes

While some people believe that any discussion of broader student outcomes is a dilution of student academic mastery, the classrooms we are studying show that is simply not true. In fact, we can only achieve meaningful mastery when we pursue rigorous academic achievement alongside and through student wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

Many of the education systems we work in and around are designed to develop academic achievement and close achievement gaps. That's obviously a noble aim. Often, however, those systems grow relatively superficial academic knowledge and skills at the expense of other important elements of human growth and development.

Is that trade-off necessary? Absolutely not.

The transformational teachers we have studied consistently share their frustration with the misperception that broadening outcomes mean diluted academic mastery. In fact, they insist, **broadening outcomes is the path to more meaningful academic mastery**.

Students who feel safe, loved, and connected are much more able to take the risks necessary to try new and hard things and spend more time at the frontier edge of their learning. Students who are aware of their own cultural assets and identities as well as unjust dynamics of privilege that will shape their path through the world can appreciate more the value of new skills and knowledge. Students who are confident that if they see a challenge they can tackle it can push through challenging concepts and learning experiences. Mastery comes from, not instead of and not at the expense of, students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

A consortium of influential education foundations recently conducted an extensive review of research and found that the perceived tension between academics and more holistic student outcomes is a "false dichotomy":

> Effective holistic approaches within education systems lead to improved academic, health, income, employment, and societal and wellbeing outcomes. Their impacts are lasting, and their effectiveness spans high- to low-income countries. Their results are felt most strongly by those who need it the most. Such approaches make for smart financial investment, and they have led consistently to improved long-term life outcomes. Despite this, the wider institutionalization of holistic practices in education systems remains the exception rather than the rule. This, in part, can be attributed to the misperception that a trade-off exists between supporting academic development versus holistic development, the "false dichotomy" that is being challenged within this synthesis. In fact, holistic child development incorporates, and is deeply intertwined with, academic rigor. Beyond academic outcomes, holistic approaches have a compounding positive effect over the course of a person's life. The consistent finding from the literature is that a holistic approach is a powerful driver of success and important buffer against adversities. Evidence behind these claims is both robust, consistent, and increasingly representative of diverse contexts. (From Challenging the False Dichotomy: An Evidence Synthesis)

We hear and see the same conclusion from the classrooms in our global learning loops. The deepest learning happens at the intersection of mastery and other outcomes. Far from being a zero-sum trade-off, the path to true rigor is through students' creativity, identity, collaboration, and agency.

Unfortunately, systems tightly designed to raise test scores tend to do a poor job of supporting those intersections. And yet the teachers in our studies report that taking this holistic approach to student learning, where mastery absolutely matters, is a much more fun and fulfilling approach to teaching and learning, for them and their students.

One lever for accelerating the paradigmatic shift from "mastery at the expense of student leadership" to "mastery through student leadership" is to define and measure student leadership outcomes, including but not limited to rigorous mastery of challenging content.

Wellbeing, Connectedness, Awareness, Agency & Mastery = Student Leadership

In our "learning loops," we asked participants to look beyond what ministries of education are asking teachers to measure, and instead to look at what teachers and students in transformational classrooms were actually valuing as indicators of progress.

So, what do young people need from us as educators in this kind of time?

Young people need knowledge. And more importantly, they need understanding. Understanding of how things fit together, how the world works, and how we got to this place and time. They need critical thinking skills to be able to analyze the media educational, cultural, and religious messages they are flooded with every day. They need help healing from the personal trauma they experience in their life, from the inequality, violence, and destruction, and from the historical trauma that has been transmitted to them from war, immigration, disasters, and systems of oppression. Young people need an understanding of interdependence with life above all living things and the earth itself. Young people need to feel part of a community or collective identity to develop a connection to and compassion for others. And they need role models. They need to see us working as educational activists for social justice in our communities. Young people need courage and that is gained from taking risks and from learning from their experiences. Young people also need an understanding of power: personal, collaborative, political, economic, and cultural power. How it works, how we can build it, and how to use it to help build the kind of world we all want to live in.

Young people need to learn our histories of resistance. We all come from a proud lineage of people who came together to win national liberation struggles for civil and human rights, struggles for lands, sovereignty, education, work, and healing. The young need to know and feel part of this legacy.

And finally, young people need to join us in our collective struggles for healing, community liberation, and justice. Young people bring tremendous motivation, energy, power, and creative vision to our world, but they are often met with a lack of adult support or even adult resistance to their participation. Many of us say that young people are our future, but then don't support their leadership in the present.

Paul Kivel
Social justice educator, activist, and writer whose work spans five decades in community education, engaged parenthood, political writing, and practical activism.

As you explore each of these families of outcomes below, keep in mind that (like the rest of the Teaching As Collective Leadership model) these outcomes are not meant to be prescriptive guidance for programs or teachers. Ultimately, the student leadership outcomes your classroom or program aspires to must align with and contextualize for the purpose you are collectively developing with students, families, and the community. That said, we believe these global patterns in student outcomes can be a provocative tool for considering which outcomes align with your local vision of student success.

SPIRIT	WHAT WE SEE IN CLASSROOMS	WHAT WE MEASURE
WELLBEING Students feel secure and loved, empowering them to be themselves, try new things, and make mistakes in ways that encourage deeper learning.	Students are joyfully taking risks and learning together.	Increasing sense of safety and belonging among peers, feeling better able to manage their mental wellbeing, trusting their teacher, and liking school and learning.
CONNECTEDNESS Students seek and value the perspectives and experiences of others as they work collaboratively toward a common good.	Students are working collectively, helping peers to feel welcome and learn new content.	Increasing empathy for others, responsibility for others' learning, and eagerness to contribute to their classroom and community.
AWARENESS Students are aware of and celebrate their and others' unique strengths and identities as assets for navigating challenges and inequity in pursuit of their growing sense of purpose.	Students are exploring their own assets, strengths, and identities as well as systemic injustices that may devalue, inhibit, or privilege them.	Increasing appreciation of their own strengths, needs, and growth, and increased questioning of the assumptions around (and inside them) that inhibit them.
AGENCY Students take independent or collective action toward shared goals to cause positive change in their own life or the lives of others.	Students are finding their voice, leading learning, and connecting daily efforts to their aspirations for themselves and their communities.	Increasingly proactive influence on their own and others' learning and paths in life.
MASTERY Students attain a higher-order command of knowledge and skills as a means to create new opportunities and solutions to challenges.	Students are eagerly and productively struggling with challenging and relevant content, at the edge of their abilities.	Increasing ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and create knowledge and skills that matter to their chosen path to thriving in and improving the world around them.

Despite some influential people's belief that academic achievement should be the only measure of success in school, we are finding that prioritizing this broader set of outcomes, together, is actually the path to more meaningful and rigorous academic mastery. Well-being, connectedness, awareness, and agency enhance and accelerate, rather than dilute, rigorous academic learning and mastery. And (bonus!), those broader outcomes call for a much more fulfilling, joyful, sustainable way of teaching compared to more conventional models focused only on narrowly defined academic achievement.

Our learning loop participants have several hypotheses for this correlation between broader outcomes and mastery. We know, for example, from advancements in the science of learning and development that a sense of safety and belonging is an essential foundation for higher-order thinking. We know from indigenous traditions and cognitive science that when students' identities gain recognition and value, they can trust and take risks necessary for deeper learning. We see over and over in these classrooms that when students recognize that what they are learning gives them the power to shape their own world and future, they are more invested learners and leaders.

As with the strategies and actions, the customization of these general themes will vary with the local context, culture, values, and aspirations. These five outcomes serve as a valuable, globally informed catalyst for considering how to locally define and monitor the progress of students' growth as leaders of a better future.

In the following pages, you will find one-page explorations of each of the five student leadership outcomes, including illustrations and associated "research constructs[1]."

Related Research Constructs

These five families of outcomes arose from practitioners' explorations of strong classrooms, but we have also compared and contrasted these findings with research literature—the education landscape is quite "noisy" with competing outcomes models in the last several years, from 21st Century Skills to "social and emotional learning" to "whole child" models.

While academic researchers rarely use the same terms that have arisen in our learning loops, we are finding validation for these five student leadership outcomes in related research constructs. Wellbeing, for example, is highlighted in research on students' sense of belonging and security, their physical conditioning, their psychological, cognitive, and social wellbeing and their optimism. Frontiers of research on empathy, compassion, gratitude, perspective-taking, collaboration, and global-mindedness, for example, support the general aim of Connectedness. Awareness as a student outcome is informed by research into students' sense of identity, social awareness, metacognition, sense of purpose, etc. Agency is supported by research into students' self-efficacy, creativity, problem solving, curiosity, and growth mindset.

The vast majority of research on mastery in education focuses on "what works" in improving results on standardized tests. However, there is increasing research that suggests that a narrow pursuit of good grades, ends up sacrificing real mastery—as well as broader outcomes. The most effective schools do not make a trade-off between high academic expectations and broader outcomes, they see them as two sides of the same coin.

Check out this research/literature review of studies related to these student leadership outcomes written by Professor Madhu Narayanan at Relay Graduate School of Education.

Education is often used to put a value on people. I had a colleague, who was also a person of color, who had many degrees. And they told me they felt they had to have all those letters after their name just to be taken seriously. I grapple with how that is wrong and how that is the reality. If we prepare students for that reality, do we risk perpetuating those same unjust patterns?

Denisse Arias
Former Director of Equity & Belonging at Teach For All and Teach For America Alumna

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[1.] A list of TACL-related research constructs, with their definitions and references to the research literature, can be found here.

A CLOSER LOOK AT...
WELLBEING

Students feel secure and loved, empowering them to be themselves, try new things, and make mistakes in ways that encourage deeper learning. We see students joyfully taking risks and learning together.

Measurable Indicators of Wellbeing

- Students' increasing sense of safety and belonging
- Students' increasing ability to manage their mental wellbeing
- Students' trust in teacher
- Students' enjoyment of school and learning
- What would you add?
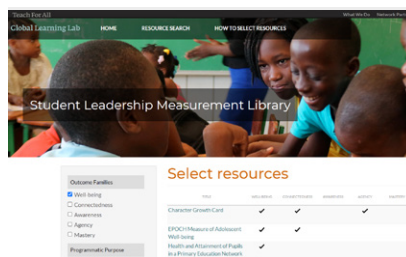
Tools for Measuring Wellbeing

Explore Wellbeing
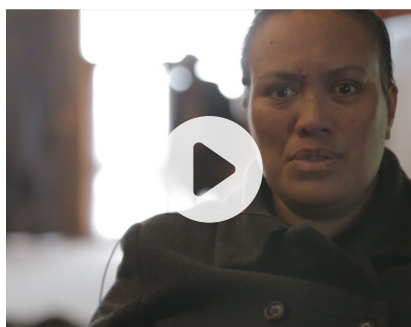
Conflicting Pathways of Success

In this video from 2015, Esther Rakete, a Maori educator and activist, shares her personal experience as a student in a system that devalued her identity. The damage to her sense of self-worth and wellbeing undermined her learning and growth.

Growth, Not Perfection

Isaac Pollack, Principal of New Orleans' Carver High School, leads his school on the simple belief that "it's OK to make mistakes, just be better tomorrow than you were today." This belief underpins a culture of wellbeing and growth, as he shares in this video from 2013.

Think About Thinking to Better Reach Students

The 2018 Oak Foundation "Reaching All Learners" fellow and Enseña Por Paraguay Alumnus, Emilio Rodríguez Cáceres, shares an overview of his project, objectives, and key learnings.

Other Sources

- Workshop: Trauma-Focused Teaching: Understanding Our Brains, Part 1
- Workshop: Trauma-Focused Teaching: Understanding Our Brains, Part 2
- Report: Learning Reimagined: Radical Thinking for Equitable Futures

Related Research Constructs

- Psychological (intrapersonal) wellbeing [Selligman, 2011; Kern, et al., 2016; Myers, Sweeney & Witmer, 1998; Adams & Benzer, 2000]
- Cognitive (intrapersonal) wellbeing [Pollard & Davidson, 2001; Litman & Jimerson, 2004; Bridges, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000]
- Social (interpersonal) wellbeing [Keyes, 1998; Fuller, 2000; Pollard & Lee, 2003; Selligman, 2011; Deutsch, 1993; Johnson & Johnson, 1982; Craig et al., 2000]

SHARE

Contribute your insights (and see others'), questions, resources, and challenges related to WELLBEING.

We know that sustained trauma in early years (0–10 years) results in stunting and failure to thrive, the effects of which can be felt for life. Children are going to carry this trauma into schools, and it is going to hinder their ability to access content, engage in learning, and build healthy relationships. As the impact of the pandemic unfolds, it is becoming abundantly clear that traditional learning models have ill-equipped our children to respond to the current crisis.

Suchetha Bhat (She/her)
CEO of Dream a Dream (India) "For every child a thriving life." (Photo taken by Prasanna H.)

A CLOSER LOOK AT...
CONNECTEDNESS

Students seek and value the perspectives and experiences of others as they work collaboratively toward a common good. Students are working collectively, helping peers to feel welcome and learn new content.

The school of the future will positively challenge students to create a bond of responsibility of personal commitment to their community, which can be physical or can be virtual, where they have a protagonist role and see themselves as part of a process of giving back and sharing their talents with others. This is important because uncertainty will continue so we need to help prepare young people to navigate complexity and see it as an opportunity for creativity.

Roberto Benes
Director of UNICEF in Tokyo, Japan, and the first Director of Generation Unlimited, UNICEF's global partnership for and with young people

*Muntu ngumuntu ngabantu.
[A person is a person because of the people.]*

Zulu proverb

Leadership is not just one person acting from the front. All are intertwined in the way of helping each other grow, and yes it is not leadership but laddership—uplifting each other.

Sonali
Former student of Teach For India fellow

Measurable Indicators of Connectedness

- Students' increasing empathy for others
- Students' increasing capacity and skill in collaboration
- Students' increasing responsibility for others' learning
- Students' growing eagerness to contribute to their classroom and community
- What would you add?
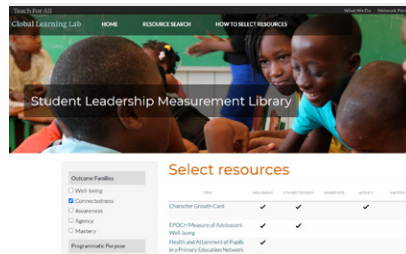
Tools for Measuring Connectedness

Explore Connectedness

Co-constructing a Learning Community
Use this video from 2015 to (re)visit the classroom of Pooja Chopra, a former teacher with Teach For India who built a powerful connected community in and around her classroom.

Reciprocal Learning
This video from 2015 explores the Maori concept of *ako*, a reciprocal learning relationship between educator and student that affirms connection through the knowledge, experiences, culture, and identity of the student as a valuable and integral part of the learning process.

Related Research Constructs
- Empathy [Bryant, 1982; Hogan, 1969; Greif & Hogan, 1973]
- Perspective-taking [Tomasello & Hamann, 2012; Johnson, 1975]
- Respect for diversity [Gay, 2015; Balkin, Scholsser, & Levitt, 2009; Witenberg, 2007]

 SHARE
Contribute your insights (and see others') questions, resources, and challenges related to CONNECTEDNESS.

A CLOSER LOOK AT...
AWARENESS

Students are aware and celebrate their and others' unique strengths and identities as assets for navigating challenges and inequity in pursuit of their growing sense of purpose. Students are exploring their own assets, strengths, and identities as well as systemic injustices that may devalue or inhibit them.

Measurable Indicators of Awareness

- Students' increasing appreciation of their own strengths, needs, and growth
- Students' more frequent and rigorous questions of the assumptions around (and inside them) that inhibit and enable their growth
- What would you add?
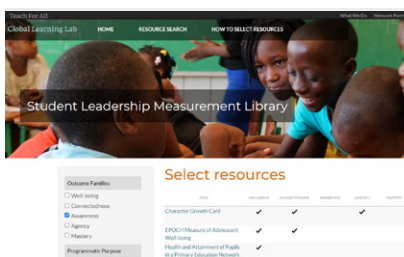
Tools for Measuring Awareness

We have to develop that critical authentic hope in young people that tells them that you can make change and that we're all in this together. And so our curriculum is built around that idea, understanding how society works, how do you play that game, and change that game? And what skills do you need in order to do that?

Ann Milne
Former Kia Aroha Principal from New Zealand. Quote taken from: "Warrior Scholars - Decolonising education", 2014

Explore Awareness

Growing Awareness
Samia Habli (Teach For Lebanon) recognized that her students were facing multiple forms of marginalization and discrimination across different lines of identity. She decided to create healing spaces to begin developing the awareness and agency they needed to understand and overcome the inequities they were facing.

Owning Your Cultural Identity
Explore through this video from 2016 how Karega Bailey at Roses in Concrete school in Oakland, California, in the U.S., helps students focus on awareness of their own cultural identities and strengths to challenge systemic injustices around them.

Contextualizing the Sense of Self
As shown in this video from 2017, at public secondary school Kia Aroha in South Auckland, New Zealand, teachers and students build a community that focuses on bilingual, critically conscious, culturally responsive, social justice education.

More Than a Number
In this video from 2013, students in Taylor's class explore history in ways that grow their awareness of the systemic challenges around them, and their power to address them.

Related Research Constructs
- Sense of identity [Schotter, 1993; Cohen & Garcia, 2008]
- Social awareness [Wegner & Giuliano, 1982; Selman, 2003]
- Metacognition [Flavell, 1979; Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Schraw, 1998; Rodgers, 2002]

SHARE
Contribute your insights (and see others') questions, resources, and challenges related to AWARENESS.

A CLOSER LOOK AT...
AGENCY

Students take independent or collective action toward shared goals to cause positive change in their own life or the lives of others. Students are finding their voice, leading learning, and connecting daily efforts to their aspirations for themselves and their communities.

Measurable Indicators of Agency

- Students' increasing proactive influence on their own and others' learning and paths in life
- Students' determination and resilience in the face of challenges and opportunities
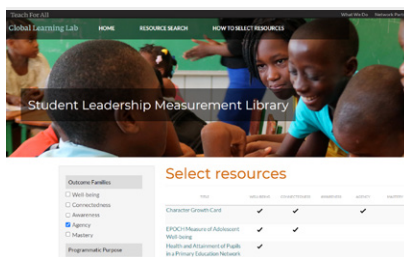
Tools for Measuring Agency

Courage Through Autonomy

How do you inspire self-efficacy in students who have spent years believing that they have limited potential? These are the hard questions Claudia Araya (Enseña Por Chile, 2012) confronted when she first met her students. Explore them through this 2013 video.

Understandig Your Story, Understanding You

In this video from 2014, Clint Smith (Teach For America) performs a poem exploring his experience of teaching and his vision for helping students think deeply about social injustice and the ways to navigate complex power structures with a strong sense of agency.

We have to equip our kids to succeed in the current system but understand that it needs changing and be willing to change it. If all we do is equip our kids to join that competition and win in it, there's always going to be other people left behind.

Sanaya Bharucha
Global Head, Student Leadership & Voice, Teach For All, 2009 Teach For India Fellow, Director, Maya musical

Sense of agency is at the heart of the school of the future.

Andreas Schleicher
Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Related Research Constructs

- Self-efficacy [Bandura, 1982, 1997]
- Creativity [Strenberg, 1999, 2006; Csikszentmihályi, 1990; Torrance, 1988; Amabile, 1988, 2011]
- Problem-solving [Mayer, 1992, 1998, 2013]
- Growth mindset [Dweck, 1999, 2008]

Student agency is closely associated with intrinsic motivation: strong teachers work to ensure students are working hard not out of fear of consequences or promise of reward, but because they see and feel the value in the hard work and learning itself. In that sense forms of "extrinsic motivation", in which students genuinely know what they want and see the connection between their hard work and that goal, are in fact indicators of strong student agency because the students are owning the choice to work hard toward mastery. For a rich and nuanced exploration of this research, check out "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being" by Ryan & Deci.

SHARE
Contribute your insights (and see others'), questions, resources, and challenges related to AGENCY.

Hart's ladder of student participation

degrees of participation
8. Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults
7. Youth-initiated and directed
6. Adult-initiated shared decisions with young people
5. Consulted and informed
4. Assigned but informed

non-participation
3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation

A CLOSER LOOK AT...
MASTERY

Students gain deep knowledge and skills as they develop critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. Students are eagerly and productively struggling with challenging and relevant content at the edge of their abilities. Mastery is achieved through, not at the expense of, student wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

The very processes that teachers care about most, like critical thinking and problem solving, are intimately intertwined with factual knowledge that is stored in long-term memory.

Daniel Willingham
Cognitive scientist at the University of Virginia.
Quote taken from: Op-Ed: Pandemic learning loss is real (2021)

The more you know about something the more curious you are likely to be about a question that is related to it.

Doug Lemov
Author of *Teach Like a Champion*
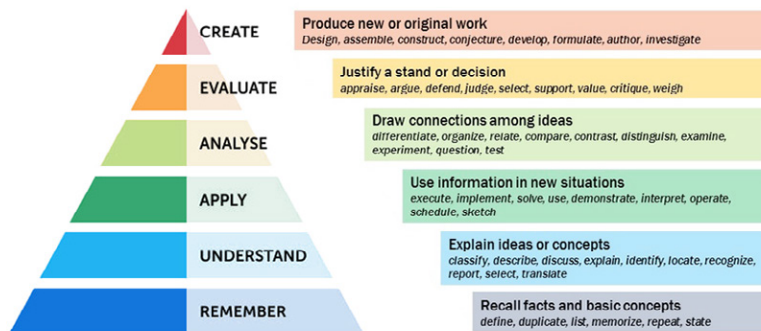
Image source: Bloom's taxonomy by Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (adapted).

Two critical ideas about mastery emerge from the classrooms our "learning loop" participants studied. First, mastery means much more than superficial knowledge and skills (often measured on weak standardized tests). The forms of mastery that actually indicate students are growing as leaders include the full range of Bloom's Taxonomy of higher-order thinking. Mastery isn't just what you know, it is also how you think.

Second, the classrooms in our studies demolish the misperception that valuing additional outcomes must mean a dilution of mastery. Transformational classrooms are distinguished by how rigorous mastery is achieved through students' wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, and agency.

The strategies and actions of Teaching As Collective Leadership offer a map to that marriage of student outcomes. And the library of measurement tools below offers a variety of ways to define and measure those broader outcomes.

Measurable Indicators of Mastery

- Students' growth and proficiency in foundational skills such as numeracy and literacy
- Students' increasing ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and develop knowledge and skills that matter to their chosen path
- What would you add?
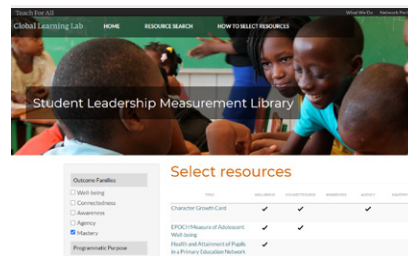
Tools for Measuring Mastery

Explore Mastery: Provocative Illustrations and Research

- More Than a Number: Critical Minds (Video from 2013)
- A research summary on how a holistic approach best achieves mastery
- Rise research on the importance of early foundational skills
- Why So Many Kids Struggle to Learn
- Drivers of Student Performance: Insights from Europe

⬈ **SHARE**
Contribute your insights (and see others'), questions, resources, and challenges related to MASTERY.

DO

This set of resources for defining and measuring student progress is for programs and educators in the Teach For All network who feel committed to helping their students on an enduring path to self-determined opportunity and leadership.

Student Leadership Measurement Library

The Student Leadership Measurement Library contains a list of resources for measuring broad student outcomes that align with the Teach For All network's Teaching As Collective Leadership (TACL) framework: wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery.

This library does not offer measurement tools "off-the-shelf" but rather as one component of a holistic framework that aims to co-create a wide range of locally customized resources and tools for teachers, teacher coaches, and program designers. Through this practical exploration with partner organizations, we expect to discover new implications for Teaching As Collective Leadership that will lead to fresh cycles of research, insight, and practice in teacher training and development.

Measurement tools must align with partners' vision of student success so that assessment links with teaching and learning (see here for a visualization of the cycle from vision-setting to teaching and learning, to measurement, and programmatic improvement, which then informs back on vision-setting).

Best Practices in Measurement
- Contextualize and adapt the measurement tools to specific contexts
- Pilot newly developed or adapted measurement tools to ensure quality control
- Use multiple sources of data and/or different measurement formats (see a resource on data triangulation)
- Plan, design, and implement a systematic measurement and monitoring strategy (*accessible exclusively for Teach For All partner organizations and staff*)

How Teach For All Partner Organizations Are Contextualizing These Outcomes

At the risk of repeating ourselves: The global patterns in this Teaching As Collective Leadership model are to provoke your thinking about your students' needs in your context.

Consider a few examples of that contextualization from around the network:

Teach for Nigeria

Reflecting on students' strengths, needs, and futures, Teach For Nigeria has chosen to emphasize (alongside academic achievement) students' self-efficacy, growth mindset, social awareness, and school belonging. The organization monitors these student outcomes using student self-reported questionnaires based on validated survey items from international assessments and piloted this survey to ensure reliability in their context. Explore more of this journey of alignment between purpose, vision, curriculum, and measures here. You can read more about this study here (*accessible exclusively for Teach For All partner organizations and staff*).

Enseña por Colombia

Concerned that current systems are not measuring what's most important, Enseña Por Colombia is collaborating with Teach For All to design and test TACL-inspired measures of student academic and social, and emotional skills. The adaptations are focusing on 1) wellbeing strategies for teachers and teacher coaches; 2) the relevance of students' social and emotional learning skills (SEL) in teacher training and support processes. These adaptations are being designed and adjusted through focus groups, quick feedback rounds with different stakeholders, piloting of the changes, surveys, and collection of other sources of information. Then, the group will analyze the effects of the adaptations on the students' outcomes through a mixed-method evaluation.

Seeking Help with Defining and Measuring Student Growth and Development?

For additional learning opportunities related to student outcomes measurement and monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning from Teach For All, make sure to check out the Teach For All Partner Learning Portal (*accessible exclusively for Teach For All partner organizations and staff*).

SHARE

Make your voice heard: Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has been developed through contributions from thousands of people—teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

OUTCOMES GENERAL INPUT

The critical need for measurable outcomes to fight inequity
The first is the importance of irrefutable evidence. And I don't say that lightly only because, of course, the idea that evidence is irrefutable is difficult in itself. But one of the things that we've learned over time is that the mighty force of oppression is going to gasp until its last breath. And so it's incredibly important for us to be armed and equipped to respond to the cries of "Oh, that's just a special group of highly motivated people" or "That's just a special group of students who broke out of the norm." We have to be armed and build the systems within our organization and communities to collect evidence.

Nedgine Paul Derolyû
Anseye Pou Ayiti (Haiti)

The power of centering student leadership
Every single big issue that has been solved in our country has been done by young people. The civil rights movement, the peace movement, the LGBT movement, the women's movement—they've always been done by the young. They can be the change makers. They have the power to do it. . . . We have to face history to make history.

Dolores Huerta
Leader in the farmworkers' rights movement, U.S.

Contribute to our "Outcomes" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

WELLBEING

Mindsets are the biggest predictor of success
Student mindsets have more influence on outcomes than socioeconomic background.
https://www.mckinsey.com/industrives/education/our-insights/drivers-of-student-performance-insights-from-europe

The OECD 2021 Study on Social and Emotional Learning
The OECD's 2021 Study on SEL demonstrates that both teachers and their school communities can support these skills and speak to the importance of student wellbeing in order for students to thrive as leaders in their context, in particular during times of uncertainty and instability such as the global pandemic.

Robbie Dean
Teach For All

Self-determination theory
These researchers focus on three core psychological needs: relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Which map pretty perfectly to our connectedness, agency, and mastery. Through the ways they create the conditions for self-determination, they make a powerful case for how these are essential for wellbeing.

Jude Heaton
Teach For All

Contribute to our "Wellbeing" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

CONNECTEDNESS

Leadership is not just one person acting from the front. All are intertwined in the way helping each other grow, and yes it is not leadership but laddership— uplifting each other.

Sonali
Student of Teach For India fellow

Intersection of connectedness & agency
The concept of autonomy has often been portrayed as being antagonistic to relatedness or community, in fact, some theories equate autonomy with concepts such as individualism and independence (e.g., Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986), which do indeed imply low relatedness. But, within SDT, autonomy refers not to being independent, detached, or selfish but rather to the feeling of volition that can accompany any act, whether dependent or independent, collectivist or individualist, in fact, recent research in Korean and U.S. samples has found a more positive relation between autonomy and collectivistic attitudes than between autonomy and individualistic attitudes.

Kim, Butzel, & Ryan–1998

Contribute to our "Connectedness" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

AWARENESS

Fighting sexual abuse through education

Luis Bermudez Gutierrez
Colombia

The critical importance of examining power and privilege to foster collective change

Swastika Shrestha
Teach For Nepal

Ego vs. Eco-centric

The reductionist approach to success has led to an economic and ecological crisis that we are experiencing today. What would it mean for us to see ourselves as custodians of life, custodians of this planet, and move from an EGO-CENTRIC definition to an ECO-CENTRIC definition of success?

Vishal Talreja
Dream A Dream, India

Contribute to our "Awareness" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

AGENCY

Students helping students learn

Suchita charged his Student Council with a mandate to improve the school, and shared with the group data from weekly tests of 9th graders. When the Student Council members saw how far behind the students were despite all the online learning that took place when schools were shut, they were concerned and took the initiative to create a plan. They met with each teacher to prioritize the content taught, and provided extra support for students who needed it during and after the school day. With the help of these interventions, the school was able to achieve more than 90 percent of the students passing the high-stakes test and moving on to grade 10.

Suchita Mohan
A school leader with iTeach schools in Pune, India

What if student agency became the most important measure of learning?

Learner-centered mindsets and social-emotional development become a new critical measure of learning success. Meanwhile, standardized tests become obsolete. Fed up with practicing for life, kids build real solutions—merging ideas, perspectives, and contributions to tackle global problems as the world drifts toward climate disaster. Kids democratize learning. As personalized project-based learning and real-world experiences become the norm, learning becomes blended, flexible, and personal. Schools pivot: learners define learning goals for the year, work with mentors/teachers to find and structure curriculum from across the internet or lived environment, build work plans for themselves or form working groups.
https://www.imaginablefutures.com/lear-ning-reimagined/

Contribute to our "Agency" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

MASTERY

Best thing you'll watch today. Teacher in Pittsburg (40 miles east of San Francisco) uses @ lizzo to inspire and teach her kids.

Raj Mathai

Academic Rigor according to Walter Doyle

Taylor Delhagen
Relay Grad School of Education

Mastery: Using agriculture to build rigorous learning

Stephen Ritz (U.S.)
Teaching kids to count is cool, but teaching them what counts is also critical.
[listen and envision, community, pure zany energy]

Contribute to our "Mastery" Digital Bulletin Board (Here)

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet (here).

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING

We can only grow our students, our teachers, and our own wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery if we are thoughtful and intentional about how humans best learn. Our studies of transformational classrooms reveal five "healthy tensions" in great learning experiences.

What conditions and experiences enable students' and teachers' growth and development as collective leaders?

OVERVIEW
Get started with a preview of the headlines coming out of our studies of transformational learning conditions.

DISCOVER
Virtually explore **transformational learning experiences** to find distinguishing principles and conditions shaping them.

LEARN
Explore the **five "healthy tensions"** that show up in most transformational learning experiences.

DO
Find actionable guidance and examples of teachers and partner organizations implementing those learning principles.

SHARE
Share and explore incoming insights, challenges, questions, resources, and research.

OVERVIEW

We can only grow our students', our teachers', and our own wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery if we are thoughtful and intentional about how humans best learn. Our studies of transformational classrooms reveal five "healthy tensions" in great learning experiences.

If we want students to learn differently, then teachers must learn differently. If teachers are going to learn differently, they may have to unlearn some of what they think they know about learning.

Laurelin Whitfield
Leadership Coach and Facilitator, Teach For All

DISCOVER

What learning principles was Teach For Nepal using in 2018 to help new teachers recognize the limitations of their perspective and learn from students and communities?

What learning conditions enabled Óliver Jabato Rodríguez to let go of his fear of failure, transforming how he saw his students and himself? Explore the question in this video from 2018.

DO

- Apply these insights through Training and Coaching and four powerful "learning bets" for teacher development: Exploring, Discovering, Examining, and Experiencing.
- Check out innovations across the Teach For All network.
- Explore adult learning and development more deeply through examples and resources.

LEARN

- Shifting lenses often calls for disorienting experiences and reflection that drives "unlearning," while developing skills often calls for watching, listening, and practicing.
- Shifting lenses and developing skills and actions can be part of a powerful cycle of unlearning and learning.

OUR GLOSSARY

In our attempt to capture the real spirit of the classrooms we have studied; we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in a slightly unusual way. We invite you to learn more about our language choices by exploring this Glossary.

SHARE

Contribute your insights and see others' questions, resources, and challenges to evolve under learning about learning.

FIVE **HEALTHY TENSIONS** FOUND IN MANY TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Learning experiences are simultaneously . . .

WELCOMING *ensuring safe inclusion for all identities*	&	**DISORIENTING** *dismantling assumptions that inhibit growth*
COLLECTIVE *learning with and from each other*	&	**PERSONAL** *learning in our own best way*
DIRECTIVE *communicating, showing, and telling in clear and accessible ways*	&	**EXPLORATORY** *questioning, exploring, and discovering in unexpected ways*
STRUCTURED *building in planned and predictable ways on what is known*	&	**RESPONSIVE** *adjusting to address learners' curiosity, questions, and confusion*
REFLECTIVE *gaining awareness of ourselves and others*	&	**ACTIVE** *applying, practicing, and creating*

FIVE CRITICAL INSIGHTS INTO HOW WE LEARN **(THAT WE ARE CONDITIONED TO IGNORE)**

We have to overcome systems that inhibit deep learning…

1. **As learners we actively** *construct knowledge***, but we are conditioned to believe we are** *mostly passive* **recipients of knowledge.**

2. **We are** *never not* **learning, but we are conditioned to believe learning only happens in formal settings like school.**

3. **Our receptivity to** *different kinds of learning* **changes as we develop, but we are conditioned to believe we are all equally ready to learn in the same ways.**

4. **"Unlearning" IS learning, but we are conditioned to assume that "learning" only means gaining** *new* **insight even though deconstructing old ideas often leads to the most important growth.**

5. **Feeling** *safe, trusted,* **and** *free* **to be ourselves makes us most receptive to learning, but we are conditioned to believe pressure and intensity should drive learning.**

DISCOVER

(Re)visit transformational classrooms, looking for learning principles

Often, we visit transformational classrooms to learn from the teachers' and students' perspectives and actions. Too rarely do we focus on the qualities of the learning experiences that are enabling both students' and teachers' growth and development.

Do you remember Teach For India teacher Gaurav Singh's profound realizations about himself and his students as he worked alongside these students' families, sorting through garbage? We first shared this story from 2009 as an illustration of a critical shift of lenses that radically changed Gaurav's approach to classroom leadership. **But what was it about that experience that encouraged that lens shift?** The learning theory in that story centers around disorientation and reflection, rather than reading, watching, or practicing.

In this sense, what can we *learn about learning* from our virtual visits with transformational teachers, students, and classrooms?

Discover Through Personal Reflection

Let's start, just as Gaurav did, by reflecting on our own journey of growth and development. Use your experiences as case studies for learning about learning. Take a few minutes to pause and think about each of these scenarios and questions.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE	DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCE
gaining new knowledge or skills	*gaining new capacities and perspectives*
Think about an experience when you learned something new or gained a new skill really effectively. What was the experience? What was it about the experience that allowed you to learn so much?	Think about an experience when your understanding or view of yourself, of others, or of the world shifted in a meaningful way. What was the experience? What was it about the experience that enabled such a significant shift in your understanding or perspectives?

Discover Through (Re)visiting Transformational Classrooms and Communities

Below you will have the chance to revisit some of the classrooms and communities from our collective studies that helped generate key insights into purpose, lenses, strategies, and outcomes in transformational classrooms. Now, however, focus on the conditions, qualities, and principles shaping the design and implementation of the students' and adults' *learning*. What assumptions are they making about the kinds and qualities of experiences and interventions that drive growth and development?

A Collective, Contextualized Vision

As shown in this video from 2018, Teach For Nepal helps teachers see the importance of recognizing the limitations of their own perspective as they strive to work alongside communities to develop a vision for students. What learning principles is the organization using to inform these new teacher experiences?

GLOSSARY
Transformative Classroom: Classrooms where students seem to be on a different trajectory. They seem to be making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward.

Explore more about these concepts and other language choices in our Glossary.

THE POOR STATE OF RESEARCH ON TEACHER TRAINING

Research into *how* to best develop teachers' ways of being, knowing, and doing is frustratingly weak.

The Brookings Institution examined "What Do We Know About Professional Development?" and organized researchers to review the evidence on the effectiveness of in-service teacher training and support in math. The study found that only 32 of 910 studies were based on reliable study design and that only five of the 910 studies met the standards of the "What Works Clearinghouse" (a respected consolidator of education research). Of those five studies, two interventions had positive results, one showed limited effects, and two showed no discernable benefits for teachers.

As Ben Jensen, an expert in teacher development in Australia, said at Teach For All's 2016 "Learning Bets" Roundtable, "the evidence is disgustingly poor."

And where we do have evidence about teacher training, it is showing marginal impact, at best. In The New Teacher Project's (TNTP) disturbing review of the effectiveness of teacher training and support, the data showed that in one site "if you were to play forward [the teacher growth seen in these studies] at what point will the average teacher in this site be highly effective in developing students' critical thinking skills? It would be 172 years."—The Mirage—The New Teacher Project.

In the words of Michelle Rhee, Teach For America alumna and former head of The New Teacher Project:

> *The measures that we traditionally use to assess teacher professional learning, which is largely teacher satisfaction with it and whether they think they are growing across this data set, have virtually zero relationship to actual improvement. Repeat: The things that we generally make our decisions on are almost completely unrelated across these settings to whether teachers are showing improvement on the "objective" measures. There's no way to overstate this; the research base on teacher improvement is just disturbingly bad and not instructive.*

Collective Ownership and Student Leadership

What learning conditions enabled Óliver Jabato Rodríguez, while he was a fellow in 2018, to let go of his fear of failure, transforming how he saw his students? How did the learning conditions that enabled his development show up for his students?

Co-constructing a Learning Community

Focus on the learning theory in Pooja's classroom shown in this 2018 video. What principles shape how she plans lessons and partners with students to develop a vision for their classroom and community?

Critical Thinking for Mastery

Taylor Delhagen, Teach For America alumnus, is not using a traditional "I do–We do–You do" lesson design as he facilitates debate to develop students' critical thinking. Why? What learning theory is at play in this classroom?

Too often, as we study who is doing what and why in transformational classrooms, we are missing the underlying learning theory that is driving students' and teachers' growth and development. What patterns do you see in the *qualities and conditions of learning* in these classrooms and communities?

Spoiler alert: The next section (after this quick look at the weak state of research on teacher professional development) shares what others have learned about learning from these and other transformational classrooms.

LEARN

Disruptive learning about learning

Transformational growth and development require that we unlearn what we have learned about learning. We must design learning experiences around healthy tensions that represent a radical departure from common approaches to teacher development.

Let's imagine for a moment that you want to become a master chef, someone who makes meals so incredible that they change people's lives. What learning experiences would help you get there?

- You could read about great cooking.
- You could watch great cooks in action.
- You could practice small elements of great cooking and gradually put them together.
- You could spend time with a transformational chef, picking up skills, knowledge, and mindsets with increasing responsibility.
- You could fuel your desire to learn by tasting excellent food and seeing first-hand the influence of great cooking on diners.
- You could get a cooking coach who would watch you work and give constructive criticism as you work.
- You could get a different cooking coach who helps you analyze your own cooking and discover ways you want to improve it.
- You could develop relationships with your diners and listen carefully to what actually makes them feel most inspired and fulfilled by your cooking.

All of those are legitimate "bets" to grow your culinary skills. But it might not be the best choice to pursue all these bets at once. Would you learn faster if you focused on a few strategically chosen learning experiences and invested heavily in them? Would it depend on how developed you are as a cook? Would it depend on your personal learning preference? How should you decide which learning experiences would work best?

Teaching As Collective Leadership offers a map of purpose, lenses, actions, and outcomes that distinguish classrooms where students are growing as leaders of a better future. But knowing the map is *not enough*.

Even the clearest map of what we want to be, know, and do does not tell us how to grow and develop those qualities.

Does a list of traffic laws and illustrations of good driving make someone a good driver?	NO, because driving knowledge needs to be applied and practiced to develop the skills and judgment of good drivers.
Does a well-formatted map of the science of nutrition and exercise turn someone who is unfit and unhealthy into someone who is fit and healthy?	NO, because that kind of lifestyle shift requires a combination of self-reflection, self-awareness, support, unlearning old habits, and practicing new ones.
Does the Teaching As Collective Leadership framework of purpose, lenses, strategies, and outcomes make a new or struggling teacher great?	**NO, because developing the purpose, lenses, and strategies described in this framework requires intentionally designed learning conditions and experiences.**

Teaching As Collective Leadership is emerging from collective studies of transformational classrooms around the world. All the insights in the model are what a diverse group of people see as patterns in those classrooms. We have also been studying the growth journeys of the teachers in those transformational classrooms. How did they develop into the collective leaders they are today?

[I hear and see us] conflating what we know about good teaching, which is quite a bit, with how we help teachers become effective at those things. Knowing and helping aren't the same things. It [feels like we] might be making the leap to say if we know/understand something, we can get teachers to do it. That's exactly where I worry that we know less than we think! Most places are completely absent, actually, of a theory of learning. And as a result, they do a set of activities that ... very often have little to do with how we actually support people to do the work of teaching.

Anonymous feedback from Teach For All's Roundtable of veteran program designers on Learning Bets: Growing Transformational Learners and Leaders

This chapter merges what we are learning from those teachers and their classrooms with key insights from the frontiers of adult learning and development research. This chapter offers a guide to designing learning experiences for teachers and students that will strengthen meaningful growth and development.

Three Big Ideas About Learning Theory

Learning theory is a complex field at the intersection of neuroscience, cognitive development, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, etc. Three important sets of ideas are emerging as we ask a diverse group of teachers, students, families, teacher coaches, and others to describe the conditions and principles shaping transformational learning experiences:

1. **Most education systems are built around, and have led us to internalize, assumptions and beliefs about how we learn that are fundamentally wrong.**

2. **Transformational learning experiences are designed to marry together five "healthy tensions."**

3. **While they call for different learning theories, shifting tensions and growing skills are inextricably intertwined.**

In this section, we will explore each of those three emerging insights about learning theory.

Big Learning About Learning #1
Most education systems are built around, and have led us to internalize, assumptions and beliefs about how we learn that are fundamentally wrong

At the risk of sounding a little dramatic (or like conspiracy-theorist trolls on the internet) *much of what you have been led to believe about learning is a scam.*

Many of the assumptions, conditions, and principles that shape conventional classroom "learning" have been driven not by genuine alignment with how humans grow and develop to fulfill their potential but instead by what is convenient and efficient for a system preparing students for an industrial and factory era.

Imagine for a moment what pressures a system aiming for assimilation, conformity, and efficiency of mechanical learning puts on *how* learning experiences are designed. In that system, we might isolate children from each other by putting them each behind their own desks, rather than letting them work together. We might (just hypothetically, of course) create a culture of competition and fear, where children are afraid to make mistakes. We might define learning (just hypothetically, of course) as what teachers tell students, instead of what students actually internalize and master.

Many of us have deeply internalized false and damaging assumptions about how we learn, misconceptions about learning that will, unaddressed, inhibit our ability to help our students grow as leaders of a better future. For many of us, learning about learning must start with unlearning about learning.

Here are five foundational insights about how humans (students and teachers) learn, grow, and develop that our school experiences have conditioned us to ignore.

Key Idea #1
As learners we actively construct knowledge
but we are conditioned to believe we are mostly passive recipients of knowledge

Most of us (as students) experienced classrooms in which the teacher talked and we were supposed to listen and learn. Those systems reinforced the misperception that learning is *received* instead of constructed. And yet, advances in the science of learning and development have underscored that human beings "learn best when they are socially interacting within an authentic situation that is relevant to their prior knowledge and goals, and that fosters autonomous and self-directed functioning." (Doolittle & Hicks, 2012, p. 86)

The implications for teachers and students are immense. Students are not empty vessels in whose minds we pour knowledge; students are active agents always deriving meaning from what they experience. What will it mean to help new teachers discover and construct new understandings, perspectives, and skills that will help students do the same?

Key Idea #2
We are *never not* learning
but we are conditioned to believe learning only happens in formal settings like school

Whether we want them to or not, our minds are processing, sorting, connecting, discarding, and evolving how we understand the world around us every waking moment of every day and perhaps every sleeping moment as well. A problematic side-effect of the artificial compartmentalizing of education into the four walls of a classroom is an implicit devaluing of so many powerful sources of learning, from apprenticeships to lived experiences and the collective wisdom of the community. That misperception also overvalues the classroom setting, rather than seeing it as one aspect of the broader learning journey of students.

Again, the implications of this truth about learning are huge. How can we design teacher training and support experiences that connect learning in workshops and institutes to the real-world learning that comes with being a teacher in a classroom? How can we take a step back to see our work as educators as a contribution to the overall learning journey of students? And how can we connect the broader context and learning our students are experiencing to the objectives we have in our classrooms?

Key Idea #3
Our receptivity to different kinds of learning changes as we grow and develop
but we are conditioned to believe we are all equally ready to learn in the same ways

The developmental journey that is so easily recognized in children continues into adulthood. In some stages of our life, we are more open to learning in ways that develop skills and mastery, while in other stages we may be more open to shifts in identity and perspective. And while everyone's journey is unique, knowing that we go through different stages as adult learners helps us be more responsive and adaptive in designing training and support for adults (and that same responsiveness and adaptivity are what teachers are going to need to embody in their classrooms with their students).

How would our teacher development (e.g., Institute Design) and coaching models change if we embraced the reality that different adult learners may be at different stages of readiness to learn at different times? How would our classrooms be different? And how could modeling these principles in our teacher training and development impact how our teachers work with students in their classrooms?

GLOSSARY

Mastery: We use the word "mastery" to describe the meaningfully rigorous learning needed to prepare students for leadership in the future. The term signals a focus on deeper learning, surpassing many current education models and systems.

Grow students as leaders: We have chosen the verb "grow" in this phrase because we feel it's more active and meaningful than more traditional terms like "develop." We made this intentional choice to inspire readers to pause and think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

Explore more about these concepts in our **Glossary**.

Key Idea #4
Unlearning *is* learning

but we are conditioned to assume that "learning" only means gaining new insights even though deconstructing old ideas often leads to the most important growth

Most of us probably experienced formal education in which "learning" meant adding new facts or skills to our growing minds. Some of the most important insights, however, come when we critically examine and let go of previous assumptions about ourselves, others, or the world that, while once useful, are now inhibiting our own or others' growth.

Perhaps we have internalized, for example, that a teacher is an all-knowing source of insights and that students are supposed to compliantly receive that knowledge. If so, teaching in ways that grow students as leaders of a better future will be very uncomfortable until we unpack and let go of those assumptions.

"Unlearning" often comes from disorienting experiences that, with reflection, help us make new meaning of the world around us. As Harvard researcher Todd Rose suggests in his book *The End of Average*, "The hardest part of learning something new is not embracing new ideas, but letting go of old ones."

How are our approaches to teacher recruitment, selection, and training reflecting the misconception that learning does not include "unlearning"? How would teacher development and coaching be different if we were not only working to grow fellows' teaching skills but also help them be more aware of assumptions they have internalized about themselves or others that are inhibiting their development?

Key Idea #5
Feeling safe, trusted, and free to be ourselves make us most receptive to learning

but we are conditioned to believe pressure and intensity should drive learning

Meaningful learning requires not only being comfortable with trying new things and making mistakes but also the mental processing capacity to make sense of those experiences and mistakes. When our minds are in a protective "fight or flight" mode (which is so often the case for children and adults who have experienced or are experiencing trauma) meaningful learning is significantly inhibited.

The implication for teachers (and teacher trainers) is clear: creating and protecting a welcoming space for all, especially people with marginalized and oppressed identities, is an essential part of designing learning experiences. This means that if we want meaningful learning to happen we have to proactively work to mitigate oppressive stressors around and inside us.

Big Learning About Learning #2
Transformational learning experiences are designed to marry together five "healthy tensions"

Those realities about how humans best learn serve as a foundation for the conditions and qualities of learning experiences that actually help us (and our students) grow and develop. As we have studied the growth journeys of transformational teachers across and beyond our network, and as we have married those stories and experiences with expertise and research into adult learning and development, several key qualities of transformational learning experiences have emerged.

We are finding it useful to express these insights as "healthy tensions," ideas that at first seem in conflict with each other but together actually make for powerfully provocative learning experiences when married together. Meaningful learning comes from a pair of interdependent yet opposite qualities, and both are necessary for learning to happen. The point is not that a workshop or lesson plan should have one or the other of these qualities, but that learning should have both, even though the two qualities might feel in tension with each other. In fact, these healthy tensions fuel learning.

These polarities are "yin and yang"—not good versus bad. In this sense, they are interdependent opposites, not a spectrum.

Below, we will explore four of these five healthy tensions in strong learning experiences:[1]

Welcoming
Ensuring safe inclusion for all learners and identities

Powerful learning experiences welcome the full being of those who are taking part and the diversity of all those who are present. The science of learning is verifying what we intuitively know: If we don't feel safe, and if we don't feel a sense of belonging, a host of chemical responses in our brains and bodies inhibit our ability to learn. When learning experiences are welcoming we see:

Learning experiences feel respectful, such that learners feel safe and affirmed in their identities, learning preferences, and needs.

Learners reveal and address gaps in understanding or skills without fear of undermining their reputation or position.

Learning is structured to provide multiple access points with varied learning modalities, and/or individualized support.

&

Disorienting
Dismantling assumptions that inhibit growth

Powerful learning is to some degree uncomfortable and disorienting. It may push us to the edges of what we know and/or can do. It may push us to confront our own biases and assumptions. It may challenge us to see the world in new ways. When learning experiences are disorienting we see:

Learners are working at the frontiers of their knowledge, skills, and/or perspectives.

Learners are discovering new things about themselves.

Learners are recognizing blindspots they didn't realize they had.

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1. These polarities are informed by our collective studies, partner organizations' input (especially Teach For America's position on adult learning), as well as other key resources on adult learning and development, including;
- Dirkx, John. The New Update on Adult Learning Theory
- Jensen, Eric. Teaching with the Brain in Mind, 2nd Ed. 2005
- Villegas, Ana María and Lucas, Tamara. Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers

Collective
Learning with and from each other

Human beings are social learners. We learn best with people who see and support our journey, who can stretch and challenge us, and who surround us with diverse perspectives and ways of thinking. Dialogue, connection, and collaboration are at the core of growing collective leadership. When learning experiences are collective, we see:

Learners learn from and with each other via spontaneous and organized structures.

All learning, whether by individuals or groups, contributes to our collective impact.

&

Personal
Learning in our own best way

Our individual needs as learners vary enormously. Temperament, identity, culture, and prior knowledge and experience all influence our receptivity to and preferences in learning. Powerful learning experiences respect and nurture those differences with elements of personal choice and autonomy. When learning experiences are personal, we see:

Learners have space to influence how they experience learning.

Learners find relevance to their lived experiences and interests in the process and content.

Directive
Building on what we and others know in planned and predictable ways

Learners appreciate direct, guided instruction to achieve clear objectives, and new insights built from prior knowledge. Predictable and familiar models, templates, and protocols for designing and hosting learning experiences can help learners feel comfortable and help us avoid "reinventing the wheel." When learning experiences are directive, we see:

Learners become familiar with learning processes so they can focus on content.

Learners know what to expect for their invested time and energy in learning.

&

Exploratory
Questioning, exploring, and discovering in unexpected ways

Learning is a process of discovery, of making meaning, of constructing our own understanding of the world. Learning experiences can be powerful when they create opportunities for learners to make up their own minds, put the pieces together for themselves, and practice agency in the learning process. Play and experimentation in this discovery process bring learning to life. When learning experiences are exploratory, we see:

Learners have a choice and voice in what and how they learn.

Learners are prompted to connect new learning with prior knowledge/experience as they make meaning for themselves.

Learners explore concepts and build skills in areas that align with their interests, their roles, and the problems they currently face.

Learners are involved in assessing their learning and experience.

&

Reflective
Gaining awareness of ourselves and others

Learning happens when we make new meanings of ourselves, others, and the world. Powerful progress comes from intentionally processing our experiences. Reflective learning is critical to gaining awareness of internalized beliefs and assumptions that might enable or inhibit our growth. When learning experiences are reflective, we see:

Learners pause, taking time to process and make meaning of challenging, uncomfortable, or disorienting experiences.

Active
Applying, practicing, and creating

Learning happens when we experiment, act, and do. Intentionally practicing new skills, trying out new ideas, and going through trial and error can make powerful progress. Practice is critical to building skills and capacity. When learning experiences are active, we see:

Learners emulate exemplary models.

Learners break down complex skills into discrete elements and practice them.

Learners build "muscle memory" for foundational skills to free their minds to focus on difficult judgments.

Imagine a learning experience with one of these qualities but not the other. A learning experience that is safe and welcoming but not at all uncomfortable or disorienting is probably not much of a learning experience at all. Sadly, too many students (and too many of us) have experienced a class that was highly uncomfortable or pressured but not at all welcoming. How did that affect our ability to learn and grow?

We are finding that the key to designing exceptional, meaningful, transformational learning experiences is to think "and" not "or" when it comes to the healthy tensions.

Consider the "Welcoming & Disorienting" polarity. Imagine you are designing a training session on the purpose of education for new teachers. We know that learners are most receptive to learning when they feel safe and secure to take risks and fail, so you may be thinking about how new teachers with marginalized identities will feel, see, and experience the space, the exercises, you, and others. At the same time, we know some degree of discomfort or disorientation is a driver of deeper learning. So you may also be thinking about how you can help learners see ways that they have internalized unjust purposes baked into education, and to feel some discomfort in that. As a designer and facilitator of learning experiences, you need to ask yourself, "Are my learners encountering both of those qualities in this learning experience?"

Note that these interdependent opposites are what we want learners to experience, which could be different from what we emphasize in designing and facilitating. That is, sometimes one side of a polarity may already be strongly present in the broader context in which learning takes place, so we do not need to design for that quality. For example, if new teachers are arriving at your training session already pretty uncomfortable and disoriented from the struggles of their first day of teaching, you may want to design toward the "welcoming" side of the polarity because its interdependent opposite is already part of the learners' experience. These polarities should guide us to think about *what our learners are experiencing*.

Big Learning About Learning #3
While they call for different learning theories, shifting tensions and growing skills are inextricably intertwined

Not only do most teacher development models reflect widely held misconceptions about how people learn and grow, but they are also largely built around developing knowledge and skills. How can we help new teachers quickly learn to plan lessons, to manage their classroom, and to assess learning? How can we help teachers master the literacy strategies, chemistry formulas, or history themes they are teaching?

Our interviews with transformational teachers about how they have grown and developed suggest that skills and lenses develop differently but interrelatedly.

As we flagged in the chapters on Lenses and Strategies, while it is a bit of an oversimplification, it is helpful to note that skills and actions are often (but not exclusively) developed by watching someone model and practice them. By contrast, lenses most often shift when we have disorienting experiences or relationships and have the opportunity to reflect and make new meaning of those experiences and relationships.

And, as crudely illustrated in the (oversimplified) visual below, shifting lenses and developing skills can be part of a powerful, interrelated cycle of development. Experiences give us fodder for reflection, which yields new learning and knowledge that we can then practice to create new experiences.

Realizing that skills and mindsets change and grow differently was a big deal for me. I had sort of lumped them together, but skills are often built by engaging exemplary models, breaking things down into pieces, and practicing over and over. On the other hand, shifting mindsets or perspectives often requires disorienting experiences and intentional reflection. Recognizing those distinctions changed how I thought about my daily learning and growth, and how I thought about institute design and coaching in a world where our lenses, perspectives, and mindsets are just as or more important than our actions.

Steven Farr
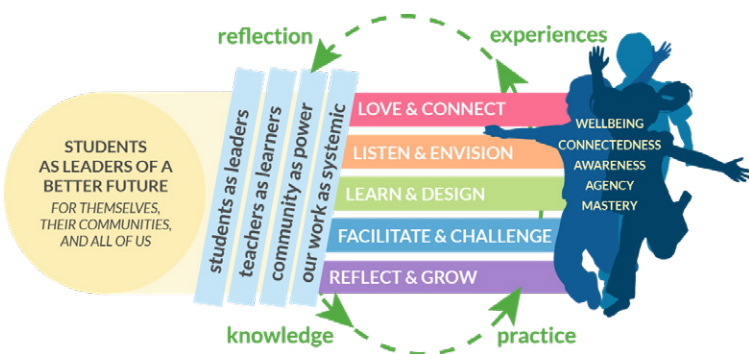Teach For All's Global Learning Lab and Teach For America Alumnus

DO

Applying transformational learning theory to teacher development

These insights about what learning conditions best help teachers and students grow have profound implications for pre-service training, teacher coaching, and professional development.

Training Sessions & Coaching

How might teacher training and support be different when we are more intentional about learning theory? Here are some possibilities:

TRAINING SESSIONS	ONE-ON-ONE COACHING
ARE MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN . . .	**IS MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN . . .**
• Learners are examining provocative case studies and discovering key insights themselves.	• The learner and coach develop a strong enough relationship for the learner to feel **welcomed** and safe enough for challenging and **disorienting** conversations.
• Learners are exchanging resources and ideas related to concrete relevant challenges.	• The coach collaborates with the learner, customizing and personalizing insights based on the learner's needs and contexts.
• Learners have autonomy in choosing key learning questions and how to address them.	• The coach is leading with ways to leverage the teacher's strengths before offering actionable guidance for areas of growth.
• Learners are working in consistent groups to build trust and vulnerability.	
ARE LESS EFFECTIVE WHEN . . .	**IS LESS EFFECTIVE WHEN . . .**
• Learners are told what to know and learn (instead of giving the opportunity to self-construct learning).	• The coach focuses on only tactics and skills or only on mindsets and lenses without being intentional about matching coaching to learner's needs and purpose.
• Learners do not see a clear connection between objectives and learning and their actual challenges and needs.	• The coach focuses only on areas for improvement and not leveraging learner strengths.
• The ways of operating in the group learning space reinforce oppressive power structures or preference for some voices and perspectives at the expense of others.	• The coach does not make time for connecting with the learner as a whole person.

Four Common Powerful "Learning Bets" for Teacher Development: Exploring, Discovering, Examining, and Experiencing

Designers and facilitators can mix and match the five "healthy tensions" described in the previous section in many different ways to create rich learning experiences for their learners. Consider four approaches that we often see strong learning facilitators use, whether the learners are children or adults. These four "learning bets" are not offered as a recipe or checklist, but as examples of what intentionality in learning theory looks like in action.

Exploring
Synthesized insights

Using summarized overviews of ideas (in articles, books, videos, PowerPoint slides, etc.), learners read, hear, or watch synthesized insights, react, and begin to consider implications. This is a relatively straightforward and perhaps "conventional" approach, but this approach can nonetheless be implemented in alignment with the four polarities. How are the content and its presentation both welcoming and challenging? How are you, as the learning designer and facilitator, building in personal choices for reflection within the collective, common experience of watching this video?

- *Using Exploring Synthesized Insights with your audience and contexts calls for a quick and direct approach. This is a relatively easy way to align messages with a big group and kick off a conversation in a short amount of time. This learning strategy is great for an audience seeking "basics."*
- *The downside of this direct approach is that learners will engage less deeply and may be less likely to shift behaviors as a result of the learning experience.*

Discovering
Insights with provocative case studies

In this approach, we build learning around the cognitive science that humans "construct" knowledge, not just "receive" knowledge. In this approach to learning, learners explore provocative case studies (video, stories, etc.) or experiences (science experiments in a lab) to discern and construct for themselves key ideas and insights. The polarity of Directive & Exploratory is particularly obvious in this approach. Still, we can also design these "discovery" learning experiences in ways that are both reflective and active, collective and personal, and welcoming and disorienting.

- *Use this approach to help students, teachers, and others experience key ideas and their sources simultaneously. Learners are much more likely to act on insights they "see" and discover themselves.*
- *This approach requires a little more time and collaborative space than directly providing the insights. And people may not discover what you want them to discover, and see something new (which is often the best part).*

Examining
Personal experiences for insights

Through reflective prompts and exercises, learners consider what they've read, done, felt, or experienced in their own lives to make meaning of insights. We sometimes call this "internalization by personalization." We might, for example, explore student leadership outcomes by asking new teachers which outcomes were valued in their classrooms growing up, and how that shapes the new teachers' reaction to those outcomes. This approach is a powerful example of the intersection of Collective & Personal polarities, allowing learners to connect to the uniqueness of their own story and experience, while also building solidarity and shared purpose as a community of learners.

- *This approach is especially useful to trigger unlearning (identifying and deconstructing internalized misunderstandings and misassumptions). And internalization through personalization naturally draws out personal connections and relevance to the learning.*
- *This approach may require a more relational, trusting, and inclusive safe space for people to be honest about personal connections. And, it is hard to predict how much time learners will need.*

Experimenting
With applying insights

In this approach, learners apply and experiment with new ideas and insights. This is a learn-by-doing approach that especially emphasizes the Reflective & Active polarity. Imagine, for example, new teachers identify three actions on the TACL strategy grid that they believe would align with their personal strengths. And then they go into their classroom (or into a role-play scenario) and "try on" those actions with learners. What worked? What didn't? How did applying those actions feel? What were the results?

Designers and facilitators should not forget to pair space for reflection (Why am I trying out these actions? What shift and learning am I experiencing?) with the real-world applications of the ideas.

- *The action orientation of this learning strategy makes this a great approach for learners who are eager to see the implications of what they are learning.*
- *True application and experiences often take time, so this approach may be best for longer-term learning experiences.*

> Keep in mind that any given learning experience could have elements of each of these strategies, while some learning experiences may center mostly around just one of them. The point of this list is to encourage intentional choices as you consider the learning polarities and your learners' aims, contexts, time, and prior knowledge.

How Partner Organizations in the Teach For All Network Are Innovating with Learning

Some partner organizations in the Teach For All network are applying these principles in their teacher training and support programs with innovative and powerful results for teacher training. What innovations are you or your organization experimenting with?

Here are some examples of the trends we are seeing as partner organizations are more intentional about learning theory:

- **More Metacognition In Training and Support Initiatives.** Just like in transformational classrooms, when we look at organizations maximizing the growth of their educators, we see a more explicit focus on learning itself. Adult learners are asked to engage with the concepts of learning theory to understand why various learning bets are being made. *Teach For America, for example, developed an internal certification program to support staff understanding and application of adult learning theory, metacognitive practices in facilitation, and education for liberation.*

- **Recognition of New Educators as Sources of Learning for Each Other.** Reflecting the Welcoming & Disorienting and the Collective & Personal polarities, we see partner organizations' increasing emphasis on strategically organized cohorts of new teachers as problem-solving sources of insight.
  - *Enseña Por México adopted a model called the "DIA method," in partnership with another non-profit, that is built on the premise that teachers who learn from each other by figuring things out will help students do the same.*
  - *Teach For India instituted "learning circles" in which fellows build strong relationships with each and bring challenges to the group for collective support. Teach For America – Colorado has all but eliminated traditional coaches in favor of group problem-solving and support.*

- **Embracing Uncomfortable Experiences and Failures as Learning Opportunities.** In the spirit of Directive & Exploratory, Structured & Responsive, and Welcoming & Disorienting, we see partner organizations' increasing focus on visceral experiences and close relationships as ways to question and change mindsets and perspectives. Whether or not we share the experiences and identities of our students, these experiences can be powerful triggers for deep learning. *Teach For India asked its fellows to work alongside the parents of one of their students for a day.*

- **Putting Relationships at the Foundation of Fellows' Learning Experience.** All of the learning principles depend on a sense of belonging and trust that liberates learners to try, fail, and grow. We see, across the network, institutes and programs being evolved to create more opportunities for strong relationships among teachers and with members of the community. *Teach For America – Memphis underwent a radical overhaul that helped it move from the lowest ranking region on many measures of success to near the top. At the heart of that overhaul was a commitment that every teacher in the region would "be known." That shift led to dramatic changes in retention, commitment, and joy in the cohort, and encouraged much more learning and interdependence among teachers and staff.*

We use group [work]. In groups, we try to add a layer to the [learning] structure itself, exploring the group dynamics and the collectiveness of the experience. We try to be more intentional about learning from different people with different experiences … to hear different voices.

Staff Member
Teach For Bulgaria

Spotlight on Enseña Ecuador

Enseña Ecuador aims to work from a systemic change approach, through the development of the leadership of the main actors of an educational community (directors, teachers, students, parents) and the construction of significant alliances at different levels of the educational ecosystem. In this way, **collective leadership will be achieved in order to propose solutions to the main problems that prevent children and adolescents from realizing their full potential**.

Through an updated framework, Enseña Ecuador has defined five **learning principles** to guide the design and delivery of its training and support model in alignment with its identified purpose:

- **Diverse**: We learn from multiple contexts and promote different leadership styles, adapting to the different starting points and rhythms of people based on genuine curiosity.
- **Holistic**: We recognize that learning is integral and involves self-knowledge, individual reflection, and the socio-emotional, intuitive, creative, and intellectual development of each person.
- **Collective**: We practice learning that takes place through dialogue and empathy to value the diversity, knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of others, and we internalize this collective learning through conscious leadership.
- **Transformational**: We learn by maintaining an open mind to change in different scenarios that allows us to recognize needs in ourselves and in our surroundings in order to act and transform ourselves continuously and permanently.
- **Active**: We put learning into practice to co-create and accelerate individual and collective actions that drive community and systemic impact.

WANT TO TAKE A SELF-DIRECTED MINI-COURSE IN ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT?

Hi. My name is Laurelin Whitfield. I was a teacher for many years before working at Teach For America and now Teach For All on issues of learning theory. I'm especially focused on adult learning and development. I am learning so much from experts (in neuroscience, cognitive development, etc.) and from practitioners (teachers and teacher coaches who are living these insights every day).

Over the years, I've realized that knowing what transformational classroom leadership involves is not the same as knowing how to help ourselves and others grow and develop those lenses and actions. If you're curious about this idea, I hope you will join me in an upcoming workshop or course on learning theory! And/or, you can explore some of my favorite resources below. I've divided them into two sets: Learning (how we learn new knowledge and skills) and Development (how we develop more mature, complex worldviews).

Laurelin Whitfield
Leadership Coach and Facilitator, Teach For All
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Reading and reflecting on
Learning

- Laura Rendón, Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy Chapter 1. In this chapter, Dr. Rendón describes how we might reimagine the agreements between teacher and learner to create learning experiences grounded in "wholeness, harmony, social justice, and liberation."
    - *If you prefer to watch or listen… Dr. Rendón shares her philosophy of education, as described in the chapter, in this keynote address. (30 min.)*
- John Dirkx, Transformative Learning Theory in the Practice of Adult Education. This article offers an important overview of some of the key ideas in transformative learning theory, the learning theory that, arguably, best aligns with our network's mission.
- Paulo Freire is considered by many the godfather of critical pedagogy. See Freire's influence at work in the philosophy of Henry Giroux, as he discusses the idea that "all education is a struggle over what kind of future you want for young people." (10 min.)
- Mai Trinh & David Kolb, Eastern Principles for Learning Wholeness. Experiential learning theory (ELT) sits nestled within the larger field of transformational learning (and informs a lot of our network partners' program models). In this article, Profs. Trinh and Kolb argue that while ELT "originated in the work of Western scholars, many of [its] theoretical principles have a decidedly Eastern orientation." This article explores those connections in depth and proposes a new way of thinking about adult learning.
- Ellen Langer, Mindful Learning. In this article, Prof. Langer explores three key myths about learning and how we might bring more mindfulness to our own learning and the learning experiences we lead for others.
    - *If you prefer to watch or listen… Hear Prof. Langer describe her approach to mindful learning on this episode of the "Leading and Learning" podcast. (30 min.)*
- Charlene Mutamba, 21st Century African Philosophy of Adult and Human Resource Education in Southern Africa. In this essay, Ms. Mutamba describes a philosophy of adult education inspired by and relevant to Southern Africa and explores its applications to the workforce (read: staff and participants) development.

Reading and reflecting on
Development

Start by grounding yourself in the core concepts of Adult Development Theory (ADT):

- If you prefer a clear and comprehensive "white paper" approach: Sandra Ellison, Understanding Vertical Development
- If you prefer a more visual "slide deck" approach: Dimitri Glazkov, What the Heck Is Adult Development?
- If you prefer to listen rather than read… In this episode of "Where Genius Grows," host Gideon Culman interviews Bob Anderson, creator of one of the most widely used leadership assessments grounded in ADT, the Leadership Circle Profile 360, on the subject Learning to Be Self-Authored. (48 min. total or just listen to 6:46-31:57)

Then explore potential applications of ADT to our work:

- William Torbert, 7 Transformations of Leadership. In this recent update to his original, seminal article, Prof. Torbert looks closely at the leadership of Warren Buffet and Angela Merkl to explore how a leader's "action logic" evolves over time and generates very different approaches to relationships and problem-solving.
- Aenslee Tanner, Creating Conditions for Growth in Adult Development. We know adults do develop, but how can we help this happen (and maybe speed it up)? In this synthesis, Tanner and her colleagues in the Growth Edge network

attempt to identify the drivers of development most supported by current research.

- If you prefer to watch or listen… In December 2018, adult development expert Jennifer Garvey Berger spoke with the "Coaches Rising" podcast about Uncovering the Deep Principles of Change. In this episode, Garvey Berger explains the different stages in detail, how they impact leadership styles, and why it's important to recognize them for effective coaching to take place. *SIDE NOTE: I also highly recommend Garvey Berger's book,* Changing on the Job: Developing Leaders for a Complex World *(grounded in theory but very practical if you want to apply it in coaching and leadership development work).*

End by exploring the frontiers of ADT, which originated in the West but is being reshaped by ancient wisdom and contemporary practices from the East and South.

- There is a treasure trove of ideas in this book from the 2019 First Integral African Conference. We'd especially recommend the section titled "Inclusion Towards Integration", on pages 36-43, which looks at how the concept of *Ubuntu* and the practice of *Padare* invite a new understanding of the developmental journey. ("What does it take to become fully human?" starting on page 142 is another gem.)
- Spring Chen, Evolution Toward Wholeness: Integrating A Holistic Paradigm into Adult Development. In this abridged version of her longer work, Dr. Chen proposes a rethinking of ADT not as stages that one passes through, but as ways of being and meaning-making that is already and always available to us. Alternatively, listen to Dr. Cheng on this episode of the "Coaches Rising" podcast (84 min.).

Your life experience is also a rich source for learning about learning!
Spend a half hour reflecting on your own beliefs about the purpose of providing learning experiences for adults. What ideas comprise your personal learning theory? Given this, what beliefs do you hold about the role of the person leading learning? Capture your reflections on these questions in writing and be prepared to share them with others.

SHARE

Make your voice heard:
Help us evolve and improve these ideas and resources

Teaching As Collective Leadership is a collective effort. It has developed through contributions from thousands of people—teachers, coaches, students, families, researchers, and others from all around the world. Please join us in continuing to evolve this work by sharing your perspective.

Below is our "digital bulletin board" which we are constantly updating with the input of generous readers who share their ideas. Please take a moment to click here on our **Co-learning Padlet** to contribute your thoughts, questions, challenges, illustrations, and links.

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING GENERAL INPUT

I think it shifted from "Don't worry, I'll do it," to "I'll not worry; you'll do it." I think that is a big shift that I have made in the last few years in terms of how I think leadership is developed. I feel like one of the biggest principles Teach For India did follow in our leadership development model was to challenge and build leadership. Ultimately, if I think about leadership development, I think it happens the most when you let people be in that challenge and figure things out for themselves.

Mansi Joshi
Teach For India

Personally, I think Constant & Spontaneous is a really vivid and helpful polarity to include for the reasons I outlined below. I can't see a helpful way to merge it with Structured & Exploratory without diluting it in a way that makes it less helpful. So I'd replace S&E with C&S. I think it's clearer, more helpful, and highlights the way of being element in our learning theory in a way that is less fore-grounded in the other polarities we have. For example, it raises really interesting questions about how I develop the qualities of being constant and spontaneous, what makes that hard, what it looks like, etc. Of course, that then opens the possibility of a learning theory about our learning theory! 😄

Jude Heaton
Teach For All

Useful article "The Constant vs. the Adaptor" mirrors the argument to change to Constant & Spontaneous. https://hbr.org/2020/02/every-leader-needs-to-navigate-these-7-tensions

Contribute to our "Digital Bulletin Board" by sharing your thoughts, questions, challenges, validations, illustrations, and links by creating a note in our Co-learning Padlet (here).

TEACHERS DEVELOPING STUDENTS HOLISTICALLY TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE BECOME POWERFUL AGENTS OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Wendy Kopp

Since founding Teach For All in 2007, I have met countless teachers around the world working to ensure every child has the education, support, and opportunity they need to thrive. Against massive obstacles, from poverty to hunger to discrimination to trauma, so many educators across and beyond our Teach For All network are helping students grow holistically as leaders who will shape a better future for themselves, for their communities, and for all of us.

As you have seen in this guide, Teaching As Collective Leadership is intended to support those educators' efforts by making the collective wisdom of transformational classrooms accessible and actionable to everyone. I am heartened to see and hear how valuable many classroom leaders are finding this emerging set of insights and resources. And I hope Teaching As Collective Leadership can inspire and guide many teachers on their journey to transformational impact with students.

Unfortunately, many education systems *inhibit* rather than *encourage* the purposeful, relational, student-centered patterns we see in our most transformational classrooms leading to students' holistic development. Too often, inherited systems drive student mastery of narrow knowledge and skills at the expense of wellbeing, connectedness, awareness and agency. I have met many teachers who tell me they want to pursue the holistic development of their students but that the education system itself is an obstacle in this pursuit.

This is where, I believe, Teaching As Collective Leadership's value goes well beyond helping guide teachers' work with students.

The global patterns from transformational classrooms that make up Teaching As Collective Leadership are not only revealing actionable guidance for teachers in the classroom, they are also revealing a map for *systemic change*. That is, Teaching As Collective Leadership is showing us how systems need change to make transformational teaching and learning easier for all educators.

Indeed, one of the most powerful and promising revelations of our work at Teach For All is that *teachers who work to grow students holistically as leaders of a better future are simultaneously growing themselves as agents of systemic change.* Centering a classroom's work around a collectively contextualized purpose, shifting one's perspective on the roles of students and teachers and community in education, fostering the leadership of others to maximize everyone's learning—these are all core capacities necessary for reimagining and redesigning not only classrooms but education systems themselves.

Teach For All recently published The Missing Piece: Developing Collective Leadership to Transform Education, highlighting insights from systems and communities that are successfully reorienting to support students' growth. Our studies of those systems reveal that systemic change is driven not by policy but instead by purpose and people. A relatively small, critical mass of teachers, school leaders, community leaders, policymakers, researchers, teacher developers, and students who are aligned to different purposes, perspectives, and practices can and will change education systems.

By embracing the challenge of growing students holistically so they can shape a better future in our classrooms, teachers transform themselves into change agents for the entire system. This, I believe, is our best hope for a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

GLOSSARY
KEY LANGUAGE CHOICES IN TACL

*"**Teaching As Collective** Leadership" is what we have chosen to call the global patterns emerging from our collective studies of classrooms that seem to be preparing students to thrive in and improve the challenging world they are inheriting.*

Sometimes we have struggled to find the perfect word or phrase or metaphor to describe what our thousands of co-creators have seen and felt in these classrooms. At some level, this should not be surprising. Not only are we trying to describe enormously complex human interactions of teaching and learning, but the ways of being, knowing, and doing in these classrooms are quite different from those many of us have previously seen and experienced.

Language choice has been and will continue to be a challenging part of our sharing and learning. In our attempt to capture the real spirit of these classrooms, we have sometimes intentionally used words and phrases in slightly unusual ways because:

- More conventional language just doesn't do justice to the insights or innovations we are sharing.
- We are hoping to provoke ourselves and others to stop and think about the concepts behind the words.

All of this attention to finding words and phrases that capture the spirit of our learning, by the way, is playing out in multiple languages as we try to ensure these global insights are accessible across our network.

AGENCY

You may have seen a video where one of the amazing teachers we have studied (Guarav Singh) says, "I wanted my students to know and feel that they could do something about it. Whatever it is. Inside themselves. Around them. Whatever it is, they can do something about it." That might be the best way to define what we are trying to capture with the word "agency." By agency, we mean students' (or our own) conviction and ability to make changes in themselves and the world around them.

CONTEXTUALIZED VISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

One of the first "aha" realizations from our collective studies was that teachers who grow students as leaders are constantly asking, "What is the purpose of education and who decides?" We see them joining and hosting conversations with students, families, and community members about purpose. This is what we mean by "contextualized vision of student success"—a locally informed, collectively evolved picture of what education is aiming for.

GROW STUDENTS

For some of us, the phrase "grow students" sounds a little odd. Usually "grow" would apply to vegetables or flowers, not people. We have chosen to say "grow students as leaders" because (a) we are looking for something more active and meaningful than traditional concepts of "develop" or "support" and (b) we are hoping to inspire a brief pause to think about the opportunity and responsibility we have to help students be prepared for a very different future than the one that shaped conventional classroom models.

HOLDING SPACE

Popularized in the last decade, this phrase refers to a facilitator's role and responsibility to create conditions that allow for genuine and authentic learning. This concept becomes especially important in TACL, where we are moving away from defining the teacher as the "source of knowledge" at the front of the classroom, and much more as a co-learner with students who are fostering a classroom culture where students learn together. Explore a case study here.

LEADERS OF A BETTER FUTURE / STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Some years ago, Teach For All hosted a collective, year-long reflection process among students, teachers, teacher developers, CEOs, community leaders, and families about the aims of our network. One clear theme in those conversations was the changing and challenging world today's students are inheriting, and the need for education to prepare them to face and improve that future for themselves and others. The phrase "leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us" emerged from those global conversations.

LEARNING LOOP

We didn't invent this phrase but have applied it to our process of crowd-sourcing studies of classrooms. "Global Learning Loops" is what we have called the mini-courses we host in which people from around the world virtually visit classrooms in different countries and share what they think can be learned from them. The Global Learning Lab has also worked with many partner organizations to host their own "learning loops," where staff come together to learn from their strongest classrooms.

MASTERY

We have struggled with and debated what to call the meaningfully rigorous learning that we know our students need to become leaders of a better future. Our students need to not only know mathematical formulas but also when to use them in new contexts. Our students need to not only know how to read and write but also how to communicate clearly to diverse audiences. We settled on "mastery" because it carries more gravitas than "academic achievement" but is also a familiar enough term for most people. When we use the word "mastery" we mean to signal deeper learning than most education models and systems emphasize today.

When we have hosted hundreds and then thousands of people to virtually visit classrooms where students seemed to be growing as leaders, we would often hear these classrooms described as "transformative" for students. Students seem to be on a different trajectory because of these classrooms. They seem to be making dramatic progress in their wellbeing, connectedness, awareness, agency, and mastery. That growth is transforming their paths and opportunities going forward. So, sometimes we use "transformative" as shorthand for the kind of impact that develops students as leaders of a better future for themselves, their communities, and all of us.

TRANSFORMATIVE CLASSROOM

Unlearning is not opposed to learning, instead it is a challenge to fixed ways of thinking and behaving. As we grow up, all of us internalize certain assumptions and ways of thinking. This can be an obstacle when we are trying to change the status quo. As Jal Mehta and Sarah Fine point out: "Most teachers teach as they were taught, so the system has a built-in mechanism for its own reproduction." Unlearning is the process of uncovering and shifting our underlying beliefs and mindsets, in ways that open up the possibility for transformation. This might apply to our beliefs about education, about ourselves, or about other people. For example, our beliefs about what students can and cannot do; what our role as a teacher should and should not include; or what qualities a community does or does not have.

UNLEARNING

Global Institute
for Shaping a Better Future

An initiative of
Teach For All