

- It's Back to School! 3 Essential Mindsets to Improve Classroom Climate & Prevent Bullying
- The "Bullying in Sports" Series: An Introduction
- Tools For a Culturally-Competent Classroom Climate: "Build", "Maintain", and "Repair"
- Cultivating Mindfulness in the Classroom
- Why I Believe That Monica Lewinsky's Message Will Fuel Constructive and Collaborative Conference Conversation



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

It's Back to School! 3 Essential Mindsets to Improve Classroom Climate & Prevent Bullying

Christa M. Tinari, M.A.

The end of summer involves the hustle of back-to-school preparations, including lesson planning, last-minute supply ordering, and room set-up. If you're like many educators, you're probably also reviewing your class list, and planning how you will interact with your students on those first few, critical days of school. You know that those initial interactions will set the tone for the entire school year. You may be hammering out the details of how you will set behavioral expectations, teach routines, and introduce engaging content. In this process it's easy to overlook something that has a powerful impact on your students' experiences: the mindsets you hold. Here are three essential mindsets that will help you establish a positive classroom climate to prevent bullying.

1. *Knowing your students is as important as knowing your content* - This is one of the tenets of the Responsive Classroom approach. As soon as I heard it many years ago, it was etched into my mind. What are your students' likes and dislikes, fears, hopes, challenges, strengths, and goals? What is their everyday life like? What are their responsibilities at home? What activities are they involved in beyond school? How does their culture inform their interactions? We can find out the answers to these questions through: sharing circles, 1:1 conversations, parent letters that introduce us to their children, home visits, attendance at school and community activities, careful observation, 'all-about-me' picture collages, choice-based learning, and index-card introductions. When we make the effort to get to know our students as people first, and students second, we demonstrate how much we value them as unique and complex individuals. Students who feel truly seen and valued by us will be able to form a more positive relationship with us, and will be more engaged in learning. Knowing our students also increases the likelihood that we will pick up on the warning signs of bullying. And students who trust us will come to us for support should they experience bullying. Showing this kind of interest in our students also models the kind of respect and care that we want our students to show to one another.

2. *The "clean slate" philosophy* - This is a good mindset to consider adopting along with the "know your students" philosophy. Do you believe that every student deserves a clean slate at the beginning of the school year? You may have heard all about the past misadventures of your students from the principal or former teachers. Or, you may have had negative interactions yourself with some of the students placed in your class. Consider the impact of reminding students about their past transgressions. Unfortunately, students usually live up to their reputations-whether good or bad- once they know about our expectations and judgements. Can you imagine if someone started their relationship with you by pointing out some past failure, embarrassment, or behavioral lapse? I can think of few things less welcoming! By adopting a clean-slate mindset, you provide an opportunity for students to be seen as more than their past failures. Be sure to communicate your clean-slate philosophy to your students. In doing so, you communicate a sense of open-mindedness, fairness, respect, compassion and hope for change. Once again, this sets a tone for the way that you would like your students to treat one another as well.

3. *The students have the answers* - This is a radical mindset shift for many educators! In our zeal to instruct, we often forget the many areas where students have the answers. When you adopt this mindset, you will experience a shift in how hard you are working for your students- and you will find yourself working with them instead. What common classroom problems can students solve? Routines that aren't working. Seating charts. Unfinished assignments. Failed exams. "Boring" curriculum. Tardiness. This list is by no means complete! Rather than trying to solve these common problems alone, engage students in conversations that pose the problems back to them. Listen carefully to their observations, thinking and feelings. Invite them to offer reasonable solutions that might work. Most students will live up to the challenge, and will often come up with much better ideas than you would alone. Once students get into the habit of problem-solving classroom issues, they will feel more comfortable problem-solving social issues, like teasing, exclusion, and bullying as well. Why are these behaviors happening? What can each person do to contribute to a solution? What will it take to really establish a classroom community of care and respect? These conversations ensure that creating a positive

school climate becomes a shared responsibility, with shared buy-in as well.

Try adopting three mindsets at the beginning of the school year. I hope they will impact your ability to create a more positive classroom climate, though modeling desired behaviors and establishing trusting relationships with your students.

Christa M. Tinari, M.A., Co-author of *Create a Culture of Kindness in Middle School: 48 Character-Building Lessons to Foster Respect and Prevent Bullying*, 2017. Ms. Tinari is an educational consultant, inspirational speaker, and bullying prevention and SEL curriculum writer who serves schools and youth-serving organizations in the U.S. and internationally. Learn more at www.peacepraxis.com.

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Bullying in Sports Series: An Introduction

by Randy Nathan (Coach Randy), MA, MSW

Harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) has literally surrounded our lives. You only have to look at the social media apps on your smartphone or turn on the news to see the amplified awareness of bullying behavior. However, there is a breeding ground for what is transpiring. It occurs under the pretext of teamwork, sportsmanship and pushing for excellence. Bullying is born in the locker rooms, the sidelines, the practice fields, and the stands. In the hallowed halls of youth sports, bullying is tolerated and taught, supported and sustained, modeled and manifested. The lip service paid to this national tragedy has allowed the problem to fester, virtually unchecked, for generations.

Astoundingly, we are kept in the dark about this hotbed of negative behavior in sports. There are moments of opportunity when something gets into the news, yet seldom few are willing to seriously address what is really occurring – a pattern, a culture that promotes harassment, intimidation and bullying. Whether it involves professional football players from Miami, a football coach from the University of Maryland, hazing of high school athletes in Arizona, or out of control parents in the stands, it is a source for the biggest and strongest to use their strength against the weakest.

The win-at-all-cost attitude promotes a negative culture as well as bullying behavior. Research now proves that negativity actually impedes performance. Players want to feel connected, find purpose, and be a part of a greater good. Coaches must take the lead in creating a positive climate, not only for players, but also parents. Coaches are informal educators and need to create a positive atmosphere for learning. Instead of focusing on winning, identify and reward effort. Therefore, when a player makes an error, instead of humiliating them by screaming, create a Mistake Ritual. Use your

fingers to “flush” a toilet (flush it down) or wipe your hand across your shoulder to “wipe it off.” Remind players that the most important play is, the next play.

Most parents agree that sports teach valuable life lessons. Therefore, they must do their best to focus on the bigger picture. Don't concentrate on the mistakes, playing time, and/or coach from the stands. Let the coach, coach. Then, following the game say to your player, “I love watching you play.” Regardless of the performance on the field, focusing on the negative does not benefit a healthy relationship. Truth be told, since 98.5% of youth athletes are not getting Division 1 scholarships, or playing professional sports, time ends quickly to enjoy watching them play. Ultimately, the player will only have their memories. I imagine a parent would rather have their child's recollections of sports be positive about eating ice cream and friendship, instead of the negative and deadly car ride home. The parent might remember the score, but I guarantee the player will not.

Randy Nathan, MA, MSW (aka Coach Randy) is the President/CEO of Project NextGen a leadership, training and professional coaching organization. His book “Bullying in Sports: A Guide to the Injuries We Don't See” is published by Pearson Education. He is the NJ State Olweus Representative, National Trainer for the Positive Coaching Alliance, and NY-area anti-bullying expert for Fox 5 News, Good Day New York, and CBS/NBC NY news. This the first of a four-part series focusing on Bullying In Sports (Part-two: Bully Coaches, Part-three: Bully Players, Part-four: Bully Parents). Coach Randy is presenting at the upcoming IBPA Conference being held in San Diego, CA. He can be reached for presentations and workshops at www.BullyingInSports.com. Or reach him directly at CoachRandy@CoachRandySays.com and Twitter [@CoachRandySays](https://twitter.com/CoachRandySays).

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Tools For a Culturally-Competent Classroom Climate: “Build”, “Maintain”, and “Repair”

by Nicolette G. Granata

“Cultural competence is having an awareness of one’s own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. This understanding informs and expands teaching practices in the culturally competent educator’s classroom” (National Education Association (NEA)).

As we continue to work through IBPA’s Back-to-School Toolbox, it is important to recognize that educators need a specialized set of tools to **build, maintain, and repair** culturally-competent classrooms; classrooms that prevent, withstand, and resolve incidents of racially-motivated bullying and/or harassment during the school year. I interviewed Dr. Donna Y. Ford, Ph.D. of the Peabody College of Education at Vanderbilt University to gain professional, scholarly insight into what educators should include in this toolbox.

BUILD: *Educators need the tools to build strong, culturally-competent foundations in their classrooms from the very first day of school. What can they use to build this foundation; one that prevents racially-motivated bullying and/or harassment from the very start?*

“Educators must take time to get to know students, and this means being intentional about building relationships to connect with students from cultural backgrounds unfamiliar to them. A must have tool is culturegrams (see online.culturegrams.com).”

MAINTAIN: *Now that educators have built strong, culturally-competent foundations in their classrooms, they need the tools to maintain them throughout the school year. What can they use to withstand incidents of racially-motivated bullying and/or harassment that may attempt to arise during the year?*

“To maintain effective relationships, educators must ensure that students of color (in fact, all students) view them as advocates who will provide a safe learning environment. This requires being explicit that race-based bullying, which has increased in recent months, is not allowed (see Teaching Tolerance’s article “*Hate at School: June 2018*,” by Coshandra Dillard). It requires discussions and posters that bullying is not allowed.”

REPAIR: *Finally, educators may need the tools to repair broken classroom foundations over the course of a school year. What can they use*

to resolve incidents of racially-motivated bullying and/or harassment that have taken place?

“This is an important source (www.stopbullying.gov) for tackling (reducing and, ideally, eliminating) bullying. It is important to teach students to stand up for themselves, to prevent or repair any damage done,”

To execute these principals to their full potential, general strategies such as those given above can be broken down even further. Dr. Ford’s article, “Creating Culturally Responsive Instruction: For Students’ and Teachers’ Sakes,” achieves just that (Ford & Kea, 2009). These strategies, captured below, provide educators with an even more comprehensive tool-set of specific, evidence-based knowledge on this critical topic:

Adapting the works of Banks (2006) and Schmitz (1999), we offer the following strategies for developing culturally responsive curriculum.

1. Define learning goals.
 - a. Determine what students in your field need to know; use deductive reasoning methods. Identify big ideas, generalizations, and theories that you want students to take away from the lesson.
 - b. Hold discussions and survey or interview students to learn about their interests and hobbies. Use this information to guide the lesson, readings, and related activities.
 - c. As you develop the lesson, choose activities, and select materials, think about what you want students to learn about themselves, their community, their classmates, and society.
2. Question traditional concepts and use transformational approaches.
 - a. Critique (when developmentally appropriate with students) how traditional curriculum has obscured, distorted, or excluded certain ideas, events, and/or groups.
 - b. Teach students how to be critical readers and consumers of information, using a transformational approach to curriculum. Include questions and materials that offer students more than one perspective of events, people, ideas, research, and so forth.
 - c. Incorporate new and contemporary research, theories, and models that address distortions, inconsistencies, discrepancies, and omissions.
3. Understand student diversity and differences, and adopt student-centered approaches.
 - a. Give thought to the kinds of diverse perspectives and experiences that students will bring to the learning situation (e.g., limited or extensive travel, international travel, community violence, family structure, socioeconomic status, literacy-rich or poor home).
 - b. Assess students’ prior knowledge and experiences through thoughtful discussions, surveys, and other information-collection methods.
 - c. Do not ask students to speak as representatives for “their” racial group.
 - d. Use constructive feedback to (re)teach to all students and build positive, mutually respectful relationships with them.

4. Select materials and activities.
 - a. Go beyond the contributions approach (e.g., holidays, heroes, foods, fashion, and artifacts) to teach students about their culture and heritage and that of others.
 - b. Integrate new material so it is not simply an “add-on.” Infuse multicultural materials throughout all subject and content areas and lessons.
 - c. Consistently evaluate materials and resources for multicultural accuracy and authenticity. Highlight, discuss, and contradict stereotypes and all inaccuracies with students.
 - d. Make sure that visuals and resources are representative, including posters, photos, artwork, videos, books, music, crayons, paints, coloring/art paper, bandages, and the like.
 - e. Use a variety of teaching materials and activities to facilitate student engagement and learning (e.g., videos, guest speakers, books, poetry, mnemonic devices, songs, word walls, word games, simulations, stories).
5. Evaluate effectiveness.
 - a. Constantly critique the effectiveness of the lesson and materials. Make revisions that will facilitate student understanding, learning, and success.
 - b. Use mastery teaching strategies to assess student learning—pretest, teach, practice, test, revise lesson or activities, reteach.
 - c. Differentiate assessment using a variety of methods to gauge student learning and progress (e.g., presentation, discussion, verbal test).

As classrooms continue to diversify (www.digitalpromise.org), it is critical that the number of resources on cultural-competency expands to match. One such resource is the book, “The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys” (Moore, Michael & Pernick-Parks, 2017).

“White women make up 65% of the teaching force in America. If we succeed in shifting outcomes for Black boys, it will be because White women responded to the call to change the way we do school,” says Dr. Eddie Moore Jr.. He will be presenting on topics from the book, in addition to giving a keynote address, at IBPA’s upcoming national conference in San Diego, November 5th-7th. You can find more information on the conference here: ibpaworld.org/events/conferences/san-diego-2018/.

Nicolette Grace Granata is an undergraduate honors student in her fourth and final year at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. She is double-majoring in Child Development and Psychology, with a minor in Special Education. Nicolette has always been extremely passionate about the social inclusion and acceptance of students with disabilities and differences. Her research interests include empathy development in young children, and neurotypical children’s concepts of “norms” and disability. She feels incredibly lucky that a semester-long Independent Study on evidence-based bullying literature, response, and prevention lead her to find, and then work for, IBPA.

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At the moment, the International Journal for Bullying Prevention is specifically calling for papers with a centered concentration on “bullying, race, and ethnicity.” We hope to give this far-reaching, still largely unexplored topic the spotlight it deserves in a special issue of the International Journal of Bullying Prevention.

THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THESE SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLES IS OCTOBER 31, 2018.
 AUTHORS MAY SUBMIT PAPERS FOR PEER REVIEW THROUGH IJBP’S EDITORIAL MANAGER SYSTEM:
www.editorialmanager.com/ijbp/
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Cultivating Mindfulness in the Classroom

by Kim DeMoss

Mindfulness, simply put, means paying attention on purpose. In our fast-paced society this can be quite counter cultural, and we can end up with a mind literally full of ideas and thoughts and no space to process them. For students, the pressure to perform well academically, the focus on achievement standards, plus having constant access to technology can create a whole new level of stress and anxiety. As educators and students begin the transition back to school, lots of thoughts, feelings,

and emotions will arise. Learning how to help regulate and understand these emotions will give us the power to overcome obstacles during this transition. This is why mindfulness is needed now more than ever, but what exactly does that mean?

Mindfulness for students is a technique that has the ability to change performance outcomes and affect social and emotional regulation skills. Neuroscientists are sharing more and more information about the brain’s ability to create new neural pathways through behaviors.

Our brains aren't made for complex multi-tasking. When we constantly switch back and forth between activities and thought processes, we are burning extra energy which can lead to a lack of focus with the things we are trying to accomplish. Research suggests that one of the primary advances in studies of meditation and mindfulness-based interventions has been the ability to improve performance and alter brain mechanisms.

Mindfulness doesn't mean that we just shut out and turn off the mind. Mindfulness is a practice of being present and in tune with how we are feeling right now. Using techniques in mindfulness-based practices, we can cultivate a safe and calming environment for our students to succeed. By allowing students time to process and sit with their thoughts, ideas and emotions, we can give them the opportunity to change the way they think and prepare their minds for the new activity or lesson. Creating a culture of mindfulness in your classroom doesn't have to be complicated, here are a few tips to get you started today:

- Keep it simple – Mindfulness is simply paying attention on purpose.
- Take your time – Slow down your normal pace, take a few deep breaths between activities and soak up the little details, it'll be good for everyone!
- Mindfulness isn't linear – The journey will look different for everyone, even in the same class or home.
- Stay present – Try not to dwell on what happened yesterday or your to-do list for tomorrow. The time will always come, it's what you do with it that matters.

Try this mindful moment activity with your students today. Close your eyes, take 5 deep breaths and just focus on your sense of hearing. Without labeling the sounds, just listen to the noises that surround you. The sounds inside the room, the sounds outside, the sounds that seem close to you and the sounds that seem distant. Go ahead, take a moment and try it! There you go, you just practiced being mindful! The key is to keep it simple and not overthink how to practice mindfulness. For students, it means allowing them that little extra moment to let their gaze drift outside, spend another minute coloring a picture, or enjoying their snack with a bit more time. For more tips on cultivating mindfulness in your classroom, click [here](#).

Kim DeMoss is a health and fitness professional and certified yoga instructor that has a passion for bringing yoga and mindfulness practices into the classroom. She has a 200 hour RYT certification as well as over 100 hours of specialized trauma informed yoga training for adults and children. She has published several articles about yoga and teaches yoga classes for all ages in her community. Kim is the founder and creator of Project Mindful Movement, a program specifically designed for educators to simplify teaching mindfulness-based practices to students in a classroom environment. She loves watching young children learn to express themselves through movement and mindfulness practices. For more ways to learn how to incorporate mindfulness into your classroom, visit www.ProjectMindfulMovement.com

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Why I Believe That Monica Lewinsky's Message Will Fuel Constructive and Collaborative Conference Conversation

by Nicolette G. Granata

Monica Lewinsky is one of two keynote speakers at this year's IBPA national conference in San Diego, CA. In 2015, Monica Lewinsky confidently and courageously took the stage to deliver a TED talk entitled "The price of shame." Before I actively listened to the talk, I didn't realize just how effectively Monica's message ties together the diverse set of topics and expertise lined up for this year's conference. I've collected some of my "lightbulb moments" from viewing the talk below so that you can see why Monica's keynote is not one to miss.

"I was seen by many, but actually known, by few..." – Monica Lewinsky, 2015.

Even though this quote came early on in Monica's talk, it is the one

that stuck with me the longest. Perhaps because it takes me to those auditorium seats at the start of the talk... to the couches of the viewers at home. The viewers – with their quiet exteriors sheltering whirling interiors that seem to say, "But I've seen you enough to know you... right? Isn't that how it works?" I reflect on how unnervingly salient this feeling, this assumption, seems to be to me in today's technology-driven world. Can you recall a time you felt this way, too?

"When this happened to me, 17 years ago, there was no name for it. Now, we call it "cyberbullying" and "online harassment." – Monica Lewinsky, 2015.

"There was no name for it..." In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Education released a report in which a uniform definition of bullying was created for the first time with the hope of improving consistency within bullying

response and prevention. It tackled how bullying was perceived by the general public... a "right of passage" becoming a "complex and widespread public health issue" (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2014). In understanding the tangible, evidence-based impact of a definition, even just a 'name' for an occurrence, I feel we can better empathize with the powerlessness felt by Monica and others living without one.

"We need to return to a long-held value of compassion... compassion and empathy. Online we have a compassion-deficit, an empathy crisis. Just imagine walking a mile... in someone else's headline" - Monica Lewinsky, 2015.

"A compassion-deficit, an empathy crisis..." A crisis indeed, with a "2011 meta-analysis of 72 studies on empathy conducted on college-age students from 1972 to 2009 indicating a decline in empathy of 40% in that time period" (Dolby, 2014) Rather than being discouraged by

this trend, I see hope in the dialogue and collaboration it encourages – rather – requires, to be tackled. Our San Diego Conference will hold the empathy experts, the compassion scientists, and the cyberbullying investigators all in the same unified space. And I believe that Monica Lewinsky's message is just what we need to ignite this immense wealth of knowledge towards new, undiscovered solutions. Solutions...though unique, that are crafted under the same, overarching vision of "A World Without Bullying."

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IN ADDITION TO CALLING FOR PAPERS ON "BULLYING, RACE, AND ETHNICITY" (SEE PAGE 4), THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR BULLYING PREVENTION IS ALSO CALLING FOR PAPERS HIGHLIGHTING THE THEME OF "GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND BULLYING."

The submission deadline for abstracts and a short (1-page) CV for this special issue is September 15, 2018. Please send these materials to Debbie Ging (debbie.ging@dcu.ie) and Aoife Neary (aoife.neary@ul.ie).

Authors whose abstracts are selected will be notified by September 30, 2018, and asked to submit complete manuscripts through IJBP's online portal: www.editorialmanager.com/ijbp by November 30, 2018.

For more information, please visit www.ibpaworld.org/journal.



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