Drawing on Student Assets to Inform Teaching/Learning

2017 Fall Institute

Session Facilitators

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**Session Outcomes**

**Objective:** Participants will design and share strategies/activities that leverage cultural/personal assets to inform teaching and learning.

**NC Prof Teaching Standards:**
- **Standard 2:** Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students.
- **Standard 4:** Teachers facilitate learning for their students
- **Standard 5:** Teachers reflect on their practice

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**Your Own Assets**

Using the “Find Someone Who …” handout, reflect on these questions:

Think of a personal, cultural, or knowledge asset you have that your fellow teachers may not know about. On the handout:

- briefly describe the asset.
- In what situations might that asset be useful?
- If your fellow teachers knew about that asset, how might it contribute to their understanding of who you are? The work you do with them?

When done, we’ll share with a partner using the “Find Someone Who …” strategy for collaborative work.

Be Prepared to share something interesting about YOUR PARTNER’S responses.
Personal/Cultural/Academic Assets

Knowledge of our students’ Cultural and Personal Experiences and Prior Academic Learning help guide teaching and learning:

What **ASSETS** do your students bring with them?

Example: students who serve as *language brokers* - children of immigrant families who translate and interpret for their parents and other individuals.

Use the assets graphic organizer handout to note some ways this teacher leverages prior learning as an asset and where this learning might have originated for her students.

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1. Research students' experiences with learning and teaching styles

- **Ask educators** who come from the same cultural background as the students about effective ways to teach
- **Visit the communities** of the students to find out how they interact and learn in that environment
- **Ask students** about their learning style preferences (use of learning style and interest inventories)
- **Interview/survey parents** about how and what students learn from them
- **Use that information to inform the design** of classroom activities, projects, readings, and assessments that leverage personal experience/interests, prior knowledge, and/or cultural assets.

2. Devise different ways for students to be successful in achieving developmental milestones

- Ensure success by setting realistic, rigorous, goals; focus on growth (about growth models) and proficiency.
- Allow students to set their own goals for a project (setting smart goals).
- **Activate prior knowledge** learned in previous classes as well as contexts outside of school.
- Leverage prior knowledge and goal setting to facilitate student use of feedback.
Personal/Cultural/Academic Assets

3. Create an environment that encourages and embraces culture
   • Employ patterns of management familiar to students (culturally responsive classroom management strategies); make expectations for behavior very clear and straightforward and appropriate for a specific activity’s learning goals.
   • Allow students opportunities to share cultural knowledge (ideas from Teaching Tolerance).
   • Question and challenge students on their beliefs and actions to build skills associated with collaborative work.
   • Teach students to question and challenge their own beliefs and actions (self-reflection).

Leveraging Personal Interest

Comics in the Classroom

“Whenever I can make it about the student it makes for a more meaningful activity.”
Sam Pane; 5th Grade Teacher, Omaha NE

How does Mr. Pane’s use of the digital format:
• Foster student engagement with the learning task?
• Foster use of academic language?
• Foster a respectful learning environment?
**Leveraging Personal Interest**

Let’s try it out:  
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic/  

For more advanced tools see:  
http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/  
http://www.powtoon.com/  
http://www.toondoo.com/  

Upload/link to your comic:  
https://goo.gl/Rbgiqa  

While exploring this tool, think about how you might use it to design an activity that demonstrates content understanding.

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**Identifying Cultural/Personal Assets**

Let’s Try it out: Community Connections

**Steps:**
- Create personal shape - consider culture, interests, experiences  
- Enhance with text/pictures  
- Post on wall  
- Use string (or marker) to make connections  
- Share out

**Discussion:**
- What did you learn about your fellow teachers’ personal experiences/interests?  
- What did you learn about their cultural background?
Session Reflection

When you return to your school, what is one thing about this session you might share with a colleague?

With the time remaining, we’ll share these reflections.