Beat the COVID Slide!
Save the Day with Accelerated Learning

By Michelle Yerkes, Professional Development Coordinator

Now that you're back to in-person school, you are probably excited about getting on to a new normal yet may also be concerned about the effects of the COVID Slide on your students' academic growth. The good news is, now is the perfect opportunity to implement Accelerated Learning, a process to get kids on the fast track to grade level learning despite existing gaps. Fortunately, anyone who has ever considered content accessibility in preparing for instruction is already familiar with many accelerated learning techniques. When implemented with a new focus, they are the best ways to support all students to be successful with on-grade content.

Teachers accelerate learning with an identified sub-group of students before new instruction to help fill in the most essential prior skills and knowledge for the new concept. Imagine you are a third-grade student. The pandemic hits, and you miss out on learning about fractions. Now your fourth-grade class is about to start a fractions unit and you lack the essential pre-requisite skills. Luckily, 1 – 2 days before the new fractions unit begins, your teacher engages you with a Success Starter, a hands-on activity that helps you understand and get curious about fractions. Imagine your teacher also fills you in on key vocabulary and that a chart is displayed in the classroom throughout the learning for your reference. How great would it feel if your teacher provided you with actual fraction bars and helped you understand how to use them as a scaffold with the new content? In addition, your teacher creates and explains what you will be learning during the unit in a clear, concise Concept Map. You would likely feel more prepared, confident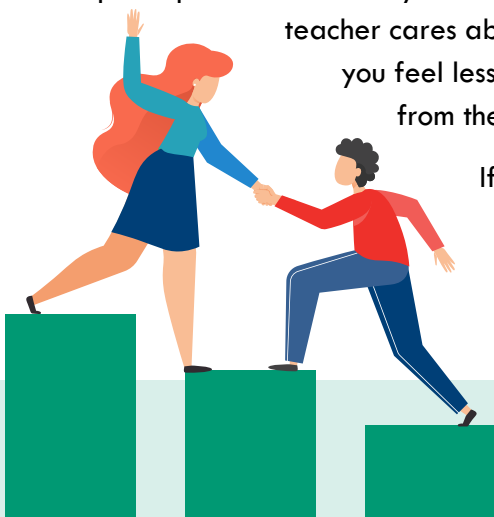, and motivated. You would also know and trust that your teacher cares about you and your learning. This is what accelerated learning is all about! Now, don't you feel less bogged down without the pressure of having to remediate every single missed skill from the previous year(s)?

If you are interested in learning more about the tools and the process to provide all students with grade level material with greater success, please check out our resources on Accelerated Learning in the Learning Library. I love talking with teachers and leaders about Accelerated Learning, so please contact me at michelle.yerkes@maricopa.gov and let's continue the conversation!

The **Accelerated Learning Playlist** *in the Learning Library is the perfect place to find more resources on this topic, including a 5-part self-led PD called "How to Reverse the COVID Slide: Planning for Acceleration."*

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How to Make Every Student Feel Like They're Your Favorite

By Kendra Moreno, Project Lead

When I was a student, particularly during first through fifth grade, I wasn't very well-liked by my teachers. Or at least that's how it felt. I was talkative, often bored, and despite coming from a loving home with involved parents, I was troubled and kind of mean. I remember my first-grade teacher being so flustered with me that she moved my desk into the bathroom at the back of our classroom so that I wouldn't pester her or the students around me. My second-grade teacher asked my parents during parent/teacher conferences if I ever stopped talking at home. My third-grade teacher just sent me out of the classroom to other teachers or the principal most days and I never saw recess in fourth grade. By fifth grade, behaviors had escalated to such a degree that I was "invited" to try out a new school in the district for a fresh start.

Despite these experiences, I pursued a career in education and throughout my teaching experience I had one mantra: no student of mine would ever be made to feel the way I did when I was in school.

Let's face it, we've all had children in our classes that manage to find just the right buttons to push or the last nerve to hop on. It's not easy, but we love them anyway. We find ways to use our personal knowledge of their lives to build relationships. We work to figure out their learning preferences and design classroom activities accordingly when we can.

Check out the **How Excelling Teachers Authentically Engage Learning Series** *that includes 5 self-lead PDs specially designed to help you grow in this area.*

How Excelling Teachers Authentically Engage…

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We encourage positive interactions in the classroom by creating a sense of belonging for everyone. Despite the efforts to create conditions for learning through clear expectations and engaging academic tasks, some kids are still going to be naughty. But with fairness and respect, we keep at it. Sometimes it's a wink when no one is looking, a sticker that maybe wasn't necessarily deserved, a fresh start after a particularly hard day, or a morning one-on-one chat to talk about personal goals and progress. Whatever your tactic, through sensitivity and a little love, even our most challenging students can and should be under the impression that they each are our favorite.

For further information, please contact Kendra Moreno (kendra.moreno@maricopa.gov).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

By Karla Gutierrez-Whitmire, Christina Valenciano, Alma Vital, Peer Evaluators

Last school year, the peer evaluators were invited to attend a training in the Phoenix Elementary School District on the book Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain by Zaretta Hammond. We were so engaged by the content that we decided to do our own book study. In doing so, we found ourselves making connections to our own personal experiences, but quickly realized that there were also numerous connections to the Learning Observation Instrument and our work as peer evaluators.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a peer evaluator is getting to meet with teachers in a pre-conference to hear their thinking around the instructional decisions they make when planning a lesson. Reading Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain began to influence the kinds of conversations we were having with teachers. Because Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) aims to create meaningful connections between what students learn, their personal experiences and their culture, it stands to reason that teachers would want to address ways to leverage these connections in their planning. These connections support rigorous curriculum, develop critical thinking skills, and help students see the relevance between what they learn at school and in their daily lives.

We decided to create a tool to help support instruction that incorporates the resources that culturally diverse students bring to the classroom while also supporting teachers to successfully implement LOI elements. Based on the book's "Ready for

Rigor Framework," we created a document that identifies connections between the LOI and CRT practices. Included are reflection questions to support and guide a teacher as they plan for instruction. For example, when considering how to build Conceptual Understanding in a content discipline, how can students' oral traditions be used to support processing new content?
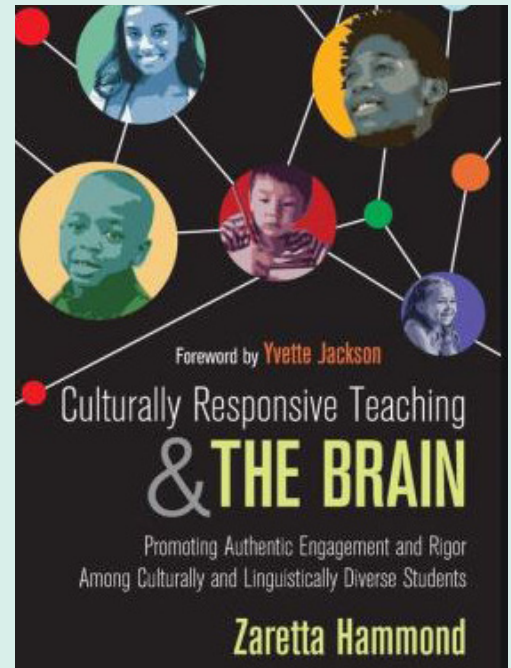
When teachers tap into the unique assets of their students, they create a learning environment that motivates student learning by establishing interest, making relevant connections, and developing closer teacher-student relationships. By fostering a sense of belonging and utilizing students' assets, teachers support meaningful, rigorous learning.

For further information, please contact your district's Field Specialist.

GET YOUR BOOK TODAY!

This great book is available to every REIL-Extend teacher! Please reach out to your field specialist if you have not yet received your copy.

You can start with our **Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain Book Study** *and look for the* **CRT-LOI Connections Guide** *available in the Learning Library by late spring!*

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Foreword by Yvette Jackson

Culturally Responsive Teaching & THE BRAIN

Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Zaretta Hammond

Prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Recruitment

By Emily Beck, HCMS Administrator

When you think about the last year of leadership team meetings, strategy planning sessions, and professional development, have you noticed an increase in the frequency of discussions around diversity, equity, and inclusion? While this is not a new topic by any stretch, it is an increasingly persistent one that leaders in education are called to explicitly and actively address.

It is imperative for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to be an integrated part of the leadership team's strategic goals, not simply a bullet point within a meeting agenda. When establishing this focus as a cornerstone of Human Capital Management, leaders should work from the inside out: transparently examine both personal and institutional biases and invite others into that work. Providing spaces to share stories and articulate individual and collective perspective, values, and identities is a good start to becoming aware of the types of diversity already within the organization. This will in turn reveal areas of exclusion and inequity, which can inform your strategic initiatives to drive results and build cultures that seek, honor, and embrace diversity.

For example, if your recruitment efforts result in an inordinate percentage of young, white, female teaching candidates, it's time for an evaluation of what recruitment practices may be leading to that outcome. Actively pursue recruitment relationships with organizations that serve primarily minority populations to diversify your candidate pool. Gather data on where your new hires are learning about you and examine the equity gaps. Do your social media platforms celebrate diversity of culture, race, gender, class, and abilities? Are you providing equitable career ladder opportunities within your organization?

Inclusive leadership requires active, intentional, ongoing (and at times vulnerable) effort to foster trust, promote a sense of belonging, and support authentic human connections. Where better to start than with recruiting?

For further information, please contact Emily Beck (emily.beck@maricopa.gov).

REIL-Extend

RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT
EXTENDING YOUR REACH TOWARD TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

Performance Excellence | Strategic Staffing | Talent Management & Development | Culture & Total Rewards

CLICK HERE *for the full* **Recruitment Toolkit** *and find additional toolkits at* schoolsup.org/hcms.

Learning Library Enhancements

By Des Hockman, Professional Development Resource Coordinator

The REIL-Extend RDSS Technical Team is always looking for ways to enhance the Learning Library. Here are the newest things to keep an eye out for which will make your experience even better!

QUICK FILTERS ENHANCE SEARCHING

If you already know the title of what you are looking for you can now search for it specifically by putting it in quotation marks. The Quick Filters, located at the top right of your Explore tab, are meant to make searching even faster by narrowing down what you are searching from. A new quick filter has been added to narrow your search into the items that are most popular amongst users.

CHECKMARKS MEAN YOU'VE SEEN IT

An orange checkmark on a resource indicates that you have previously viewed this resource. Very helpful if you are using a playlist and would like to know where you stopped the last time you viewed it!

EASILY COMMUNICATE BY SHARING

The share feature is a great way for you to be able to easily communicate resources with others within the RDSS Learning Library. Depending on your role you can now share with an entity, a role, or an individual.

LOADING TIMES ARE NOW FASTER

In a time that we all work at the speed of light, and time is so valuable, excessive load times can be frustrating. There have now been updates to ensure that your results load faster for you.

LEADERS CHECKING IN ON EGPs IS NOW EASIER

Compliance isn't everything, but it is something that takes time to ensure we follow through on. To make this even easier, a "No Goal(s) Created" option is now available in the instrument drop down on the My Leading Page allowing you to quickly find any staff members that don't have an EGP within the system.

When you export your search results from your My Leading Page, the new Goal Plan Upload indicator shows how many items the staff member has uploaded in alignment to an EGP goal. A zero indicates that no goal plan has been uploaded.

For further information, please contact Des Hockman (desere.hockman@maricopa.gov).

NEW FEATURES!

Put titles in quotations for specific searching.

"Five Components to Fast Lane Learning"   Clear

Use the "Popular" quick filter to see the most frequently visited resources.

QUICK FILTERS:
Featured
Playlist
New
Popular

Orange checkmarks keep track of the resources you've already viewed.

Five Components to Fast Lane Learning

Use the sharing arrow (circled in red above) to quickly share your favorite resources.

Instrument
No Goal(s) Created

Select "No Goal(s) Created" to easily identify educators who need EGP assistance.

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REIL-Extend Goals

Goal 1: Attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators through implementation of a high-quality, LEA-wide human capital management system focused on expanding leadership and cultivating an engaged workforce.

Goal 2: Redesign high-need schools to accelerate access to effective educators by extending the reach of excellent teachers.