Mindframe

2

We value student engagement in learning

//

We strive to eliminate exclusion by creating a learning community that values student voice and engagement in learning.

Questionnaire for Self-Reflection

Assess yourself on the following statements: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
2.1	We are very good at recognizing that our actions impact students' engagement and telegraphing our expectations for students' learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	We are very good at ensuring that instruction is engaging and students can drive their learning.	1	2	3	4	5

(Continued)

(Continued)

		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	MOSTLY AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
2.3	We know perfectly well that some tasks are meaningful and relevant to learning, and others are not.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	We know perfectly well that our instructional actions can improve student learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
2.5	We know perfectly well that most students are only behaviorally engaged, not cognitively and emotionally engaged.	1	2	3	4	5
2.6	Our goal is always to engage learners behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally in meaningful and relevant learning tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
2.7	We are thoroughly convinced that we need to collectively plan to move learning forward and create opportunities to enhance student voice.	1	2	3	4	5
2.8	We are thoroughly convinced that we must design meaningful and relevant tasks to eliminate disengaged behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5

> ## Vignette
>
> *Hamilton Middle School staff conducted walkthroughs of each other's classrooms to see how students interact in different settings. As a group of colleagues walked into Mr. Woods's math classroom, they recognized students struggling in their own classrooms. Surprisingly, they saw these students engaged in work, asking questions, and collaborating with a partner. They heard Mr. Woods repeat multiple times, "Remember, to be successful on this assignment, we have to be able to do the following:*
>
> - *Decide if two quantities are in a proportional relationship.*
>
> - *Explain our reasoning to peers using academic vocabulary.*
>
> - *Monitor our emotional response when we're not sure that we're right."*
>
> *Group members paused their discussions and looked at their assignments. Several had checked off a box indicating they knew they were successful on the first part of their assignment and were ready to move forward.*
>
> *One of the visiting teachers asked Mr. Woods, "How do you engage those kids?" Mr. Woods responded simply, "They know what they are doing and feel they are being successful. Students misbehave less when they know how to be successful." Mr. Woods expected students to be successful in his class and used success criteria to communicate those expectations to students. When asked, Marley said, "I really like this class because I know I'm learning and how I will be evaluated every day. It's never a surprise, like in some other classes. Mr. Woods makes learning easy, but we do a lot of work here."*

What This Mindframe Is About

Striving to eliminate exclusion and creating a learning community that values and validates student voice about learning is essential for fostering positive and inclusive educational environments. This commendable goal also aims to increase sustained student engagement. Eliminating exclusion requires the collective to embrace a concerted effort to create environments where all students feel valued, included, known, validated, heard, and engaged. Amplifying student voice about

learning requires a shift toward a more inclusive student-centered approach in the learning community. When value is placed on increasing student voice, it empowers students to take ownership of their own learning, builds their confidence, and fosters a sense of responsibility for their educational journey. Elevating student voice about learning helps educators and leaders gain valuable insights into the needs and perspectives of students. Student voice about learning can influence educational policies and practices at the school and district levels. By valuing student input and actively involving them in shaping the learning environment, schools can foster a sense of belonging and active engagement for all students regardless of their dimensions of identities.

Note the reference to "student voice about learning" as this is less asking students to be on councils, committees, and speak just for the sake of students talking. It is more specifically about creating opportunities for students to think aloud, ask questions about their work and progress, enquire about next steps, and learn to listen to other students.

Increasing engagement in schools empowers all learners in the learning community. Student engagement plays an important role in shaping student achievement in the education system. Zepke (2018) defined "student engagement" as a construct used to identify what students do, think about, and feel when learning. Many students have investigated student engagement around three main factors: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors (Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003). The behavioral level of engagement includes effort, persistence, active participation, turning in assignments, concentration, asking questions, and class communication. The emotional level of engagement involves students' affective communication and deep and meaningful connections that students have with the other students, the content, the task, and the instruction. When emotionally engaged individuals feel a strong sense of interest, motivation, and personal investment in what they are doing, they exhibit a positive and enthusiastic attitude toward learning. The cognitive level of engagement focuses on making connections, increasing understanding, and mastering the knowledge and skills taught in schools. It refers to the active mental processes and intellectual involvement that individuals exhibit when they are deeply engaged in the learning process. It goes beyond passive absorption of information and involves critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation. One of the dilemmas is this three-fold elaboration ignores the interaction between them and has not led to the gains promised by the advocates of the three-fold system. We introduce an alternate model below.

Which Factors From the
VL Research Support This Mindframe?

Concentration-Persistence-Engagement

INFLUENCE	NO. METAS	NO. STUDIES	EST. NO. PEOPLE	NO. EFFECTS	EFFECT SIZE
Concentration-Persistence-Engagement	10	550	354,511	1,202	0.51

There are skills in being able to concentrate, remain persistent, and enjoy engagement in learning. Moreover, these skills can vary situationally— on some tasks, at some times, and not all the time within a particular task. There are three major dimensions of concentration and persistence (Miyake & Friedman, 2012):

- *Inhibition* of dominant or proponent responses and skills so as not to be distracted;

- *Shifting* between tasks or mental sets, this relates to the ability to move back and forth between multiple different tasks or ideas; and

- *Updating* and monitoring of working memory representations. We can hold a limited number of items of information in short-term memory at any one time, irrespective of ability (usually about four to six bits of information).

These are tough asks for many students with the myriad of potential distractions, the continual request to shift between and within tasks (e.g., sorting out the math notions within the verbal problem presented), and the fact that we are of little capacity, holding at best four to six ideas at once. Contrast this with the typical lesson—full of facts, teachers talking so much, tasks where more content is demanded. We are not as good as we think we are in teaching students how to consolidate information so that they overlearn and thus free cognitive load for dealing with relationships between ideas and deeper conceptual thinking.

This is a major reason why we invite teachers to make transparent their success criteria, the rubrics of what it means to be successful, the scaffolding up this ladder to the final rungs of success, and continually checking to ensure students understand where they are, how and where they need

to improve, and whether they have the optimal learning strategies to be successful learners. This helps reduce distractions, ensure students know the shifts they need to make, and focus on what matters in the lesson. This is summed up in Richard Mayer's (Clark & Mayer, 2012) first principle of learning: the Coherence Principle, which states that humans learn best when extraneous, distracting material is not included.

When we ask teachers how they know their students are concentrating, attentive, and engaged, so often the answer is: When they are doing the work. Sadly, in a lot of "doing" there is little learning. So often, it is repetition of what they already know. Nuthall (2007) noted, "Our research shows that students can be busiest and most involved with the material they already know. In most of the classrooms we have studied, each student already knows about 40–50% of what the teacher is teaching" (Nuthall, 2007, p. 24). Further, Nuthall argued that teachers' thinking focuses on keeping students busily engaged in activities that produce some tangible product. This leads to ritualized routines, whereby teachers and students talk about resources, tasks, and how long an activity should take. When he showed students videos of their classroom behaviors and asked what they were thinking, the answer typically was how to finish quickly and how to get the answers with the least possible effort. This was the case, regardless of the student's prior ability. When he asked teachers how they knew their students were learning, they argued that it was when students were actively engaged in learning activities. "They monitor the look in their students' eyes, their enthusiasm, their puzzlement, the questions they ask. In most teachers' minds, the criteria for successful learning are the same as the criteria for successful classroom management" (p. 916). Performance is more a function of student interest, motivation, and understanding of the purposes and beliefs of the teacher's activities. However, knowing that a student is engaged does not mean they are learning.

A disheartening reality often unfolds, wherein a substantial amount of activity yields meager learning outcomes. A pertinent instance arises from the work of Van Hees (2011), who meticulously documented the progress of five-to-six-year-old pupils engaged in the process of learning to read over an extended period. Remarkably, the most recurrent undertaking in these reading classes involved cutting and pasting. Yet, it prompts contemplation—to what extent does this sort of "doing" genuinely contribute to the acquisition of reading skills? Admittedly, the students were visibly engrossed, expressing contentment, and displaying a fondness for "reading"; however, discernible advancement in reading

proficiency remained conspicuously scarce. The teachers had powerful arguments about why these students struggled to read in terms of their socioeconomic and cultural background, home conditions, and their lack of resources and time.

Berry (2023) introduced an innovative framework that probes teachers' interpretations of student engagement. She noted, "To a lesser extent, teachers may attempt to promote a level of investment in the lesson by appealing to student interests and encouraging students to share their ideas or opinions within the lesson, but the main focus remains at the level of participating in the lesson events as designed by the teacher." Berry supported Kennedy's (2016) claim that ensuring all students are highly engaged in learning at all times might be seen as too difficult by the teacher, leading the teacher to settle for a more achievable and more observable goal of compliant participation in classroom events.

Berry (2023) built a six-factor model of engagement: disrupting, avoiding, withdrawing, participating, investing, and driving (Figure 2.1). The aim is to move students' engagement from participating to driving, and to be more cognizant of the various types of disengagement. The three negative engagement strategies all harmed their progress toward achievement. She also noted that their positive engagement is more likely to follow successful learning; thus, learning begets engagement more than engagement begets learning.

Three major dimensions of teachers' actions led to higher engagement: clarity, opportunity to learn, and feedback (Kumar, 1991).

- Clarity included giving directions and explanations relating to lesson context; reinforcing and encouraging students' efforts to maintain involvement; teaching methods appropriate for the learner's objectives and the environment; demonstrating an ability to conduct lessons using various teaching methods; and the quality of questioning.

- Opportunity to learn included: provides learners with opportunities for participation; uses instructional materials that provide students with appropriate opportunities to participate; manages disruptive behaviors among students ($r = .55$), and promotes good interpersonal relationships.

- Feedback included: provides feedback to students throughout the lesson.

FIGURE 2.1 Berry's Model of Engagement for Disrupting to Driving

ACTIVE ← PASSIVE → ACTIVE

	DISRUPTING	AVOIDING	WITHDRAWING	PARTICIPATING	INVESTING	DRIVING
Engaging in the activity	Disrupting the learning environment Refusing to participate Arguing with the teacher	Looking for ways to avoid work Being off-task Being unprepared Looking for reasons to leave the room or move around the room	"Flying under the radar" Physically separating from others Being distracted Putting in low effort	Doing the work Being on task Paying attention Responding to questions	Asking questions about what we are learning Valuing what we are learning Showing interest or curiosity in what we are learning Enjoying learning	Setting goals for my learning Seeking feedback to help me improve Seeking out challenges Monitoring and evaluating my progress
Engaging with peers	Arguing with peers Trying to distract others	Off-task talking with others Playing around with others instead of working	Sitting with a group if directed but not interacting	Working with others when directed to do so	Sharing ideas and thinking with peers Following shared interests	Collaborating with others toward a shared goal Challenging each other to drive improvement
	Students are **disengaging** from the planned learning experience			Students are **engaging** in the planned learning experience		
What goals might the teacher have for engagement in the learning experience?				I want them to follow my lead and complete certain tasks	I want them to be interested in learning and actively involved in the process	I want them to be proactive and collaborative learners

Source: Reprinted from Berry, 2023. Used with permission.

Teacher Clarity

INFLUENCE	NO. METAS	NO. STUDIES	EST. NO. PEOPLE	NO. EFFECTS	EFFECT SIZE
Teacher clarity	3	101	18,442	239	0.84

Fisher et al. (2014) and Sharratt (2018) have researched and written extensively about the importance of teacher clarity. The notion is best summed up in the chapters of Fisher and Frey: Identifying Concepts and Skills; Sequencing Learning Progressions; Elaborating Learning Intentions; Crafting Success Criteria; Modifying Learning Intentions to Include Language Expectations; Determining the Relevance of the Learning; Designing Assessment Opportunities; Creating Meaningful Learning Experiences; and Establishing Mastery of Standards.

Fendick (1990) explicitly explored the effects of the teacher's clarity of speech (e.g., so all can hear, the teacher does not use vague terms), organization (starts with success criteria, covers all topics on post-test, reviews student work), explanation (explains simply and interestingly, at the right pace, gives examples of how to do the work, answers student questions, gives enough time), and assessment (asks questions, encourages discussions, provides feedback).

It seems a hands-down case that if students do not understand the teacher's instructions or lessons, there is unlikely to be much comprehension and engagement. But clarity is more than comprehension. It is about "being explicit about precision-in-practice" (Sharratt, 2018); it is about high expectations, teachers sharing their notions of success criteria with their students, who ensure there is intentional alignment between the lesson, the tasks, and assignments, which provide that the delivery of the lesson is relevant, accurate and comprehensible to students, who give worked examples to illustrate the degree of cognitive complexity desired from the students, and who provide welcome feedback about where to move to next (Hattie & Clarke, 2019).

Suspension/Expelling Students

INFLUENCE	NO. METAS	NO. STUDIES	EST. NO. PEOPLE	NO. EFFECTS	EFFECT SIZE
Suspension/ expelling students	1	24	7,579	42	−0.20

We know that suspension and expulsion hurt learning; the effect size is –.20. Perhaps this is because teachers and school leaders don't have other options for addressing challenging behavior, and sometimes students engage in extremely unacceptable behaviors. However, the evidence for alternatives, such as positive behavioral support and restorative practices, is strong (Smith et al., 2022). The effect of in-school suspension on subsequent school achievement was d = –.10, and the effect of out-of-school suspension was double (–.24; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Students suspended were more likely to come from low-income and urban schools, among African Americans, lower achievement, and lower SES homes. Data "suggests that students who may experience heightened risk from the outset may be doubly disadvantaged by their schools' use of disciplinary practices that may further exclude them from instruction that they need to progress educationally and alienate them from the school setting" (Noltemeyer et al., 2015, pp. 234–235).

Alternatives that can help reduce the behaviors that led to suspension include school-wide positive behavior interventions, conflict resolution, and social skills programs (Evans & Lester, 2012; Valdebenito, et al., 2018). The overall effects of these programs are positive but small, and more success might come from enhancing these student's achievement outcomes and making classes inviting for all students to thence reduce their feelings of exclusion and unfairness in class—and increasing teachers use of restorative practices (Smith et al., 2022).

Using data across four school years on the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs) from one Californian district of 101 schools serving over 79,000 students, Liu, Penner, and Gao (2023) found massive differences in the referral rates relating to the students' ethnicity. About 2 percent (or eighty teachers) made more than forty-eight ODRs per year (about one every four days), which is several times greater than their average-referring colleagues who made at least one ODR (i.e., one every two months). The top referring teachers accounted for 35 percent of all ODRs, and these teachers tended to be white, in early career, and in middle schools. The referrals by the teachers with only one to two ODRs per year showed no racial differences, but the top referrers sent three to four times more Black students than other students to the office—mainly for interpersonal or defiance issues. Black students only accounted for 7 percent of all students enrolled in the district but represented close to 22 percent of all referred students and 27 percent of students referred by top referrers.

This study has been replicated so often: we punish African American students disproportionately, even for the same discipline issues (K. N. Allen, 2017; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Sorensen et al., 2022), and we start doing

this in early childhood settings (Gansen, 2021). Liu et al. (2023) concluded that "educators are more likely to perceive behaviors committed by Black and other students of color as more problematic and deserving of punishment despite evidence documenting few racial differences in misbehavior" (p. 2).

When a decision is made to exclude a student, their belief in the school community can be compromised. They know their membership in the learning environment is questioned, and they can be banished again. The behavior can be worse after their suspension because the feelings of cohesion they had before the suspension have been compromised. Before discussing solutions for this, we recognize that there are extreme situations in which removal from the learning environment is warranted. However, when the suspension is necessary, we should reflect on each time a student is suspended to determine what we missed. The most important part is developing a reentry plan that ensures students know their behavior is problematic but still welcome.

Fortifying Practices That Create a Learning Culture

When educators believe that every student possesses the potential to learn, the collective is vigilant in the elimination of exclusionary practices. Educators within the learning community must believe and embrace that learning is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor but rather a collaborative journey that involves shared accountability, active participation, collective inquiry, and open and honest dialogue. Students need not be passive knowledge recipients but rather active agents who own their learning. School communities that value student voice and engagement are committed to cultivating authentic learning experiences that shape an atmosphere where students can drive their own learning (Fisher et al., 2023). Every student must be encouraged to express their thoughts, ask questions, seek feedback, give feedback, and contribute their unique insights to the learning community.

The road toward eliminating exclusion continuously challenges educators to grow by unlearning practices and making adaptations. Educators must steadfastly dismantle barriers that hinder equitable access, exposure, opportunities, participation, and success. There must be a shared belief that education is a source of empowerment for all. Fostering inclusivity cannot be a passive pursuit but rather an active process that requires intentionality, unveiling biases, empowering student voice, valuing diversity, promoting equitable experiences, and reflecting to evolve. Learning community members who prioritize building a trusting and respectful

learning environment are transparent in expressing themselves and brave in challenging exclusionary practices.

Practice 2.1: Elevating Student Voice to Promote Inclusion

Elias et al. (2010) recognized that a supportive and healthy school culture elevates student voices about learning and promotes social-emotional well-being. The Quaglia Institute for Student Voice and Aspirations (2016) stated that adolescents who feel their voice is heard while in school are more likely to be academically motivated than those who do not think their voice is heard. Schools where students are regarded as responsive to their expressed critiques have students with better grades and attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism rates (Kahne et al., 2010). Elevating students' voices promotes democratic values and respect for humanity in young people.

When educators believe students have unique perspectives on learning, engaging, teaching, and schooling, their schools offer opportunities that actively shape the learning community (Cook-Sather, 2006). Systematic approaches allow students to share their experiences, tell their stories, and express how the school's culture and climate affect them. Classroom participation involves social and emotional competencies and individual efficacy, courage, and confidence. Student's voice refers to students participating in class and expressing their views, taking an active role in curriculum decisions, evaluating school structures and processes, and having the power to drive change within the learning community (Darwin, 2022).

Schools can leverage student voices to engage youth in leading improvement efforts in classroom instruction, programmatic practices, and school initiatives. Students and educators alike need training and professional learning to support the implementation of student voices. For students, effective training includes specific skills required for individual voice activities. School leaders must engage teachers and learning community members in generating the belief in student voice and providing professional learning focused on specific skills, such as reciprocal dialogue designed to engage students constructively. Teachers also benefit from professional learning focused on strategies to support student voice at the classroom level, such as student-led conferencing (Bailey & Guskey, 2021). Learning communities must create an environment for all voices to be shared and heard. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to favor some students' voices over others. This form of bias is typically unconscious (Elias, 2021). Biases exist based on mental models that shape our values and beliefs based on prior experiences. To eliminate the harmful impact

on students and the learning community, we must recognize and address them. When biases are in operation in schools, it impacts how students engage. When students don't feel that their participation matters or is appreciated, the instinct is to disengage and become less motivated to learn (Elias, 2021). As educators seek to improve diversity in student participation, schools must create opportunities for students to increase their involvement as they build a sense of value and potential.

A 2019 report by the Center for American Progress (CAP) identified strategies for student voice used by schools and districts across the United States. Figure 2.2 displays common strategies to solicit student voices.

FIGURE 2.2   Common Strategies to Solicit Student Voice

STRATEGIES TO SOLICIT STUDENT VOICE	EXPLANATIONS
Student surveys	Surveying the students can solicit student voices on aspects of academic performance, the quality of the curriculum, school climate, instructional experiences, organizational culture, and the relationships among the school community members.
Student perspectives on governing bodies	Including students in governing bodies actively engages them in the learning community by providing youth opportunities to share their perspectives and creating a sense of ownership and agency among students.
Student government council	Student governments or student councils empower youth to make decisions and engage in issues important to the student body and school culture.
Student journalism	Student journalism provides youth a platform to gather information, interview sources, raise issues, report news, expose concerns in the school community, and allow students to express their opinions.
Student action research	Student action research empowers learners to discover and apply research techniques to identify solutions to issues in the school community and share knowledge gleaned from their research.

When educators assume that students are not mature, capable, or insightful enough to identify the core issues within the learning community, their lives, or the world, this trickles down to the students and they hear these lower expectations. These assumptions also lead to school structures and processes that limit and marginalize students' opportunities to contribute and participate (Brasof & Levitan, 2022). Adults must engage individually, relationally, and collectively to investigate biases held within the learning community as they create open and authentic dialogue to adjust the inequitable power dynamics that too often silence

youth (Brasof & Levitan, 2022). There is significant research on the counternarratives of the impact of elevating students' voices. When schools are converted into learning spaces that require students to think aloud and share their insights and opinions, learners engage in transformative academic and social experiences (Deangelis & Lueken, 2020).

Practice 2.2: Increasing Engagement Through Teacher Clarity

Teachers ponder to identify moves that engage students in their learning. A strong relationship exists between teacher clarity and student engagement from participating to striving. Student engagement increases when teachers provide clear, organized, and well-structured instruction. Teacher clarity is not only a method but also a mindset. Further, fairness and equity are brought to the classroom when the expectations are transparent and communicated. With clarity for learning, students are equipped to:

- Understand what is expected of them,

- Plan and predict their learning,

- Set goals,

- Acquire a strong sense of how to gauge their progress, and

- Know what they need to do and why it matters.

Clarity in teaching gives students confidence and motivation as they see the value in what they are learning and how they will know that they have learned it. Clarity saves time and promotes efficiency because students do not have to spend extra time figuring out what they should learn. A lack of teacher clarity leads to confusion, which hinders engagement. When students are confused about the lesson's content or instructions, frustration builds (which has a −0.04 effect size).

Marcus Buckingham (2005, p. 146) stated "that clarity is the antidote to anxiety." When students know exactly what they need to do and how they will be assessed, it reduces anxiety and uncertainty. This is extremely important for students who experience challenges in their learning, as clear instructions can mitigate stress related to ambiguity. Clarity can also encompass tenets of culturally fortifying practices as this approach acknowledges and respects dimensions of identities by making learning relevant and inclusive (Hollins-Alexander & Law, 2021).

According to Ainsworth (2015), learning intentions (effect size of 0.54) describe what it is that educators want students to learn. Success criteria

(effect size of 0.88) specify the necessary evidence for students and teachers to show whether they have achieved the related learning intention. Success criteria make the learning intention visible to both students and teachers by describing what learners must know and be able to do to meet the learning intentions for the day (Almarode et al., 2021). Success criteria answer three key questions: What am I learning? Why am I learning this? And how will I know that I have learned it?

Clarity goes beyond learning intentions and success criteria. It plays a pivotal role in creating equitable and engaging learning environments by reducing barriers to accessing the content, fostering understanding, and empowering students to drive their own learning. Clarity for teaching and learning is the route to academic success through relevance and rigor.

Below in Figure 2.3 is an example of a clarity for learning lesson frame.

FIGURE 2.3　Clarity for Learning Lesson Frame—Kindergarten Example

Learning Intention	We are learning to read and write words.
Relevance	So we can read books that interest us.
Success Criteria	1. I can identify letters. 2. I can say letter sounds. 3. I can blend sounds together to make a word. 4. I can write a word in a sentence.

Clarity and engagement can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Teacher clarity provides the foundation for student engagement. When students are engaged, they are more receptive to the clarity provided by teachers. And when clarity is present, students are more engaged (Fisher et al., 2022).

Student engagement is one of the biggest challenges that educators face today. Multiple factors cause students to disengage that are complex and often not discussed. Many of the reasons are associated with dimensions of identities such as socio-economic status, parent labor force status, homelessness, illness, family structure, refugee background, language barriers, and a host of other dimensions that place a wedge between the student and classroom engagement. Other reasons include school factors that may cause students to disengage such as repetitive content, lack of

relevance to world situations, no autonomy in learning, limited opportunities for feedback, and little use of visual and media connections.

When it comes to student engagement, if students see less value in their work (e.g., that they are not progressing) and the assignments, there is limited commitment and attention to the learning (Schlechty, 2011). Schlechty (2002) defined five levels of engagement as shown in Figure 2.4, with two positive and three negative engagement strategies.

FIGURE 2.4   Schlechty's Five Levels of Engagement

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT TRAITS	STUDENT BEHAVIORS
Engagement	High Attention, High Commitment	Students are immersed in task as they experience value and relevance. At this level they will persist in the face of difficulty and challenges.
Strategic Compliance	High Attention, Low Commitment	The student has little value in the task but associates learning with outcomes and results. Students are motivated by grades and external factors.
Ritual Compliance	Low Attention, Low Commitment	Students view learning as having little or no meaning but want to avoid negative consequences. The student will learn at low or superficial levels.
Retreatism	No Attention, No Commitment	The student is disengaged from the work and the learning. There is no attempt to comply, but they are not disruptive. They are unlikely to learn.
Rebellion	Diverted Attention, No Commitment	Students refuse to do the assigned task, they act in ways to disrupt others, they develop poor work habits, and have negative attitudes toward learning. Learning does not occur.

There are many ways to engage students beyond low commitment and low attention. When educators create tasks promoting students' funds of knowledge, learners are primed for learning. Figure 2.5 identifies success criteria in a single-point rubric describing what success looks like, motivating students to drive their learning. Single-point rubrics focus on the "point" of proficiency, describing what successful completion of

a learning tasks entails without categorizing it into different levels of achievement. Single-point rubrics are reflective assessment tools that offer a learner-centered approach, contributing to more meaningful and effective learning experiences that increase student engagement.

FIGURE 2.5   Single-Point Rubric

Learning Intention: We are learning to describe how characters in a story respond to major events or challenges.

Strengths	Success Criteria	Opportunities for Growth
	I can identify an event that affects a character in a story.	
	I can explain how a character feels when they are faced with an event or challenge.	
	I can explain how a character explains the event.	
	I can explain why the character reacts to the event.	
	I can explain how a character changes from the beginning to the end of a story based on the event.	
	I can use evidence from the story to support my thinking.	

Single-point rubrics are particularly effective when growth-producing feedback is provided to learners, rather than simply assigning a grade. This holistic approach to performance increases engagement by empowering students to participate and drive their own learning actively.

Practice 2.3: Creating Restorative Cultures to Mitigate Discipline Inequities

There is a desire to decrease exclusionary practices in schools while maintaining safe, nurturing learning environments. Many schools use exclusionary discipline practices such as suspensions and expulsions to address misbehaviors. Restorative cultures seek to foster equitable and positive spaces that build strong relationships and connections among all members of the learning community. A restorative school culture focuses on resolving conflicts, repairing harm, and healing relationships as methods to mitigate the negative effects of punitive discipline policies and practices. Restorative cultures address inequities in schools by promoting supportive educational environments that prioritize

understanding root causes of behavior and addressing underlining issues that affect students negatively. This approach is set to increase educators' empathy by acknowledging that students from different dimensions of identities might be dealing with a range of challenges that impact their behavior. Considering a student's circumstances reduces the likelihood of discriminatory discipline actions. Most educators embrace the belief that every student regardless of their race, background, zip code, or sexual orientation has the right to learn in a supportive school environment. Such environments respect humanity, uphold dignity, and respond fairly to mistakes and mishaps.

Restorative cultures prioritize inclusive community building within the school by strengthening relationships and developing a shared sense of belonging among all learning community members. Inclusive communities are less likely to perpetuate discipline policies and practices that harm students. Restorative cultures implement practices that offer students chances to take responsibility for their actions, learn from their mistakes, and make amends with those negatively impacted. By intentionally teaching these social and emotional skills, students are equipped with tools and better prepared to handle conflicts and challenges without resorting to disruptive behavior. When students manage their emotions, make responsible decisions, and set goals for their behaviors, their levels of engagement increase as they understand their triggers and learn how to self-regulate. Such self-awareness equips them to engage with focus and intention on the impact of their behavior.

A Student Listening Circle is a restorative strategy for eliciting student involvement in collaborative decision-making and problem solving with adults. This circle is a facilitated focus group where students articulate to educators their experiences, perspectives, and ideas on important topics relevant to them and then collaborate with those educators to plan and implement actions to improve the school climate based on those topics. Figure 2.6 is an example of a circle prompt that evolves from lower- to higher-stakes questions to build class community, done in the initial weeks at the start of a school year (Safir, 2014). Use a listening circle to build respect, deepen trust, and share funny stories. Prompt your students and record your observations after the listening circle.

FIGURE 2.6 Student Listening Circle Prompts

Round 1: Getting to Know Each Other

- Today I'm feeling _____ (one word).
- If you could be a superhero, what superpowers would you choose, and why?

Round 2: Exploring Values and Identity

- What touches your heart?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What does respect look like to you?

Round 3: Storytelling

- A time when you had a conflict with a parent or caregiver . . .
- An experience of feeling that you did not fit in . . .
- A time when you learned something that really mattered to you . . .

Source: Adapted from Fullan, 2017.

A positive and supportive school culture is cultivated when educators strive to eliminate exclusion in the learning environment. This culture creates a climate where students thrive, participation increases, and fortification occurs. Creating a restorative culture promotes fairness, equity of voice, and inclusive learning environments for every student.

Key Messages

- When the collective focuses on eliminating exclusive practices in schools, environments are created where students feel valued, validated, and positioned for learning. This student-centered approach opens the door to productive levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement and an elevation of student voice. And students are empowered to create a path of academic success.

- When students are engaged in shaping the learning community, their sense of belonging is enhanced with their peers and the impact of the teacher-student relationship is increased. In addition, factors that demonstrate levels of student engagement such as

(Continued)

(Continued)

active participation by asking and responding to questions, making personal connections, and mastering the knowledge and skills taught in schools drive student performance and lead to positive learning outcomes.

- The skills of concentration, being persistent, and engagement can be very situational with different tasks. With multiple distractions, a continual request to shift between tasks, little capacity to hold multiple ideas at once, and lessons full of facts with teachers talking and demanding more content, these skills are very challenging for students. However, success criteria help in reducing the distractions and providing focus on the important aspects of a lesson.

- Students are engaged when there is clarity in learning experiences. When instruction is explicit, and teachers share what it means to be successful in lesson objectives, tasks, and assignments, students develop a sense of confidence and motivation as they know what they are learning and understand how they will know that they have learned it. Clarity also plays a role in ensuring transformative equitable learning experiences for students by reducing barriers to accessing content.

- Suspension and expulsion practices hurt learning and lead to exclusion from academic opportunities; the effect size is −.20. It is important for teachers and leaders to have options for addressing behaviors that lead to students being suspended and expelled. A focus on learning outcomes and creating invitational classrooms for students can reduce feelings of alienation. Strategies such as restorative practices also reduce students' feelings of unfairness and exclusion from the learning community (Smith et al., 2022).