

Chapter 1

From Pixels to Picture: A Framework for Mindful Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses a framework and the associated methods by which curious teachers can grow their leadership in their classrooms, schools, and communities. In particular, attention to teachers' professional development in the following areas are examined: teacher-generated student goals, clarity of student learning, soliciting student feedback, and well-being practices for teachers. When these areas are at the center of a teacher and a school's decision-making process, students' academic achievement, personal health, and prosocial behavior have immense potential to improve.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is for the aspirational teacher. In its contents, readers actively explore the traits of a teacher who is purposeful, attentive, and sustains hope for the future of education. A purposeful teacher is a fulfilled teacher. An attentive teacher is an effective teacher. A hopeful teacher develops a vision their colleagues and community can support. This chapter invites introspection within the framework of creating specific goals for students, enhancing clarity for student learning, soliciting student feedback, and practicing self-care. Readers will examine how this framework can enliven their teaching, enhance their leadership roles (both informal and formal), and help cultivate longevity in the profession. Teachers engaging with this framework of decision-making will connect microscopic to macroscopic perspectives of effective

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teaching, learning, and leading, whereby the “big picture” of mindful teaching will come into view (Figure 1). Mindful teaching informs all levels of instruction, whether educators remain classroom teachers and/or assume leadership positions.

Teachers who define their goals for students, elicit student feedback, enhance clarity of their lessons, and cultivate their well-being will propagate professionalism within their communities. Defining, eliciting, enhancing, cultivating, propagating—these verbs describe the mindful teacher. Such teachers contribute to a community of learners bound to make school a meaningful place for students and staff. At the core of this engagement is introspection on the part of philosophical teachers, i.e. the indelibly curious ones who love to learn. Highly effective teaching and learning is born from methodical, continual, and collaborative reflections. Readers will learn how philosophical, introspective teachers are a prerequisite for improved student outcomes. Challenging yet rewarding, the proposed framework of this chapter will enliven one’s teaching and put wind in their sails for the journey of education.

Figure 1.



Each day, those who teach have an option to walk through the doors of introspection and teach with intention. Substantial research indicates that students’ learning and well-being is deeply correlated with reflective teachers who promote visions of success (Heck, 2009; Nye et al., 2004; Rivkin et al., 2005; Schroeder et al., 2007). Therefore, saying “Yes” to introspection and professional growth is a noble act

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