

# EDUCATION UPDATE

INSIDE

2

Read Alouds:  
The Swiss Army  
Knife of Literacy

7

What Promises  
Will You Keep  
This Year?

8

Solving Authentic  
Problems in  
Makerspaces



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LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.

## Push, Don't Pity, LOVE Students in Poverty

Linda Cliatt-Wayman, who led one of the most dangerous high schools in America, says students in poverty don't need educators' excuses. They need a lot of love and unimaginably high expectations.

She calls it her "assignment on earth" to pull as many kids out of poverty as possible. The first female assistant superintendent of high schools in the School District of Philadelphia, Linda Cliatt-Wayman stepped down from her role in central office to become principal of Strawberry Mansion in 2012. The inner-city high school—notorious for its drugs, gangs, and extreme violence—had been on Pennsylvania's "persistently dangerous" list for five consecutive years.

Having grown up in North Philadelphia just a few blocks away, Wayman took on the "life-saving work" of righting the injustices experienced by students in poverty. Her relentless leadership helped turn around Strawberry Mansion, raising performance and taking it off the dangerous schools list after just one year.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 →

Photo by Caitlin Cunningham Photography



yes, they need rules.  
they need consequences.  
BUT THEY NEED SOME FUN  
and a whole lot of LOVE.

LOOK,  
guys,  
if  
NOBODY  
says they  
love you,  
I LOVE  
YOU.



## Why Every Class Needs Read Alouds

Read alouds can draw students of any age into a community that is knowledgeable and curious about topics and texts, from novels to news reports.

**E**nglish language arts teacher Pernille Ripp, who grew up in Denmark, doesn't remember many rich classroom-reading experiences. "We spent a lot of time with basal readers," she recalls. What she does remember are the bonds created when her mother read to her at home. "Those

experiences made me a reader," she says. When she became a teacher, she knew that "read aloud would be how we built community."

Literacy expert Regie Routman agrees. In *Literacy Essentials: Engagement, Excellence, and Equity for All Learners*, she calls reading aloud an "indispensable first

step in reaching and teaching [students]."

"It slows us down, relaxes us, reminds us of the joy and inspiration of a well-crafted story. Being read to puts us in the frame of mind for learning and increases literacy achievement," she writes.

Yet, as students age, they are less likely to be read to at school and at home. Ripp, who teaches 7th grade in Madison, Wisconsin, explains, "One of the biggest misconceptions is that once kids pass 10 years old, they don't need to be read to—that there's no value in it. That's definitely not true." This misconception is embedded in a narrow understanding of the types of texts that can be read aloud and how reading aloud changes students.

### The Swiss Army Knife of Literacy

Unlike shared reading—where students have text copies in hand and the reading

is frequently interrupted for instruction or skill practice—a classroom read aloud involves one person (often a teacher) reading and pausing minimally to clarify a tricky term, make a connection, or ask questions related to a big idea. Most people have experienced a read aloud through a picture book or a novel, but any interesting text can be read aloud for a variety of objectives.

Teachers can use read alouds to create a class bond; promote a love of reading; preview information, themes, or text structures; model effective reading; show how texts connect with one another (intertextuality); or provide an exemplar for a genre of writing. The read aloud is like the Swiss Army knife of literacy; it has multiple uses at every age and in every content area.

## Read alouds bring us together and make us speak books.

Read alouds also create a bridge to more complex texts. A 1984 study by Thomas Sticht showed that a child's reading level doesn't catch up to their listening level until around 8th grade. That makes the read aloud a perfect opportunity to expose students to texts they can't yet decode for themselves. "While I'm reading aloud to my students, I'm doing the heavy lifting with vocabulary and decoding so that they can experience the joy of the text," explains Valentina Gonzalez, a professional development specialist for elementary English language learners (ELLs) in the Katy Independent School District in Texas. Hearing stories provides an oral language foundation and can improve acquisition of academic vocabulary, especially for ELLs.

Read alouds provide a scaffold to the reading and writing that students do on their own, adds Barbara Moss, a literacy expert and education professor at San Diego State University. And data show that children of any age who regularly have books read to them score higher on state and national literacy tests.

### Don't Wreck the Read Aloud

Moss believes the strategic use of read alouds can help students achieve many of the goals of the standards, but she cautions: "Don't wreck the read aloud

with too many instructional interruptions." Keep it simple and fun.

For example, don't have kids doing a lot of tasks during the reading. "I used to Post-it my students to death," recalls Ripp. "Write down or draw every thought that you have!" Then she realized she was losing students who were distracted by all the tasks. Now, she might have a couple of cues for students, but ultimately, her goal is to get to "where we're just so deeply immersed in the story that they beg for another page."

"Don't worry about kids understanding every word," says Routman. "Just find a great story. They will get it." Preread the text on your own, and then pull out all the stops as you read it in class. And remember, you're never too old to get something out of a great picture book, she adds. (Visit

*Education Update* online for a list of Routman's favorite read aloud books.)

Consider, too, how images, illustrative gestures, or a slower rate of speech can help ELLs overcome language barriers, says Gonzalez. Are there terms to preteach so that ELLs can access the text? How will all students, but ELLs especially, process the text during or after the reading?

Don't be afraid to scrap a book if kids just aren't into it. Moss recalls an excellent student teacher who made the fatal flaw of reading aloud a long, complicated passage on the water cycle. "It went on for a half an hour and the kids were dying."

That doesn't mean informational texts are read-aloud kryptonite. Moss remembers a 1st grader who told her, "I don't want to read stories about bears with clothes on. I want to read about real stuff." From coverage of current events to discoveries in STEM, short, engaging articles abound and make great sources for read alouds. An inspiring *New York Times* article on Chef José Andrés feeding thousands in Puerto Rico could initiate a discussion of what makes a hero, suggests Routman.

### Priority, Purpose, Process

Amanda Zieba, who teaches middle school English language arts and reading in La Crosse, Wisconsin, has been reading aloud

to her students for a decade. Although she has refined her methods and expanded her bookshelf to include everything from picture books to obituaries, her guiding principle has remained constant: "I want my students to like reading."

She's found that starting class with a read aloud, followed by 10 minutes to write in journals, provides a predictable structure that helps kids settle into the day's lesson. Having a set process also prevents the read aloud from getting scrapped because of time constraints.

To make the case for read alouds as a worthy use of class time, Routman encourages teachers to be knowledgeable about the research-based rationale and then "invite your principal into your classroom during a read aloud so [that] they can listen to the level of conversation that takes place and see how engaged kids are."

### Your Best Book Club

Successful read alouds have a clear purpose that you plan toward, says Tanya Friedman, an educator and coach with the ATAPE Group in New York City. Last year, she worked with a team of 2nd grade teachers at Young Leaders Elementary (P.S. 369) in the South Bronx to help them make read alouds more rigorous and culturally relevant.

Teachers at P.S. 369 wanted to give their students, a large portion of whom are ELLs, more tools to discuss the high-level ideas within the texts they were reading. The questions and cues teachers had been using during the read aloud, however, focused students on literal comprehension, which, in turn, reinforced low expectations for student thinking. It also drained the life out of the read aloud. "What's the conversation in a good book club? Rarely is it recounting what happened in the book," says Friedman.

By videotaping student discussions, teachers at P.S. 369 could see that students didn't have the skills to have dynamic conversations. Working backward from this goal, they developed a read-aloud planning guide that incorporated Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge to fine-tune the types of questions teachers ask.

"If we stop and say, 'Who remembers where the mother is going?,' that's what we're prepping them to talk about," explains Friedman. "But if we stop and say, 'Why

## **PUSH, DON'T PITY, STUDENTS IN POVERTY**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Wayman now runs a nonprofit to help the city's poorest students make it through high school. She is author of *Lead Fearlessly, Love Hard: Finding Your Purpose and Putting It to Work*, and her TED Talk on how to fix a broken school has been viewed nearly 2 million times. In the following interview, she shares what every teacher and school leader should know about educating children in poverty.

**In your book, you describe how, when you first came to Strawberry Mansion, the Department of Justice held a nonviolence assembly in the school auditorium. The presenters played a video reenactment of the Columbine shooting, and your students erupted into laughter. What effect did that have on you?**

At first, I sat there in amazement. I'm looking around and I'm saying to myself, *What in the world is going on?* I really didn't understand it at all. I thought they were being disrespectful and rude. I let the program continue, but when it was over I brought some kids to a roundtable conversation.

When they told me, "That's *nothing* compared to what we see on the streets each night," right then, my heart sank. And I said to myself, *Oh my god. They can't even relate to the pain of other people because they're so wounded.* And that changed a lot for me. I actually looked at the entire thing different. That all of the violence, all of the disrespect, all of the walking the halls, all of the assaults—it all came because they were in this deep state of hopelessness.

It was their reaction to that film that made me say, *OK, yes, they need rules. They need consequences. But they need some fun and a whole lot of love.* It was the only way for me to turn the school around.

**Speaking of love, you ended your morning and afternoon announcements by saying, "If nobody told you they loved you today, remember I do, and I always will." Why was that message so important to communicate?**

The teachers brought a young girl to me one day who was being very, very rude in class. And the young girl just told me, "Stop talking to me, Ms. Wayman. Will you please stop talking to me because nobody loves me. Nobody on this earth loves me."

And I just sat back in my chair, and I couldn't believe that she thought *nobody* on this earth cared about her. And so, I got on the loudspeaker and I told them, "Look, guys, if nobody says they love you, I love you." It started there.

When I got to Strawberry Mansion, it was something I always said to my students. Strawberry Mansion was 50 times worse than my previous school, and they needed to hear it even more. My kids—13, 15, 16, 17, 18 years old—would tell me, "Ms. Wayman, nobody has *ever* told me they loved me." And so, it was important for me to let those students know that you are not walking around this world unloved. I'm here for you every day, the staff is here for you every day, and we absolutely love you. And we're going to show you that we love you in these ways: we're going to have high expectations for you, we're going to make sure you have the best teacher in the classroom possible, and we're going to make sure school is fun. It was something that they latched on to. They *needed* to hear that they were loved.

**What advice do you have for teaching students in poverty, especially for teachers who have never personally experienced poverty?**

I had a lot of teachers in that situation. The one thing that I would tell them is to never get it in your mind that you have to use what you see as some type of *pity party* for not teaching. I would always tell my teachers, "You are a teacher. No, you may not understand a lot about what their home lives are like, but you know about teaching, so I need you to go into the room, build relationships with the children, and teach to the highest level possible and expect for those kids to reach it. Because if you do that, they will."

My one teacher, Ms. Speirs, grew up in Florida and knew nothing about poverty, but she referred to her students as *scholars*. "You're scholars, all of you." The kids didn't even know what that meant. They said, "What is that?" So in her mind, she was already thinking, *I may not know your individual situation now, but I know where you can go in the future. I see you as a doctor; I see you as a lawyer. And if I see you as that, it starts right here today, and being a scholar means making sure that essay gets done. And I'm going to show you how.*

So my advice to inner-city teachers that have never dealt with this situation is to do your job and teach. Do not fall into

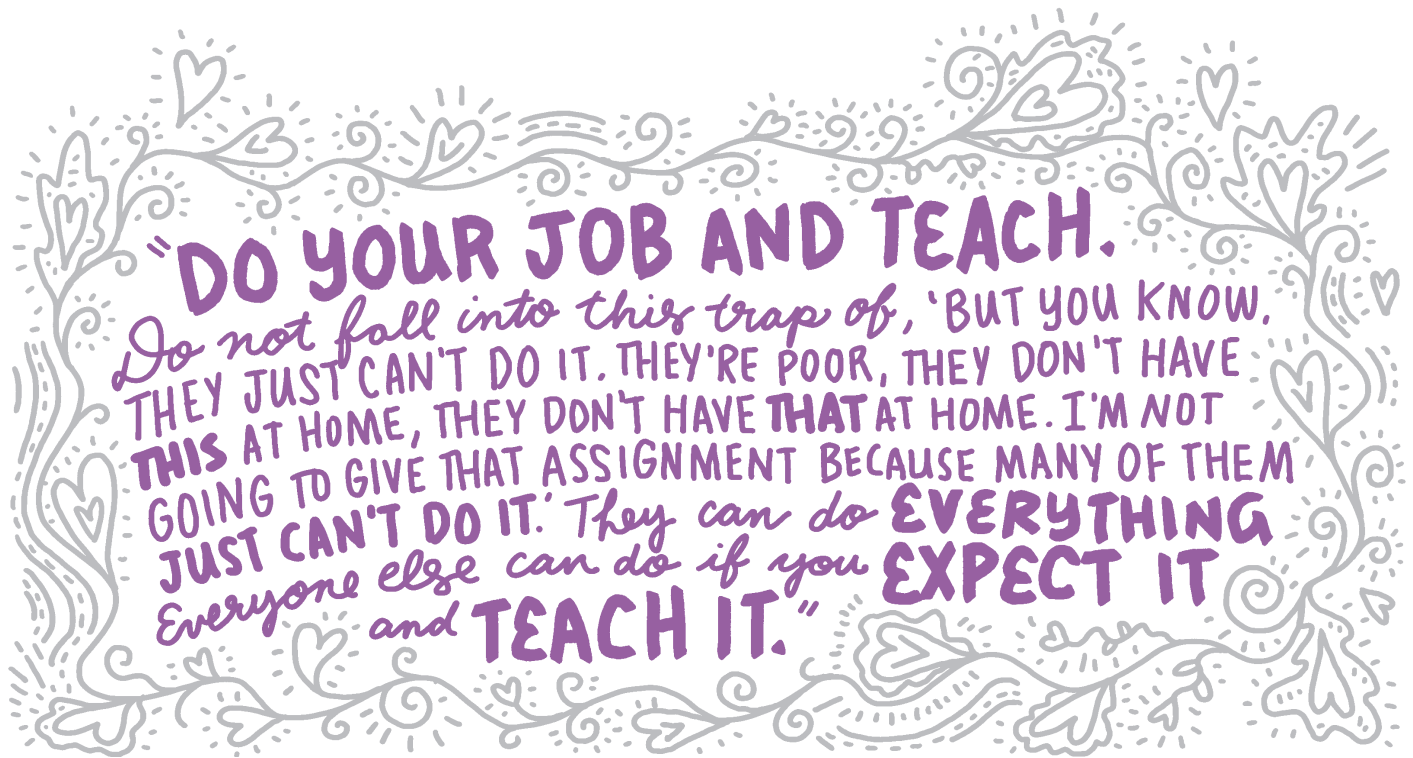
this trap of, "But you know, they just can't do it. They're poor, they don't have this at home, they don't have that at home. I'm not going to give that assignment because many of them just can't do it." They can do everything everybody else can do if you expect it and teach it. So, I would always tell my teachers, "I need you to do one thing: teach." They said, "Ms. Wayman, why do you keep saying that?" "They need a teacher, babe. They're not worried about whether you were in poverty; they need a teacher."

Before I got to Strawberry Mansion, they were giving the kids 3rd grade books. *Why are you giving the kids 3rd grade books, and they're in the 10th grade?* "Well, I don't know if they're going to read it. That book got too many pages in it." So you gotta have expectations and you gotta just teach. Teach to the best of your ability and don't get so consumed by their situation. Nurture them through this situation, but the best thing you can do is see them in the future. If I can just teach them how to write this essay, I can get them here. If I can just teach them how to do these math problems, I can see them in this college. And they will rise to every expectation. It is absolutely amazing what they can do. But they're often not given the opportunity.

**You put relationships at the center of everything, from teaching and learning to school safety. What does that look like in practice for a school leader?**

Constantly talk to students and listen to what they have to say—and act on that. At Strawberry Mansion and in my other schools, we gave them a forum to talk. But there was never a day that I did not walk through my halls, almost every period, and say, "Hi Johnny, how you doing? I heard last week your grandmother was sick. Is your grandmother well today?" I always tried to find out a little piece of information in their daily lives that would get me to that bridge to say *something* to them. Or I would say, "Oh, your teacher told me you got an A on that test today. Great job!" I constantly made it my business to know something about them that would give them a reason to want to continue to talk to me. Then, when they would talk to me or ask questions, I would clearly listen to what they had to say and always follow up.

You walk through schools now, and there are kids who will tell you they don't



even know their principal's name. *They don't even know their name.* The principal is at the top—and everybody in that building is watching what the principal does—so the principal has to build relationships, even if it's just through a daily announcement. “Hi, guys, good morning. You all look beautiful this morning, glad to see you.” You have to say something to them. It's the only reason why they would continue to want to talk to you, if you get to know them as people.

And once you get to know them as people, if they're doing something wrong, you already have a relationship with them. I could walk up to someone and say, “Now Johnny, why did you just throw that on the ground?” “Oh, Ms. Wayman, I'm so sorry. That is a rule, that we keep our school clean, right?” “Yes, babe, pick the paper up.” When I first walked into Strawberry Mansion, they would tell me how many ways I could “go F myself”—because that's what happened—“F you, I'm not picking up nothing. Who the H are you?” And I'm talking about hardcore situations. Schools in Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles are dealing with the same type of situation I was dealing with in Philadelphia.

You have to seek out a way to personally relate to students for them to understand that you have their best interests at heart

and you want them to be educated. And I would tell them that every single morning and every single afternoon: how I expect for them to get a high school diploma, how I expect for them to behave themselves, and how I expect for them to abide by the rules. It all came from me. Now, did my entire team support that work? Absolutely. We all fit together like a puzzle.

**Your book shifts the focus from the challenges of educating children in poverty to what it takes to succeed in a broken system. What does an urban principal need to do to “lead fearlessly [and] love hard”?**

A lot of times in high-poverty areas, school leaders believe they can lead just sitting in their office, and they have a whole bunch of APs [assistant principals] and different people running the school. It never works. It has to be a system where everybody is on the same page. Sometimes school leaders like to delegate a lot of things . . . , but I've never seen that work in a high-poverty, high-violence school.

Like I always say, “If you're going to lead, then lead.” You cannot delegate your work away. You have to be part of the system. You have to let everybody see you're working as hard as everybody else, and you all work together. My teachers, my god, they were beat down. They had the burden of being in those classrooms with those

kids every single period. And they were very challenging children. So the one thing I had to do as a school leader was make them realize I was their main support. It's me. Whatever you're doing, whatever you need support with, you come see me, and I'm going to be the person who gets that support for you, no matter what it is.

A lot of school leaders in high-poverty areas will say, “Well, that's on you. That's your room, you figure it out.” It can't go like that. Teachers need help. And they have to look at their school leader as a support for them in every area of the classroom.

**Any final words of advice?**

In inner-city, high-poverty, high-crime areas, the principalship is different. We cannot lead like everybody else. We have to be really personal with the kids. We have to be honest with the kids. We have to say what we mean and do what we say. And we have to expect for those kids to make it from their circumstance. If we don't believe it in our heart, that we can make a difference and change these kids' lives, then we're in the wrong seat. ■

*Editor's note:* This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

*Sarah McKibben (@editorbytrade) is the managing editor of Education Update.*

## WHY EVERY CLASS NEEDS READ ALOUDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

do we think the mother had that look on her face? What other experiences might she have had that made her not trust this person?," then we are prepping students to have a different type of conversation."

That doesn't mean literal comprehension gets tossed. If teachers notice student comprehension is shaky, they can recap events or make that a focus of small-group work. "We have to teach literal comprehension, but to me, that's not what [a] read aloud is for," says Friedman. Kids need to practice comprehension in small groups, at their level. But higher-order thinking? "All kids can do that, so that's what should be happening during a read aloud."

### Relevant and Rigorous

Making lively, academic conversations the goal of a read aloud also changed how teachers at P.S. 369 select books to read. Friedman says the new approach considers what's on students' minds, their experiences, and what they're talking about. (Get tips on text selection at *Education Update* online.)

For example, they read *Mama's Nightingale* by Edwidge Danticat, a book about deportation that would've previously been considered too heavy for 2nd graders. With the new lens of rigor and relevance, however, Friedman says, "we could see that it would lead to really amazing conversations." Teachers were surprised by how much their students already knew about detention centers and fear of immigration police.

"Read aloud is a way to honor students' culture and interests, as well as build background and vocabulary," notes Routman. A culturally relevant read aloud creates a self-propelling cycle of engagement where students not only want to learn more, but also want to do something with their new



*One of the biggest misconceptions is that once kids pass 10 years old, they don't need to be read to—that there's no value in it. That's definitely not true.*

knowledge. "They're like, 'Let's write letters. What else is unfair? What can we do about it?,'" says Friedman. "That's what we want school to be—connected to kids' real lives."

### We Speak Books

A few years into her teaching career, Ripp decided to take her experiments with read aloud to a world stage. She created the Global Read Aloud, a monthlong event that brings classrooms around the world together over books. What started with 300 students and one book (*The Little Prince*), has grown in its 8th year to include more than 2.2 million students in 80 different countries, four books, and an author study. Like her classroom read alouds, Global Read Aloud "brings us together and makes us speak books," says Ripp. It's a lot like learning a new language together, she continues.

That's because read alouds sensitize students to the language and structures of texts—not just stories, but informational texts, too, says Moss. It creates a shared signpost in students' minds, pointing out the connection between what they heard and the learning that follows. For example, in 7th grade, Zieba reads aloud *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* as a bridge to a historical unit on the Holocaust. "It's not complex in terms of the level of text, but it is helping my students understand a complex topic."

"Stories lean on other stories," Moss quotes author Jane Yolen. As students begin to notice elements of plot, style, and

language, they start to draw comparisons between what they hear in the read aloud to what they read on their own. "These connections, or intertextualities, fuel not only comprehension but also a vibrant community around reading."

### A New Relationship to Reading

Since the shifts at P.S. 369, students are eager for read alouds and engaged in discussion. When asked about books, students are more likely to talk about big meanings, rather than small details. In general, their disposition to reading has changed. "They want to read more; they want to find more books like that one," notes Friedman.

"Many of my kids come in as proudly resistant readers," says Ripp. "When we say, 'OK, listen to *this*,' all of a sudden, they start to wonder, 'Maybe that book is not a fluke? Maybe there are others like it?'"

Kids have a lot of choices for how they spend their time, notes Moss. "We want reading to be one of the things they choose." Reading aloud can motivate that choice, and that alone makes it a valuable use of class time. It can also add life to lessons: "Read aloud is a reset, a way to bring the joy back to teaching," says Routman.

Ripp says she hasn't found anything that binds her classes together like read alouds. "Read alouds become part of who we are; [they] become part of our memories." ■

*Laura Varlas is the managing editor of ASCD Express and a contributor to Education Update.*

## UPDATE on the WEB

### Read Aloud Resources

Get tips for selecting texts, plus Regie Routman recommends 10 picture books to read aloud to learners of any age, at [www.ascd.org/educationupdate](http://www.ascd.org/educationupdate).



# THE HEART OF IT

With Executive Director **DEB DELISLE**

## The Promise of a New Year

In with the new, out with the old, and on our way to becoming.

**J**ust as August signals a new school year, January ushers in a host of possibilities for starting anew. Some of us will once again vow to exercise more, balance work and home life, or take up a fun hobby. As 2017 drew to a close, I had the chance to engage with a group of educators at our fall Conference on Educational Leadership. Together, they reflected on what their students had accomplished to date and made plans for what they hoped to achieve by spring.

Thinking about the similarities between August and January brought back memories of one of my particularly energetic 6th grade classes (think behavior management in full operational mode). When we returned from our winter break, one of my students brought in fortune cookies that he and his dad had baked. In each cookie was a paper “fortune,” intended to be a wish for what the new year could offer. We had great fun opening and reading aloud the fortunes created by one of our own.

In a moment of inspiration, I decided to use those little predictions as a lesson on how and why people set goals, not just for the immediate future but for the long-term as well. We had an interesting class conversation about hopes and dreams—often

punctuated with silly, meant-to-shock comments about potential future jobs, such as being a gorilla-cage cleaner. However, what started as a lighthearted discussion moved slowly into a serious exchange about promises made and promises broken. Cautiously, my students shared a time when they were hurt or they hurt someone else because

*I realized that my class had changed over the break. It was as though January signaled not just a new calendar year, but also a new start.*

of promises broken. The class quieted as each student took a turn and each story gave way to a bit more courage for the next speaker. One by one their accounts became a little bit longer and their listeners grew more encouraging.

As the conversation unfolded, I realized that my class had changed over the break. It was as though January signaled not just a new calendar year, but also a new start—and

a new focus—for these often-rambunctious students. They were *becoming*.

I have visited many classrooms whose teachers thrived on spur-of-the-moment decisions, often leading their classes in a different direction than their predetermined lesson plan. These unpredictable moments yield significant insights into what kids are thinking and worrying about and what interests them.

I once observed a 1st grade teacher who developed a unit on irrigation systems based on a student’s interest in pipes—yes, pipes. The teacher informed me that she did this out of respect for a child who, up to that point, had not expressed an interest in any subject matter but who took great joy in receiving a certain kind of pipe for his birthday. Reading, math, and science were incorporated into the study of pipes, irrigation systems, and the movement of water beneath roads, driveways, and homes. And yes, she was able to align her lessons with the 1st grade standards, and in doing so, she helped him *become*.

When I think about her ability to follow one child’s interest, I think of how she represents what educators do every day—fulfill promises. Whether in August or January, educators make meaningful vows—to be better at their craft, to engage each child, to connect with families, and to help students *become*. Some days are more challenging than others, but we always find that bright light—the fortune cookies, the water pipes—of promises fulfilled.

As 2018 unfolds, we at ASCD wish you a bright new year with promises made and promises kept. With a vow to keep growing in our craft, here’s to the kids who teach us so much and to the educators who learn from them every day. ASCD is proud to partner with you on this journey. ■

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# ROAD TESTED

★ Removing  
★ Roadblocks  
★ to Learning  
★ and Leading



JASON  
KERN

## Solving Authentic Problems in Makerspaces

So you created a makerspace and stocked it with all the modern tools for students to prototype and create. Now what? One of ISTE's eight questions to ask before launching your makerspace revolves around defining your learning goals and outcomes. Are you using these spaces to create a mindset for solving *real* problems? Are you inspiring students to develop the skills necessary to succeed in the modern economy and make a difference?

Unfortunately, we often use makerspaces to solve teacher-directed "fake" problems. It's fine to 3-D print trinkets from sites like Thingiverse or build simple copper circuits that light an LED bulb. But we need to go beyond these simplistic approaches and identify real areas of need in our communities.

### Attaching Purpose to Projects

The first authentic problem-solving experience we led was with the Prosthetic Kids' Hand Challenge ([www.handchallenge.com](http://www.handchallenge.com)). Started by a teacher in South Carolina, the Hand Challenge donates prosthetic hands to kids in need by teaming them up with people around the world who have access to a 3-D printer. The group provides all the files and designs needed to print, assemble, and ship a prosthetic hand. This kind of project is a great place to start using 3-D printers for a purpose. That challenge is on hiatus, but sites like e-NABLE Web Central ([www.enablewebcentral.com](http://www.enablewebcentral.com)) feature similar projects.

At All Saints Episcopal School, we set out to design our own solution to a problem. Our juniors and seniors teamed up with the Center for Affordable Prosthetics ([www.facebook.com/PrintingTheFuture](http://www.facebook.com/PrintingTheFuture)) to help a 22-year-old man in Honduras in need of a prosthetic arm. This time it was not a simple download-and-assemble project. Students had to go through the design thinking process to build an arm to the man's specifications, which involved iteration and problem solving. How do you print an arm that will form to the contour of a person's existing limb? The students tested different filaments until they discovered one they could heat and form into a shape that worked. Many challenges like this cropped up along the way, but the teens persevered.

"When we all found out who it was for, it gave a deeper meaning to the project and made us want to do it more," said one student. The class was excited to hear of the arm's arrival in Honduras but also open to feedback about necessary improvements. Students are now working hard on an enhanced version of the arm, as well as a new prosthetic hand for a young girl in Colorado.

### Meeting School Needs

You don't have to go all the way to Honduras to solve real-world problems. Our playground, for example, was outdated and no longer serving the needs of our youngest students. Rather than hire an architect, we went to experts who had lived the experience: 6th graders. We presented the challenge to them, and they interviewed preschoolers to inform the models they would build, using everything from cardboard to 3-D printers.\*

This past summer, their ideas came to life when the playground was renovated into a "Tiny Town" with stores and a road for tricycles. The excitement of the 3- to 5-year-olds was surpassed only by the pride of the 6th graders who designed it. Next up? A redesign for the school's quad area and soccer field.

### Why Mindset Matters

This year, All Saints created the Center for Innovation,\* which includes a "Fab Lab" equipped with a laser cutter, milling machine, vinyl cutter, and 3-D printers. With this new space, students in the fabrication class are embarking on a journey of design thinking. Using the foundational knowledge they gained in the first semester, they will find a community partner to team up with in the second semester. Students will pitch an idea, go through the design process, and then iterate their solution. At the end of the year, we hope our students will have made a meaningful difference in the community.

Through these experiences, we have learned that success is dependent not on having the best tools in your makerspace, but on having the right mindset. If we continue to underestimate our students by asking made-up questions, we will never see the limitless potential they have as empathetic problem solvers. Inspiring students to think about how they can influence the world through inquiry and innovation not only helps them grow but also builds a better community. How can you use your makerspace to make a difference? ■

\*See more about the playground project at [bit.ly/2yukUAY](http://bit.ly/2yukUAY). Visit the Center for Innovation at [bit.ly/2A3kIc](http://bit.ly/2A3kIc).

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Would you like to write for the next "Road Tested" column? Visit [www.ascd.org/educationupdate](http://www.ascd.org/educationupdate) for submission details.