

Teaching for Education Equity:

Creating a Zone of Proximal Development for All Learners

Personalized learning

Having assessed students for specific skills, educators organize learners accordingly—to solo, small groups, or one-to-one work.

Individual or small group skill-building

The teacher works with those who are at the same point in their development of the skill to help them move toward independence. After students have shown that they can perform the skill independently, they practice on the computer or with paper and pencil. The learning occurs through interaction with the teacher, who can provide the supports needed for competency.

Students work independently

After whole group gatherings or personalized lessons with the teacher, students work solo or with partners. This work often includes working online, planning and working with partners, as well as reading, writing, and creating alone and together.

It includes work on projects that have personal meaning for students and allows for personal expression and choice. It is structured for success through planning, and teacher check-ins.

Student-teacher-family-relationships

The teacher develops strong relationships with each student to better tailor learning through:

- Maintaining profiles for and with all students that are shared frequently with families
- Conducting a weekly, goal-oriented one-to-one check-in with each student
- Matching learning to a child's developmental and personal needs
- Fostering meaningful connections and understanding with families
- Creating a purposeful, friendly classroom environment
- Ensuring each student's voice is heard and understood during whole-group participation

Integrated skills development

Teaching social and academic life skills together increases learning during whole-class, small-group, and independent work.

- Productive student conversations increase while whole-class teacher-led discussions decrease
- Through rehearsal and practice, students learn to manage classroom routines such as transitions, partner work protocols, work sharing, and reflection

Community Circles

The whole class gathers in Community Circle several times each day for a whole-group learning experience.

Examples include:

- **Arrival times**, interactive work; sharing about the work; building community through games and other activities; getting to know one another; planning; class problem-solving
- **One or more reflection times** that include a review of work accomplished and work yet to be done, usually an afternoon "pulling it all together" time with cheers, acknowledgements, and plans for the next day
- **Lessons** directed by the teacher on topics that are appropriate for all learners in the class and taught with attention to equity and cultural understanding

Examples include:

- Read-alouds
- Current events
- Vocabulary development
- Historical events Science demonstrations
- Discussions of literature (poetry, characters, settings, plots, etc.)
- **Audience** for students to share and reflect on their work with each other
- **Planning** for field trips, celebrations, service, and other group and individual projects
- **Problem-solving** when the community discusses classroom social issues and seeks solutions together
- **Play activities** designed to build community and hone social and academic skills
- **Cultural conversations** allow students to get to know each other's cultures and share language across cultures, plus build understanding, reduce bias, and generate efficacy mindsets
- **Gatherings to build cognitive skills, including:**
 - Observation
 - Listening
 - Memory
 - Logic
 - Reflection
 - Self-regulation