

THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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STARTING THE YEAR OFF ... EXHAUSTED.

By Justyna P. King

"My teachers are burnt out." "The teachers are tired." "I'm afraid some of my teachers will quit soon." These are some of comments that we have heard from principals and school leaders, who are empathetic to what teachers are dealing with during COVID teaching—and are quite frankly, terrified.

We've seen it all and there is a spectrum of where teachers are at emotionally. Some are spending more time in their schools or home offices than sleeping and spending time at home. Some teachers are so tired of new resources, new digital tools, new expectations, that they are considering an early retirement. Some quit – as late as the first week of school.

How can we support our educators to trudge through the 2020-21 school year, when we're nary a month into the school year and everyone is exhausted already?

In this issue of the High School Newsletter, I hope to provide some insight into what teachers can do for self-care, and what they can ask for at their schools in order to better meet their social and emotional needs.

Also, in this issue is the importance of classroom learner inclusivity and some research as to why students plagiarize. This year is challenging, but know that all of us at the Office for Catholic Schools are here to support you!

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK: THE TEACHERS ARE NOT ALL RIGHT.

The kids are not all right. The teachers are not either. What to do if you're on the brink!

HOW TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

High school teachers from around our diocese chime in with some ideas

HELP STUDENTS AVOID PLAGIARISM –

Reviewing tips from Jennifer Gonzales and the top six reasons why freshmen reported cheating during their first semester of college.

THE TEACHERS ARE NOT ALL RIGHT

HOW TO INCORPORATE SELF-CARE INTO LIVING AS A TEACHER

It's ok to not be ok. Let's start there – acknowledging that “being fine” does not mean we are all right. Teachers, just like regular humans, are entitled to feelings (believe it or not). We are entitled to having hard days, difficult days, annoying days. But teachers are also entitled to having days off—one of the hardest things for great teachers to do is to ask for help from their principals when they need it. And sometimes all that it takes is an hour off, or a class period off, or a day off for mental health and soulful rejuvenation. When asked about ways that teachers recharge, here are some of my favorite answers that high school teachers gave:

1. Cook! And eat everything whilst cooking.
2. Netflix – watch an entire season of something uplifting (warning: *The Walking Dead* is a bad choice right now)
3. Exercise (if you're one of those people)
4. Nap. Totally underrated and so decadent these days.
5. Read a book – yes! A physical book!
6. When all else fails, Amazon.com is there to lull you out of your consumerism coma.

EDUCATORS, PUT ON YOUR OXYGEN MASKS FIRST!

OUR SEPTEMBER LUNCH AND LEARN ON 09/22/2020 WAS PRESENTED BY JENNIFER WERNER, CONSULTANT AND CLASSROOM EDUCATOR. SHE TALKED THROUGH TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS TO INCORPORATE SELF-CARE INTO THEIR DAYS. TO SEE THE RECORDING OF THE LIVE PD, SEARCH WWW.MYCATHOLIC SCHOOL.ORG FOR “LUNCH AND LEARN” OR “JESSICA WERNER”.

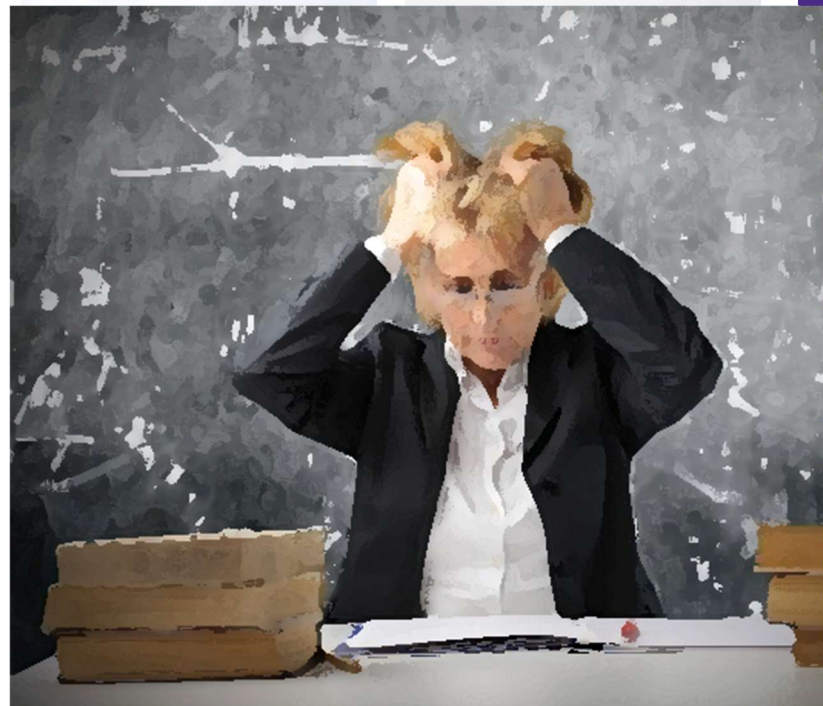
Excerpt from *US TODAY*: Teachers Are Struggling

“Almost all of them, 83%, say they are having a harder time doing their job, and two-thirds say they have had to work more than usual. Two-thirds say they haven't been able to do their job properly since starting to teach remotely...

The newest teachers, those who have been on the job for five years or less, struggle the most with distance teaching; 6 in 10 say they hadn't been trained well for the task. The oldest teachers have the most difficulty dealing with technology. Among teachers 55 and older, 1 in 4 say it hasn't been easy for them to use the technology required.

Parents recognize how hard teachers are working. Seven in 10 say teachers are “working harder now than they ever have.”

What are Your Thoughts on COVID Teaching? Email justyna.king@seattlearch.org with your comments!



Me trying to excel in my career, maintain a social life, drink enough water, exercise, text everyone back, stay sane, survive and be happy





Don't Reinvent the Wheel, Friends!

The best teachers steal. That is a direct quote from one of my favorite teachers and former co-workers.

When it comes to teaching tolerance, inclusivity and social justice, some lessons are just meant to be replicated...reproduced...stolen, if you will. (One of the most beautiful outcomes of pandemic teaching is the bountifulness of resources that educators are willing to share.)

While implementing inclusive and equitable lenses to your current lessons may be more work, it is imperative work that yields incredible thoughtful discourse.

Here are some resources to get you started if you're in a rut:

How Do Our Various Group Identities Shape us As Individuals?

<https://www.tolerance.org/learning-plan/how-do-our-various-group-identities-shape-us-as-individuals-0>

Identity Mapping and Social Location Lesson:

<https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/11/express-yourself-crafting-social-location-maps-and-identity-monologues/>

Lean In: A Students' Guide to Engaging Constructively with Social Justice Content:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279539507_Lean_in_A_students_guide_to_engaging_constructively_with_social_justice_content

Cultures of Dignity: The Difference Between Equity and Equality:

<https://culturesofdignity.com/equity-and-equality-lesson/>

Social Justice & Service Learning: Be the Change ...

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/student-tasks/do-something/be-the-change>

Finally, the Catholic Education Center has resources on virtue, character and information on saints, church leaders and Catholics of all backgrounds who worked for justice:

<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/faith-and-character/>

Implementing Inclusive and Equitable Practices into Your Classroom

BUT WHAT IF I TEACH MATH?!?

Really, the title could have been "What if I teach a non-humanities subject?!" since I hear from all backgrounds – math, science, physical education, etc. Social justice, inclusivity, and equity work is not just limited to humanities courses. ALL teachers must work to incorporate these important lenses into their lessons. True, many social justice and equity lessons lend themselves well to the humanities, but consider the ways in which you teach your subject through an equity lens:

1. **Keep stereotype threat in mind** – what you say about students shapes their self-worth; what are your own biases about girls versus boys? Expectations for ability based on race?
2. **Pay attention to your time** – specifically in math and science, studies have shown that despite their own perceptions, teachers tend to spend more time with boys
3. **Create an environment for students to learn at their own pace** – do not compare students in an outward or celebratory manner in the classroom based on competitive outcomes; celebrate individuals, not how they stack up against their peers.
4. **Integrate Universal Design** – access to materials include captions, easy-to-read fonts, opportunities to listen, watch, discuss and manipulate materials.
5. **Bring the real world in the classroom.** Utilize examples that students can relate to. Coordinate topics with other teachers by asking what are your social studies teachers doing right now in their classes and how can you filter those concepts into your lessons as well – immigration rates, economic inequities, the power of statistics?

For more resources and ideas, visit: <https://www.weareteachers.com/tips-tricks-inclusive-classroom/>

How to Foster an Inclusive Classroom Environment

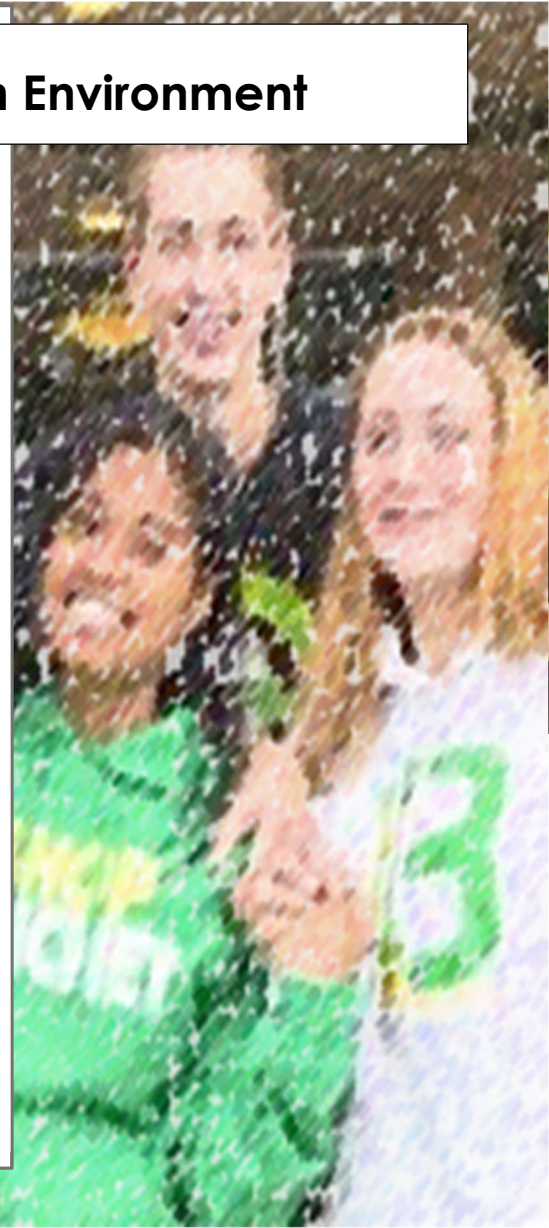
It is important to develop a classroom environment that allows for student input and choice. Good teaching means instructing with different lenses – but creating a classroom that is both culturally competent and content relevant can be difficult to achieve in certain subject areas. Inclusive classrooms go beyond the teaching of skills and facts, and promote a high level of engagement by students of all skill levels.

When asked how they do it, several teachers throughout our Archdiocese had some wonderful nuggets of wisdom. Brian Mullen, English teacher and Department Chair at Kennedy Catholic High School said that some of the best ways to support an inclusive environment is by "incorporating works of literature representative of the diversity found in our country." Furthermore, Mullen strives to achieve a high level of engagement and buy in from all of his students, by recognizing that "it is essential to incorporate myriad assessments so students have ample opportunities to showcase their learning." Indeed, best practices for classroom achievement indicates that mastery, regardless of how many times it takes students to show mastery, leads to purposeful learning.

Gina Vickery, a seasoned Chemistry teacher in her first year of teaching at Forest Ridge of the Sacred Heart, echoes Mullen's ideas, and adds that "regardless of the topic that I am teaching...I try to model and encourage inclusivity and being open and respectful to other students' thoughts, feelings, and perspectives." Relationship building is at the heart of high school students achievement and Vickery goes on to say that "it is really important for students to show that it's alright to disagree with me or another student, but that listening to, and respecting other's opinions is a must."

This can be especially true for teachers during an election year, when tensions are high and the media can seem polarizing. If you're want to be inspired to reconsider your own teaching practices, check out this wonderful TED talk by Lindsey Ott, entitled "Solving the Achievement Gap Through Equity, Not Equality."

https://www.ted.com/talks/lindsey_ott_solving_the_achievement_gap_through_equity_not_equality



"Describing inequities without taking action becomes dehumanizing" – Elena Aguilar

Check out the latest edition of Educational Leadership magazine and you cannot miss it – an article entitled "Black Boys Are More Than Inequity Statistics" by Elena Aguilar that speaks to what many educators have lived time and time again: speak without action. The article describes school leaders who "talk the talk" about statistics and need to reform, however, stop short of providing real plans for how to address inequities that exist in schools for children of color.

The next time that you have a moment with your principal, ask them, "What are we doing to fight the inequities within our school?" and if you can't get an answer, provide your leaders with some ideas and follow up throughout the year. Change is possible but takes communication, resources and a commitment to action.

*"Don't email me only when another Black man has been killed by police. Don't tell me...how Black boys have the odds stacked against them. Tell me about **their resilience**. Their quirky passions. Their **creative genius**. Their leadership skills and poetry. Don't focus on Black bodies only when they are being violated. **Tell me about their aliveness**."* – Elena Aguilar (Educational Leadership, October 2020)

Training Students to Identify Plagiarism*

From her years in the classroom and a review of research, Jennifer Gonzalez recommends the following exercises for grades 7-12, with the approximate time each one might take:

- **Recognizing plagiarism** (15-20 minutes) – Have students read a passage of 500-800 words and then examine several (teacher-created) examples of student writing about the text, some of which contain plagiarism, some without it. Students respond Yes or No, discuss in groups, and are then told if their assessments are correct. After a few rounds, students should be able to correctly spot most instances of plagiarism.

- **Summarizing** (20-30 minutes) – “Students need to be able to read something, digest it, and then explain what they learned in their own language,” says Gonzalez. This is best taught with short, straightforward texts using the following whole-class sequence; *I do* (modeling), *We do* (guided practice), *You do* (independent practice). Students practice reading, looking away from the passage, verbally recalling the gist, writing it in language that is disconnected from the source and sounds like them, and checking back for proper attribution, no plagiarism, and proper crediting of the source. It’s helpful for students to compare their summaries with those of one or more classmates.

- **Paraphrasing** (20-30 minutes) – This is slightly different than summarizing: students take a specific idea and retell it, giving credit to the author – for example, *According to... in her article..., ... says....* This is best taught in the same *I do/We do/You do* sequence with lots of feedback and peer comparisons along the way.

- **Using direct quotes** (20-30 minutes) – Students learn that the only time it’s okay to use an authors’ exact words is when they’re in quotes and directly attributed to that person. *I do/We do/You do* is effective for this skill as well.

- **Using a formal citation style** (30-40 minutes) – Common Core ELA standards require students to start applying a formal style as early as seventh grade, so practice should begin in middle school with the school’s or district’s choices (e.g., grade level, MLA or APA). Gonzalez recommends working with 2-3 sample items, starting with articles and books similar to the ones students will encounter in their writing and research projects. Students generate a reference list at the end of their paper, modify the author references they’ve done in the third and fourth exercises above, and then apply the skills with new passages. Once they’ve achieved mastery, students can learn to use time-saving citation generators like EasyBib, BibMe, or the citation feature in Google Docs. The final step is having students do research and write an essay or extended response applying these skills.

These five exercises are contained in Gonzalez’s ready-made lessons linked in the full article below.

[“Teaching Students to Avoid Plagiarism”](#) by Jennifer Gonzalez in *Cult of Pedagogy*, February 26, 2017

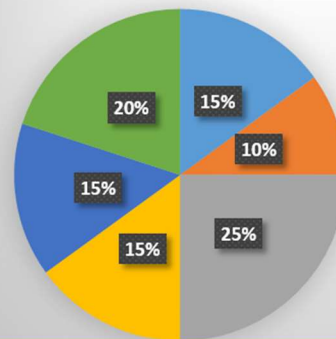
*Plagiarized (Adapted) from the Marshall Memo 09/29/00

Why Do Students Plagiarize?

According to the Rochester Institute of Technology, in their study of Freshmen college student plagiarism, the top reasons why students cheat include:

1. The desire to get a good grade
2. Fear of failing
3. Procrastination
4. Disinterest in Assignment
5. Belief that they will not get caught
6. Confusion as to what constitutes plagiarism

Reasons for Plagiarism



- Desire to get a good grade
- Fear of failing
- Procrastination or poor time management
- Disinterest in the assignment
- Belief they will not get caught
- Confusion about what constitutes plagiarism or current university policies



DID YOU KNOW?

Our Seattle Archdiocese is one of three diocesan regions in Washington state, which is divided between Seattle, Yakima and Spokane. Within our region, the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) supports 61 Catholic Elementary schools and 11 Catholic High Schools.



A Moment of Peace

A little prayer to send you on your way...

Good and Gracious God,

Who loves and delights in all people, we stand in awe before You, knowing that the spark of life within each person on earth is the spark of your divine life.

Differences among cultures and races are multicolored manifestations of Your Light.

May our hearts and minds be open to celebrate similarities and differences among our sisters and brothers.

We place our hopes for racial harmony in our committed action and in Your Presence in our Neighbor.

May all peoples live in Peace.

AMEN.

- 2020 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas



ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021

#ignitinghope

CONTACT ME ANYTIME!

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Citations, Links, Images and Resources:

Cult of Pedagogy: Teaching Students to Avoid Plagiarism. February 26, 2017. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com>

Truama Sensitive Schools – *Educational Leadership* (October 2020) Volume 78 No. 2. ASCD.

5 Ways to Build Equity into your Math Lessons from We Are Teachers.com <https://www.weareteachers.com/equity-math/>

Plagiarism – Why do Students Cheat?
<https://www.rit.edu/twc/academicintegrity/reasons-students-plagiarize-or-cheat>

Reinventing the Wheel Cartoon: www.cartoonstock.com

Stillframe from Mr. Bean – the Exam Cheat.
[https://mrbean.fandom.com/wiki/Mr._Bean_\(character\)](https://mrbean.fandom.com/wiki/Mr._Bean_(character))

Teaching Demographics:
<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28>

US TODAY expert:
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/05/26/coronavirus-schools-teachers-poll-ipsos-parents-fall-online/5254729002/>