



## FAQ Answers from Patrick Briggs

### **Traditional pep rallies do take up valuable time in school, but isn't there validity in engaging students in a sense of unity?**

Thanks for this question, because I did not intend to imply that school celebrations that do not deal with academics are not important. I love pep rallies, and I too believe that building unity and community are very important. What I should have said is I would love to see academics celebrated to the same (or greater) extent. If you have pep rallies weekly, have academic celebrations more than once a semester (like I did before I became more culturally relevant).

### **What are some other scaffolding ideas?**

The best way to scaffold is to help students to break assignments into manageable chunks. I always say, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!" Many students see assignments as eating an elephant and have no idea where to start, so they give up. These students are right brained. They see the whole assignment, and some are not successful simply because they don't know how and where to start. If 10 days are given for an assignment, have benchmarks and check-ins daily as to where students should be and support them to be there. Checklists and rubrics help those that see the whole to see the parts. Before they know it, the elephant is gone, but it is because you scaffolded and gave them the tools to do it. Any assignment that takes more than one day should include chunks and benchmarks so that students constantly get feedback on their progress and success. Without that, many will work hard only to find they did not do it right the first time. Once you've experienced that, you tend to hesitate to start.

### **How can lesson plan design support WICOR more strategically?**

A great way is to use the WICOR lesson plan templates and the WICOR walk-through forms in MyAVID. They provide guides to including WICOR in lesson planning. Another great way is to work with your PLC, department, or team to intentionally include WICOR activities in your lessons. Remember that when you purposefully include WICOR, two things will happen. One, all students will be engaged. Two, the level of rigor will be raised. If those are the expected outcomes of including WICOR, plan the strategies that will allow this to happen. As you heard me say, I would do this based on my students' age. Not everything has to be a strategy that takes the entire period, like a Socratic

Seminar. Many are those quick one- to two-minute opportunities to allow students to internalize what they have learned (pair/trio share, stand–share–sit, team huddle, etc.).

### **How do we scaffold teachers to begin teaching as if All Means All? Where do we start?**

Start with your own data to create a sense of urgency. When teachers discuss their own data AND think about what they can do to improve their variable called instruction, they are on their way to a great start. The problem comes when we blame kids for poor performance. If that is happening, then there is not a reason to change. If that is where we are, we need to start with some professional learning on CRT. If teachers are ready to engage in this work, start with the data to show the need. This is really starting with the why. Starting with the why of this work allows educators to engage in dialogue before we start the what and the how. If we are not clear on the why, the what and how will be based on compliance and not commitment.

### **What do lessons for the right brain look like?**

See the answer to the second question. I'll add that we must intentionally look at our assignments and help students break them up into chunks in order for all to be successful. We all teach students that don't need us to do this for them. Those students are successful traditionally. Those who are not need us to always look at our lessons and ask, "Will some students see this as having to eat an elephant?" If yes, then we must purposefully plan scaffolds in our lessons so that those students (and ALL) are successful.

### **Do you have CRT professional development in MyAVID?**

We have great CRT professional development at our AVID Summer Institutes and Path to Schoolwide trainings. We do have a CRT page in MyAVID under the curriculum tab, and there are seven great videos and many resources there. I would not say they are PD, but more resources to support the use of the book and to supplement the training. I hope to see you in one of our CRT trainings at AVID Summer Institute soon if you've not been to one!

### **With so much emphasis on state-mandated tests, how do we engage students while still meeting state requirements?**

As I said, I can't change what you teach and I can't change the tests. We cannot control curriculum and assessment, but we completely control the variable between the two, which is instruction. All of the WICOR strategies that I use with students are used to help them to access my curriculum at deeper levels. Since I can control instruction, I would look for ways to intentionally and purposefully add WICOR strategies into my instructional practices. These should not be seen as add-ons, but activities that are a part of the lesson. If the lesson called for us to discuss something, I could use a Socratic Seminar or Philosophical Chairs for an entire period. I could also do the same thing with WICOR strategies that take two to three minutes. Planning for WICOR helped to keep my lesson going, but now I'm more of a guide on the side instead of sage on the stage.

### **What are some more ways to incorporate choice into assignments, formative and summative?**

During the section where I talked about identifying and developing talents, I spoke about focusing in on the objective of the lesson/unit. My favorite question to ask students was, “How would you like to show me that you know and understand...” I spoke about the objective being for students to know and understand the digestive system. I then told my students, “My objective is for you to know and understand the digestive system. How you do that is up to you!” After that, I am the guide on the side facilitating learning and ensuring they are successful with how they plan to prove they achieved the objective. I love choice because when there is no choice, the decision of a child is to do or not do. When there is a choice, the child now has the ability to decide will I do A, B, or C. Typically, the “not do” choice comes off the table.

### **What personal strengths are found in an effective teacher? (from a student)**

I love that this question is coming from a student. I always felt I was effective when my students could say, “My teacher cares about me for who I am, where I come from, and where I’m going.” Can you say that about all of your teachers? If not, what qualities do you see in the teachers for whom you can say that and those for whom you cannot say that? I quoted research that students want “a caring teacher who accepts no excuses and refuses to let them fail.” Can you say that about all of your teachers? If not, we may want to have conversations with the adults in the building about how we can create this culture for all students.

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