

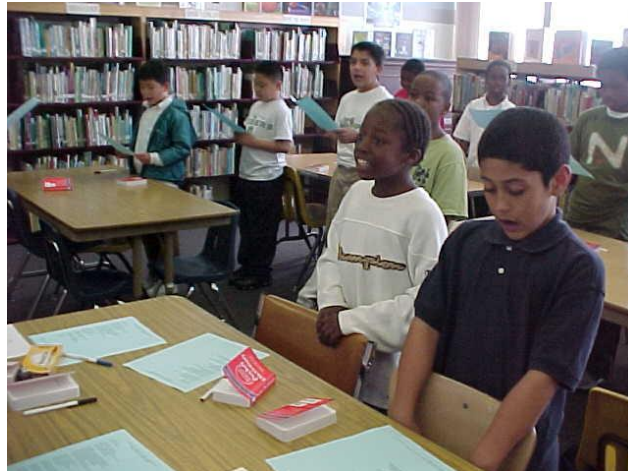
“CURE FOR THE COMMON CLASSROOM” and Mike Rutherford’s “Six Big Ideas”



This logo was adopted in 1996. It is the Yoruba language symbol for “Transformation of Being.”

The “Protocols” Achievement Model and Classroom Management System...

...has several components that enable teachers to reduce the amount of time that, too often, must be devoted to “managing and disciplining” students. This is lost instructional time.



The Protocols Achievement Model and Classroom Management System is a simple “values-centered” student responsibility model that attempts to enhance the teachers’ effectiveness by providing better “tools” to do the job; and accelerate student achievement by helping students better understand their roles as learners and their opportunities as citizens.

This primer outlines the elements of the “Protocols” and the fundamentals in the “culture-rich” language and mathematics initiative that originated in San Francisco in 1996. It is introduced as a reliable intervention and teacher development model with true flexibility and open-ended strategies for improving teaching and learning.

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INTRODUCTION

We, today’s educators, are confronted with a challenge more imminent than ever before, “How can we make this school year better, more productive than last year – even if last year was pretty good?” “How can we help all our students achieve at higher levels than before?” “How can we keep from ‘leaving no child behind’ in a world that is moving so fast we hardly have time to think and plan; a world so unpredictable that our faith is tested every time we turn on the television or meet students who don’t know their multiplication tables and the parts of speech?”

Expressed and embedded in a system of “Key Strategies” and “Core Values” the *Cure for the Common Classroom* joins forces with the professional development model of former principal and brain research expert, Mike Rutherford, and the *Learning Centered School* to fashion solutions that can help all children. The *Cure for the Common Classroom* is predicated on “Effective Schools” research, and is designed to embolden teachers with confidence and demand more responsibility for learning from students themselves. “Building community” and “strengthening character,” at the classroom level, are the objectives of the *Cure for the Common Classroom*. Enhancing teachers’ capability by honoring what they know, and seasoning it with proven techniques tailored to their environment and experience has brought great results – less time spent on classroom management; and more time for instruction, teaching and learning.

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CURE FOR THE COMMON CLASSROOM

Three Key Strategies

- **Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum**
- **Engaging Learning Environment**
- **High Quality Relationships**

Key Strategy #1: Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum

Expectations, more than any other factor, drive student achievement. Helping students understand:

“Why we go to school...”, and

“How to be a learner” ...is essential.

Key Strategy #2: Engaging Learning Environment

The **learning environment** “competes” to be the number one consideration in the teaching/learning process.

The **Context** in which teaching and learning take place is critically important.

Key Strategy #3: High Quality Relationships

“Students will often learn as much **for a teacher** as they will learn **from a teacher**.”

- *Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond*

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Cure for the Common Classroom:
Core Values

1. Schools have the best opportunity and a professional obligation to mediate learning; particularly language, mathematics, and social development.
2. “Effective Schools” research is a reliable and powerful intervention. It is especially powerful when implemented in urban schools by people who understand, thoroughly, diverse cultures.
3. All teachers want to see their students succeed, but don’t always know how. The “Cure” strives to equip teachers with better tools rather than correct the teacher based on mistaken assumptions about teacher ability.
4. “We can, whenever and wherever choose, successfully teach all children whose education is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it or not, Must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.” - *Dr. Ron Edmonds*
5. We are savvy enough to design curriculum, build environments, and heighten the quality of teacher-student relationships to effectively educate all our children and garner the active support of the stakeholders in our school communities.

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Mike Rutherford’s **Learning Centered School** are configured around “**Six Big Ideas.**” They represent what is considered “profound knowledge;” the “deep insights” to teaching and learning that have survived the tests of time and the ravages of fads and trends.

In this new era of teaching and learning - brain research, authentic experience, coaching and mentoring, social-emotional learning, standards-based instruction, teacher expectations, applied technology, high-quality relationships and meaningful engagement with parents and family converge and intersect with educational leadership to produce “**increased teacher efficacy.**”

Teacher Efficacy – the ability of teachers to mobilize energy, talents and resources to effect improved student achievement is the primary and focused objective of this professional development effort. It holds that position because we believe there is no meaningful pathway to student achievement and, in fact, school improvement that does not go through this intersection.

Designing solutions that can help all children requires knowledge, experience, initiative, and ingenuity. Teacher efficacy is the difference between our students’ suffering and stumbling into a “probable” future, and experiencing a “possible” future. Our challenge is to deliver and secure “the possible.”

Big Idea #1

Clear Learning Goals...

Examine the knowledge and skills necessary to make the best use of time in the classroom. A reliable and useful learning goal has two essential components:

1. CONTENT and
2. LEVEL OF THINKING
/ DOING.

Big Idea #2

Congruency...

In a learning situation, congruency communicates the ability to of the teacher to achieve an exact match or agreement between the **clear learning goal** and the selected classroom learning activities. It is important to recognize the difference between “congruency” (an exact match) and “correlation” (an approximate match). “Highly correlated” to the standards – is not the same as **congruency with the standards**.

Big Idea #3

Diagnosis...

...is determining what a student already knows and can apply to a learning goal. Diagnosis determines the level at which the student starts. Too much time is spent in classrooms, every day, teaching material children already know.

Of course, teaching beyond a student’s comprehension is also a costly mistake and can lead to frustration, reduced effort and failure.

Big Idea #4

Task Analysis ...

... can be thought of as a “**road map**” to reach a destination... **the clear learning goal!**

Task analysis serves to match the level of learning task with the student’s level of readiness.

Two outcomes are produced:

1. Learning takes place at an optimum rate; and
2. Since task difficulty and readiness are matched, the student experiences more success.

Big Idea #5

Monitoring learning...

... Combines communicating the expectations with evaluating progress on the goal(s). For example, in teaching punctuation, instead of offering a soft evaluative measure, “Do you understand?” or “Are we clear on that?” –

A skilled teacher asks, “Let’s see how we did on teaching that idea. Write three sentences using colons and semi-colons and explain your reasons for believing them to be correct.”

Big Idea #6

Mid-course Corrections

It’s wishful thinking to think that we can anticipate all the variables in a learning environment – especially a dynamic one. We start in the right general direction with **clear learning goals**, but our ultimate success depends on our ability to be *flexible and adapt* the curriculum in ways that make it more effective; more relevant. Good teaching requires that we make timely **mid-course corrections** during the teaching/learning time.

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