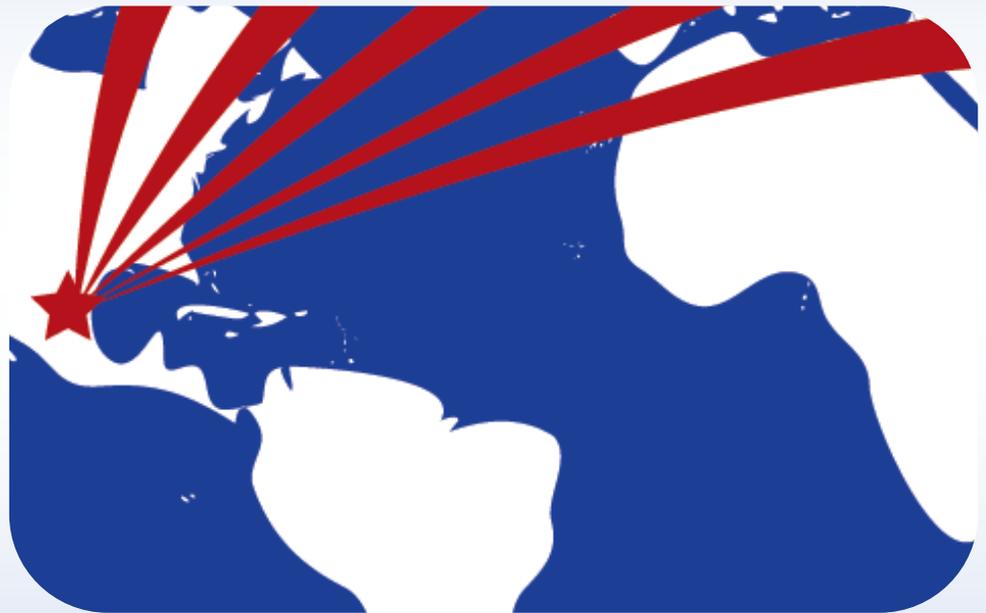


The Texas Foreign Language

# JOURNAL

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# Message from the President

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Dear TFLA Members,

I hope everyone enjoyed some well-deserved relaxation time with family and friends during the winter break. I always feel rejuvenated when I come back in January, filled with energy and ready to tackle my new year's resolutions.

I sense, especially this year, we needed our winter break to catch our breath after a semester of implementing new state standards, getting used to new instructional materials and adapting to new curriculum based on proficiency and performance. Wow, what a fall semester we've had... And what a year we have ahead of us!

This July, we will welcome back Ms. Laura Terrill for our Summer Institute, July 23 through July 25, on the beautiful campus of Texas State University in San Marcos, TX. What a treat to have Ms. Terrill share her expertise and guidance in world language teaching and learning. She will be a great source of inspiration as many of us are looking at adapting classroom instruction to be based on performance toward proficiency.

Our Annual Fall Conference will take place in San Antonio, TX at the Hyatt Regency – Riverwalk! Can you already tell it is going to be a lot a fun? Be on the lookout for the Call for Proposal coming out soon! TFLA is always looking for dynamic and insightful presenters willing to share their knowledge and practices with others. Our annual conference is always a wonderful place to collaborate with each other and share ideas and experiences, but also meet new friends and colleagues.

What an exciting year ahead in World Languages in the Lone Star State! I wish you all a Happy New Year 2018!

Marie-Christine Douglass  
TFLA President

## Letter from the Editor

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This has been quite a fall semester for us in Texas. We have had our challenges, but have also seen many successes. As world language educators, we have persevered and worked hard for student success. As you enter the new year and new semester, I hope that this TFLA journal edition gives you some ideas to start strong. Thank you to each of the authors that made this edition possible. Mary Hayes Harms shows us how to use our creativity in the French classroom with a longtime favorite story, *Le Petite Prince*. Shari Howard provides us with a number of differentiation strategies that we can start using immediately. Dr. Ashleigh Franco's article shows us the power of character education in classrooms. Last, but definitely not least, Adriana Torres, reminds us the importance of taking care of ourselves. Only when we take care of self, can we truly teach to our fullest potential. That is an importance message for all of us to remember as we close one year and start another.

Lauren Oropeza Snead, Ed.D.



# TFLA Executive Board

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# Project-Based Learning with *Le Petit Prince*

Mary Hayes Harms

French Teacher, Sam Houston High School, Arlington, Texas

I came upon project-based learning as a way to differentiate in my classroom. Often I would have at least two different levels of French in the same class and needed a way to spend time with both levels. As the only International Baccalaureate teacher of French in my high school, I test at least two International Baccalaureate levels each year and I needed to keep my non-testers busy while I was working with my testers.

Projects are an excellent tool to use for assessing the student's knowledge and proficiency. At the completion of the project you will know some things about your student: did they master the objectives that you set for your project? As a formative assessment, the project can help you identify what needs to be retaught if needed and it can also be used as a summative assessment. You can also use these projects to accommodate the learning styles of your students. As language teachers we can use projects to improve the personal and interpersonal skills of students as they work together as a team and present their creations to their classmates.

*Le Petit Prince* by St. Exupéry is a perennial favorite of my students. We read this book in French 3 during the second semester. The little prince travels to 7 planets and encounters adults and animals in the process, learning about himself and others. Several years ago, I passed a Spanish classroom that had papier-mâché animals hanging from the ceiling and I wanted to do something similar for my French students, hence the eighth planet was born.

I have two projects based on this book that

I would like to share with you. These projects, although designed with French literature in mind, can be adapted for any book. With the first project, after reading *Le Petit Prince* the students create a story around an eighth planet involving a slide presentation to the class and a papier-mâché planet to be displayed. With the second project, students create a mosaic of their favorite character in the book which includes a quote from their character.



Photo Credit: Mary Haynes Harms

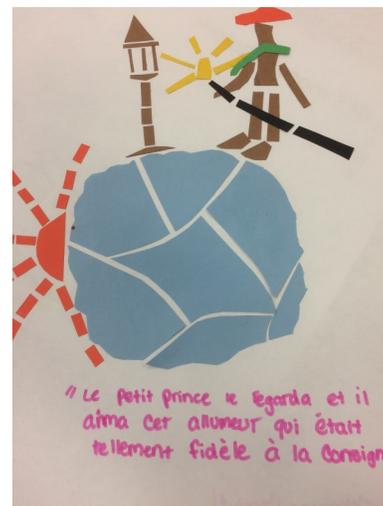


Photo Credit: Mary Haynes Harms

As with any project, you must decide on your objective for the project. The TEKS that are reflected with the project *Le Petit Prince* are 1B, 1F, 2B and 3B and for the mosaic project they are 2A and 2B ([Level III,http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter114/ch114c.html](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter114/ch114c.html)). *Le Petit Prince* will take about 4 class days and the mosaic is at the most 2 days with block scheduling, 90 minute class periods.

It is important to write clear instructions to be followed by the students. In this process it is not uncommon to find that instructions change as you find a better way to communicate what you expect from your students. Depending on how detailed the instructions are, it may be necessary to rewrite instructions at least twice. So having a clear picture in mind of the product you want to have will keep

the rewriting to a minimum. The age group and proficiency level of your students will also effect the amount of details that you will need to provide. For example, ninth grade minds are still very literal, and will need help seeing the final product and mapping out each step will minimize confusion for the student. Finally, when planning group projects it is necessary to assign roles to each group member, so that participation is at a maximum.

A grading rubric will also provide for the students clear expectations and motivation to create a good product. Rubrics will also make the grading process go more quickly. Below is a simple example of a rubric that can be easily modified for your purposes.

Table 1

Rubric sample

	0 - 1	2	3	4
Presentation is spelled and accented correctly	Word(s) misspelled Word(s) missing	Word(s) with two or more accent errors	Word(s) with one accent error –	Word (s) spelled correctly with accents
Title page and at least 6 slides in presentation	3 slides or less	4 slides or less	5 slides or less	6 slides or more
Creativity	Little to no creativity Did not create a story but just wrote words	Somewhat creative; idea incomplete	Creative – interesting, but could have done more	Exceptional creativity – fun, interesting, very clever
Neatness and effort with slides	Very messy Little to no effort	Not very neat – Not much time or care spent on this Few details	Mostly neat – Time and care were spent Some details but could have done more	Very neat, Much time and care spent Many details that make sense to the project as a whole
Participation – put your name on the slide you are responsible for	Helped team 25% of the time	Helped team about 33% of the time	Helped about 50% of the time	Helped 75% or more of the time
Grading	5 points = 25	10 points = 50	15 points = 75	20 points = 100

The project for *Le Petit Prince* will look as follows:

- Title in the target language: The eighth planet for *The Little Prince* by St. Exupéry
- Objective: In groups of three to four, Students will create an eighth planet that the Little Prince would like to visit in FRENCH.
- Supplies: 12" standard sized balloons, Elmer's Glue, paint, brushes, newspaper strips, water, yarn, paperclips and paper for notes, and a laptop or iPad.

The recipe for papier-mâché is made with Elmer's Glue in order to avoid flour all over the room. Use 3/4 white glue to 1/4 water (or if using a good, thick glue, like Elmer's you can do 1/2 and 1/2). I teach the kids how to make the papier-mâché. I found showing the following video on youtube.com to be most helpful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HvJgFzOFo&t=324s>

### Instructions: Part 1

1. Create the setting, environment of the new planet.
2. Create a character who lives on the planet.
3. Give this character a job or a responsibility.
4. Create a brief conversation between the Little Prince and the character on the planet. (As each group presents their new planet to the class, have the students try to guess the lesson that the Little Prince learns from his visit. )
5. State the lesson the Little Prince learns from his visit to this new planet on the last slide.
6. What impression does the Little Prince have about adults after visiting this planet?
7. Slide presentation in FRENCH – share with teacher (we use Google Drive at our school, however, you can use other programs such as OneDrive, Canvas, or Google Classroom)
  - Title slide with team member names
  - Description of planet
  - Description of character
  - Dialogue
  - Impression of adults
  - Moral of story

### Instructions: Part 2

1. Inflate a balloon. These are going to be the molds for your planet. Inflate them based on the size of the planet you are making.
2. Make enough papier-mâché to cover the balloons you inflated.
3. Cover the balloons, a strip at a time, with papier-mâché. Cut a 12 inch piece of string and tie it to the balloon end. Continue doing so until the balloons are covered.
4. Let the papier-mâché dry and harden, preferably overnight. If the papier-mâché isn't completely hardened, you run the risk of destroying your creation.
5. Paint it. You can follow the traditional colors, or make up your own design. Let the paint dry. Tie a paperclip on the other end of the string.

As you can see from the pictures my students really enjoyed working with all the different materials and they enjoyed designing the planet to go with their story that they made up. I display the work in my classroom for most of second semester. My French II students see the planets and look forward to year three so that they can do this project as well.



Photo Credit: Mary Haynes Harms



Photo Credit: Mary Haynes Harms

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  - Description of planet
  - Description of character
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### Mosaic Project

As you can see from the pictures my students really enjoyed working with all the different materials and they enjoyed designing the planet to go with their story that they made up. I display the work in my classroom for most of second semester. My French II students see the planets and look forward to year three so that they can do this project as well.

The second project is a mosaic that the students design.

- Objective: Students will choose a specific animal, plant or character in *Le Petit Prince* and prepare a mosaic and a quote from what was chosen.
- Supplies: Multicolored constructions paper, scissors, glue sticks, internet.
- Suggestion: Google 'mosaic pattern'. Insert the specific word for the animal, plant or character. Copy the pattern from the internet if you need help figuring it out.

### Preparation:

1. Choose your character.
2. Use at least 2 colors in the mosaic itself.
  - You may cut out construction paper pieces in triangles, squares and such, or you may tear the paper into small pieces.
  - You may also use pieces of magazine pages torn up or cut up.
3. Once you have chosen your character, lightly sketch the outline on the backing paper
4. Tear or cut out pieces of paper to be fitted within the sketch.
5. Leave spaces between the pieces to imitate grout.
6. Glue.
7. Put your quote on the page, large enough and dark enough to be read. If using black backing paper, use a white colored pencil to write your quote.
8. Present to the class.

The mosaic is easy to display in the school hallway outside your room. It will help create an interest in your language as well.

Project-based learning has been and will continue to be an excellent way to promote comprehension of your target language as well as measuring student proficiency. It is well worth your time to plan for at least two projects a year. Smaller projects can also be implemented on a more frequent basis, such as one per unit. Check your textbook resources as activities can easily be adapted for this purpose. This also is good to document and use in the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) for the year-end review. A good goal you might have is to design and implement at least 2 projects per semester. This is easy to document with the instructions and student participation pictures.

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For more information, feel free to contact the author at [mharms@aisd.net](mailto:mharms@aisd.net).

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# Differentiation Through Project Based Learning

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Shari Howard

Berkner High School, Richardson, Texas

Differentiation. The word that strikes fear, trepidation and thoughts of hours of after school planning, grading and preparation in addition to the already cumbersome load of being a teacher. We all know that it would be better for the students. We would want it for our sons and daughters if they were in school. It is the closest we can come to customized learning tailored specifically to the needs of each individual student. But with several subjects to teach or 120 plus students to consider each day, it is simply difficult to find the time.

But take heart! Differentiation can be simpler than we think and with time, we can develop more sophisticated and individualized ways to teach our diverse learners without losing copious amounts of sleep.

Let's start with why. We all know what we think of the "one size fits all" t-shirt. We certainly do not want to "one size fits all" the students' education. We want what is best for every student. We can all agree that each student has something to offer, a set of talents or skills, possibly undiscovered that we, as teachers, could tap into. Einstein put it well when he said, "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." We need to find ways for our students to learn better and express their learning more effectively.

Now to the what. Carol Ann Tomlinson (2017), the originator of the differentiated instruction technique, defines differentiated instruction as accommodating a student's interests, readiness and learning style profile through content, process and product. Let's breakdown content, process, and product to better understand how we can differentiate them.

Differentiating by content means that a variety of formats are used to convey information. Examples would be videos, graphic organizers, discussions, readings or images.

Differentiation by process means that students need time to digest the information. Processing time varies from child to child, but regardless, every child needs time to process. Information will not be absorbed without time to manipulate the material, understand it and make it their own. Examples of processing strategies are jigsaw, think-pair-share, inner-outer circle and group discussion.

Differentiation by product means that teachers give students a variety of ways to show that they know the material. Choice menus are common ways to differentiate. Common choices include presentation (PowerPoint, Google slides, Prezi, etc.), poster, essay, letter writing, children's book, or point of view differentiation.

Now for the good stuff! How to differentiate and keep your sanity. There are a variety of ideas and resources that require little to no prep that differentiate content, process, or product. Here are a few of my favorites:

- Centers: Turn tables or grouped desks into centers and have students rotate between them doing different activities in the target language. My favorite center ideas are:
  - ◊ Rory's story cubes (Dice with images that can be put together to tell a story)
  - ◊ Make a word: Write a word or phrase at the top of a page in the target language, preferably a long one. Then students make more words out of that phrase. For example, from the phrase "¡Feliz Cumpleaños!" (Happy

- Birthday!) they could make the words “sol”, “ellos” and “años”.
- ◇ Uno, the card game: It’s a great way to practice numbers and colors!
  - ◇ A puzzle: It requires working together in the target language.
  - ◇ Finish the squiggle: Draw a squiggle on a page and then ask them to finish the drawing and write a story about it.
  - ◇ Simple children’s board games: These can often be converted to the target language or purchased with target language prompts.
  - ◇ Who Am I?: Teacher or students write on small white boards or index cards the name of a person, place or thing. Students take turns putting a card to their forehead and asking yes/no questions.
  - ◇ Be creative: Challenge yourself to give the students different ways to learn and express themselves!
  - Scavenger Hunts (Get permission to have your students finding clues around the school, notify staff and create acceptable passes ahead of time.):
    - ◇ Seek and Find: The teacher writes clues in the target language such as, “Find something round,” or “Find three shiny objects” and has the students take pictures with the item when it is found.
    - ◇ QR Code Hunts: The teacher writes clues in the target language (I like to write rhyming clues) which lead the students to specific places in the school. Each new place they find has a new QR Code taped to it with the last clue leading back to the classroom.
  - Techy Differentiation:
    - ◇ Nearpod.com: This is a free service that provides a platform to do slides, student animation and drawing (so cool!), quizzes and polls. Results are tallied live and teachers can request that the results be sent to them in Excel format for easy grading!
    - ◇ Padlet.com: This is a free service that allows students to post comments, photos or web images as answers to teacher posed questions in the form of post-it like graphics. This is great for product differentiation.
    - ◇ Edpuzzle.co: This is a free service that allows teachers to choose from pre-selected videos or use videos found on YouTube and add-in questions at specific times in the video. Questions can be open-ended, multiple-choice, video questions or audio questions. Basically, each student watches the video at their own pace, answering questions as they are able and re-watching the section of the video leading up to any given question as many times as needed. This is a great activity for process differentiation.
    - ◇ Newsela.com: This resource is only in English and Spanish. It provides articles on current events and concerns and allows for differentiation by word count and grade level difficulty. You must create an account, but basic services are free.
    - ◇ Filminute.com: This resource provides minute long films done by contributors from all over the world. Many of the films have no or few words and could be used to generate discussion and a variety of different assignments.
    - ◇ Fakebook: <https://www.classtools.net/FB/home-page> - This free platform allows students to create a virtual “fakebook” page for a person, country or time period. Many examples are offered on the site. Students can choose from a list of relevant topics you provide to differentiate by content.
    - ◇ Kiosko.net: This free resource allows access to newspapers from around the world. Students could choose the country, the topic or the article for an assignment which is content differentiation.
- For my final differentiation method, let’s talk projects! Projects can seem overwhelming especially if you feel that you have limited resources or limited knowledge of how to effectively teach through project based learning. But with the right guidance, resources and people, you can create successful projects for your classroom as well. I like projects because of the choice that is built-in. You can cover a lot of ground by having six groups in your classroom each cover a different country and present about it.

If you are considering a project, always keep in mind that projects serve a purpose. To create an effective project, let's start with the five questions: what, when, who, where and how. What follows are the questions I like to ask myself when designing my differentiated lessons.

What is?

- the topic
- the essential question
- the desired goal

When:

- does the project fit best?
- would the project increase learning?

Who can help me?

- the instructional technician
- the instructional coach
- the librarian

Where should we do this project?

- in a computer lab
- on our phones
- on one -to-one devices
- with hands-on supplies
- all of the above

What:

- are the objectives of the unit?
- is the goal of the project?

How

can I structure this project to meet student needs as they work together?

Structure is very important to ensure equal participation.

What will their roles be?

- Reporter
- Timekeeper
- Materials Manager
- Director

- What will the checkpoints be?
- How will I rate their success at each checkpoint?

Be imaginative and, (could it be possible?) have fun with the differentiation process! It will liven up your classroom and give your students more ways to learn, process, and provide an outlet for their creativity.

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# Character Education, Cold calling, and Grit with Second Language Acquisition

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Ashleigh Franco, Ed.D.  
Johns Hopkins University

While we were working as coaches on a multi-million-dollar federal grant, helping to implement a classroom management program, a colleague and I encountered a disagreement about the practice of cold calling on students. We were leading a seminar on conflict resolution with a group of third and fourth graders at an elementary school in one of the nation's largest, most diverse cities. Both of us had years of teaching experience, including substantial experience in working with predominately Hispanic students. When I asked one of the English language learners (ELL) in the seminar to read aloud, my colleague objected. While I recognize that educators have good reason to shun the practice of cold calling in some circumstances, I propose that the practice can be positive for ELL students if the educator situates the practice in a classroom culture built on character education.

Through experience in the classroom and professional development through Teach For America (TFA) and the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), I learned just how practical character education can be. In fact, KIPP schools place more emphasis on character development (51%) than academics (49%) and, in my opinion, this is one of the biggest factors behind the network's success. Character education includes a focus on helping students develop such character traits like gratitude, social intelligence, optimism, and grit. I maintain that the practice of cold calling is appropriate in a classroom founded on character education principles because it is linked to building grit.

## Grit and Cold Calling

Lemov (2015) explained cold calling as “[calling] on students regardless of whether

they've raised their hands” (p. 249). Teachers avoid cold calling when using the direct method to teach ELL students. As explained in a Cirrus Test Prep guide (2016), “The direct method [operates] on the assumption that students learn a second language the same way they learned their first language. This method also emphasizes a stress-free environment and strives to achieve this by not requiring students to talk” (p. 70). In other words, some teachers avoid cold calling in order to protect students' wellbeing. But is cold calling always a threat to student wellbeing? What if classroom culture were so strong that second language learners felt safe to take risks in a whole group setting? Could a classroom culture built on character education principles transform learning for language learners and support second language acquisition?



Photo Credit: Rocio Castillo-Foell

Grit refers to “perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (Duckworth, 2007, p. 1). I practice cold calling on students because of the impact I have seen firsthand in my classroom. I believe it helps students develop grit and other character strengths by, first and foremost, fostering a culture of learning through accountability. When students realize that the teacher will call on

anyone at any time, students learn that they should always be actively engaged. When they know they can be called on at any point, students are motivated to stay focused. As Lemov (2015) explained:

When students see you calling on members of the class who don't have their hands raised, they will come to understand that raising their hands is an opportunity to signal that they have something worthwhile to say, but *not* a tool they can use to control whether or not they participate in class. They come to expect and prepare for the possibility that they might be asked to offer their opinion or answer a question to solve a problem or read something at any time. (p. 250)

Let me be clear — teachers should not use cold calling as a “got you” strategy to embarrass students who are not paying attention. Cold calls should be predictable, meaning that teachers should make the practice routine so that students know to expect it in advance. There must also be a very positive classroom culture in place in order for this strategy to be effective. This is where a classroom culture of character education matters.



Photo Credit: Ashleigh Franco

### Classroom Culture

Character education boils down to “knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good” (Berreth & Ernst, 2001). Because strong character plays such a critical role in a positive classroom culture, teachers must be intentional about teaching character strengths; explicit teaching, reinforcement, and modeling of each skill are essential. In this section, I discuss how I built a positive classroom culture in a first-grade

classroom, using character education principles, and how this classroom culture supported both the practice of cold calling and the development of grit.

I maintained high behavioral, academic, and interpersonal expectations in my classroom. I worked tirelessly to develop students' social intelligence to the point where they would not make a peer feel badly about not answering a question incorrectly. To do this, I focused on creating positive relationships between myself and students, between myself and students' families, between students themselves, and between students and others on our campus. My young students learned the importance of understanding others' feelings and controlling their tongues. If students were sad their name wasn't chosen from the “magic cup,” they would say, “oh well, maybe next time.” If a student got hurt or was upset, I would praise the students who comforted their peer. If a student was unable to answer a question, peers encouraged one another. They even learned how to help without giving away the answer.

In addition, I fostered opportunities to celebrate students every single day—from mastering particular skills, completing homework more often, making strides toward reading or math goals, demonstrating behavioral growth, or even highlighting students' comments that aligned with a growth mindset. It did not matter if students entered my classroom on a reading level B or a reading level M—they all started at “0” on our reading growth chart that charted how many reading “jumps” they made that year. Students were applauded for growth and praised when they persevered through problems.

Teaching character strengths needs to be intentional and requires explicit teaching, reinforcement, and modeling of each skill. For instance, a mentor text I used to introduce students to grit to my Kindergarteners and first graders was *The Little Engine that Could*. Students had to think of something they struggle with and ways in which they can show grit to overcome their struggle. I reinforced this character strength over time through other read alouds and accompanying activities, positive praise, and recognition.

With character strengths as our core, our classroom was a safe place. Success in our

classroom and our school was defined through both academic growth and character development. When students learned that their teacher valued character strengths as much, if not more, than academics, students felt more confident in taking risks and were celebrated for doing so.

Furthermore, in my classroom, being bilingual was widely admired. I frequently communicated the benefits of learning two languages and my respect for students showing grit in order to reach that goal. This applied to ALL students in my class—not only the students learning English, but also the students learning Spanish. Having spent more than 20 years studying German, to only reach an intermediate level, I could empathize with my students. I also drew on the experiences of my Brazilian-born and raised husband, who shared he was ashamed of his English. His English is not only near perfection, but he has been an asset to his employers and has single-handedly taught our son Portuguese. With this foundation of empathy, I communicated to students that, with hard work and perseverance, it is possible to be able to communicate in two languages.



Photo Credit: Ashleigh Franco

When cold calling is used in classrooms with a positive classroom culture, students learn that they will be held accountable for their work. If students are never expected to participate in whole group lessons, then they might learn helplessness and begin to mentally check-out. In other words, a student's lack of confidence is not an excuse from answering questions or reading aloud. On the flip side, if we encourage all students to participate,

regardless of the wide range of abilities in any given classroom, the end results are students with stronger character, better social skills, more confidence, and increased academic success. What can be better than helping students gain confidence by taking risks?

### Conclusion

I maintain that cold calling is one tool teachers can utilize appropriately with students learning a second language, including English language learners, in an ultra-supportive, positive classroom focused on developing character. A teacher who employs cold calling appropriately, in a supportive classroom context, helps students build grit. The foundation of character education is key—after all, no one wants to feel unsafe. Referring back to the example I gave at the beginning of this article, if the classroom context had a strong foundation in character education principles, students would have felt safe in the classroom, the teachers could have practiced cold calling, and students would have had the opportunity to develop grit.

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# The Power (or Lack Thereof) of Me, Myself, and I

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Adriana I. Torres

Garland High School, Garland, Texas

As teachers, we tend to overwhelm ourselves with all of what is required from us. We pour our hearts out into our lesson plans and try to implement and integrate different learning strategies for all the different learning styles, differentiating so that we can teach to EVERY kid and cater to their EVERY need. On top of this, we are also required to call parents and document EVERYTHING that is required for us to document. Just thinking about all our requirements makes me stress out. BREEEEAAAATHHHHEEE!

I was talking to my mom recently and telling her about all my projects and things I was doing at school for the kids, she chuckles and said, “Adri, you need several secretaries to get all of what you do done.” Yeap, yeap, yeap, as teachers, we do so much that it would be nice to have a secretary or an apprentice or even just a teacher aide to do all the administrative stuff for us. This would help us stay focus on TEACHING, CONNECTING & DEVELOPING THOSE RELATIONSHIPS!

With all the frustrations, politics, and requirements around us, we must stop and think about Me, Myself & I. At least, stop and reflect on who we are, how we are doing and what we need to do to take care of Me, Myself & I.

## THE POWER OF ME

### Who we are ...

First of all, let us not misunderstand the power of “ME” and turn it into a me, me, me, me thing. Take the time to make this a self-reflection about our “ME.” Who is “ME” or the true essence of me? What about me, can I truly give to those around me?

How much strength, love, patience and

compassion do I still have within ME?

Am I still the me I was when I first started teaching? If it wasn't for me, would my department be a little different, positive or negative? What about me, makes me different from the average teacher? Is it just me that sees things differently, or is everyone on the same mindset? Is it me, or is it them? What is it about me that others don't like and why? What is it about me that others like and appreciate? Is there anything about me that has a positive impact not just in my classroom with my kids, but also in my department and my school as a whole? What is it about me that I can change so that I can become a better version of Myself?

## The Power of MYSELF

### How we are doing ...

I myself, am EXTREMELY tired! I cannot do everything by myself or for myself! I have realized that I cannot do, what I cannot do, and I must start taking care of myself first in order to take better care of others later. Not because I can do it by myself, means that I should do it myself. I trust in myself a little bit too much to get things done. For example, we all have also heard of the saying, *“If I want anything done right, I must do it MYSELF.”* It is good to have that much self—confidence, but it's lonely when myself is all by myself. Although, I really haven't had much time by myself lately. Some nice and quiet time is also good from time to time to reboot.

Finding time being by ourselves is also good as long as we don't become loners doing it and secluding ourselves from those around us. Being a teacher is draining, having everyone constantly coming at you from all directions about so many

things can really suck out all the energy from you. All I know is that I can not do it all by myself. I'm tired.

### **THE POWER OF (or lack thereof) I**

#### **What we need to do ...**

*"There is no "I" in team!"* We have all heard that at one point or another. I have always lived by, "I can do all things through Jesus Christ whom strengthens me" 1<sup>st</sup> Philippians 4:13. This has given me so much confidence throughout my life and a strong rock to stand on. This one verse makes me feel like I can do anything I set my mind to do and it gives me special super powers to do them if I only truly believe.

My kryptonite is my passion! I am a passionate person and I take things to heart when I see things not getting done that will benefit the students and no one is really taking the time to figure it out and come up with a better solution that will benefit them in the long run. It is all about the kids after all. I can not get in the way of that, but I cannot also try to solve every problem that is out there. I take on too much and I can't justify it at the end when it starts affecting my time with my family or my actual "teacher requirements." I have also learned that not because I can do something means that I should do it. Yes, God has blessed me with many talents, but at the end of the day, what am I actually hired and payed to do? I wish I can do more for them, but I am only one, I cannot do it alone.

Sometimes, we need to recruit more passionate teachers and or staff to join the cause and get things done. We must make it a collaborative effort when we are trying to solve a problem or going on an educational crusade. Yes, don't be afraid to take on a challenge, even if it is only the "I" that believes in the cause, but also, we must be ready to remove "I" from the equation when the time comes.

I personally know that I still have ways to go to becoming the teacher I was meant to be. But for now, I need to focus on me, myself & I, to better myself in every way that I can and not forget to take care of my basic needs. I wish to not be living on survival mode anymore, I can not give from an empty self. We each have different basic needs, let

us start the year by refueling ourselves with whatever it is that will make us run again without burning out. If we truly believe in changing the world and making a difference, one student at a time, then we must first start with ourselves and our own family before we can help others reach their highest potential.

Arrivederci mis peeps! Hasta la próxima ...

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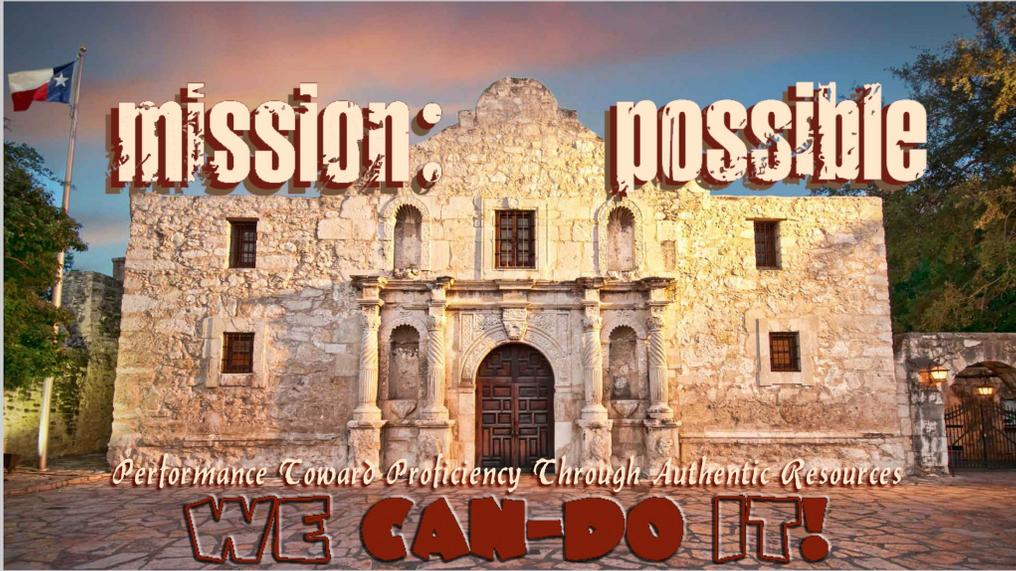
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