



Why ARE We Still Doing That?

Get Thinking...and Start Talking

Use this ASCD Study Guide to enhance your understanding of—and kick off conversations about—*Why Are We Still Doing That? Positive Alternatives to Problematic Teaching Practices*, the September 2021 PSI+ member book.

Introduction

1. What comes to mind when you think of persistent school practices that should be retired?
2. Look at the list of 16 topics covered in this book. Which are you most interested in reading about? Why?
3. Reflect on the story of Persida's tele-marketing days compared with her days as a teacher. What about this story resonates for you?

Chapter 1: Round Robin Reading

1. Did your K–12 teachers use round robin reading? Are your memories of it positive or negative?
2. What are the problems associated with round robin reading? Who might enjoy it? Who is most hurt by it? In what ways might they be hurt?
3. Why do you think teachers use round robin reading? What are their reasons and their objectives?
4. Can you name better, more effective ways to achieve these objectives?
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Chapter 2: Teaching to Learning Styles

1. What does research tell us about the benefits, or lack of benefits, associated with teaching to learning styles?
2. Define *metacognition*, explain why it is

important, and describe ways to help students develop metacognition.

3. Define *multimodal* teaching. What is it, and how does it help students?
4. Reflect on the positive alternatives included in this chapter. Rank the three most essential and explain your reasoning.
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Chapter 3: Homework as the Default

1. What does research tell us about the benefits, or lack of benefits, associated with homework?
2. Consider the 10-minute rule (see p. 41), popular in so many districts. What are some inherent problems with it?
3. A 5th grade teacher asks, “Is it OK to occasionally assign small bits of homework focused on practicing and remembering?” How would you answer, based on the information in this chapter?
4. A teacher asks, “Isn’t assigning nightly homework a good way to help students develop a sense of responsibility and a strong work ethic?” How would you answer, based on the information in this chapter?
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Chapter 4: Formative Assessment Imposters

1. What are some common misconceptions about the meaning and purpose of formative assessment?
2. How might these misconceptions support the use of formative assessment imposters? What are some practical ways to clarify these misconceptions and expose these imposters?
3. Reflect on the positive alternatives included in this chapter and rank your Top 3. Which are you most likely to use and why?
4. Explain, in your own words, how formative assessment accelerates student growth.
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Chapter 5: Standardized Test-Based Practices

1. Which of the practices discussed have had the greatest effect on your life as a teacher, and on the lives of your students?
2. Are there harmful standardized test-based practices that were not mentioned in this chapter? If so, what are they, and why do you think they are harmful? How might we best support student learning in light of those practices?
3. Which of the alternatives the authors provided are within the locus of your control?
4. The authors would say that formative assessment provides solutions to the problems that led the nation into high-stakes standardized testing in the first place. Why do you think they would say that? What connections do you see?

5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Chapter 6: Behavior Charts and Withholding Recess

1. What is the root of the problems associated with using behavior charts? Of the problems associated with withholding recess?
2. What is the common essence shared by all this chapter's classroom management recommendations?
3. What are *restorative practices*? How can they help build community in classrooms and schools?
4. What practices are you using, or could you use, to support the social and emotional learning of your students? What is one change you can make, or have made, toward teaching prosocial behaviors?
5. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?

Conclusion

1. What do you have the power to choose to *change* within your classroom?
2. What are some *positive and negative side effects* associated with curricular decisions made by you or for you?
3. Where do you need to practice *grace* with yourself and with others? How can you remind yourself to do that?
4. How might collaboration with colleagues help you (and them) this week or this school year? What small steps could you take to share your lived and learned teaching experiences, and how might others help you grow in ways that benefit your students?
5. What are your three biggest takeaways from this book?

Pérsida Himmele and **William Himmele** are professors who regularly work with preservice teachers and consult with educators in U.S. and international schools. They are also the authors of the ASCD best-seller *Total Participation Techniques*.

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