



Beginning with Relationships, Arriving at Rigor

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Building State Capacity to Improve Student Outcomes

As education leaders in Idaho and Montana work to improve student outcomes, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction, the Region 17 Comprehensive Center (CC) is at their side.



Essential Question

How do I build a community where there is enough trust so that students can advocate for their needs, and I can challenge them to do their best learning?





Myrna Muñoz

Educator for over 20 years:

- Teaching preschool – college, multiple ELD, coaching, administrative leadership positions
- Bilingual/Bicultural Consultant with Education Northwest



Krystal Smith

10 years experience as a classroom teacher in a personalized learning setting:

- Digital learning coach
- Trades academy advisor
- Transformational Learning and MT Advanced Opportunity program manager



Agenda for Today

11:15 – 11:30 Community Circle

11:30 – 11:45 Teaching stances based in caring

11:45 – 12:00 The Empathy Interview

12:00 – 12:20 Using transformational learning methods & strategies to enhance relationships, empowering students

12:20 – 12:30 Reflection & Closing

Community Circle



- Take 2–3 minutes to think about your favorite teacher:
 - > What do you notice about his/her/their stance as an educator?
 - > What did he/she/they make sure was safe in your community?
 - > What stands out about him/her/them?

Be ready to share out

- > Either unmute yourself to share out your thoughts (about a minute per speaker) or type your thoughts into the chat.
- > What are we noticing about what we remember?

*Keep this teacher in mind during our time together.





Unconditional Positive Regard

- » Coined by psychologist Carl R. Rogers, elaborated on by Alfie Kohn
- » No conditions of acceptance
- » Building community and relationship rather than elevating achievement and obedience
- » Central message: I care about you. You have value.
- » An ethic of care



Warm Demander

- » Studied and popularized by Geneva Gay
- » Caring about vs. caring for
- » Honoring humanity
- » Expecting high performance
- » Supporting with strategy to fulfill expectations
- » Patience, facilitation, empowerment

Conversation Protocols

- » Pick the stance that most sparks curiosity for you and read the article.
 - > Go to the [jamboard](#) page for your group (group 1 goes to page 1, group 2 goes to page 2)
 - > Add the stance for your group on a yellow sticky note (unconditional positive regard or warm demander stance)
 - Take 3–5 minutes to read the article.
 - Write your takeaways, observations, and big ideas on a sticky note (not yellow) in the appropriate jamboard.
 - Take a look through the jamboard to find other perspectives on the stance that you were most curious about. Mark ideas you like or agree with.
 - Come back ready to share out ideas that interested you, helped affirm what you already do, or surfaced action you'd like to bring to your learning community.



The Empathy Interview

- »» What is it?
- »» What does it add to the data?
- »» How is this related to the stances we've studied?
- »» Why is it a great use of time?



Using transformational learning methods & strategies to enhance relationships, empowering students

- » Transformational learning is a flexible system designed to center and develop the full educational potential of each pupil
 - > Customized to address each pupil's strengths, needs, and interests
 - > Includes continued focus on each pupil's proficiency in the content
 - > Actively engages each pupil in determining what, how, when, and where they learn
- » Develop a transformational learning plan for each participating pupil that honors individual interests, passions, strengths, needs, and culture—and that is rooted in relationships with teachers, family, peers, and community members
- » Ensure equality of opportunity to participate for all pupils of the district



Grants Resource Page

Transformational Learning

- > Application
- > Frequently Asked Questions
- > Transformational Learning Examples

Montana Advanced Opportunities

- > Application
- > Frequently Asked Questions
- > Informational Articles





Transformational Learning and Montana Advanced Opportunities Grants

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING GRANT

Intended to provide financial incentive for school districts to implement transformational learning, House Bill 89 replaced HB 351, where a lottery system will determine the order of funding for newly applying districts. Transformational Learning is defined as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional mandate of "fully develop[ing] the educational potential of each person."

MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITIES GRANT

Advanced Opportunity means any course, exam, experiential, on-line, or other learning opportunity that is incorporated in a district's advanced opportunity plan and is designed to advance each qualifying pupil's opportunity for post-secondary career and educational success. Permanent funding is directed towards supporting college and career readiness through supplementing parent out-of-pocket expenses and personalization of CTE courses. Allocated funds are first-come, first-served.

Application Process

- Complete application found on [OPI website](#)
- Obtain school board chair person's signature
- Include district's strategic plan as it refers to Transformational Learning and/or MT Advanced Opportunities
- For Transformational Learning, include district's definition of proficiency, without requiring seat time as a measure of proficiency



What's Next?

After applications are submitted, the Board of Public Education qualifies districts. There is currently a wait list for Transformational Learning funding, with a projected funding date of FY23; however, MT Advanced Opportunity allocations have unclaimed funds, thus, no current wait list. Upon receiving funding, districts are required to submit an annual report for requalification.

Application Window Opens 1st Week in December

Additional Information Found on OPI Website

Informational Webinars Throughout the Summer and Fall

Addresses Students' Strengths, Interests, and Needs

Focus on Proficiency over Content

Application Window Closes 2nd Week in January

For More Information:

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Transformational Learning Ideas:

- digital curriculum
- personalized pacing
- 1-to-1 professional development coaching
- project-based learning
- performance-based assessment

MT Advanced Opportunity Ideas:

- dual enrollment
- work-based opportunities
- certifications and credentialing
- personalization of CTE programs
- graduation and career track pathways



Breakout Groups:

1. What does transformational learning mean to you?
1. How have you transformed, or how do you want to transform, learning for your students?
1. What are your next steps in this process?
1. What support do you need to make this happen?

Closing Reflection

Of the ideas you heard today,

- »» What are you looking forward to learning more about?
- »» What are your next steps toward creating a space where rigor can be safe?
- »» What can you infuse into your American Rescue Plan to strengthen relationships, rigor, and student empowerment?

Resources:

Bryk, A. et al. (2017) *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Gay, G. (2010) *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College, Columbia University, NY

Gobir, N. (2021) How Unconditional Positive Regard Can Help Students Feel Cared For, KQED, San Francisco, CA. <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/57646/how-unconditional-positive-regard-can-help-students-feel-cared-for>

Nelsestuen, K. & Smith, J. (2020) Empathy interviews. *The Learning Professional* 41(5). <https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/tool-empathy-interviews.pdf>



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