



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility



CAROLINA KROON

Morningside Center staff developer Nelly Espina at PS 214/Bronx.

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



OUR MISSION & FOCUS

WE EDUCATE young people for hopeful and intelligent engagement with their world. Through our programs in public schools, students develop their emotional intelligence and sense of social responsibility. They learn practical skills we all need to do well in life – like managing anger and other strong feelings, making good decisions, dealing well with conflict, standing up to bias and bullying, and working with others to improve the community.

THE CORE of our work is in the classroom, supporting teachers in teaching young people these essential social and emotional skills. We do this primarily by training and coaching teachers to help them teach our research-based curricula, including The 4Rs (Reading, Writing Respect & Resolution) and the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). Since 1983, we've worked with hundreds of New York City public schools (and now in schools beyond NYC) to develop and perfect this approach.

WHEN A TEACHER opens the door to students' social and emotional learning, wonderful things can happen in a classroom and in a school. "I notice a big difference in my class," says a teacher at Brooklyn's PS 130. "My students are more of a community now." A teacher at Brooklyn's PS 307 says, "My students take the language from the lessons and weave it throughout the day. Students feel more trust in the teacher, and with that trust comes a stronger relationship, which leads

to better learning." A principal observes that her school is undergoing "a slow transformation – starting with the tone and the climate." Two major scientific studies of our programs confirm that students who take part in these programs are more caring, less aggressive, and happier, and their classrooms are calmer and friendlier. Not surprisingly, their attendance and academic scores also improve.

WE WORK WITH PRINCIPALS and all members of the school community to kindle this culture of caring and respect throughout the school. We tailor our work for each school, using the many programs and approaches we have developed and honed over the years, from The 4Rs to our Pathways to Respect program for countering bullying, to student diversity panels and parent workshops. In addition to our school-day programs, Morningside Center provides rich after-school programs for hundreds of young people in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

IN EVERYTHING WE DO, we try to embody our core beliefs: that everyone deserves respect and the chance to be heard, that our diversity is our great strength, that we are responsible for ourselves and each other, and that by working together, we can make the world a better place for everyone.

Please see pages 8-9 for a description of all our programs.



ENO NAKAMURA

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COACHING IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

I PLAY THE RECORDER, and I'm part of an amateur ensemble. Rachel is our teacher and coach. From time to time, if we lapse into a moment of sloppy or careless playing, she'll look around at us, a twinkle in her eye, and ask, "Is that how you want to be remembered?" She is challenging us to play mindfully, listening to the music we're making and going for beauty with every note we play.

Rachel's coaching works on many levels. When demonstrating a difficult passage, she shows us how fluid and sweet a recorder can sound. She guides us in exploring a wide range of repertory – everything from Bach to a contemporary samba piece that is great fun. She gives us tips for improving the specific skills that form the basis for good recorder playing. Above all, her message is "Blow – and be happy!"

I thought of Rachel when I read Atul Gawande's essay in the *New Yorker*, "Personal Best: Top athletes and singers have coaches. Should you?" (October 3, 2011). Gawande's conclusion, after an interesting exploration of the question: Yes. Everyone can use a coach to do their best, even the very best practitioners.

And that includes educators. Coaching has always been a crucial aspect of Morningside Center's work. When we started the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) back in 1985, we knew that just handing out our curricula and giving a few workshops wouldn't magically result in wonderful classroom lessons. Teachers starting out with the program would need someone to show them what the activities would look like in their own classrooms with their own students. They would need a partner who would work with them in planning, conducting, and debriefing the lessons. Even back then, teachers were under pressure and pulled in different directions. They would need inspiration from someone passionate about social and emotional learning — and an occasional nudge to encourage them to stick with it.

Twenty-seven years later, coaching is still at the heart of our work. Working on a per diem basis, our staff developers roll up their sleeves, go

into classrooms, conduct demo lessons, co-teach lessons, observe and give feedback – and generally serve as allies for teachers. While their primary goal is to foster high-quality teaching of The 4Rs or RCCP, they share techniques and insights that improve teachers' performance throughout the school day.

We have a remarkable team of 20 staff developers. Some are former classroom teachers; others are experts in peacemaking and facilitation. Some are artists, singers, or actors. All receive extensive training and support from each other and from me. Some provide as few as 15 days of service in a given year; others, as many as 150 days. Last year our staff developers provided a total of 1200 days of service in the New York City public schools. It's an unusually stable crew: their average tenure with Morningside Center is eight years.

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Tom Roderick

CHRISTOPHER SMITH



Our staff developer Javier Diaz coaches a teacher in The 4Rs.

CAROLINA KROON



THE NUMBERS

16,490 STUDENTS took part in sustained school-based Morningside Center programs during the 2010-2011 school year.

1,245 TEACHERS learned new skills through professional development we provided during 2010-2011 (including 825 teachers in ongoing school-based programs).

791 PEER MEDIATORS & PEACE HELPERS resolved conflicts and addressed problems for thousands of their peers during 2010-2011.

86 NYC SCHOOLS implemented sustained Morningside Center programs; 140 additional schools participated in our workshops during 2010-2011. We also implemented programs in schools in Georgia and Ohio.

1,141,423 PEOPLE VISITED TEACHABLEMOMENT, our teacher resource page, during 2011, making 6,431,413 hits.

30 YEARS SINCE OUR FOUNDING in 1982!



CAROLINA KROON

Peace festival at our PAZ after-school program at Brooklyn's PS 24.



Program highlights:

Smart School Leaders

AN EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT PRINCIPAL can inspire the whole the school. We know this from our own experience, and the research backs it up. Through our new Smart School Leaders project, we are coaching a group of NYC public school principals in leading with emotional intelligence and in engaging all members of the school community in planning for and implementing school-wide social and emotional learning.

The project includes:

Coaching Principals. We provide focused, one-on-one support for principals using “Star Factor,” an approach to coaching developed by Janet Patti of Hunter College School of Education and Robin Stern of Teachers College, based on Daniel Goleman’s research on leadership. Drs. Patti and Stern themselves are supervising the experienced certified Star Factor coaches who work with the principals.

Collaborative Planning. We support principals and their SEL planning teams as they develop a vision of SEL that is fully integrated into the school’s culture; make action plans; carry them out; and evaluate progress. To guide us, we use a manual we’ve been developing, *Educating Heart and Mind: A Strategy for School Transformation based on Social & Emotional Learning*.

Principals’ Learning Community. The ten principals in our network spend several days together over the year, visiting each other’s schools to see how their colleagues are fostering SEL, discussing common concerns (such as NY State’s teacher and principal evaluation system), sharing challenges they’re facing in their schools, and doing problem-solving in small groups.

Building SEL Capacity School-wide. We’re supporting the schools in implementing a multifaceted school-wide approach to SEL that includes consistent classroom instruction, student leadership, and SEL-oriented discipline policies. Each of the schools is on the path toward a vision of SEL fully integrated into its curriculum and culture.

Planning Expansion of Smart School Leaders. We are using our experience to develop this model and to prepare for scaling it up. Our aim: to support Smart School Leaders in many more schools, in NYC and beyond. ◀



CAROLINA KROON

“OVER THE YEARS we’ve made steady progress in creating an atmosphere at PS 62 that’s safe, orderly, and inviting. And part of how we’ve done that is through social and emotional learning.

At first, we would do The 4Rs in a particular class or grade. But it didn’t take root throughout the building. Then we began to notice that the teachers who really focused on The 4Rs and made it a part of the classroom community didn’t have as many issues with their students.

That’s when we started to make it a part of the daily curriculum across the board. During morning gatherings, and once a week, everyone in the school is doing The 4Rs.

You have to really be invested in it. You have to say, ‘I respect this, I get it, and I want it to happen.’ Once we began doing that, we started to see a really great environment being born.”

— Lisa Manfredonia, Principal, PS 62, Bronx



Program highlights:

SEL Skills for Life: OUR WORK IN OHIO

A KINDERGARTEN STUDENT in Warren, Ohio, whom we'll call Mia, was both a leader and a bully in her class. "The other girls would emulate her," says Morningside Center staff developer Bruce Gill. "If she had a certain color of fingernail polish on, the rest of the girls would get the same color." But Mia also intimidated her classmates, and over time more and more of them didn't want to play with her.

the meeting, Mia told the class what she'd been feeling and asked her classmates to tell her why they wouldn't play with her anymore. And one by one, the students told Mia about the things she did that made them want to avoid her. The teacher then asked Mia if she wanted to know from her classmates what she could do to be friends with them again, and she said yes. So members of the class told Mia what they thought she could do differently.

The teacher, says Bruce, "was blown away that this student would ask to have a class meeting – and impressed by the way the rest of the class handled it." Now, says Bruce, Mia "still has her moments. But she's different. Things have changed."

For the past two years, Bruce – along with Lynne Hurdle-Price and Linda Lantieri of the Inner Resilience Program, and Tom Roderick of Morningside Center – have been supporting teachers in Warren and Youngstown in implementing Skills for Life. The approach combines Morningside Center's The 4Rs Program (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution) with the Inner Resilience Program's strategies to help both students and adults

calm their minds and focus. SEL Skills for Life also includes classroom peace corners, class meetings, and parent workshops.

Already, says Bruce, the program has had a palpable impact on students and the classroom climate. A new first-grade teacher who had just been introduced to SEL Skills for Life was surprised when she began talking about it with her first graders, who had been part of the program last year. "At one point she couldn't remember the full name of the program, and the whole class filled her in," laughs Bruce. "These kids are coming into the first grade knowing the definition of 'conflict.' Their language

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AARON SCHWAB



SEL Skills for Life class in Warren, Ohio.

At this school, teachers are implementing a program called SEL Skills for Life, a joint effort of Morningside Center; CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning); the Inner Resilience Program led by Linda Lantieri; the city school districts of Warren and Youngstown, Ohio; the U.S. Department of Education; and Ohio's 17th congressional district.

As part of Skills for Life, Mia's teacher had introduced class meetings as a way to address their problems and concerns.

One day, Mia came to class feeling upset about what was happening between her and the other students. She asked the teacher if they could have a class meeting to talk about it. In



Program highlights:

My 4Rs Teaching Partner: POWERFUL TEACHER SUPPORT

Several years ago, Morningside Center decided to try out an innovative teacher coaching model called “My Teaching Partner, developed by researchers at the University of Virginia (UVA). When our staff developer Cora Miles asked for teachers who wanted to participate in the project, a third-grade teacher, “Denise,” stepped forward. Denise was in her second year of teaching at a school in the Bronx, and she was open to coaching, even though some parts of the model made her nervous.

In My Teaching Partner, the teacher selects a particular aspect of her teaching to work on, using a framework called CLASS, which breaks down teaching into a number of clearly defined dimensions grouped under three broad categories: Emotional Support, Classroom Management, and Instructional Support.

DENISE'S STORY

Denise chose to focus on the dimension called Regard for Student Perspectives. “That’s something teachers are not always aware of,” said Denise. “I thought that would help me with how I teach and how I approach children.” In the CLASS framework, Regard for Student Perspectives includes qualities like listening and empathy; flexibility; and support for student autonomy.

The next step in the project – videotaping herself teaching – made Denise a little uneasy at first. She’d never been videotaped before. But Denise overcame her reservations and made the videotape, and Cora picked out sections of it to discuss.

When Denise viewed the video clips, she made some discoveries: “I saw in the clips that I talk a lot,” she said. She also saw that she was sometimes sarcastic in class.

Cora gave Denise feedback – beginning with the positive. “Cora’s approach was to catch me doing something right,” says Denise. “In the tape she pointed out a time when a child said something and I asked him to say more and then listened while he explained. Since I had decided to focus on Regard for Student Perspectives, Cora encouraged me to do that more often, and asked what other strategies I might use to elicit student perspectives.”

Denise said that as a result of the coaching, she’d become



CAROLINA KROON

Teacher videotapes herself teaching a 4Rs lesson.



Kristin, our staff developer, sends teacher video clips with comments..



Kristin and the teacher review video clips.

“much more conscious” of her interactions with students and better at listening. “I realized that I’d be better able to listen for student perspectives if I talked less and took more time to listen to their points of view,” observed Denise. Soon Denise began to see a change in her students as well. They opened up more in class and got more engaged.

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CURRENT PROGRAMS

IN THE CLASSROOM

► **The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution)** (grades preK-middle school). We provide training and coaching to prepare teachers to teach weekly lessons using an engaging, evidence-based curriculum. The 4Rs uses great children's books as a springboard for helping students learn and practice essential skills like active listening, respecting diversity, resolving conflicts peaceably, and building community. A major scientific study found that students in 4Rs schools did better socially, emotionally and academically than students in non-4Rs schools.

► **Resolving Conflict Creatively** (grades K-12). Through training and coaching, we prepare teachers to teach weekly RCCP lessons based on this time-tested, research-based interactive curriculum. The program, co-founded with the NYC Department of Education in 1985, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on students' development and academic performance.

► **Advisories.** Carefully planned advisories can strengthen the bonds among students and between students and adults, help young people feel more connected to school, and develop students' social and emotional competencies. Morningside Center helps schools create an advisory program tailored to its needs and provides professional development services for advisory teachers.

► **4Rs - My Teaching Partner** (grades preK-12). The success of our classroom programs depends on the teacher's ability to connect with students and build a caring classroom culture. We are working with researchers at the University of Virginia to adapt their evidence-based process for teacher coaching, My Teaching Partner, for use with our 4Rs Program. See page 7 for more on this exciting project.

SCHOOL-WIDE

► **Holistic Discipline** (grades preK-12). Discipline does not equal punishment. In fact, student behavioral problems can be teachable moments for encouraging students to reflect and learn, reinforcing social and emotional skills. We work flexibly with school leaders to help them align their school's approach

to discipline with social and emotional learning, creating a school environment that is safe, calm, and caring. This can include workshops and classroom coaching for teachers, collaborative planning to help schools develop and implement effective discipline plans, and consultation to help schools figure out how to correct conditions that are contributing to student misbehavior, such as a chaotic lunchroom.



CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Workshop at our 2011 Courageous Schools conference.

► **Pathways to Respect** (grades preK-12) is our program for eliminating bullying. We address the problem on three levels. On the school level, we work with a planning team to analyze the problem and develop school-wide initiatives to eliminate bullying. On the classroom level, we support teachers in teaching a curriculum to engage students in countering bullying behavior. And on the individual level, we support school staff in working with students being targeted for bullying and students who are doing the bullying.

► **School-wide Social & Emotional Learning.** We are working with national leaders in the field of SEL – and intensively with ten partner schools in NYC – to develop a comprehensive approach to fostering students' social and emotional learning throughout the school (see page 5 for more). Our SEL coaches support principals and their leadership teams in creating a vision of a school infused with SEL, assessing needs and resources, and creating and implementing an action plan for sustained school-wide social and emotional learning.

► **Restorative Circles.** Restorative Circles provide a democratic process, rooted in Native American traditions, for engaging young people in communicating deeply with others, strengthening their community, and taking responsibility for



their actions. We are providing support and facilitation for Restorative Circles in schools across NYC.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We support students (K -12) in becoming leaders in their schools and communities through programs including:

- ▶ **Peer Mediation** (grades 3-12). We work with a team of 25-30 students in the school to help them develop core social and emotional skills and master a step-by-step mediation process. The mediators then serve their schools by resolving disputes among their peers, with support from adults.
- ▶ **Peace Helpers** (grades K-2). We work with selected youngsters and their teachers to establish classroom Peace Corners where students can go to address problems and conflicts, with Peace Helper support.
- ▶ **Diversity Panels** (grades 3 to 5). We prepare and support students representing various forms of diversity to make classroom presentations that invite discussion about how the school can ensure respect for all.

AFTER-SCHOOL

- ▶ **PAZ @ PS 24** (Peace from A to Z). Our after-school program at PS 24 serves 270 children in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, with a program of social and emotional learning, cooperative sports, arts, community service, and homework help. PAZ @ PS 24 operates from 3-6 every school day afternoon as well as all day during school holidays and the summer.
- ▶ **PAZ @ PS 214** serves 135 middle school students in the Bronx with a rich program of conflict resolution, health and nutrition workshops, and an outdoor environmental education program. PAZ @ PS 214 operates from 3-5 on Monday through Thursday, and on school holidays.
- ▶ **SES Tutoring @ PS 24**. 350 students build their language arts and math skills and have lots of fun throughout the school year at our much-loved tutoring program at Brooklyn's PS 24.



High school peer mediation training.

IN THE WORLD

- ▶ **Courageous Schools Conference**. Each year hundreds of educators come together for a day of inspiration and sharing about how to create classrooms and schools that strengthen and enlighten our young people. See page 11 for more information about our Courageous Schools conference, *Honoring Teaching as a Calling*, on May 19, 2012.
- ▶ **TeachableMoment.org**, our teacher resource website, provides teachers with hundreds of inquiry-oriented approaches for encouraging students' social responsibility. We offer both timely lessons that invite critical thinking on issues in the news, and activities to develop students' social and emotional intelligence. Last year the website drew over a million visitors and 6.4 million hits.
- ▶ **SEL & TeachableMoment Newsletters**. Our two newsletters keep friends and colleagues up to date on conferences, workshops, new lessons, and other work. Sign up on our website, www.morningsidecenter.org.
- ▶ **Social Media** Through our growing networks on Twitter and Facebook, we share news and ideas on SEL, education issues and more. Join us! ◀



SKILLS FOR LIFE, from page 6

is different. We've definitely seen carry over from kindergarten."

Many of the teachers now in their second year with the program "have really taken the curriculum on, and they're working as a team to bring new things to it," Bruce says. For instance, teachers had introduced students to put-downs and put-ups – and to the idea that we all have a bucket that we can either fill up with put-ups or empty with put-downs. "Well, these teachers brought an actual bucket into class," says Bruce. "The kids go and fill it up with marbles or whatever when there are put-ups, or take the marbles away when there are put-downs."

'If you're mindful, you'll know when you've been triggered. And you have a tool to calm yourself down.'

"Working with Bruce, Lynne, and Linda has been great fun," says Morningside Center's executive director Tom Roderick, who joins them in conducting the training. "This is really a dream team." Integrating elements of mindfulness and relaxation from Inner Resilience has been a powerful addition to Morningside Center's work, Tom observes – and not just for students. "Teachers are under a lot of stress these days, and they deeply appreciate the program's emphasis on taking care of ourselves."

Bruce agrees: "Combining mindfulness and relaxation with social and emotional learning is a natural. Mindfulness is the ground on which

you can build everything else. If you're mindful, you'll know when you've been triggered by something. And you have a tool to calm yourself down, whether it's through the breath or in some other way."



Bruce Gill.

SEL Skills for Life also includes family workshops that incorporate both relaxation/mindfulness techniques and social and emotional learning skills. "Parents are finding tremendous benefits with the program," says Bruce. "In the first session we talk about stress, the fight-or-flight response, and about abdominal breathing and relaxation – and the parents just love it. And they love connecting with each other."

Parents have also had a chance to learn SEL skills and to see the skills their children are developing. "We've had parents go visit classes where their kids are doing SEL Skills for Life. They get to hear their first graders using words like 'de-escalate.' It's very exciting."

Teachers, meanwhile, are seeing their relationships with students in a new way. "It's about having a partnership with your kids," says Bruce. "One teacher came up to me and said, 'I thought I was a really good teacher. I know I was a really good teacher. But I'm so much better now.'" ◀



AARON SCHWAB

The Ohio teachers are "working as team to bring new things to the curriculum."



2012 Courageous Schools Conference: HONORING TEACHING AS A CALLING

Saturday, May 19, 2012

Bank Street College, 610 W. 112th St, Manhattan

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

REGISTER ONLINE: www.morningsidecenter.org

Join hundreds of fellow teachers, principals, parents and education activists for a day of inspiration and connection at Morningside Center's 3rd annual conference on social & emotional learning!

Keynote speaker: Martin Brokenleg, cofounder of the Circle of Courage, an approach to education and youth work based on traditional indigenous practices that encourage respectful, responsible behavior without resorting to coercive discipline.

Workshops include:

- Renewing our Sense of Calling as Educators, with Linda Lantieri
- Leading with Social & Emotional Intelligence, with Dr. Janet Patti
- Reaching Deeper: Touching a Student's Inner World, with Dr. Martin Brokenleg
- Charlotte Danielson's Framework: Fostering Professional Development and SEL, with Phyllis Walker and Maria Nunziata
- ... and many more



ALAN SHAPIRO, 1926-2011: Educator, activist, friend

On January 28, 2011, Morningside Center lost a much loved friend and colleague, Alan Shapiro. He died after a short illness at the age of 85. Alan, a lifelong teacher, helped found Morningside Center in 1982 and was part of our work from then on.

As the founding chair of our Board of Directors, Alan helped guide Morningside Center (then ESR Metro) as it brought programs in “nuclear-age education” into the New York City public schools. This evolved into a peace education program that later became known as the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. Alan was also one of the founding board members of national Educators for Social Responsibility. He went on to serve as the leader of ESR's international programs bringing together educators from many countries. Alan was also a pioneering advocate for teachers and for innovations in education, including

“schools without walls.”

For the past ten years, Alan was the chief curriculum writer for our website of teacher resources, TeachableMoment.org. The lessons he wrote are a testament to Alan's boundless intellectual energy, unquenchable curiosity, and powerful moral sense. Until his very last weeks, he was an active citizen in every meaning of the word: Day after day, he thought critically about what was happening in the world and found ways to act on it.

Through TeachableMoment and in many other ways, he encouraged hundreds of thousands of other people to become active citizens too.

We're inspired by Alan Shapiro's life of caring, hard work, and activism – and we carry him in our hearts as we continue our work. ◀



We are grateful to the foundations that currently support our work!

- Fund for the City of New York
- David & Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation
- Keith & Miller Foundation
- New York Community Trust
- Novo Foundation
- Pinkerton Foundation
- SHS Foundation
- Philip & Lynn Straus Foundation
- Tiger Foundation

Thanks to our Board of Directors!

- Joyce Dudley, President, Dudley Hamilton Associates, Inc.
- Carol Beebe, Co-founder & Board member, New York Open Center
- Betsy Bousquette, Lawyer & former Partner, Bryan Cave LL
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- HeeWon Brindle-Khym, NGO & Trade Union Coordinator, Fair Labor Association
- Laura Shmishkiss, School Director, Bronx Community High School/Good Shepherd Services
- Shellie Winkler, Executive Vice President, Edelman public relations firm

Statement of Activity for Fiscal Year 2011 Operating Budget

REVENUE & SUPPORT

Contract services	2,185,983
Foundation & corporate grants	855,830
Other revenues	37,151
Net assets released from restrictions	162,219

Total Support & Revenue: 3,241,183

Net assets at beginning of year	1,158,521
Net assets at end of year	1,297,881
Change in net assets	39,360

EXPENSES

Program	2,151,677
Management and general	886,439
Fundraising	63,707

Total Expenses 3,101,823



CAROLINA KROON

Hard at work at Brooklyn's PS 307.



POWERFUL SUPPORT, from page 7

Encouraged by promising results with Denise and other teachers, Morningside Center collaborated with UVA in submitting a successful proposal for a federal grant to adapt My Teaching Partner for coaching teachers in our 4Rs Program. We created the adapted model in Year 1, and are now piloting and tweaking it in Year 2. Next year we will roll out 4Rs-My Teaching Partner in five schools new to The 4Rs.

The past two years on the project have been both challenging and immensely rewarding. Morningside Center staff developers Mariana Gaston, Emma Gonzalez, Heather Loewecke and Kristin Page Stuart have worked hard to master My Teaching Partner, adapt it for use with The 4Rs, and pilot the adapted model with teachers. This has involved not only striving for a deep understanding of the CLASS rubric defining good teaching, but also learning to upload videotapes to a password-protected website, select short clips, and write prompts for teacher reflection. Our UVA partners, Jason Downer, Megan Stuhlman, and Jessica Geist, have been wonderfully supportive. Our videographer Carolina Kroon and Ben Gologor, part of the research team from Fordham led by Josh Brown, have been busy shooting exemplary 4Rs lessons for a video library that staff developers and teachers will use in the coaching process.

“UVA has developed an amazing tool,” says Kristin. “CLASS breaks down the whole complex of interaction skills. The detail

‘This gives us a way to talk about pedagogy that we didn’t have before.’

they’ve brought out is incredible. It allows us to provide much more focused feedback, because CLASS has many facets. It gives us a way to talk about the pedagogy that we didn’t have before.”

“I’m always excited to get extra help,” says one of Kristin’s teachers. “I feel isolated. I get feedback on walking my class through the hallways but not on my teaching.”

Even when teachers do get feedback on their classroom work, it’s often not that helpful. “A teacher might hear a comment like, ‘You have a problem with classroom management,’” says Kristin. Even positive statements (“That was a great lesson!”) don’t help much if they’re not specific. “A general comment like that might make you feel good, but it doesn’t help you figure out what you were doing that worked so that you can repeat it or build on it,” Kristin observes.

Through 4Rs-My Teaching Partner, Kristin is able to provide teachers with clear, specific, and personalized feedback to help them do their best work in an area they themselves have targeted. “The more specific the feedback we can provide, the better,” says Kristin.

“We’re looking at some very specific, very small changes. And the teacher and I are working on this together. Once you get down to that very fine level of detail, it becomes non-evaluative. It’s just, ‘Let’s try this. Let’s see what happens.’”

EMILY’S STORY

One of the teachers Kristin coached, “Emily,” wanted to work on the Behavior Management dimension. She was looking for ways to address a common occurrence in her classroom: After she gave the class an instruction, two or three of the students would do the opposite of what she had asked. From the video, Kristin could clearly see how Emily typically responded: She would wait a minute or two before saying anything to the students in question.

“I highlighted this in the video and then we talked about it,” says Kristin. “I told her that I understood she had a good intention, which was to give the kids a chance to change their behavior. But I suggested that maybe we could try adjusting that a little. Maybe she could cut her response time to, say, fifteen seconds. I said, let’s just try this and see what happens. If that doesn’t work, we’ll try something else.” Emily tried it. And, said Kristin, “It changed everything. She was really happy.”

We aim to make lots of teachers happy in the years to come – and help their students learn while they’re at it. High teacher ratings on the CLASS rubric correlate with high student growth, socially, emotionally, and academically. We hope that what we are learning from our collaboration with UVA will improve our coaching of teachers, help teachers create a great classroom climate – and give students an academic boost. ◀



COACHING, from page 3

The relationship between the staff developer and the teacher is a critical nexus for our work, and we are always looking for ways to strengthen it. Several years ago the research team that conducted the scientific evaluation of our 4Rs Program told us about “My Teaching Partner,” an approach to teacher coaching developed by Robert Pianta and his colleagues at the University of Virginia. It’s a careful, focused process that involves a teacher identifying an area of her teaching she wants to improve, and using a research-based rubric for classroom quality called the CLASS. The teacher videotapes herself working with her students, and the videotape provides the jumping-off place for the work with the coach.

‘If you want people to reach high standards, you give them the tools they need and you give them a hand.’

With funds from the W.T. Grant Foundation, we introduced My Teaching Partner to some of our staff developers and tried it out in two schools. The impact on the teachers was profound. Teachers found that the targeted support of our staff developers helped them make teaching breakthroughs. Fast forward to the present, and we are now in Year 2 of a three-year federally funded collaboration with the University of Virginia to adapt My Teaching Partner for coaching teachers implementing our 4Rs Program. (For more on this see the article on page 7.)

Coaching can help principals too. In our work over the years, we’ve seen again and again what a huge difference a principal can make in the success of our classroom-based programs – and in fostering a positive school culture. Because our staff developers are knowledgeable about social and emotional learning, are good listeners, and are independent of the Department of Education, they’ve sometimes become confidants and unofficial coaches for principals.

Since 2005, coaching of principals has become a major focus of our work. Our SEL Policy Pilot project supported principals of 19 Brooklyn schools in facilitating a collaborative planning process for sustained, school-wide social & emotional learning.

Today, we’re building on this work. Through our Smart School Leaders Project, we are providing one-on-one coaching for principals in leading with emotional intelligence, using a coaching model based on Daniel Goleman’s research on leadership. We are also refining our approach to supporting principals in facilitating collaborative planning, and writing a manual to codify the process and provide tools for carrying it out. (For more on this, see the article on page 5.)

Unfortunately, coaching isn’t the preferred method for improving our schools these days. Instead, the focus is on shaming. Principals are removed. Public schools are closed and replaced by charters. Teachers are assessed using an error-prone “value-added” metric that is derived from a standardized test students spend an hour taking – and then the results are made public.

From our 30 years working in the New York City public schools, Morningside Center knows that running a school or teaching a group of children is a challenging and complicated endeavor. Albert Einstein said, “Things should be made as simple as possible, but not any simpler.” High-stakes tests are too simple and flawed to assess the quality of a teacher’s year with students or a principal’s year with a school community. And shaming is not the way to improve performance. If you want people to reach high standards, you give them the tools they need and you give them a hand.

When Atul Gawande first enlisted the help of a coach, he was nine years into his career as a surgeon. He didn’t turn to a coach because he was struggling. He did it because he wanted to continue to strive for his personal best. No matter how competent, accomplished, or highly regarded we are, we can all benefit from another pair of trained ears hearing the music we’re making or another pair of trained eyes seeing the operation we’re performing or the lesson we’re teaching. Easier said than done, of course. Coaching is an art in its own right.

Morningside Center keeps trying to do it better. And if Rachel should ask us her question, I would be proud to say, “Yes, that’s how we’d like to be remembered!” —Tom Roderick



Scenes from our PS 24 PAZ After-school program (top) and our 2011 Courageous Schools conference (below).



PAZ photos by CAROLINA KROON



Conference photos by CHRISTOPHER SMITH





CAROLINA KROON

Speaking up in 4Rs class at PS 307.



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