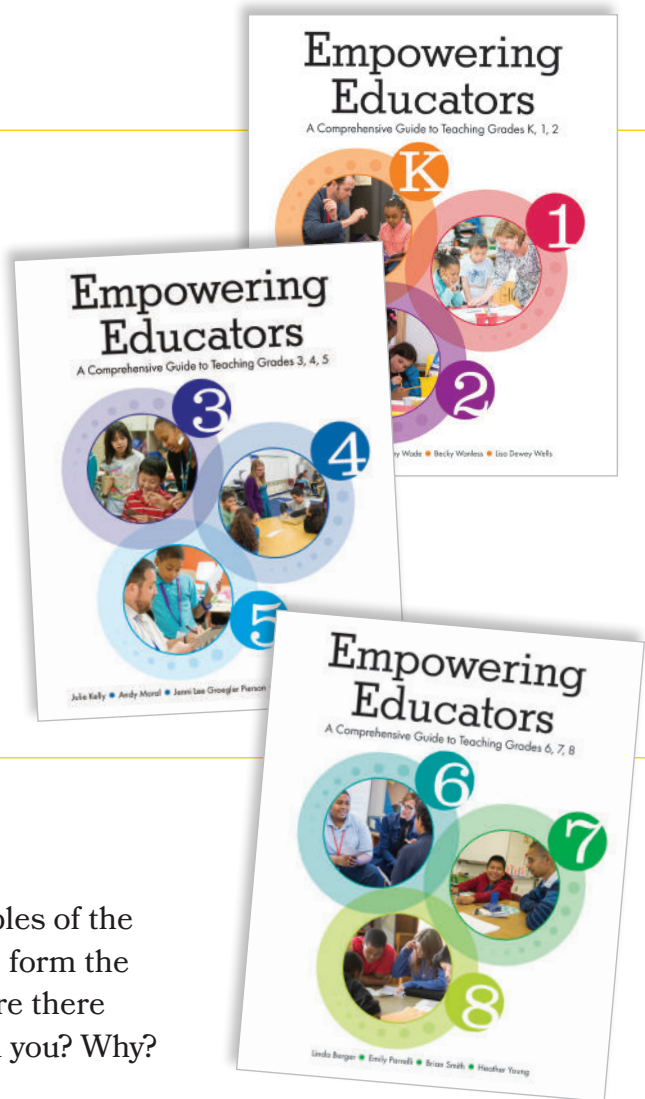


Discussion Questions for

Empowering Educators

A Comprehensive Guide to Teaching

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Introduction

The introduction includes six guiding principles of the *Responsive Classroom* approach, which also form the core of the *Empowering Educators* books. Are there any principles that particularly resonate with you? Why?

Chapter 1: Developmentally Responsive Teaching

Developmentally responsive teachers take the time to learn about their students individually, culturally, and developmentally. What are some ways that you get to know your students, where they come from, and what they value?

Review the common developmental traits for the grade(s) you teach. Identify which traits seem most important to you, which traits affirm your current teaching practices, and which traits prompt you to see your students differently and/or adapt your teaching practices.

Chapter 2: Effective Management

Teacher language and teacher leadership are two of the most powerful tools educators have. How does your use of these tools impact your classroom management?

As you prepare the classroom space for a new school year, consider how it will support the hallmarks of the age group you teach. How can you arrange the classroom space to meet the needs of all students and provide them with a sense of belonging and significance?

You and your students rely on daily schedules, routines, and procedures to form the backbone of your school days. Which routines and procedures are most critical to teach at the beginning of the school year, and how will you teach them?

Chapter 3: Positive Community

Certain key practices help create a safe, predictable, joyful, and inclusive classroom where all students have a sense of belonging and significance. One example is a daily meeting such as Morning Meeting or Responsive Advisory Meeting. What are some other ways to strengthen your relationships with your students and the connections between students?

Proactive discipline is a core component of a positive learning community. What are some of the proactive discipline strategies mentioned in Chapter 3, and how can you incorporate them into your teaching?

Chapter 4: Engaging Academics

The most engaging learning happens when lessons are designed to reflect the natural learning process. What are the three parts of a well-designed lesson? What teaching practices help to ensure a purposeful and meaningful lesson?

Actively observing students is an essential part of teaching. When observing your students, what do you look for? How do you collect information and how often do you review it? How do your observations inform your lessons?

Chapter 5: Connecting With Parents

Partnering with families is as important as knowing the children we teach, and consistent communication strengthens our relationships with families. Reflect on the ways you communicate with families. What are your strengths? What are your areas of improvement?

Taking the time to learn about our students' families individually and culturally can help us partner with them more effectively. What are some ways that you get to know your students' families, where they come from, and what they value?

Chapter 6: Healthy Teachers, Healthy Classrooms

Recognizing our own social and emotional tendencies and those of the people around us can help us better understand ourselves and others. After reviewing the traits for each dichotomy in the C.A.R.E.S. Competency Traits chart, what are your tendencies? How might they impact your teaching, your interactions with students, and your collaborative efforts with other educators?

Professional development isn't limited to course work or schoolwide learning; informal opportunities for professional growth abound. What are two professional growth opportunities you would like to focus on this year and why?

Teaching is one of the most challenging and rewarding professions out there, and it can take a physical and mental toll. Taking care of yourself is essential for your own well-being as well as your students'. What are your daily self-care practices? What other practices would you like to try?