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A Note About Notes and Other Resources

To keep the text clean and unencumbered, all references to research, ideas, authors, and quotations requiring explanation or further discussion are notated by a superscript in the text and listed in a Notes section beginning on page N1 in the end matter. The notes are divided by section (Engagement, Excellence, and Equity) and sequenced consecutively in each section and chapter. Many notes include bibliographic information to help you find referenced material easily. Simple reference citations not requiring annotation are contained in the References and Resources section beginning on page R1. Any statement or concept not attributed is based on my own teacher-research, observations, and more than forty-five years of teaching and leading experience.

Accompanying Website for *Literacy Essentials*

go.hbe.com.au/shp6753/

- ◆ Study Guide
- ◆ Lesson Plan: framework, detailed daily plans, teacher and student reflections, anchor charts, examples of student work, and much more
- ◆ Class-authored, published nonfiction book: *Polar Bears Are King of the North*, by second and third graders, 48 pages
- ◆ Class-authored, published book: *Dreams: Listen to Our Stories*, by fifth graders
 - Follow-up comments by students as high school seniors

successful lesson, opened up his or her classroom for colleagues to observe, offered support to a new teacher, or raised an important schoolwide issue in a positive way.

- ◆ **Remember colleagues' birthdays,** special occasions, and individual accomplishments with a personal congratulation, a short note, an e-mail, a text message, or a card.
- ◆ **Invite all staff members to attend professional development meetings.** Include specialists and teaching aides. Consider, as well, inviting a parent, a board member, or the superintendent. Our school community members can be our biggest boosters and advocates. Having some “open” PD meetings sends an inclusive message and makes our work transparent.
- ◆ **Publicly acknowledge a colleague's achievement in a staff meeting.** Or, before a scheduled professional development meeting, we can ask a peer to bring or share a student work sample, lesson plan, class-authored book, or anything outstanding we have noticed. Not only is a colleague's work publicly celebrated, but also we all benefit from learning about the excellent idea.
- ◆ **Provide families a welcoming school culture.** Ensure that a highly visible, welcoming message greets visitors as they enter the school building. It can be daunting for families whose children have mostly known failure to even enter our schools and classrooms. Resist judging families, even when they fail to “show up.” We never know how many hardships a family may be facing or what fears or negative past experiences may be keeping them from attending a conference or returning a phone call. Continue to reach out in a positive manner.
- ◆ **Treat secretaries, office staff, volunteers, and custodians as valued players in a school's success.** Use Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and other holidays to write them class-authored gratitude letters. Invite them into the classroom to talk about their jobs. Proudly include them in any whole-school activity that celebrates the school's achievement. Organizations that flourish treat all employees and volunteers as team members.
- ◆ **Perform acts of kindness each day.** For example, listen without judgment to a colleague who has had a tough day; volunteer to pick up a colleague's class from a special activity; share a lunch with a teacher who has forgotten his or her own or had no time to bring one. For a colleague who is not a good speller, offer to read a newsletter before it goes home to families. Acts of kindness foster relationships, and kindness can be taught. Through our own kind gestures to our colleagues and students, we model and encourage thoughtful, kind deeds. (See more on kindness in “Teach Kindness,” pages 17–19.)

10 Actions That Promote High Trust and Achievement

1. Celebrate strengths and successes.
2. Assume a collective sense of responsibility for all students and staff.
3. Hold high expectations for all learners (teachers, students, and principal).
4. Use common language and shared beliefs that align with research-based practices.
5. Engage in continuous professional learning centered on authentic and relevant work to increase student learning.
6. Implement a viable curriculum with accompanying first-rate resources and texts.
7. Embed meaningful and respectful conversations and feedback that move learning forward.
8. Employ coaching experiences that leave the learner feeling “I can do it!”
9. Promote ongoing assessment, mostly formative.
10. Ensure that data use, analysis, and application are sensible and practical.

Taken together and put into daily practice, these actions foster trusting relationships, which build capital when tough issues arise. These actions and principles are discussed and demonstrated throughout this book because a trusting culture is a necessity for all of us—students, teachers, coaches, leaders, learners at all levels—in order to put forth our full efforts, even under challenging circumstances.

Bond with Students and Colleagues

It's difficult to learn from someone we don't trust. Years ago, esteemed New Zealand educator Don Holdaway noted, “You don't have to love every student, but you do need to bond with each one of them if they're to learn anything at all.” Bonding means forming meaningful and respectful connections with all students and their families—and making an effort to do the same with our colleagues. I'll never forget

the story Don told about going in to see his daughter's kindergarten teacher when he and his family were living and working in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His daughter was not getting along well with her teacher and felt the teacher didn't like her. In his booming voice Don told the teacher it was her duty as his child's teacher to bond with her. From that day on, the trouble between teacher and child seemed to vanish, with the teacher taking Don's command seriously. Part of that bonding meant valuing the child and sending the message: *I see you, I know who you are, I understand you.* Too many of our students—and colleagues and families, too—remain invisible to us. Even if they are physically present, they are often mostly silent and unseen. Attempt to “see” through respectful eyes all members of the school community and to affirm each one of them.



Take Action

- ◆ **Let every parent or guardian know something positive about the student.** A phone call, text message, or note early on—and often, throughout the school year—serves to build trust and saves time in the long run. A parent who believes his or her child and culture are valued will be more likely to listen without feeling threatened and to cooperate when there is a problem. Bonding with families makes it easier to bond with our students.
- ◆ **Let every student know we value them.** Through our daily gestures, body language, and words, let's affirm every student. It is important to let students know we are glad to see them, that their contributions to the class matter, and that we recognize their unique talents (even on days when it's hard to do so). Ask students, “What's one or more important things you would like me to know about you?” Tell students, “Here are a few important things I would like you to know about me.” One thing I often tell students is: “I'm not interested in the ‘right’ answer. I'm interested in your thinking and how you got there.”
- ◆ **Let every learner know we want them to succeed.** As one middle school student said, “You can always tell when a teacher wants to help all students succeed.” That teacher demonstrates fairness, openness, effort, and flexibility. For example, if the whole class did badly on a test, the teacher willingly reteaches the lesson and gives a new test. As well, the teacher does quick check-ins with students to see how they are, if they understand the work, and what further support they might need.