

Down the Hall

so I could come and share some information on Guatemala with her class. I brought a few books, a flag and a small gift of Guatemalan worry dolls. Her student stood next to me and beamed as he shared impressive knowledge about his birth country. He knew about active volcanoes, Lago Atitlán and traditional Mayan clothing. He opened up the book his family had sent in with him and pointed out how “most people in Guatemala look like me.” When I brought out a barrilete, he quickly flipped to the back of his book and showed the photo of Sumpango, Sacatepéquez, with barriletes *gigantes* dancing in the air.

We invited Lindsay’s class to come outside with us that afternoon. Amid the excitement, I happened to catch this moment: Two seventh-grade students—one whose mom is from Ecuador, the other whose mom is from Perú—are standing with this second-grader from Guatemala. They are laughing, chatting and getting ready to fly a kite.

This was a great day to be a teacher. It was a great day to witness the kind of global connection we get to celebrate on a sunny, perfectly windy day.

Next unit: MayaWorks and fair trade. *Viva la conexión.*

DID YOU KNOW?

2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.

—CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

17 percent of high school biology teachers do not cover human evolution in their classes.

—ASSOCIATION OF RELIGION DATA ARCHIVES



Miguel A. Salinas is a behavior specialist at Jane Addams Middle School in Bolingbrook, Illinois.

It's Heart Work

Meet Miguel A. Salinas, a middle-school behavior specialist who works with the most-referred students in the building. Salinas describes his day-to-day practice as “heart work,” and is unrelenting in his commitment to ensuring that all students feel valued and see themselves reflected at their school.

What first steps did you take to build relationships with the students on your caseload?

This position gave [me] an opportunity to rebuild relationships with families in the school setting, where

Not all educators stand at the front of a class. In each issue, we interview an outstanding educator who works outside the classroom.

the parents can start to trust that the building [staff are] doing their best to support their son or their daughter. The first thing I did at the beginning of the school year is I made home visits. From that point, I got to hear what the families needed.

“What do you need from us? What do you need from me personally? I want to make sure that your son or daughter is extremely successful here. Tell me what that is.”

“I work from 6:00 [a.m.] to 6:00 [p.m.]. I need my son involved in something.”

“Let me find out about your son’s interests. What is he into?”

Then I was able to connect maybe three or four students on my caseload with the boxing program here

in the community. It was just for those students to know that they had somebody in the school building who had their back, who was their mentor, who really cares about what goes on in their daily life.

How do you support students who feel disengaged and disinterested in school?

I see myself having been that student on the other side who was disinterested in school. Growing up, I didn't have models in my classroom that looked like me. I went through all my schooling and I never really knew any powerful Latinos, minus like César Chávez. It's like looking at myself in the mirror because some of this I can connect with.

In 10 years, I haven't had one student tell me, "I don't want to be successful. I want to have a miserable life." A lot of time with students who are disengaged, who don't put pencil to paper all the time, we have to change our processes. I [use] lyrics versus talking about feelings, which is traditionally what you learn in your training. "What is this lyric talking about? Let's go into it. Now let's identify emotions within the lyrics that you hear." Now I have students who are engaged, who are excited, who want to read the lyrics, say the lyrics. They want to do stuff that they would do in language arts but in a different way within that setting.

What recommendations do you have for other behavior specialists and school psychologists?

Get to know the families. Meet them where they're at. If I need to pick up a student from their house because they didn't come to school, that's what I'm doing. Let's say we had to repair a relationship between student and teacher. Then I can at least be the mediator in the conversation, because the student trusts me.



The other part is we just teach skills. How to recognize, "I'm getting upset but now what can I do? How can I be proactive and not be reactive, where I'm lashing out against other students, against my family, against my teachers?" I [also] always look at resources. For me, again, getting connected with the community, knowing the resources within your community and connecting parents, connecting students with those resources.

What's one of your successes this year?
There's a student I have on my caseload. He told me when he met me this year, he said, "When I first met you, I thought you were talking only because you have lips." Meaning, "You really don't care. You're really not invested in me or want me to be successful." It took work for me to gain his trust, [for him] to be able to be like, "All right, I can open up to Mr. Salinas about what's going on in my life." Really, that has been one of my biggest successes.

This is heart work. You got to show that you care. These aren't *those* students; these are *our* students.

DOWN THE HALL

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Civil Rights Done Right

Curriculum improvement strategies for building robust, meaningful civil rights lessons.

Appendix D

A unique model for culturally responsive text selection.

Teaching The New Jim Crow

A literacy-based teacher's guide that accompanies Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking book.

Teaching Tolerance's Anti-bias Framework

Standards for anti-bias education at every grade level.