

Beginning Educator Support Team

Winter 2019 Newsletter

Teacher Self-care

Teachers have one of the most meaningful, fulfilling tasks in the world – to educate and prepare the next generation of people to lead society in new directions. It is also cognitively, emotionally, and physically demanding work. It is the sort of work that is always present: there is always more to be done, and we often feel compelled to lean in and give more of ourselves, even when our reserves are tapped.

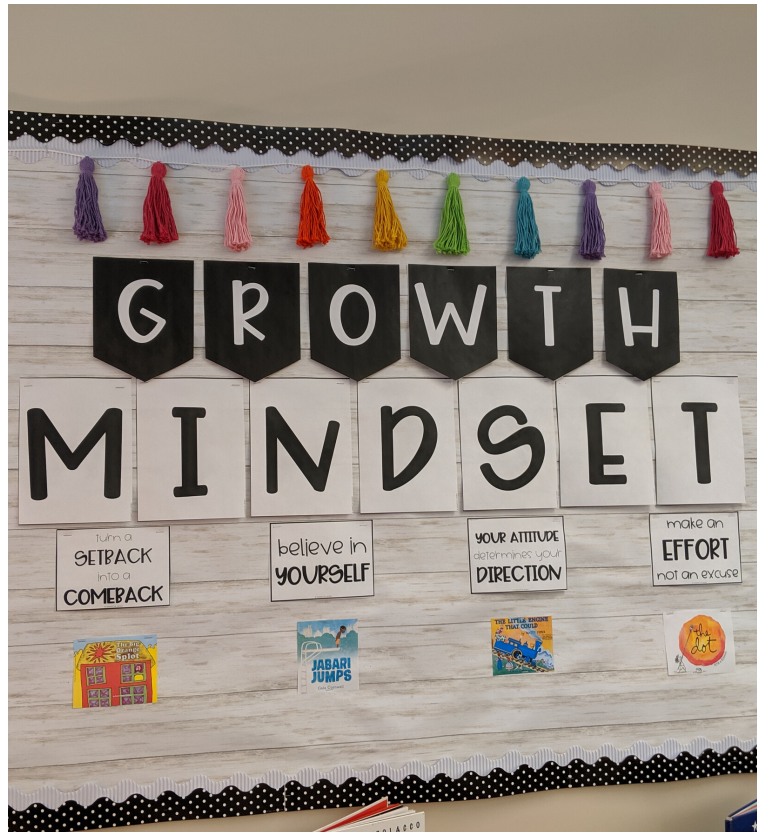
Teachers who lead a sustainable, energized teaching life have a few things in common: they learn to prioritize, work efficiently, and take care of themselves, both professionally and personally. They know that self-care positively affects their attitude, provides energy, and offsets secondary trauma they may experience from their students. After all, no one can drink from an empty cup.

Self-care is different for each person, but here are a few key considerations:

- Personal Self-care: get enough sleep, exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, set aside time for leisure activities, make time for friends and family
- Professional Self-care: prioritize work tasks, balance social and work time during the school day, stay on top of tasks and deadlines, build positive relationships with students and colleagues, use positive self-talk

For more ideas, click here:

[Compassionate Schools handbook.](#)



First-year Edison teacher, Sadie Tonn encourages her students to use a positive growth mindset when they face a challenge

Mentoring Convos

Making time to reflect with a mentor or colleague can alleviate stress and lead to solution-oriented thinking. Here are some topics to consider for learning-focused conversations between mentors and early-career teachers this time of year:

- Methods of self-care
- Ideas for working efficiently, including organization systems and technology
- Mid-year student work analysis and feedback
- Maintaining a work/home life balance now and during winter break; time management strategies
- Mid-year reflections and goals for second semester (personal, professional, and student)
- Norms/expectations around celebrations
- Preparing for disruptions to school schedules leading into winter break
- Preparing for the return from vacation (resetting routines, student behavior, instructional goals)
- Successes and ongoing challenges

Peer Observation

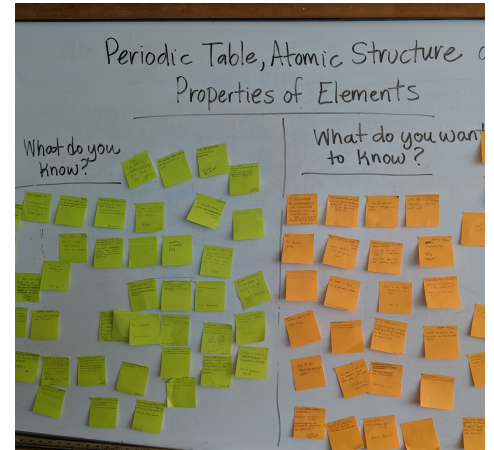
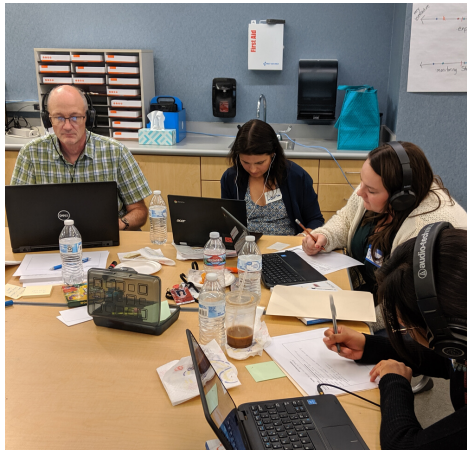
Teachers observing teachers may not seem like a radical idea, but it is at the forefront of a new style of professional learning. In Walla Walla, we pride ourselves on our "open doors" classrooms because observation can be a powerful tool for continual improvement of our craft in the service of student learning.

When done well, non-evaluative peer observations help the observer and the observee improve their practice, foster a sense of shared responsibility for our students in a collaborative learning community, and push us to provide equitable learning opportunities for all. As Stephanie Hirsch says, "Let's make teaching a public rather than a private act."

Here are some tips from the field to make the most of your observations:

- **FOCUS.** Identify and agree on a focus. It might come from student work or behavior, a previous observation, or a hunch, but focusing your eye results in better clarity about the teaching and learning that's really happening.
- **TAKE NOTES.** Jot notes around your focus using a template. Reflect on your notes and make interpretations. Record take-aways and ideas for application. These notes will be valuable to sort your thinking.
- **DISCUSS & REFLECT.** Talk about what you saw/experienced with your trusted colleague or mentor. Observation is best when paired with a great learning-focused conversation.
- **APPLY.** Apply the learning or try something you saw and elicit feedback. Keep the cycle going!

BEST Community Spotlight



Check out a Swivl robot for a high-quality video selfie; Second-year teachers engaging in our Video Learning Lab series; You never know what gems you'll find during a peer observation! First-year teacher, Erin Peek loved this great KWL strategy we found in mentor, Mary Burt's classroom

Jim Knight has written that video-enhanced professional learning has enormous potential for accelerating our growth as teachers (*Focus on Teaching, 2014*). Video gives us a clear picture of the teaching and learning that's happening in our classroom. It provides a context for us to set goals based on our own analyses, and it allows for immediate feedback and changes to our practice. It can feel uncomfortable at first, but, used effectively, video can have an unmistakable positive impact on our students' experiences.

This winter, make a New Year's resolution to join our brave second-year teachers in engaging in this authentic embedded professional learning and hit RECORD!

For tips on filming and analyzing yourself, click here: [Teacher Video Selfie](#)

Comments, questions, or want to know more about supporting early career teachers?
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