

ENGAGING "DIFFICULT" STUDENTS

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Objectives

Learn 5 key strategies for engaging all students, including those most challenging to you

Apply the learning to your own work

Establish a few commitments to yourself

Four Corners

Gather your belongings, then move to the corner of the room that best represents the level of students you teach (see orange signs)

Once everyone has chosen a corner, move as a group to a new table/section of the room

Take all your belongings with you - this will be your new seat for the duration

30-second Introductions

Select a time-keeper to keep track of each person's 30 seconds.

Share: Name, District, Grade and/or Subject

And **CHOOSE ONE** from this list to share:

Name an object that is important to you

Name a life value that is important to you

Describe something good that has happened to you recently

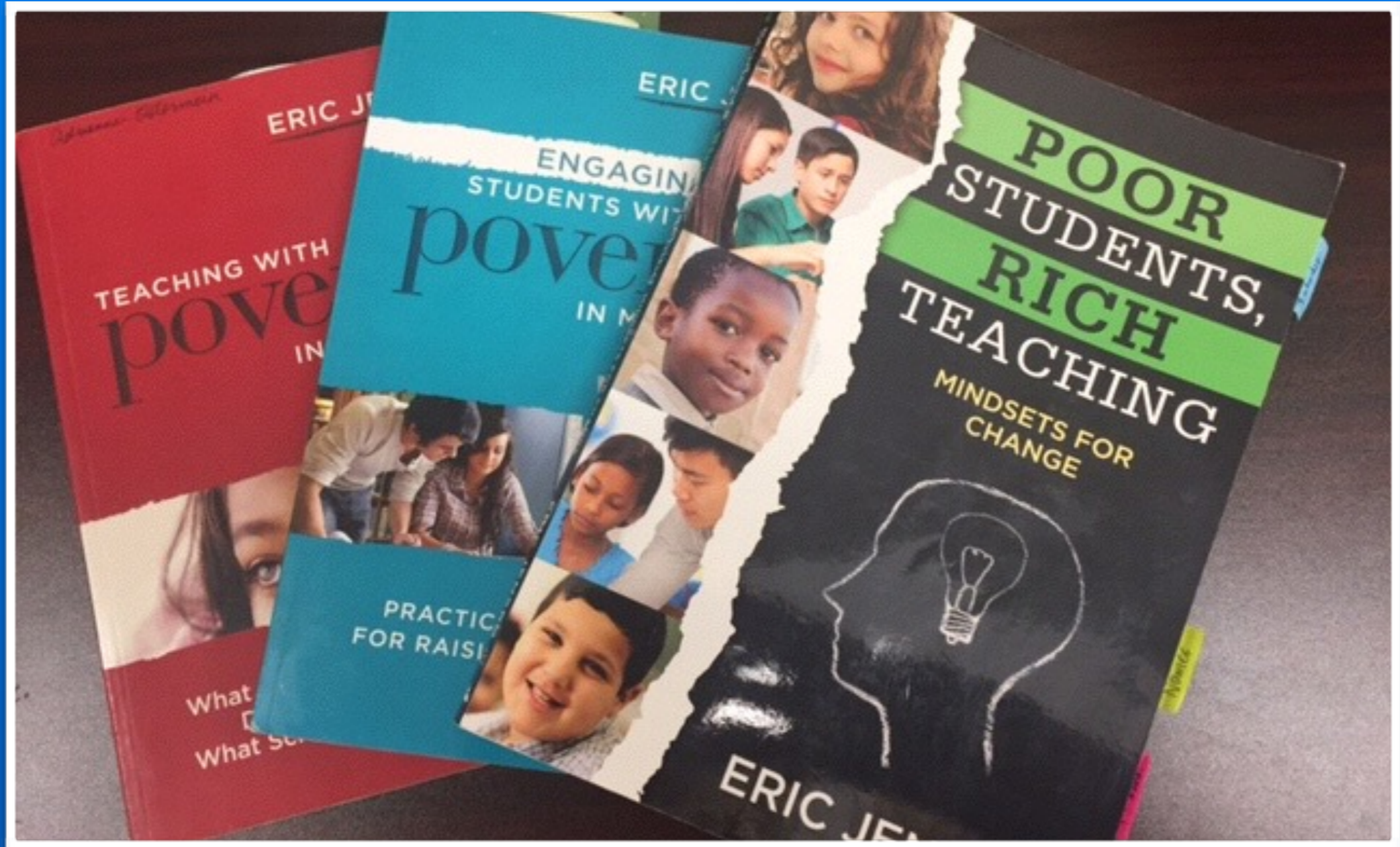
Name a dream for your life when you're retired

Share something most people don't know about you



Engaging “Difficult” Students

Teaching with the
Brain in Mind
based on the work of
Eric Jensen



Eric Jensen's work

with Poverty and the Brain

Brains Can Change

Brains adapt to suboptimal conditions

Brains can and do change everyday

You can facilitate that change, but you may have to change first

You'll have to let go of every single excuse you've ever heard

You CAN ensure your kids graduate college or career ready

What Really Works?

Relationships

Starting the Day off Right

Clear, Simple Rules

Interdependency

Hope-Building: Jobs

Relationships

Turn and Talk:

Why is it important to build relationships with your students?

What have you done to foster those relationships so far, both teacher-to-students and students-to-students?

Relationship Stats

First, quality interactions within a relationship provide instruction, correction, modeling, and support for students, forming the basis of a teacher-student relationship.

Second, a positive teacher-student relationship enhances students' sense of classroom security and increases their willingness to engage in the classroom.

Third, evidence shows that quality relationships can help students achieve more through greater connected engagement (Jensen, *Poor Students, Rich Teaching*).

Relationship Builders

💡 “Me Bag” Activity

💡 Writing Assignment #1 (student to student)

“What my peers don’t know about my life away from school.”

💡 Writing Assignment #2 (student to teacher)

“What I wish my teacher knew about me...”

Fast-track Relationship Builders

1 and Done

Do 1 favor or connection or show of empathy SO powerful, students remember it well

2 for 10

Invest 2 min./day for 10 consecutive days with a student most “needing” a connection

3 in 30

Discover 3 things about every student you have in the first 30 days

What Students Care About

“Do I feel respected?”

“Is my teacher empathetic and caring?”

“Is my teacher fair?”

“Is my teacher on my side? Do I get support and advocacy?”

“Does my teacher make class worth going to and enjoyable?”

Final Thoughts on Relationships

Build the strongest relationships with the students who need it most:

Class leaders that other students may follow

Those who may bully or annoy others

Students who are aggressive, interrupt or act out

Those least confident or secure

Your Turn

What are some ideas you want to implement next year to build relationships?

Write it down!

Starting the Day Off Right

Take a minute and consider how you begin each day, starting with the moment the kids arrive.

When Students Arrive

Welcoming music is playing

You greet students at the door with a smile

You welcome them using their name

You give compliments

You create anticipation

In the First 5-minutes

Open class with a smile

Begin with a positive greeting and upbeat attitude, not an announcement or command. Make it fit your personality. Ideas:

“Welcome! Do you know that today became a great day when you walked in the door?”

“Welcome! It is great to see you again today. You make my day. Thank you!”



Student Check-in

Consider asking students for a response to a question such as: On a scale of 1-5, how ready are you to start your day?


Any number below 3 needs a qualifier such as “what is impacting your ability to learn today?”

Then find an opportunity to meet with individuals to empathize and give support.

Using Google Classroom



Andrew Lantz
May 22

NOT DONE 

How are you feeling

How are you feeling today

please select an option and then leave a comment describing why you feel that way

Your answer

- 5 -Ready to learn
- 4
- 3-so-so
- 2
- 1-Not ready to learn at all

[SUBMIT](#)

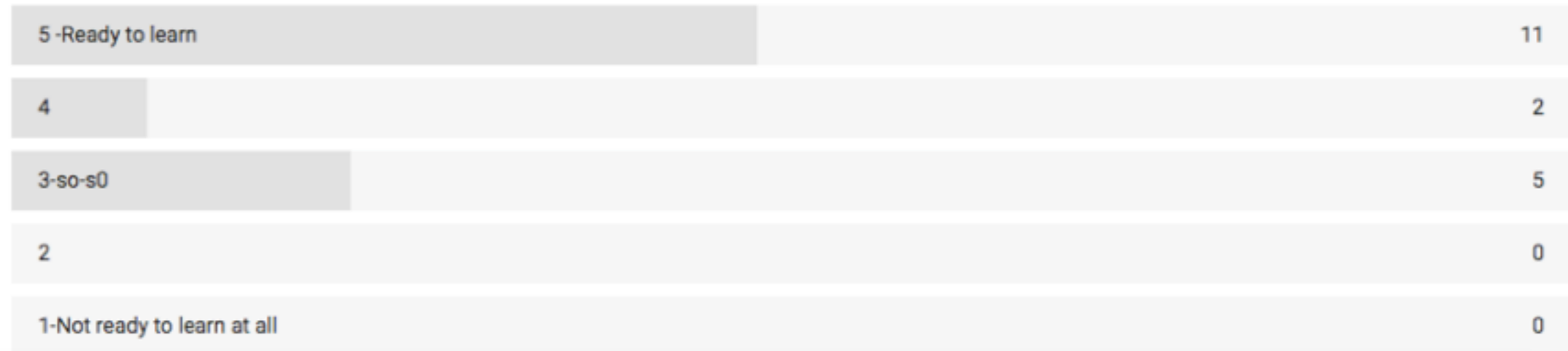
How are you feeling today

18

DONE

5

NOT DONE



Private comments



~~Monica Lynn Williams~~ May 17

I feel really good today and I got a lot of sleep and I have a lot of energy today and I did not have to baby sit last night.
I did not have to baby sit a 3 year old girl and a 2 year old boy

Private comments



~~Anonymous~~ May 4

My mind is on something else but I will suck it up and try to listen and pay attention to you .

Commit To Yourself

Talk with your group about something you will *commit to do* to revamp your morning routine.

Write it down!

Creating Interdependency

The Fifty-Fifty Rule: Split class time equally between social time and individual time.

Use activities to introduce students to the “connectedness” of everyone in the class.

Put students on teams, *then value the team outcomes*, more than the individual outcome.

Give students shared interest teams or buddies where each has an academic interest in helping the other succeed.

Frame success as, “How many *others you help*” vs. “What you get *for yourself*.”

2 Best Forms of Interdependency

- 💡 Working Partners (study buddies)
- 💡 Teamwork (4-6 member teams)

Key: Each collaboration requires maintenance.
Help students learn and use communication and conflict resolution tools.

Become a Team

Select a Team Leader - go around the circle and each person says either, “yes,” “no,” or “maybe.” NOTE: If you say no, you must give a reason

Come up with a **Team Name**

Come up with a **Team Cheer**

You have 3 minutes!

Team Share

Leaders stand

One leader gives three claps, we all give three claps back and “whoosh” of energy

Tell us your team name and share your cheer

Interdependency

Our Team Name is: _____

(You'll get time each week to complete boxes below)

Week #	#1	#2	#3	#4
Participation % on team				
% of Project completed				
Team sticks to class rules				
Contributions to our class				
On time % for team				
Team spirit & celebrations				
% of team helping others				

TOTALS: _____

“Type a quote here.”

–**Johnny Appleseed**

Classroom Jobs

As a team, try to come up with a real-world job title for the typical classroom jobs.

Professional Commitments

What is one change you'll make regarding interdependency (teams) or classroom jobs?

Write it down!

Closing

Remember, there are no “difficult” students, just unmotivated ones. Our job is to get them on track!

Evaluations

Please give us your feedback and
enjoy the rest of your **summer!**