

Preparing teachers to support students.

Intellectual preparation allows teachers to do their best teaching: when teachers deeply understand the text and unit themes they can help all students master grade-level content and standards.

Key Reading

Excerpt 1: *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* by Dr. Gholdy Mohammed, pg. 113-115

“Teachers need to see themselves as intellectual beings before cultivating the same within the students. ...

Students need to feel valued and loved. They need to know that they matter to all adults in the school. And they need to know they are capable of the intellectual greatness their ancestors practiced and promoted. This means teachers need to create a space of intellectualism where students see themselves as the next generation of thinkers. This will come through in their language use, topics taught, and the texts they engage in. ...

The teacher as the intellectual knows the theories of the world and the profession, as every problem in education can be explained by analyzing the right theories. This type of teacher could then see the brilliance in the minds of their students and hopefully teach to only cultivate their intellect.

Intellectualism should not be minimized. It can't be taught by just teaching the textbook or packaged curricular programs; it requires ingenuity and creativity from the teacher and the school leaders. The genius, intellect, and brilliance of students are within them. Teachers need to cultivate and “water” it so that students can lead a full and joyous life when they leave our schools.”

Excerpt 2: [“The Elements. Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning”](#) from Carnegie Corporation, November 2020

“Good teaching is rocket science. Teachers achieve this remarkable feat when they apply sophisticated instructional approaches that require a deep understanding of the subject matter and how students learn. When they do, students learn and grow at a rapid clip. They take on tough topics and complete in-depth assignments. They persist through uncertainty, grow more curious and confident in their abilities, and master complex skills and content. ...

Working with well-designed educative curriculum materials can transform the teaching experience. Rather than seeking out supplementary materials or redesigning lessons that don't feel like a good fit, teachers develop a deep understanding of the underlying concepts and structures that knit the curriculum together. As they learn, they enhance their content knowledge and their understanding of the rationale for the curriculum's learning sequences. Instead of redesigning lessons, they spend their time preparing to use high-quality instructional materials nimbly, freeing up energy to foster relationships with students and push them to meet rigorous standards."

Excerpt 3: "[The Elements, Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning](#)" from Carnegie Corporation, November 2020

"Every student should have access to high-quality, demanding curriculum and opportunities to think critically. Every teacher should know how to scaffold learning experiences so that students are supported to engage with complex materials and activities. Promoting equity means avoiding strategies that leave underprepared students out of standards-aligned learning based on their current skill level. If a discussion centers on a highly complex text, for example, a teacher can read the text to less-prepared students and engage their thinking at a complex level, even if the prerequisite skills are not fully established. When teachers develop deep expertise in both content and curriculum, they can apply relevant tools and supports to ensure underprepared students complete challenging work."

Excerpt 4: "[The Elements, Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning](#)" from Carnegie Corporation, November 2020

"Teacher-student relationships are key: Students are more likely to be engaged, have a positive outlook, bring their whole selves to school, and bring a positive mindset to their schoolwork when their relationships with teachers are strong. Teachers foster these connections by showing interest and confidence in students' abilities and respect for their communities, families, and cultures. Knowledge gained through these relationships enables teachers to select culturally relevant content and learning experiences and ensure that discussion and meaning-making affirm all students' identities."

Related Teacher Tools

- [Progress Monitoring and Assessment](#)
- [Preparing to Teach Fishtank ELA](#)
- [Supporting English Learners](#)

Sources

The following research was referenced in the development of Fishtank ELA writing materials:

- Frey, Nancy, and Douglas Fisher (2014). *Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom*. 2nd ed, ASCD.
- Frey, Nancy, and Douglas Fisher (2011). *The Formative Assessment Action Plan: Practical Steps to More Successful Teaching and Learning*. ASCD.
- Kang, G. (2016). Advocacy for Autonomy: Complicating the Use of Scripted Curriculum in Unscripted Spaces. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, Vol. 32: Iss. 1, Article 10. <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.2152>
- Muhammad, Gholdy (2020). *Cultivating Genius : A Four-Layered Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. New York: Scholastic. 113-115.
- Short, J.; Hirsh, S. (2020). *The Elements, Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning*. [New York: Carnegie Corporation.](https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/47/94/47947a81-4fdf-421b-a5e8-fbb211898ee0/elements_report_november_2020.pdf) https://media.carnegie.org/filer_public/47/94/47947a81-4fdf-421b-a5e8-fbb211898ee0/elements_report_november_2020.pdf