

An Inspirational Message from Abbey Nobles

2022 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Southeast Region Teacher of the Year



Hello Beginning Teachers!

It is that time of the year where we all start counting down the days until Winter Break. Daydreaming of what we would be doing if we were still at home in our PJs with a *real* mug of coffee and a magazine. It is that time of the year that anything extra seems to weigh heavy and everything feels extra. That time where we know the holidays are coming, but still forget to start doing our shopping and planning until the day before Winter Break. Papers are piling up, emails are going unread, and it is the sixth time in the last hour you have had to ask your students to please get a pencil.

We have two months to go, so how will we do it?

When I am overwhelmed, I crave humor. I have a deep need to laugh and put my stress aside to abide in the ethereal warmth belly laughing produces. The Blue Zones researchers say that joy builds resilience and increases creative thinking. **Ouch.** Once more, **joy builds resilience and increases**

creative thinking.

I hope you are thinking what I am thinking. Yep-I definitely did not laugh today, or yesterday, or really this whole month. So let us change that together. Our classrooms desperately need laughter and fun. With all the stressors we have that emphasize student performance and proficiency, I venture to state a hypothesis that enjoyment yields engagement.

It is vital to continue to target our most extreme users*, build their capacities, and laugh with them. Our students who are coming to us with behavior and academic needs, language barriers, and difficult life circumstances need a reprieve. The truth is, we all need FUN. We need to remember that we are scaffolding skills for students to engage in higher academic discourse, achieve high standards, and last a seven-hour day seated, without flaw. We need to scaffold their skills by laughing a little while increasing their capacity to do hard things and think deeper.

It is the time of the year where we all need to take space to pause and laugh with our students. It is our mission to not only push content but foster a sense of enjoyment and fun in our days. If we as teachers are not having fun, you better believe our STUDENTS are not having fun. It is a harsh reality.

So how do we do it?

The key is doing it right alongside them. You cannot expect your students to do something you do not do. Get on a team and have some fun.

- Play games (with them- be on their team!) Middle and High School students LOVE UNO. They LOVE UNO Championships; they LOVE making up their own UNO rules....
 - Did you know you can also make this a team building activity where they design their own rules and discuss/debate the importance of why rules exist?
- Minute to Win-It games (with them- be on a team!)

- Gami-fy learning (resource [1](#), [2](#), [3](#))
 - Blooket
 - Kahoot
 - Create engaging games: Scavenger Hunts, Webquests, Student Centered/Inquiry based learning
- Simple daily silly check-ins (they can write them or discuss them or both! AND they can lead into more SEL questions every so often. This is an excellent way to continue to get to know your students)
 - Which fast food restaurant has the best milkshake?
 - Would you rather have duck feet or cat feet?
 - Pancakes or Waffles?
 - Something I wish

Share your fun with my team and me at #NCStoriED and if there is something amazing happening or ethereal joy, please tag us or send in your story to the team to share via [this google form!](#)

Enjoy your next two months of FUN!

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*Most extreme users are our kiddos with intensive needs whatever they may be: needs for movement, redirection, academic, behavioral, language, etc.

I wasn't born to "just teach," I was born to inspire others, to change people, and to never give up; even when faced with challenges that seem impossible.

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