



Find Meaning (and Fun) Amongst a Mess

Because of what school has become for not only educators, but students as well, it is not often thought of as being fun. Instead, it's seen as something that students must endure in order to become productive members of society. I disagree. I believe that learning can be something that is both meaningful and fun. Throughout this book, I hope to introduce many ways that you can create a classroom that is not only fun and empowering for your students, but also fun and empowering for you as an educator. I will include opportunities to engage, be empowered, and reflect throughout each chapter. I wanted to write a book that was personalized and meaningful to those who were reading it. In order for this to be a personal journey, these calls to action are going to be very important. Let's jump right in.

REFLECT



Think about how you feel in the morning before school. Are you excited? What would it feel like to be excited as you go to school every morning, and how might that impact classroom culture?

There are so many things that we miss out on because we are afraid of failure. We fear that a risky learning experience won't go well

or just won't go the way that we expected. This fear of failure keeps so many of us from doing what we know is best for our learners. What if I take this risk and my test scores don't improve? What if I try something new and my students don't like it? What if I do something that

I've never done before and the results aren't what I expected? The "what ifs" haunt us and hold us back from doing so many amazing things. But what if you take the risk and scores do improve? What if you try something new and your students love it? What if you do something you have never done before and the results are so much more than you could have imagined?

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EMPOWER



What is something that you have wanted to try in your classroom but haven't because of your fear of failure? Take that fear of failure and change your perspective. For example, instead of "What if a Makerspace is just a mess and my students cannot control themselves with that much freedom?" ask yourself, "What if a Makerspace helps my students make connections to the standards and learn how to control themselves when given the freedom to make their own choices?"



Today's learners need passionate educators. They need educators who know their own strengths and are willing to allow their passions to drive what they do in the classroom every day. Educators who have an intense enthusiasm for what they do each day are the educators who leave the biggest impact on their students. Ask anyone who has gone through the education system, and when they describe the teachers who impacted them the most, they will usually describe a teacher who was passionate about learning, his or her content area, or just life in general. They remember those teachers because passion is contagious and leaves its mark on anyone who comes in contact with it.

ENGAGE



Visit <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/dirt/index.php> to find your strengths. Reflect on the results and think about how those strengths can help you find meaning in your career as an educator.

Continuing to learn as an educator is imperative and no longer an option for today's teachers. If we stop learning, we stop growing. If we stop growing, we will no longer be able to reach today's learners. They will continue to evolve into learners who do not need the information that we are offering. However, if we choose to learn and grow with them, we will stay relevant and will avoid the very real possibility of becoming obsolete as a profession.