

Learning Partnerships in School Counseling:

A closing the gap opportunity.

Amy Olson, *MMSD Lead Counselor*
Mindy Willard, *MMSD School Counseling
and Transitions Coordinator*



Introductions

Mindy Willard, MA

**School Counseling and Transitions
Coordinator MMSD**

Amy Olson, MA,

Interim Lead Counselor MMSD

James Madison Memorial High School,
11 years as 9-12 Counselor, Department
Chair, School Based Leadership Team,
worked with Scholars of Color, AVID,
Personalized Pathways, and Summer Melt
Counselor

Toki Middle School, Counselor

Memorial Middle School, Social Studies

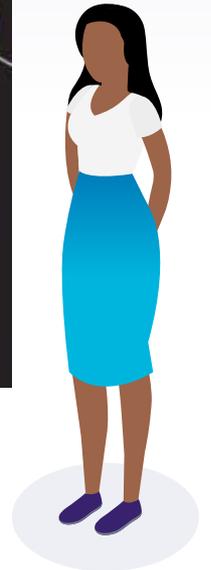
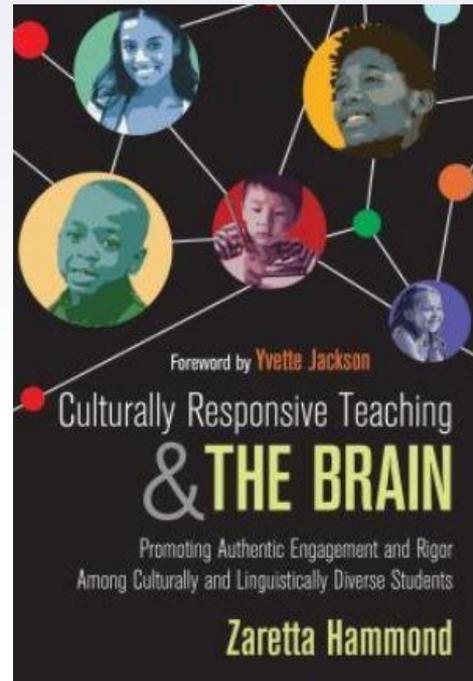
MA in Counseling and Psychology in
Education, **University of South Dakota**

BA in History, Secondary Education, and
Social Studies Teaching, **Augustana
University**



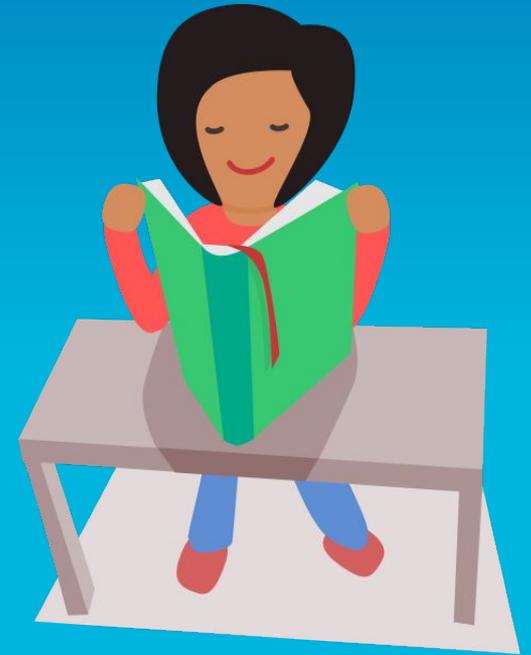
Outcomes

1. **Learn key components of a Learning Partnership.**
2. **Understand how to build and use a LP with culturally and linguistically diverse students.**
3. **Build a culture of care to improve your practice and positively impact all students.**



“**Learning Partnerships** will breed an unshakable **belief** that **marginalized students** not only can but will **improve** their school **achievement.**”

~Z. Hammond



Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, Zaretta Hammond, 2015

The Why

- ▶ **“Wisconsin has the regrettable distinction of ranking among the worst states in the nation for racial inequality.”**
- ▶ **“Racial disparity in Wisconsin is not inevitable but closing the gap will require a broad focus and multifaceted approach.”***

*Race in the Heartland,
<https://www.epi.org/files/uploads/Race-in-the-Midwest-FI-NAL-Interactive-1.pdf>

From Dependent to Independent

“Many culturally & linguistically diverse students are dependent learners who don’t get adequate support to facilitate their cognitive growth. Consequently, they are not able to activate their own neuroplasticity.” (Hammond, p14)



Dependent Learners

Students of color, English learners, and low income students:

- ➔ routinely receive less instruction in higher order skills development than other students
- ➔ have less challenging and more repetitive curriculum focused on skills
- ➔ denied the opportunity to engage in the productive struggle

Resulting in



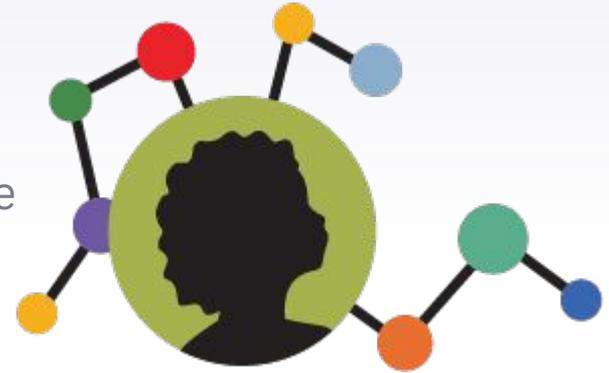
A **disproportionate** number of culturally linguistically **diverse students** are **DEPENDENT LEARNERS**

What's the difference?

The Dependent Learner	The Independent Learner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is dependent on the teacher to carry most of the cognitive load of a task always• Is unsure of how to tackle a new task• Cannot complete a task without scaffolds• Will sit passively and wait if stuck until teacher intervenes• Doesn't retain information well or "doesn't get it"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relies on the teacher to carry some of the cognitive load temporarily• Utilizes strategies and processes for tackling a new task• Regularly attempts new tasks without scaffolds• Has cognitive strategies for getting unstuck• Has learned how to retrieve information from long-term memory

From Dependent to Independent

- ▶ We need to help our students of color, low income students, and English learners **move from Dependent to *Independent Learners***.



**Create a Learning
Partnership: an Alliance**



The How:

3 Essential Components for a Successful Alliance:

Shared understanding
and agreement to
tackle specific goal

Share understanding
and agreement about
tasks necessary to
reach goal

Relational bond based
on mutual trust

Leveraging the Learning Partnership

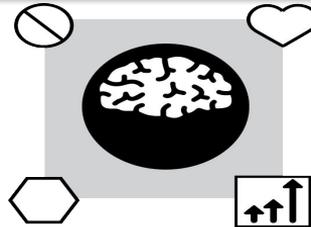
RAPPORT

*Building Trusting Relationships Across Difference
(funds of knowledge)*



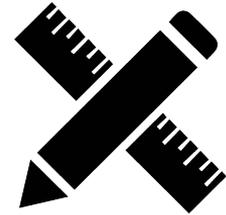
ALLIANCE

*Developing Mindsets for Success
(High expectations and academic press)*



COGNITIVE INSIGHT

*Using Formative Assessment for Independent Learning
(Self efficacy)*



Focal Student

- From [Hammond, Chapter 5](#), pp 82-86
- *A teacher focuses in on how dependent learners respond to curriculum and instruction. **The goal is to make adjustments in order to better engage these students.***
- As a counselor, focus on how learner responds to our supports (MTMDSS). If it is working, great! If not, MAKE ADJUSTMENTS!

► Alliance with Focal Student

- From [Hammond, Chapter 6](#). Pp 92-96
- *Alliances are conscious pacts between the teacher/ally and a dependent learner student to **increase academic independence by building trust and rapport.***

Amy's Learning Partnership Experiences - 1st Attempt

- ▶ 9th grade "Academic At-Risk" from one of our SIP target groups
- ▶ Schedule weekly check-in with student.
- ▶ Teachers found success with their focal student in their curriculum (daily meeting, use scaffolding in the moment, had control over expectations).
- ▶ Counselor success was so-so

Big Takeaways:

- ▶ Making adjustments was hard when support was not a clear intervention and there was not a specific goal (pass all classes to get off at-risk list was too vague).
- ▶ Easy to form the relationship, but hard to make change with sporadic meetings.
- ▶ Need to be consistent. Need to have specific goal(s).

Amy's Learning Partnership Experiences - 2nd Attempt

- ▶ 12th grade African American, 1st Gen., Low Income Student
- ▶ Post-Secondary planning (application, FAFSA, enrolling, etc)
- ▶ Followed senior timeline (Tier 1) but had 1:1 check-in after each activity.
- ▶ Success!!

Big Takeaways:

- ▶ Post-Secondary Planning is in our locus of control (we own this).
- ▶ Much easier to make adjustments to my curriculum, my MTMDSS work to meet the student's needs.
- ▶ Adjustments I made for this student helped me with all of my seniors.
- ▶ Senior felt good about helping my work.

Example

FOCAL STUDENT A.C.		Goal/Learning Target: Find and apply to a City College in Chicago close to where his grandma lives.	
What is working?	What is not working?		
He loves coming to my office	Missed the English class presentation.	Observations:	What scaffolds could help this student?
When I give him a specific task he will follow through with it.	Mom wasn't able to come to parent night	Still talks to his mentor/youth football coach - think he would be best to help mom with FAFSA.	Parchment Instructions Sheet (do we have one?)
	Created parchment account with the wrong school		Use computer in student services instead of study hall so he can ask questions.

Goal Achieved!





Let's hear from the experts!

Do you have a Learning Partnership experience you can share?

Learning Partnerships in Post Secondary Planning



Af Am students were 1.85 times more likely to say **School Counselor is most influential person** in their thinking about post-secondary education*

ARE SCHOOL COUNSELORS IMPACTING UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS' THINKING ABOUT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION? A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE STUDY, Blaire Cholewa, Ph.D., Christina K. Burkhardt, Michael F. Hull

https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/PDEs/WebinarPowerPoints/1096-2409-19-1-144_4.pdf

▶ Learning Partnerships to a Culture of Care

Building a culture of care



Helps students open up, feel relaxed and



Accept the academic push from the teacher!

Trust Generators

*School Counselors
have this down!*

Familiarity

Students see you in a particular setting, crossing paths at lunch, community events, etc.

Similarity of Interests

Share your hobbies, sports team, social cause you're passionate about

Concern

Genuine concern for important events in a student's life, asking follow-up questions.

Competence

Allow for students to demonstrate skill/share knowledge, give them a sense of expertise.

Selective Vulnerability

Be human, share personal challenges you had as a learner or current progress to learn new skill.

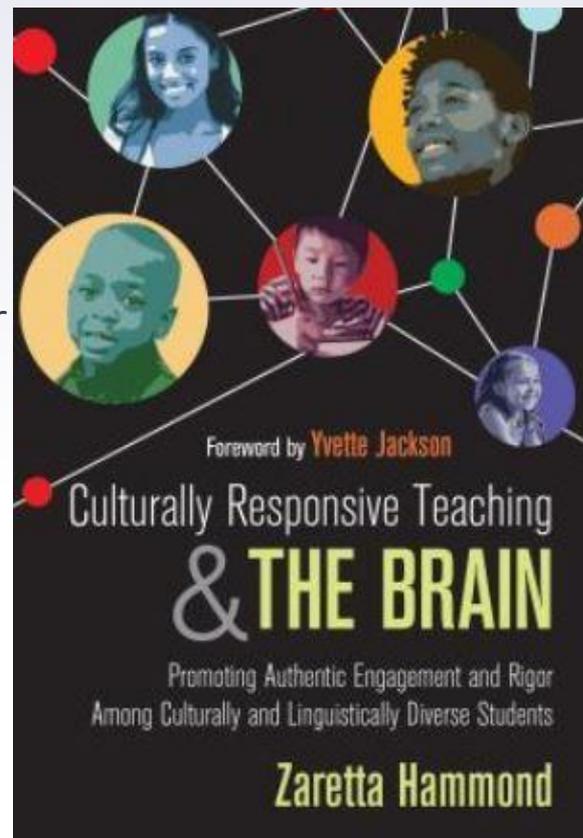


Recap:

1. Take learners from being dependent to independent by creating a learning partnership and learning from them how to make your practice better!
2. Chose a focal student that is willing to create an alliance with you (cannot be one-sided relationship).
3. Document your findings.
4. Continue with a culture of care in your work helping all students access their potential.

Resources

1. [Buy the book](#) and use the [reading guide](#) or other professional learning community tools.
2. Take an online continuing ed course (one example [here](#))
3. Check out Dr. Hammond's [website](#) and follow her on social media!
4. Start a Learning Partnership!



► Tools you can use

[One page document with “basics” and documentation grid](#)

[Planning for Learning Partnerships](#) (*East High School, MMSD*)

[Conversation Stems for Learning Partnerships](#) (*Memorial High School, MMSD*)



Do the best you can until
you know better. Then
when you know better, do
better.

~Maya Angelou