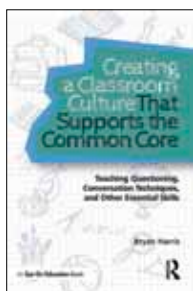


**Creating a Classroom Culture That Supports the Common Core.** Bryan Harris. Routledge, 2014, 90 pages.

Educators across the nation are asking a million-dollar question: Will the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) make a positive impact? In *Creating a Classroom Culture That Supports the Common Core*, Bryan Harris explores this question by examining substantive changes in daily instruction. Through thoughtful design, and the inclusion of quality, relevant information and resources, this book showcases how, “if done right, the Common Core has the potential to positively change the education landscape and result in increased learning, achievement, and motivation” for our students.



As we implement the CCSS, educators must strategically integrate content knowledge and students’ ability to demonstrate what they have learned; *Creating a Classroom Culture That Supports the Common Core* is a resource that can support this transition. Throughout the book, Harris focuses on Common Core skills and using them to engage students. Readers will find the topics (such as managing behavior, rigor, and critical thinking) relevant for all grade levels. Each chapter is filled with strategies for implementation, and includes reflection questions and additional resources to extend knowledge.

While it appears that the target audience for the book is classroom teachers, the topics and strategies in it should inspire reflection for school leaders on what we should promote for student success and what we should observe in our daily practice. For instance, a recurring theme in this book is that “active learning, student participation,

and engagement in talking about their learning and knowledge [are] central to helping students meet content standards and 21st Century skills.” How are we, as instructional leaders, promoting this premise?

This book would make an excellent guide or book study as we lead our staffs to identify and discuss the hallmarks of a Common Core classroom. We must lead the same active learning, participation, and engagement for our staffs as we do for students. After all, shouldn’t we practice what we preach?

This book moved me to think in a new way about the CCSS and what they can do for our students. As a leader, I look forward to implementing Harris’s strategies in conversations with my staff as a whole and with individual staff members.

*Reviewed by Erin Simpson, principal of Overlook Elementary School in Wadsworth, Ohio.*

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