

Not on the curriculum:
Programming to meet the social &
emotional needs of teenagers



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Monna McDiarmid

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An international school counselor, I help teenagers with their big life stuff. Writer & photographer passionate about travel, good food & lovely living spaces

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(Presentation layout inspired by the
film credits of Woody Allen films)

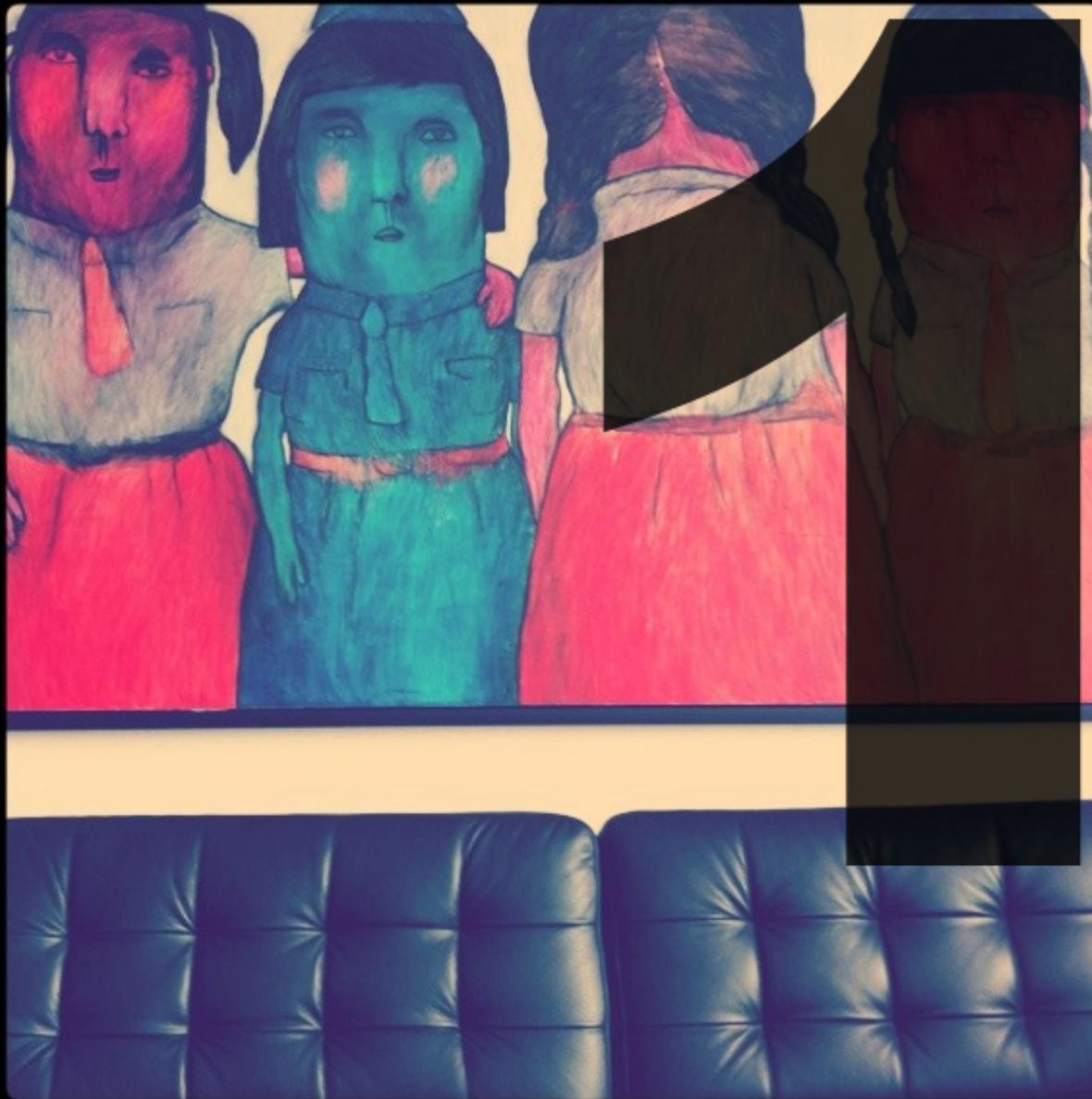


Children are hard wired for struggle when they get here. When we hold that perfect little baby in our hands, our job is not to say, “I need to keep her perfect.” Our job is to say “You are imperfect and you are wired for struggle and you are worthy of love and belonging.”

~ Dr. Brene Brown

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There is never going to be a perfect time.
Start now (even if you are scared).

What are your strengths as
an educational programmer?
(Go ahead... toot your own horn!)

My strengths as a programmer

- Knowing my audience through 14 years at 5 international schools (AP and IB); 4 schools as College and Guidance Counselor
- Have worked on teams and as the only counselor in my division
- B. Ed and M. Ed in Curriculum & Instruction
- Creativity
- Instructional tech fan (blogging, social networking)
- Fearless about programming
- Constantly learning from my mistakes



Begin with an **obvious need**.
Be intentional about your goal-setting.
What skills, knowledge & attitudes
do you want students to learn?

Think about the most pressing need
for students at your school.
What do they need **help** with?

Keep **the kids** in mind.































Write down the most pressing
need at your school.

*“Ms. McDiarmid, how can I
feel good about myself?”*



You don't need to be part of
a huge counseling team.
(Many of us are not!)

Ask for help from a friend or colleague.
(Two heads are definitely better than one.)

The best presenter might be another
teacher or student or a team of people.
Our schools are full of experts.



NIST Programming Team:

Joachim Ekstrom, Monna McDiarmid, Michelle Vogel,
Brenda Manfredi, Randy Wallis and Damien Pitter



Come up with an approach or
format for your program.

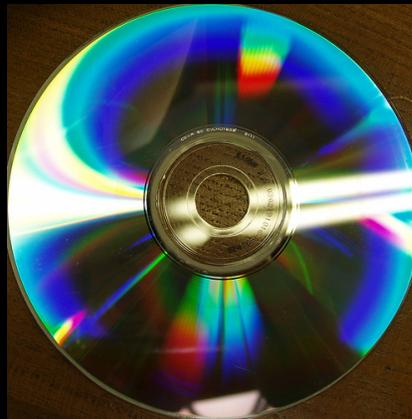
Sometimes the format will grow naturally out of the topic.

Personal stories
and pop culture texts
are far more compelling
for our students
than lectures.

(You can quote me on that.)



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deep learning

Avoid text-heavy power points.

(Don't read every word... this puts
students and adults to sleep)

Use interesting images.



{Take a risk and use your own photos.}

Sometimes the best program
is not a program at all!

~ unprogramming ~

- Post affirmations in student bathrooms
- Poster campaign/photo exhibit
- Show a relevant film/tv episode in the lobby
- On your office door, post BIG questions you'd like students to consider. Leave paper for students to respond.
- Write a blog post and email link to parents and students
- Provide a list of resources/links on your blog
- Write a poem to the students

A poem about IB projected scores (by Monna McDiarmid)

IB Projected Scores do not define you.

The numbers may tell us
the following things:
how easy you find school
(or not)
how diligently you have been working
(or not)
how you performed on your most recent assessments
(or not)
if school is where you shine
(or not)
and how easy it is
to keep your butt in a chair.

They may help you get into university
but the numbers are just part of your story.

Don't let the numbers tell you who you are
or who you can become.

The goals that shaped the format for our sessions about body image & self-esteem:

- Talk with girls and boys separately within year groups. (Grades 8, 9, 10 and 11)
- To better understand students' perspectives, we would begin by asking students to consider a number of questions individually, in pairs and small groups and listen carefully to their answers.
- To use YouTube videos that engaged and challenged student assumptions about what is beautiful and acceptable.
- To share our own stories about our relationships with food and bodies (anorexia and over-eating).
- To challenge students to be kinder to themselves & others.
- Format: 90-minute interactive session

Don't believe everything you think.



Create opportunities for active learning
and authentic participation.

Student-centered programming:

- Draw, paint, illustrate
- Role play or create a skit
- Think, pair, share
- Brainstorm
- Simulations
- Write/journal
- Blog and other social media
- Goal-setting
- Challenge students to come up with programming ideas



Beg, borrow or steal some time.

Be prepared to explain to admin
how your program will benefit
students & the school community.
(Be as specific as possible.)

Where does that time come from?

- Tutor or homeroom time
- Teacher Advisory Groups
- Do a guest spot in Health/Wellness class (or volunteer to teach Wellness class)
- Ask teachers if there is a natural fit between this topic and their course
- Ask administrators for class time; have a rationale prepared
- Organize a group to meet at lunch or after school
- Ask for some secretarial support to free up some of your time for planning and programming sessions

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When presenting, it's okay to tell kids you are feeling scared or vulnerable.

(They know how that feels.)

“Owning our story can be hard
but not nearly as difficult as
spending our lives running from it.
Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky
but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on
love and belonging and joy—the experiences
that make us the most vulnerable.
Only when we are brave enough to
explore the darkness will we discover
the infinite power of our light.”

Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*



ordinarycourage.com



Assess learning and teaching with student feedback and/or help from a critical friend.

Get feedback immediately.
Keep the survey short.

Two simple survey models

1. The Traffic Light Model

- What should we **start** doing?
- What should we **continue** doing?
- What should we **stop** doing?

2. Question & Answer

- What is the most important thing you learned today?
- What is a question that you still have?

Checking in with students

Private/Anonymous:

- Pen and pencil
- Pre-test and post test
- Google documents and forms
- Survey Monkey
- Email
- Direct Message on Twitter

Public:

- Comments to a blog post
- By holding up the appropriate number of fingers, students give the session a score out of ten

Soon after the session, reflect on the success of the program and make notes about what you will change next time.
(Always write it down.)



Start multiple conversations about
this issue via other media.

what is beautiful?

We invited students and teachers to participate in a conversation about what is beautiful.

Here's what we asked of the participants:

- 1) Name your **superpower**
- 2) Explain your superpower
- 3) Have your portrait taken (or supply your own photograph)

Join NIST's "What is Beautiful" campaign! Here's all you need to do:

- 1) Send a photo of yourself for your poster (at least 3000 px wide or high) OR have your photo taken in Room 4309 on Monday April 25 between 9 am and 3 pm.
- 2) Tell us what your superpower is, what quality in you is beautiful. This will be your poster's title. Ex. **Confidence** is beautiful.
- 3) Write a couple of sentences about your superpower or the quality that makes you beautiful. Ex. "I trust in what I know and what I can do and in my ability to learn what I need to."
- 4) EMAIL these three items to Ms. McDiarmid by Tuesday April 26.



What is Beautiful in you?

35 people volunteered but it wasn't easy.
It made them feel exposed & vulnerable.
(Also, bragging is not cool in all cultures!)

Two examples:

“Why not reinvent the wheel?
Isn't that how we got propellers?
I like photographs that are out of focus,
listen to movie dialogue like music,
and am inspired by song lyrics I thought
said something else. I like big ideas and
all the space between, where little ideas grow.”

Damien Pitter

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Damien Pitter



**DIVERGENT
THINKING**

is Beautiful.

“I’m a complicated creature.
I can be uptight sometimes but I’m also
kind and committed to helping others.
I know and accept myself.”

Monna McDiarmid

“I’m a complicated creature. I can be uptight sometimes
but I’m also kind and committed to helping others.
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**SELF-
KNOWLEDGE** is Beautiful.

Then Damien Pitter took these 35 posters
and made them into a **short film** which
we played for the entire high school.
(That was really cool!)

Then we **framed** the posters and the “What is Beautiful?” campaign took up residence in the foyer of the high school.

Students and staff spent their free time reading about their colleagues and peers.





*I wish that people always wore a sign
with their super power written on it. I have
learned so much about people I thought I knew.*

~ NIST Student, Grade 10

facebook, a manifesto
and a new blog

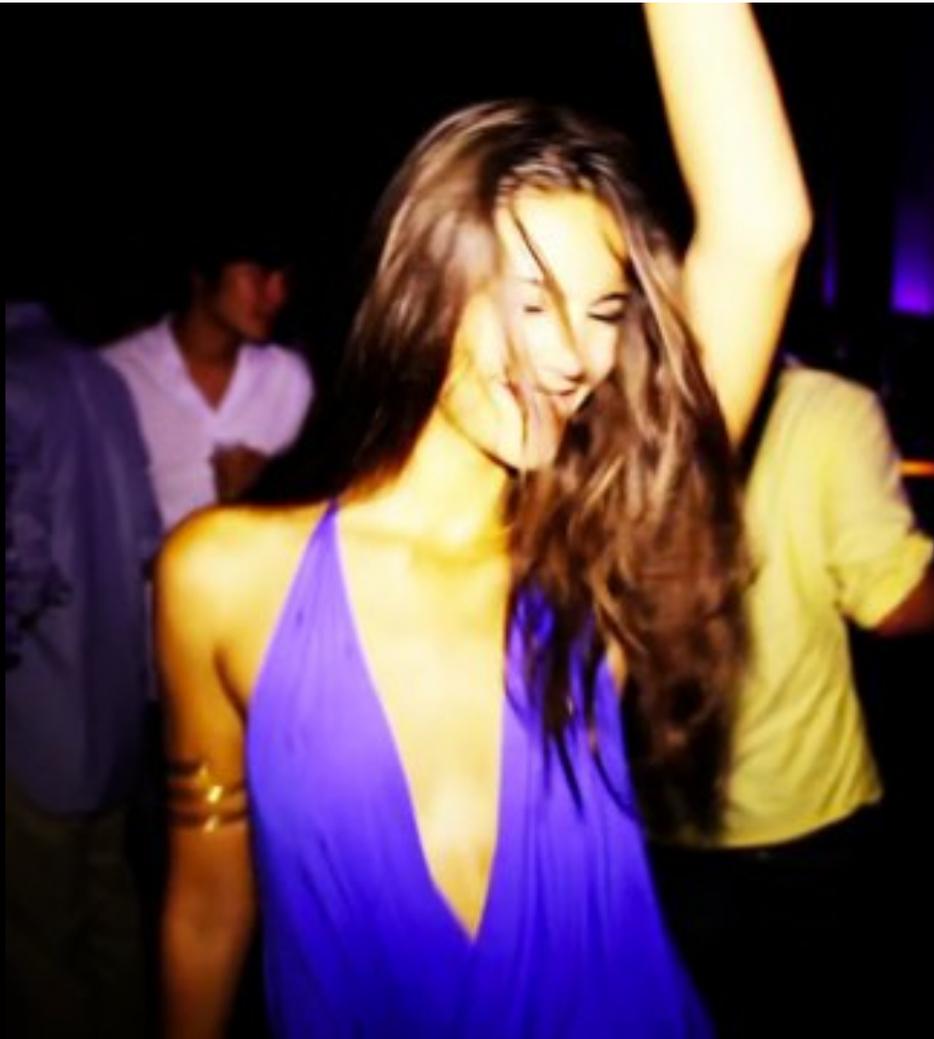
I posed the students' most frequently asked question "How can I feel good about myself?" to my **network of wise friends on Facebook**.
(Not surprisingly, I received a lot of great ideas.)



A Confidence Manifesto for Girls

{<http://thegirlsguidetohappiness.tumblr.com>}

1. Think of a person who loves you unconditionally. Love yourself like that.
2. Don't compare yourself to others.
3. Flex your super power.
4. Be vulnerable.
5. Treat your body with respect.
6. Try new activities.
7. Be careful with your words.
8. Stand for something.
9. Dream big.
10. Hang out with people who like and inspire you.
11. Practice joy.
12. Stand up for yourself.



The Girls' Guide to Happiness

{<http://thegirlsguidetohappiness.tumblr.com>}

tweet!





Monna McDiarmid

@YISUni Yokohama, Japan

At Yokohama International School in Japan, we are sending our seniors on to great universities and life-adventures, one extraordinary student at a time.

<http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/mcdiarmid/>

Spread the conversation

- Use Google docs during and after the session
- Write a post on your blog; ask students to comment
- Encourage students to blog about the topic
- Twitter
- Facebook: Post an update or create a group/event
- Share images on Flickr or Followgram
- Make short videos and podcasts
- Use surveys
- Find ways to put this conversation on exhibit

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Expand the program.

Expanding your program

- What are the other topics you'd like to address and in what way?
- What is needed and appropriate for each grade level? Develop a scope and sequence.
- In the spring, submit a proposal for next year's sessions. Secure time in advance.
- Do you need some PD as a presenter? Identify your needs and make a request.
- Would the ASCA model help provide a framework to your programming?

easy

STAPLES

EN GROS

Photo Credits

- Black and white photograph of baby and “What is Beautiful?” photographs and campaign posters by Damien Pitter
- Black and white photograph of a young woman and Jack the dog on Yale campus by Streeter Phillips
- Black and white photograph of a young man in a café by Jin Yi Roh
- Other photographs by Monna McDiarmid