

# No Child Left Behind

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No child left behind (NCLB) is proposed in 2001 by George W. Bush to improve students' individual outcomes. The Act supports standards-based education reform. Therefore, high standards and measurable goals were set to encourage student learning. According to the standards, the states develop assessments in basic skills which will be given to students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. Students' progress in reading and math are measured annually.

As a result of NCLB, America's nine-year-olds posted the best scores in reading and math in the history of the report. Moreover, the achievement gaps in reading and mathematics between nine-year-olds are at an all-time low.

Therefore, my report will focus on discussing how NCLB works in Los Molinos Elementary school to help student learning. Furthermore, I will discuss some of the content standards in the United States and review part of the Taiwan's standards.

## Guiding Principles for Education

First of all, I would like to introduce the first two guiding principles in Hacienda La Puente Unified School District.

1. We believe students, parents, staff and community have a shared responsibility for the establishment of a professional culture built upon dedication, honesty, integrity, pride, perseverance, collaboration, teamwork, and mutual trust and respect.
2. We believe students, parents, staff and community have a shared responsibility for recognizing the diverse learning styles and individual needs of our students and ensuring all students meet high learning standards.

According to the four principles, we know that every member in the society shares a responsibility to make sure No Child Left Behind. However, instead of focusing on meeting the standards, the prior principle to lead students to success still focuses on establishing a professional culture.



The guiding principles signed by the leading Educators

It is the professional culture which impresses me the most while observing the English teaching in Los Molinos elementary school. Students knew how to respect others while they were expressing their opinions. They listened to any speaker without interrupting, which made everyone feel respected. Learning atmosphere was positive. No laughing at or teasing the student who made a mistake during the class. In addition to assisting every child to meet the standards, the education here pays a lot of attention to educating manners. I experienced the profound culture before I found out the secret of leaving no child behind.



The RSP students also learn the polite way for asking



The most precious professional culture --- Respect

According to the guiding principles, I would explore the responsibility devoted by students, teachers, and principal in Los Molinos Elementary School.

## The Responsibility for Different Roles

### 1. Students' responsibility:

Just as mentioned, students learn to respect prior to studying. In Los Molinos, students, whether in kindergarten, RSP (resource specialist program), or higher graders, behave properly in class. They know to raise their hands and wait until they are allowed to speak. They love to share and cooperate with others. They respect classmates as well as teachers. In every classroom, no shouting or arguing occurred. During my observation, I found teachers equally respect students as independent individuals. Teachers illustrated and expressed themselves politely. Therefore, students have good models to follow.

I found the secret to student's good behavior is that rules are set clearly for students to follow. The rules are the agreements between teachers and students. There are posters demonstrating the rules posted in the classrooms and campus. Then, a traffic light cards poster is designed to monitor students' behavior. Students have to take responsibility for their behaviors. If a student gets a warning for the first time, he has to change his green card into yellow. If he gets the second warning, then the yellow card changes into orange and the student has no recess. If the student gets three warnings a day, then the principal or the teacher will call his/her parents. Sometimes, the parents have to come to school to bring the student home. Clear rules make the classroom a democratic society.

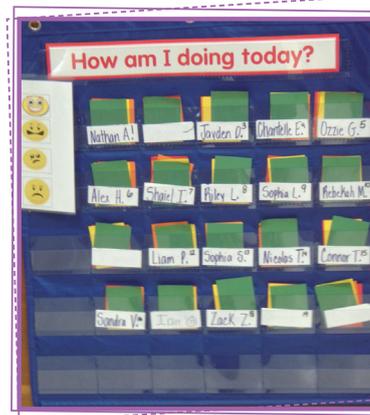




I was also attracted by students' pledge every morning. In each classroom, a flag is displayed in the front. Students have to pledge in the beginning of everyday.



The agreements on respect between teachers and students



Traffic light cards for students to monitor their behavior

## 2. Teachers' responsibility---meet each student needs

Teachers are professionals in engaging students' learning. Because of the national economic deficiency, some teachers have to teach a combo class which includes two different graders in one class. That is to say a teacher may have the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders together in one class. Actually, this kind of situation did happen in schools in Los Angeles. What impressed me is that teachers designed their teaching simultaneously to meet different individual's needs and engaged every student. How do they design the teaching?



Stations for reading and spelling



A station for reading fluency

First of all, teachers launch workstations in learning classroom. Not only are there different graders in one classroom, but also students are with different learning abilities. Therefore, teachers differentiate materials in stations for students with different needs and reading levels. The station could be reading comprehension station, listening comprehension station, math station, reading fluency station, spelling station, or Multi media learning station.

With workstations, teachers could have more time to meet with small flexible groups for guiding reading or skill instruction. For the learning behind students, they would feel comfortable when learning in small groups. For most of the students, they learn at their own paces which can promote positive attitudes toward education and also elicit better behaviors. Students cooperate with each other when learning in centers.



A station for math

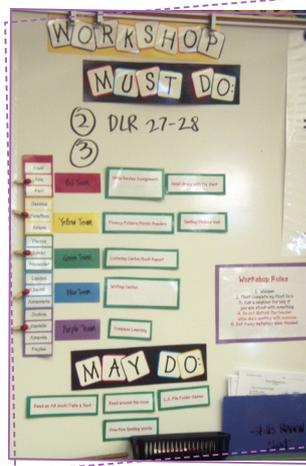


A station for reading comprehension

Secondly, teachers also plan “May do list” and “Must do List” to meet students’ needs. For the advanced students, they could have more activities to do after they finish their “Must Do.” For example, some of the “May Do lists” are AR book reading, file folder game, or practice spelling words. Therefore, every student is busy in learning. The proficient students could have more advanced practices after they finish the “Must do List.”



May do list



Must & May do list



Students can learn at their own speed. An AR system to test reading comprehension.

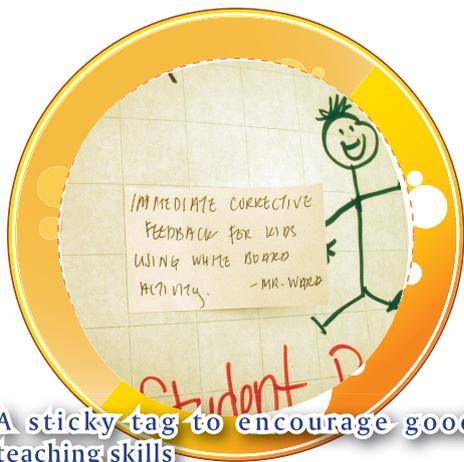
Thirdly, teachers write teaching diary to record their teaching and students’ learning. Moreover, teachers also report students’ weekly progresses for parents to take part in kids’ learning. In this way, teachers and parents can monitor students’ progresses. For the learning behind students, teachers will spend time with them in the working station. If the student still needs help, there will be a pull out system for him to get more support to make sure that every student can meet the standards.

Last but not least, teachers are willing to share and learn. Although, the school day ends at 2:15, most of the teachers in Los Molinos stay at school preparing and discussing their teaching until 4 or 5 o’clock. They share and obtain needed teaching techniques from others. Therefore, I found that from K-5 the teaching develops a spiral curriculum which helps students themselves to scaffold knowledge consistently.



### 3. Principal's responsibility---teachers' and students' counselor

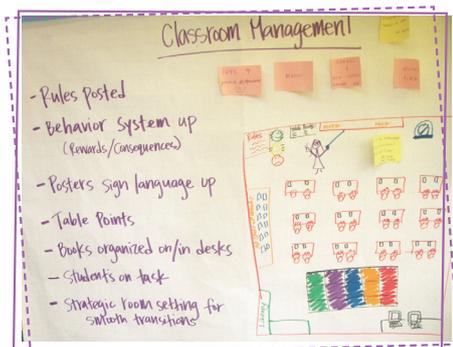
The major responsibility of a principal is to assist teachers to improve their teaching and instructional techniques to help students raise their achievements. The principal visits classrooms to observe teachers' teaching every day. She observes every teacher and gives feedback at least 3 times in one semester. Ms. Lin, the principal, tried to find out teachers' good teaching techniques to share with staff and also assist teachers who need help. She recorded teachers' teaching merits on a sticky note and tag it on the board of teachers' room to encourage superior teaching skills.



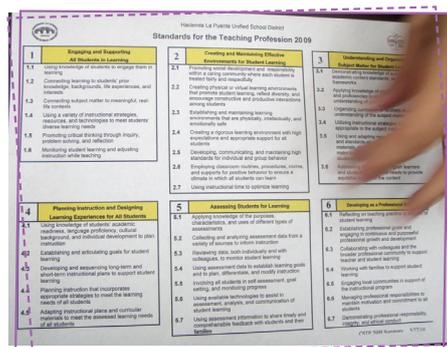
A sticky tag to encourage good teaching skills

Principal also facilitates the school's interactions with parents. During my visit, a parent's reading workshop was held to make parents know the reading strategies taught in school. Parents will know what students learn in school and how to help kids learning at home. Of course, when disciplinary issues arise, and when students are not succeeding academically, Principal also has to work with parents.

In Los Molinos, all the staff and parents are working together to make students' progress. There are no extra administrative documents for the staff to execute. The only goal in school is to facilitate students' learning.



A standard poster in the teachers' office



Standards for the Teaching Profession



## The Content Standards

I am quite amazed that the standards work so consistently with teachers' teaching, students' learning, and students' assessment. Students have simple, clear and achievable standards to follow. With the obvious and assessable standards, teachers could also design the curriculum. The states and school assessments are stick to the standards to see if students acquire the basic learning skills and knowledge.

Standards play an important role in education. Standards are designed to encourage the highest achievement of every student by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level. The standards are based on the stages of the Language Learning Continuum, which provides clear benchmarks for measuring students' ability. Therefore, the standards clearly define what students should know and be able to do at each stage of the Continuum.

In California, there are no more than 40 standards in average for each grade in language arts, 20 in reading, 10 in writing, 6 in speaking and listening. In Taiwan, there are almost 140 standards for each learning stage in Chinese language, not to mention Taiwanese or English. The standards are complicated for teachers and students to follow. Moreover, they do not show the continuum between stages. On top of that, the benchmarks need to be set more clearly.

Based on the standards, I would like to compare some of the tests and teaching between CA and Taiwan. First of all, I would like to introduce some of the reading standards in California and try to figure out how teachers apply these standards to their teaching and assessment.



## 1. Reading Standards

### Standards

R1.0 Match oral words to printed words

### Teaching in Class



Teachers apply one of the mind maps as strategies.

Oral words are drawn as pictures, and the printed words are written down besides the pictures.

### District Interim Assessment

The dog runs fast.

(Color the word you hear.)

### Validity

- 1.This question meets the purpose to see if students gain the ability to recognize printed words.
- 2.Instead of mechanical practice, the test supplies students more opportunities to practice language in a real life situation.

### Beneficial Backwash

- 1.Teachers can teach language in a real life situation instead of just mechanically practice spelling. When teaching letters, teachers try to connecting subject matter to students' experiences. The multiple teaching aids are applied in class to interest students' learning.



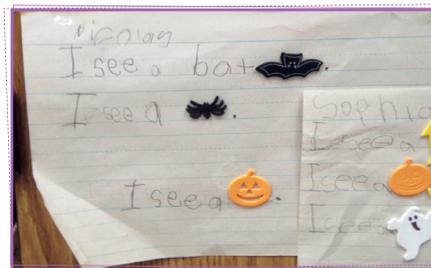
**Standards**

R1.3 Identify letters, words, and sentences.

**Teaching in Class**



teaching from letters, words then sentences



the teaching using knowledge of students to engage them in learning

**District Interim Assessment**

the cat      sat cat      The cat sat.  
○              ○              ○

**Validity**

This question is to test if students can distinguish letters from words and sentences. It meets the purpose.

**Beneficial Backwash**

Teachers connect subject matter to students' experiences to engage students. Teachers can retreat lots of meaningful sentences from students. The test can cause a beneficial backwash.



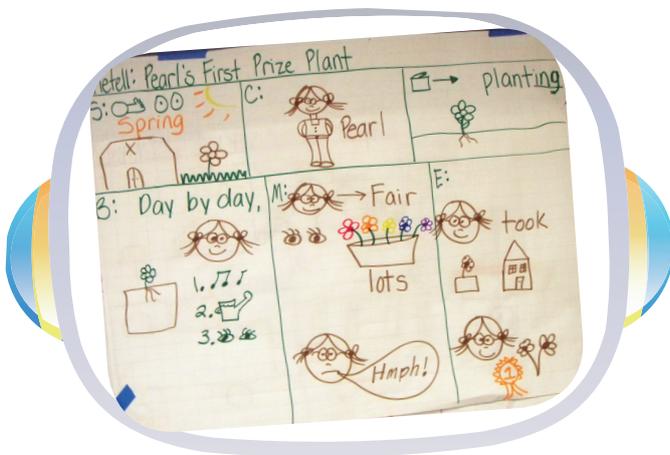
Due to the time limit, the collection of the paper tests is limited. However, I did find some good teaching examples according to the standards.

Standards 2.4 Retell familiar stories.

2.5 Ask and answer questions about essential elements of a text.

3.3 Identify characters, settings, and important events

Teaching in class:



In these posters,

S represents setting

C represents characters

B represents beginning

M represents middle

E represents ending

Because the teaching strategy is based on the standards, every student acquires the skill of how to tell a story or how to write a story. The basic skill won't be different due to different teachers or different stories.

No matter which story is, teachers always ask students to retell the story by asking about the setting, character, beginning, middle, and end of a story. For the lower graders, to retell the story they only have to draw the pictures to meet the standards. For the higher graders, the structures will be developed gradually. At the same time, students also learn speaking and writing abilities while retell the stories.

At last, allow me to try to discuss the Standard Test for grade four students in Taiwan. I would make some effort to see if this would help teaching and test development.

Here are some example questions:

**Standards** 1-1-1 Distinguish fundamental sounds in English.

**Test** Circle the initial sound of the word you hear.  
( ) (1) b (2) d (3) p (pig)

**District Interim Assessment** The question asks students to identify the initial sound of a word. However, it is hard for students to listen to the tape to recognize the single sound in a single word. Sometimes there is an argument in identifying the initial sound. Some say they hear “big” instead of “pig”. Therefore, if a student didn’t get the answer right, it does not mean that this student cannot identify the sounds.

**Beneficial Backwash** This kind of question could cause a harmful backwash, because the mechanical practice of phonics will benefit a student’s score in the test.

**Modification** This kind of questions can be tested in a sentence or with pictures.

Of course, I believe our tests are also based on the standards to realize students’ learning. The review here is for us to have a second thought before we teach or give a test.

## Acknowledgements

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