

My Daughter Can't Wait For Monday Morning:: Child-driven responsibility for sustainable education in happy and productive classrooms bullying sidelined

Martin J. Sterling

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Martin Sterling's 'hands-on' approach to building an effective learning environment was developed over a number of years and observed in action, in grade three to eight classrooms. Elementary school teachers, who Martin Sterling helped turn their classrooms around with a new view of a child's world, suggested he write this book. He presents a detailed 'How To' section, with structure, planning, and parameters, to guide teacher and children on a journey of discovery towards an environment of constructive relationship. Discussion and child-created classroom rights guide and focus the exploration. He shares ideas on building effective environments; how children begin and continue to develop a classroom life of learning how to learn; how they become effective and constructive architects of their own persons. In short, how children learn to take responsibility for themselves and those around them. Classroom management becomes a lighter touch. Mrs. Dubray, Vice Principal and grade 4/5 Teacher. "The real strength of this system is that the kids take ownership for it." Children take joy in being valued and in valuing others. All are celebrated. This is a place where each child can feel emotionally safe, move forward with greater confidence and be excited about learning. Mrs. Cummings, grade 7/8 teacher "Using this system makes it nice to come to work, I have such a good time." Teachers have found that this collective empowerment of the class proves most effective in dealing with behavioural problems, including bullying and is a powerful process to engage in troubled classrooms. It doesn't just control bad behaviour, it creates good behaviour. Together, teacher and children build a happy place to learn and grow. This foundation of constructive relationship process that the teacher establishes in the classroom engenders feelings of connection, understanding and security and becomes the bedrock upon which learning and the acquisition of curriculum is built. Ms. Tibbs, Education Student. "This system works so easily, I felt like I was cheating. My College of Education supervisor was really impressed with my class." Mrs. Dubray continues, "The energy you are able to give to your children in terms of teaching curriculum is so much greater. There is significantly less stress, and it seems that children take on much more responsibility and carry on with their tasks. The system allows children to develop their abilities and blossom at their own level in a way that they feel safe. I've seen the benefit - it pays dividends all year." Parents report that their children are happier, look forward to school, and come home talking about their classroom life and learning. When children are given the opportunity to become architects in the creation of an effective learning environment for themselves and others, we lay important foundations in the quest for a sustainable future. Dr. Edmund O'Sullivan - Professor emeritus, OISIE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) "This is a refreshing book by a teacher and educational practitioner with a wealth of classroom experience. It is an ambitious and imaginative book; a groundbreaking work that offers, both at the level of theory and practice, a powerful ecological vision, providing a way to develop whole human beings in the context of sustainable education that benefits the emergent needs of this new century."

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