

FOR REFERENCE + INSPIRATION

“Education for democracy and justice can only occur with an understanding and appreciation for the ongoing rituals and performances of students and teachers engaged in ongoing inquiry that is emergent, reflective, and liberating.”

-Dennis Attick, reviewing Richard Quantz, *Rituals and Student Identity in Education*

“Ritual is not merely a technique, a method for improving learning, it is an agonistic space of meaning-making that is worth struggling over -- it is where the real work of schooling takes place and unless we are attuned to it, we will never be able to move toward the hope of a transformative education that many of us embrace.”

-Richard Quantz, *Rituals and Student Identity in Education*, 18

“Rituals tether emotion in flesh and blood and bone and help release it. They embody memory in communal time.”

-Krista Tippett, *Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*, 2016

“Rituals can be defined as special actions that help us navigate emotionally important events or transitions in our lives, as well as enhance aspects of our daily routines to deepen our connections and relationships.”

-Gillespie and Petersen, *Young Children*, September 2012

“I will explicitly define ritual as that aspect of action that is a formalized, symbolic performance and suggest that while most teachers and administrators focus their attention on the rational aspects of action such as goals and outcomes, the real importance of education actually occurs in those non-rational areas that we rarely think about or plan. If there is a ‘new pedagogy’ it will be in organizing and considering the non-rational aspects of schooling.”

-Richard Quantz, *Rituals and Student Identity in Education*, 8

“When a new teacher enters a learning environment, that person brings new resources for the students and other teachers: warmth, knowledge, connection and leadership. There is also anxiety, both for the person entering and for the people who are accepting this new member of their tribe. Ritual can celebrate all the gifts that arrive with each new teacher, and soothe the nervousness of new and unfamiliar faces. A formal welcome serves as a doorway: a distinct moment in time when a newly hired teacher transitions to being a part of the school community.”

-Rabbi Jill Hammer, *HaYidion: The RAVSAK Journal*, online

“Life outside the class and inside the student is turbulent, disorientating, sometimes violent, often depressing, and always confusing. How can we better help today’s youth than to give them a ritual liturgy to focus on learning art [or anything else]? Repeat the practice every day. Teach them about the joy of practice.”

-Marvin Bartel, Ed.D. , *Art Rituals in the Classroom*, Goshen College, 2009

“Work out your rituals before you find them becoming an accidental part of your practice.”

-Martin Robinson, *Practice Teaching, Teaching Practice: Ritual*, blogpost

“When we examine the rituals that schools impose on their students, we are not only observing attempts to forge community (which is generally a positive thing), but we are uncovering mechanisms of political enforcement to a status quo that advantages some to the disadvantage of others (which is always a negative thing).”

-Richard Quantz, *Rituals and Student Identity in Education*, 18

“Rituals, large and small, elaborate or simple, give our classes meaning, variety, and vitality. They can enhance and intensify the commitment to learning. They offer an opportunity for increased involvement and development of a sense of community and belonging. However, they must be carefully considered because their potential for harm is as great as their potential for positive outcomes. We all need to be aware of the rituals we engage in when we teach, the power they hold, and the impact that they may have on our students and the learning environment.”

- Laura E. Taylor in *Collected Essays on Teaching and Learning*, University of Manitoba

“[Rituals] are intrinsically connected to the function of the institution of schooling, and classroom life is rife with ritualized activity. Rituals are keys to understanding the essential constitution of classroom life.”

-Peter L. McLaren, *Rethinking Ritual, ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, Vol. 41, No. 3

DESIGN : REDESIGN A RITUAL – GETTING STARTED

IDENTIFY NEED: 1. Using the introductory framework and conversation as inspiration and reference, choose to redesign a current ritual or to create a new ritual where change is needed. 2. Follow the questions vertically in the redesign column or the new ritual column. We'll take a few minutes for this reflective exercise then share.

REDESIGN OF CURRENT RITUAL	CREATION OF NEW RITUAL
Describe a current ritual in your school, leadership role, team, etc. that may be in need of a redesign or deepening. What are the elements of the ritual in its current form, and what are its stated aims?	Describe a place in your leadership practice or in your school that could be supported by the creation of a new ritual. Where is there a need for change, transition, healing, growth, connection, or cultural shift that might be served by a new ritual? This could relate to how you lead your team, a daily practice you'd like to have, a transition ritual for students, or something schoolwide.
▪In what ways does the ritual serve / not serve its stated purpose?	▪What is it you'd like to accomplish through the design of a new ritual? What type of ritual is needed?
▪In what ways does the ritual reinforce your school's mission, values, and culture? Are there any ways in which it falls short of or even contradicts the mission or the culture you're trying to build?	▪Who else should be involved in the creation of a new ritual? Your students? Colleagues?
▪Does the ritual function as a mechanism for building community, creating change or transformation, opening possibility, or something else?	▪To get started, brainstorm a few ideas for the new ritual.

<p>▪Does the ritual reinforce the status quo in ways that exclude, hurt, or cause damage? Think about things like reinforcement of certain identities, reinforcement of narrow pedagogies, reinforcement of social status among students and/or staff members.</p>	<p>▪If the new ritual yielded the change you're hoping for, what would you be able to say about it?</p>
<p>▪To redesign this ritual, who should be at the table?</p>	<p>▪What next steps can you take?</p>
<p>▪What do you imagine would deepen or enhance this ritual? What changes would allow it to serve all members of the community?</p>	
<p>▪What next steps can you take?</p>	