



Poolville Elementary School *The Monarch Metropolitan*

March 1, 2020: Edition VIII, *What You Gonna Do When Hulkamania Runs Wild on You?*

Today's edition of *The Monarch Metropolitan* has me reflecting on my "**trash-talking**" children. Specifically, when the usual communication practices breakdown in the Cheslock household, it's standard protocol to spontaneously "morph" into a **professional wrestler** of your choosing. Then....the communication smackdown begins.



Michael's man...The Ultimate Warrior.

The Ultimate Warrior had an impressive bodybuilder physique combined with face-paint and a manic look in his eyes. He didn't speak much and when he did he tended to ramble incoherently.

I was blessed with Michael shortly before his 17th birthday. He is a quiet but intense young marine now. His trash-talking selection fits perfectly!



Griffin's guy...Randy "Macho Man" Savage.

The Macho Man's colourful ring attire combined with his familiar rasping tones, his "**oh yeah**" catchphrase, and his flamboyant nature made him a memorable performer who was immeasurably popular with the fans.

Every Griffin inspired "**Savage**" promo is memorable. Each offering always ties to something he is involved in at the time. I fondly feel Griffin's Savage is best described as the "**Rock**" before the Rock.



Dawson's dude...The Undertaker.

The Undertaker is one of the quickest and most athletic big men of all time. The Undertaker has never really been a speaking character and the Undertaker has never really had a chance to shine on the microphone. However, true followers of the Death Dealer go crazy when the Undertaker's signature "**Gong**" strikes.

Yep....I said gong. This means when Dawson's mad and not speaking he simply runs around the house screaming "**Gong**"..."**Gong**"..."**Gong**"!



Lori's lady...Chyna.

Chyna is an American former professional wrestler, actress, and bodybuilder. Chyna first rose to prominence in the World Wrestling Federation in 1997, where she performed under the ring name Chyna and was billed as the "**Ninth Wonder of the World**".

Chyna doesn't possess a lot of catchy taglines. As such, Lori plays along by chasing the boys and simultaneously naming the 8 Wonders of the World in funny voices.



Jason's juggernaut...John Cena.

The "**most electrifying man in sports entertainment**" lit up the wrestling world with his many catchphrases, awesome charisma, quick wit, and "**Pro-American**" message.

When "**Jason**"...I mean "**John**" Cena is required, I simply run around the house body slamming kids as I yell the **Pledge of Allegiance**!

So...how does this pertain to the pursuit of educational excellence at Poolville Elementary School? Easy, my WWE wrestling superstars aren't the only ones that need to **communicate in order to GROW!**

Even when the learning has been turned over to the students, it's still tempting to spend too much time giving directions, repeating important information, and telling students how they did instead of asking them to reflect on their work. **Here are a few simple ways you can talk less and get students talking.....and learning.....more!**

Stop Helping Students Tap Out:

It can be uncomfortable to watch students struggle to figure out an answer, but they need time and silence to work through it. Resist the urge to talk students through every step of a problem and instead just observe. Similarly, learn to love think time. I often worry about keeping the momentum of a lesson going, and it's uncomfortable for me to allow several moments of silent "wait time" or "think time" before calling on students. However, I try to push against the feeling that I will lose students' attention because I know providing wait time can actually increase the length and quality of their responses. Letting students think instead of rushing in to narrate or question builds anticipation around what's going to be said next and increases participation as more students are prepared to move into the conversation.

Use Every Inch of the Ring:



It's easy to get in an instructional rut when you stand at the same place near the board all day long. Try occasionally sitting on the side of the classroom or in an absent student's desk and say, "I need someone to go up and demonstrate ____ for us." Because students are used to the person at the board facilitating the lesson, they are likely to talk for much longer than if you stay at the front and they're in their seats answering you. You can even remain sitting among the class once the student is done demonstrating and ask follow up questions from other students instead of commenting on the students' demo yourself ("What do you all think? Is that an effective method—how do you know? Does anyone use a different strategy?")

Supercharge Your Soundbits by Turning Your Statements Into Questions and Prompts:

Instead of saying to a group, "Nice work over here, I like the strategy you used for ____", ask the students to reflect on their own work: "Tell me how your group has chosen to solve ____." Instead of telling a student, "Take a look at #3, that answer is incorrect" say, "Would you tell me how you got the answer for #3?" Not only will these questions get students talking instead of you, students will also have the chance to reflect on and articulate their learning.

Guided Ring Time:

Classes sometimes just need a little more structure for their talking. Try this simple exercise as an example:

- Ask students to write an answer to a question or prompt for a few minutes.
- Pair students and have them share.
- When one student listens to the other, they must summarize what the other says, beginning with the phrase: "So what you're saying is ..."
- After they all share and summarize to one another, go around the room and ask students to tell the class what their partner's thoughts were (not their own).

Instead of Asking, "Does that make sense?" say, "Can you put that in your own words?":

If you've ever asked students "Are you getting this?", you've probably noticed you rarely get an insightful response. So, you either move on without students understanding or you repeat something you've already said. Try inviting students to put what you've explained into their own words, either repeating it back to you (if you were helping the student in a one-on-one conversation) or by turning and talking to a partner/doing a quick think/pair/share.

Stop Repeating Yourself (That's What Reruns Are For...Earn Your Residuals):

It's tempting to say some important points and instructions a couple of different ways to make sure every child understands, but that strategy can backfire when it's overused. Students learn that it's okay to tune you out because you'll repeat everything you say. Instead, experiment with different strategies for getting students to follow directions the first time you give them and use call-and-response



routines to get students' attention right away.

Notice Moments When You Summarize/Review For Students and Instead Get Their Input:

If you hear yourself saying once again, remember, as I said, as always, so to sum this up, or don't forget, that probably means you're about to drive home an important point for the second or third (or tenth) time. Practice making those moments a chance for students to share: What's the rule about this? Who can sum this section up for us? Who remembers the way to determine ____? Some teachers even turn these moments into interactive activities, where the whole class does a hand motion, body movement, sound, or chant to indicate that they're summarizing an idea or reviewing directions before getting started.

Conclusion:

Teachers often debate which is worse: a noisy class of students or a quiet one. In terms of teaching strategies, a noisy group can be difficult to control and lead through a lesson; although they might also be easier to engage in activities and discussions. On the other hand, a quiet class is easily communicated to, but there is a struggle to get them excited, engaged or participative.

I hope you will suit up, tag in, and leap from the top turnbuckle as you call upon your inner trash-talking wrestler this week. Let's collectively wage the war on silence by using "**one**", "**two**", or "**three**" of the aforementioned **student-talk suggestions**!

Let's change our practices. Out with the old, in with the NEW!

Let's use RESEARCH to fuel Monarch LEARNING!

I hope this edition of ***The Monarch Metropolitan*** will arm you with the tools necessary to avoid too much teacher-talk and instead deliver high yield instruction!

Regardless of your approach, let's learn and take advantage from the learning of others. This week, let's listen. Let's take targeted action, and let's **help more Monarchs SUCCEED!**

Good luck!

Without further ado, "**Let's all smell what the ROCK is cooking!**"

#Can you dig it?

#Woo!

#And That's the Bottom Line Cos' Stone Cold Said So!

#You Can't See Me!



A Summary of Our Learnings:

- Edition I: ***Early, Deliberate, and Purposeful Interventions That Work!***
Edition II: ***Using Your Two Ears Before Your One MOUTH!***
Edition III: ***The Zombies Are Coming! Prepare Your Classrooms!***
Edition IV: ***Feed Me, Seymour! Taming Educational Hunger!***
Edition V: ***Calling Worksheet World! Attention....This is Earth Calling Worksheet World!***
Edition VI: ***Super STAAR Strategies That Work!***
Edition VII: ***You Don't Have to Go to Jared's to Pop the Big Question!***
Edition VIII: ***Instructional Coaching Straight Off the Top Turnbuckle! Bombs Away!!!!***