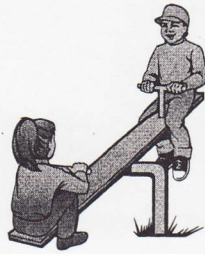


*from Data Driven Differentiation  
in the Standards-Based Classroom  
Gregory & Kuzmich*



# Collecting Data to Create a Positive Classroom Climate

# 1

## **POSITIVE CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

Why are connections essential? The essence of human interaction is social, based on relationships. To create a fertile soil for learning, teachers and students must make daily and positive connections. Without connections, the definition of being at-risk becomes a reality.

Interviewing students in an alternative high school or a drop-out prevention program produces a litany of connections "gone bad" at critical junctures in students' lives. Students frequently report that they could go days without an adult who smiled or personally interacted with them. Hiding at school became an art form with these students. In contrast, on a recent visit to a secondary school in Colorado, an administrator noted the concerted effort of staff there to uncover and rid the school of "hiding opportunities."

To foster connections, each of the more than 1,100 students in the Colorado school was listed on a series of large charts. Staff members marked off students with whom they had frequent (daily was preferred) and personal contact. The staff then walked among the charts, and each teacher, administrator, and support member put his or her name next to two or three of the 137 students whom the data showed were getting no regular contact. The next quarter, staff reported a marked decline in both discipline



issues and the drop-out rate and an increase in attendance. While this method of analysis and data use is not new, the results tend to be well worth the time and effort of staff. Students are always worth time and effort, especially when we establish connections.

When we reviewed the "Five Theaters of the Mind" model (see Figure 0.1), we learned that the emotional, social, and physical systems of the mind are greedy for attention and will not allow the cognitive and reflective systems to function at optimal efficiency if their needs are not met. Understanding these "theaters" is one way to see how connections affect learning and, therefore, why collecting data and using it to make differentiated changes in learning environments is essential.

### Caring and Support

Rachael Kessler (2000) describes deep connection as one of seven gateways to the "soul of education":

The yearning for deep connection describes a quality of relationship that is profoundly caring, is resonant with meaning, and involves feelings of belonging, or of being truly seen and known. (p. 17)

Students need opportunities to receive care and support from adults to form deep connections. They also need developmentally appropriate opportunities for steadily increasing autonomy and choice. Competent adults who demonstrate caring and appropriate supervision are key components in developing students' self-confidence, which results in acceptance by their peers. A sense of belonging comes about in classrooms that are consistently well managed by qualified teachers. Classrooms that are free of put-downs and harassment lead to positive behaviors that are the prerequisites for success and growth. Students enter school with a wide range of predispositions toward education. However, a classroom climate that supports students through earned autonomy can mitigate negative predispositions (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002)

Try to picture two classrooms, one where students are frequently buffeted by a hard-to-predict adult and one where risk taking is a prized attitude. Students in both classrooms ask many questions each day at an unconscious level:

- Is this teacher my friend or enemy?
- Will I be embarrassed or feel stupid?
- What will my classmates think?
- Can I do this work?
- Where is my connection to this task?
- Am I valued?



In the classroom where students cannot predict what they will get from a teacher, the answers to these questions may cause a student to disconnect from the adult and from learning. How can we expect learning if sarcasm, capricious decisions, and lack of respect are prevalent? In the classroom where it is comfortable to risk, there is a teacher who reinforces positive approximations, invites questions, is consistent and respectful, and allows students to earn autonomy through clearly stated and enforced guidelines. From such a base, a child can grow and learn. Belonging and connection can be measured in the level of risk a child is comfortable demonstrating.

### Risk Taking

A toddler risks walking further and further away from a parent but frequently looks back to see if the parent is still present. The toddler has a clear limit to the toleration of distance from the parent. Each toddler's limit is unique and depends on a wide variety of factors. Similar factors continue to dominate our risk taking throughout life. Many of the factors are not static; they change over time, ebbing and flowing with life events. This most basic of psychological principles governs the potential to learn as well. Risk taking must be predicated by positive connections with others in the learning environment. Each time a child learns something new, the delicate balance of cognitive dissonance is tipped. When they develop a healthy level of risk taking, students encounter and work through cognitive dissonance despite problems. This cycle helps students build the necessary resiliency when things get hard or complicated, both in learning and in life (Burns, 1996).

The teacher who systematically establishes a climate that supports risk taking fills the environment with opportunities for connections with students. This also satisfies the needs of the social and emotional learning systems, which crave acceptance and inclusion in a safe environment. Practices that promote this type of environment contribute to teachers' abilities to form more meaningful relationships with students—relationships that pay off in students' increased motivation, learning, and academic achievement (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). In the rest of this chapter, we will give you key factors that help establish the essential conditions for learning in the educational environment of the classroom and allow you to differentiate for diverse learners.

## ASSESSING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In books for beginning teachers, we frequently see excellent suggestions for establishing positive learning climates. We need to use these principles regularly, not just when we begin a teaching career or a school year. There



are also numerous and inspiring books on factors needed to support the learning environment. Just as we check for understanding or assess writing, we need to develop ways to check that the classroom climate provides the connected atmosphere essential to learning.

Each student is unique, and we will need to differentiate how we provide these climatic factors, based on the data we collect. Creating a classroom climate that promotes learning is not a one-time proposition but rather a gentle series of adjustments every day. Great teachers make these adjustments unconsciously, yet conscious adjustments still are necessary to ensure that another 137 students will not be left behind.

There are several components that help us assess classroom climate. We have discussed the level of student risk taking. We also need to think about feedback, ritual, respect, cultural history, and celebration. So what are the key conditions that nurture, replicate, and sustain student growth? Learning is about the ability of the student to change and to grow, and so is teaching, by the way.

Without change, there can be no learning. The cognitive dissonance we pass through on the way to learning is the essence of change. Daryl Conner (1993) says the ability of people to change and learn has two key components. He notes that balancing the capability to change with the challenges we face is essential for change. When this balance is disturbed and capability exceeds challenge, we can become energized, although sustaining the energy over time is an issue. When challenge exceeds capability, individuals become overwhelmed, and that interferes with their resiliency. The highlighted conditions for a classroom climate that supports learning evolved from what we know about change and growth.

## USING FEEDBACK

Mr. Norman comes into his classroom and notes that students seem uncertain about a current performance assessment they were working on in this unit. He notes that students are not as productive today. Students are wandering around the resource center. They are asking some pretty low-level compliance questions: for example, How many pages should I write? When is this assignment due? Since Mr. Norman is an excellent teacher, he observes student behaviors and takes mental temperature checks of climate at regular intervals.

Mr. Norman begins by asking students questions to further his understanding of the situation he observes. He asks some of the students if they know what to do next for the project. He also asks what is frustrating them. He asks them to talk through the work they started. Once he listens to students, Mr. Norman offers feedback on both their work and their thinking about the work. The atmosphere in the resource center changes as the energy level rises. Students seem to move and act with purpose, the



questions change in quality, and students are again productive. Mr. Norman elevates "monitor and adjust" to a very impressive and useful level.

### Effective Feedback

How does Mr. Norman know that feedback or the lack of it is the issue? Do all of the students respond to this adjustment, or do some still need more or different information? While part of feedback involves praise or correction, there is much more to it in a resilient classroom (Marzano et al., 2001). Ask yourself:

- What are the intuitive things the best teachers regularly watch for in the classroom to monitor their communication with students, especially the feedback level?
- What aspects of feedback build student resiliency for the continual changes needed to sustain learning?
- How do teachers know, from observing student behavior, that there is a problem specifically related to feedback?
- Which feedback remedies should be employed that reestablish student connections and the conditions for learning?

Students who feel in control and have a "can do" attitude demonstrate the ability to sustain change. A feedback process that is working (see Figure 1.1) helps students maintain a sense of control, reduces uncertainty, and encourages a higher level of thinking.

So what should a teacher look for if the amount, type, and content of the feedback in a classroom are working? Looking for these climate factors can help teachers evaluate

- Whether they need to change what they are doing
- What feedback they still need to provide
- Which students need additional feedback

These factors can assess other aspects of learning as well. Since proper feedback has such high payoff, starting with that aspect of classroom climate makes sense (Marzano et al., 2001).

### Feedback That Promotes Reflective Thinking

Taking feedback in classrooms to the next level requires a teacher to ask students certain types of metacognition questions that could check many of these factors. Jim Bellanca describes his first awareness of metacognition from his fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Potter, who prompted students' reflections with the following questions after an assignment.



- What was I asked to do? What was my task?
- What did I do well? What was successful?
- If I were going to do this task again, what would I change or do differently?
- What help do I need?

These questions not only pushed students into their reflective learning system but facilitated goal setting, personal accountability, and advocacy.

### Differentiating Feedback for Diverse Learners

What evidence confirms that feedback is not adequate? What are some of the things teachers can do to improve feedback? That depends on the type of students and their needs. Here are some examples from Rosabeth Kantor's (1985) work as well as the authors' 30-plus years of classroom observations and interactions.

Some of our starting points for feedback are common sense, others help teachers plan for careful and balanced approaches to feedback that increase student success and capacity. Feedback works when it makes connections real for students and honors the collaborative nature of a true student-centered classroom. Figure 1.2 can be copied and used to help you prompt the desired dialogue and interaction. The left-hand column

**Figure 1.1** Observing If Feedback Is Working and Sufficient

- ☐ Students exhibit purposeful action
- ☐ Students can describe next steps
- ☐ Students can self-evaluate work in progress
- ☐ Students appropriately ask for assistance
- ☐ Students' questions are about aspects of complex thinking rather than procedure
- ☐ Students' attitude and demeanor are positive
- ☐ Students collaborate as needed without prompts
- ☐ Students positively reinforce each other through various types of interaction
- ☐ Students adhere to class norms



**Figure 1.2** Customizing Your Feedback

<i>Type of Student Needs and Behaviors</i>	<i>Starting Points for Teacher Feedback</i>
Students who need to feel control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make certain feedback ends with a choice</li> </ul>
Students who seem confused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As you further explain the step the student is working on, clearly connect to the target</li> <li>• Use examples to make the parts-to-whole relationship evident</li> <li>• Try to ask questions about the personal impact of the issue or task</li> </ul>
Students who seem anxious about specific learning tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the surprise by referring back to the rubric or model</li> <li>• Break the steps of a task down into more achievable/quicker chunks</li> </ul>
Students who seem embarrassed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate any possible public conversation, keep it private</li> <li>• Allow students to choose from among a variety of acceptable methods to communicate learning</li> </ul>
Students who cannot begin a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure and limit the choices and have students describe the one with the most advantages</li> </ul>
Students who need frequent praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach them to self-evaluate using a checklist and have them bring you the list when multiple items have been checked off</li> <li>• Provide language for positive self-talk</li> <li>• Provide specific praise that celebrates a completed goal set by the student</li> </ul>
Students who resist change in process or method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give them a connection to the previous process and a real-world rationale for the change</li> <li>• Have students suggest a viable method or process that does not compromise the standard or assessment</li> </ul>
Students who seem angry about a task or issue related to the learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A private discussion around a "neutral source" (like evaluating a different student's work) may be necessary to reduce the intensity of the emotion</li> <li>• Have the student ask you questions; this lowers the threat level further</li> </ul>
Students who seem bored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity to refocus and let students start at a different point in the assignment or project or collaboratively reframe it until the meaning is more personal for them</li> </ul>



describes student needs and behaviors, and the right-hand column suggests ways to use feedback to deal with each situation. This may be a handy chart to keep in your reflection book or journal as you consider specific students and their needs.

Feedback and praise that are planned and tuned to specific student behaviors and needs are far more effective than any generalized practice of generic praise and shotgun solutions. Specific praise allows a child to feel deeply connected, and that is a most powerful motivator (Kessler, 2000). Shotgun solutions are those generic reminders that a hurried teacher aims at a group. Customizing feedback to the moment and the student is far more effective. The collaboration of communication between a teacher and student is worth the time. It saves repetition, confused products, and disappointing results that in the long run cost more in terms of time, effort, and resources. Forging that personal connection and meeting student needs results in increased achievement and motivation.

## **RITUAL, RESPECT, AND CULTURAL HISTORY**

Multiple teacher resources for beginning as well as veteran teachers talk about establishing norms for behavior and trying to enforce them consistently. Then what happens? What are the ongoing practices that continue to promote a healthy climate for learning?

Max Depree (1989) describes the use of ritual, and Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson (1998) have frequently explained the role of history in any social situation (institution) as essential preconditions for change and growth. So what do these elements look like in a classroom, and how does a teacher support a climate that encourages behaviors and attitudes for learning? See Boxes 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 to get started.

### **Box 1.1 Ritual**

Rituals provide a framework of predictability that is both comforting and foundational for risk taking. Rituals set forth a soothing path on which to build spiraling skills, even at the shaky beginning stages. Rituals can be about everyday rules of interaction and can also honor rites of passage and accomplishments; in this way, they establish a secure foundation for learning. Rituals cause a climate that won't rock or shake under the cognitive dissonance of effective learning.



**Box 1.2 Respect**

Respect requires an undisguised regard for both what makes us the same and what makes us different. Respect honors the human construction of a fabric that stretches out whenever a conversation or encounter takes place. All participants in an interaction or activity must hold up that fabric if honor and respect are to be continued. If one person drops the fabric, the conditions for success diminish as if we had turned off the engine of an automobile. Respect keeps a climate alive and moving forward, and for learning, moving forward is critical.

**Box 1.3 Cultural History**

Cultural histories establish the worth of each individual and group in the learning organization. While each individual brings to class a unique mix of the cultures that have affected his or her personality and behaviors, new cultures are formed with every encounter. The core of culture lies in stories we tell and the interpretation (visual or otherwise) of emotion colliding with events and circumstances. We create new stories and representations in a group that honors cultural history. Such histories also take into account the current community served by the school. Taking time in a classroom to describe the history of the group or the contributions of individuals and the group is a key component in establishing a growth-oriented classroom climate.

What does a classroom look like when all of these practices are in harmony and contributing to the climate for differentiation and growth of students? When assessing harmony and cohesiveness in human interaction, there are key characteristics that teachers can consider. Many popular and well-researched programs, for example, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's *Character Education*, have some of these traits at the heart of their strategies. In this chapter, we focus on several traits that are common to these types of excellent programs, philosophies, and disciplines. These traits come from brain research, from safe and drug-free schools information, from discipline programs, from critical thinking research, and from several decades of experience with successful students and teachers. We could list a hundred traits. The ones we list in Figure 1.3 were chosen because they are consistent across many types of research literature and experiences of successful teachers and students. Each of these traits can be improved and sustained through



**Figure 1.3** Seven Traits for Optimal Learning in a Positive Classroom Climate

<i>Self-evaluation</i>	The ability of a student to self-evaluate actions, products, and attitudes
<i>Resiliency</i>	The ability of a student to persevere regardless of failure
<i>Adaptability</i>	The ability of a student to respond with flexibility and to generalize learning across situations
<i>Responsibility</i>	The ability of a student to demonstrate accountability for actions, products, and attitudes
<i>Teamwork</i>	The ability of a student to function productively and positively as a member of a group
<i>Competency</i>	The ability of a student to feel a sense of worth resulting from academic and personal achievements
<i>Expectation</i>	The ability of a student to realistically judge the probability of positive and negative consequences and to take actions that influence a positive outcome

supportive and culturally sensitive rituals, demonstrations, and practice for ongoing and abiding respect and the honoring and communication of cultural history. The purpose of this particular list is to detail what teachers should look for as they assess the health and productivity level of their classroom. These traits, in our opinion, help create a classroom climate and culture conducive to learning. Figure 1.3 outlines the seven traits that help teachers assess climate so that a positive classroom environment can be maintained. A concise definition of each trait is also included.

We think these healthy climate characteristics describe the attributes of student behavior and thinking when ritual, respect, and cultural history have the impact we desire in classrooms. If teachers are going to create a healthy climate for learning, then these seven characteristics are needed to create the internal climate in individuals and the external climate or norms for groups. This condition creates a climate conducive to learning.

## DIFFERENTIATING CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The teacher's role is to assess students with regard to these traits. Given information about these elements, teachers can then start to coach students and use ritual, respect, and cultural history to bring about desired change. These elements help teachers differentiate the affective as well as the academic expectations in a classroom. We find this type of model (see Figure 1.4) helpful in understanding the need to collect data and



**Figure 1.4** Assessing Data About Student Traits for Optimal Learning in a Positive Classroom Climate

<i>Student Traits for Optimal Learning</i>	<i>Evidence: What does the student do to demonstrate the trait?</i>	<i>Indicators for Data Collection: What would the student do or say in a positive classroom climate?</i>	<i>Differentiate Based on Analysis of the Data: What can be done if the student is not contributing to the class climate?</i>
1. Self-evaluation	Uses criteria to self-evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately describes personal behavior, action, or attitude</li> <li>• Generates a checklist for accomplishment, refining criteria with experience</li> <li>• Uses critical thinking and actions that help verify a process</li> <li>• Describes what will be different in the future</li> <li>• Is able to set a goal and work toward it</li> <li>• Uses clear or evolving criteria</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ritual:</i> Describe what is seen rather than what is felt</p> <p><i>Respect:</i> Establish a norm for taking care of personal needs and for regular self-reflection</p> <p><i>Cultural History:</i> Use senses, learning styles, or multiple intelligences to clarify ideas or solutions</p>
2. Resiliency	Demonstrates perseverance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is willing to try again</li> <li>• Learns from mistakes</li> <li>• Sticks with tasks and interactions</li> <li>• Refines a practice, given experience</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ritual:</i> Write down a recent error and rip it up, placing pieces in an envelope along with a goal for next time; regularly check on goal progress</p> <p><i>Respect:</i> Praise others who display perseverance</p> <p><i>Cultural History:</i> Share stories from a variety of types of learners and cultures to help students see value and heroes who display this trait</p>
3. Adaptability	Exhibits flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can move to creative elaboration of ideas</li> <li>• Works through a constructivist task</li> <li>• Multitasks well</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ritual:</i> Give feedback that values creative solution-oriented work habits and team behavior</p>

(Continued)



**Figure 1.4** (Continued)

<i>Student Traits for Optimal Learning</i>	<i>Evidence: What does the student do to demonstrate the trait?</i>	<i>Indicators for Data Collection: What would the student do or say in a positive classroom climate?</i>	<i>Differentiate Based on Analysis of the Data: What can be done if the student is not contributing to the class climate?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to different points of view positively</li> <li>• Can change his or her mind given new evidence, point of view, or purpose</li> </ul>	<i>Respect:</i> Interview your group to establish strengths of each person <i>Cultural History:</i> Summarize the day's accomplishments through the story of each group or person
4. Responsibility	Maintains personal accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes responsibility for actions</li> <li>• Works toward a goal</li> <li>• Adjusts work according to a model and/or rubric</li> <li>• Initiates tasks without multiple prompts</li> <li>• Exhibits internal personal control</li> </ul>	<i>Ritual:</i> Revisit norms <i>Respect:</i> Write reflections and reframe questions and comments <i>Cultural History:</i> Pre-plan questions to ask a partner
5. Teamwork	Contributes to a group effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively seeks out the contributions of others</li> <li>• Sees the perspective of others by actively listening to other points of view</li> <li>• Is open to ideas and tolerant of the process</li> <li>• Takes turns</li> <li>• Supports the group effort and honors the needs of the group through collaboration</li> </ul>	<i>Ritual:</i> Generate reasons for steps or group process <i>Respect:</i> Focus on solution generation <i>Cultural History:</i> Craft roles within group activities to clarify and hook personal contributions
6. Competency	Displays energy and motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes what has to be accomplished</li> <li>• Communicates step-by-step arrival at a solution</li> <li>• Actively engages in activity or interaction</li> <li>• Asks good critical questions</li> </ul>	<i>Ritual:</i> Reframe the goals of the interaction or function of the group <i>Respect:</i> Describe their role or contribution to reaching the goal



<i>Student Traits for Optimal Learning</i>	<i>Evidence: What does the student do to demonstrate the trait?</i>	<i>Indicators for Data Collection: What would the student do or say in a positive classroom climate?</i>	<i>Differentiate Based on Analysis of the Data: What can be done if the student is not contributing to the class climate?</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages others</li> <li>• Learns from errors</li> <li>• Relates events to personal experience or application</li> </ul>	<i>Cultural History:</i> Use peer assistance and evaluation
7. Expectation	Uses cause-and-effect analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaborates reasons for a point of view</li> <li>• Asks complex questions of self and others</li> <li>• Identifies underlying causes</li> <li>• Sees consequences and possible interventions of solutions</li> <li>• Offers logical opinions and options</li> </ul>	<i>Ritual:</i> End the day with a ticket out that explains the cause and effect of an action or new learning <i>Respect:</i> Reinforce student questions for growing insight and clarity <i>Cultural History:</i> Check assumptions through comparisons with past and current practice

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differentiate our behavior to promote student learning. The student traits are listed in the left-hand column with a demonstrated example in the next column. Column three suggests student behaviors that can be used to assess the trait, and the last column suggests techniques to use to strengthen the trait.

These traits help teachers frame classroom climate. Using them frequently to assess the condition of classroom climate will allow teachers to make adjustments in the fabric of learning. Students with observant teachers, who make these minute course corrections on a frequent basis, will learn more and retain what they have learned to use it another day. The solutions and remedies listed using ritual, respect, and cultural history are just a sampling. Try your own. Share such solutions with other teachers and administrators. Such a list of tools and strategies will help you at any parent conference, student advocacy session, discipline intervention, or special needs conference, not to mention their impact on academic success.



Healthy classrooms increase the probability of student achievement. In classrooms where teachers model, reinforce, ask questions about, and spend time rehearsing these traits, the achievement level can be accelerated for learners from diverse backgrounds.

## DIFFERENTIATING CELEBRATION AND PRAISE

There is nothing like a bit of fake and generalized praise to turn off a student and cause long-term distrust. We can watch teachers who use specific praise and see different results. Not all praise is created equal. Students must be able to believe the teacher and, more important, believe internally that the praise is earned and proportionate to the action or product eliciting the praise. A student who can self-reflect and self-evaluate will be able to connect with praise and use it more effectively as a confirmation of his or her own thinking (Kohn, 2002; Marzano et al., 2001). Praise should not be surprising to a student. So, how does a teacher help a student to attain a level of self-regard and evaluation that allows connection to celebrations of learning?

Before we can talk about celebration, we must talk about student thinking. Can students question their own assumptions, discover errors, and correct them, and can a student ask meaningful questions about the work? Listening to students and coaching these behaviors are essential to a student's ability to accept and believe praise. These same principles will be used again when we discuss student assessment in an upcoming chapter. These same areas help us assess student learning and differentiate teaching and learning based on the evidence we collect in these areas.

There are four primary areas in which we focus praise if we use a critical thinking model to facilitate growth and achievement in students (see Figure 1.5). These areas have been selected from a variety of research and work about critical thinking, higher order thinking skills, dimensions of learning, habits of the mind, Torrance's (1995) work on creativity, and psychology-based work on learning. While there are other areas of thinking that could help us focus and use celebration and praise well, the four elements outlined in Figure 1.5 are a good starting point. The left-hand column identifies the element to use for praise and celebration, and the right-hand column lists attributes in each category that should be praised in order to improve the rate of growth, performance, and learning.

Adjusting your praise to match thinking rather than task completion or expected compliance truly affects the climate for learning in a classroom. Does that mean you should not praise other things? Some students require a feedback approach from teachers that includes praise for task completion. However, save elaborate group celebrations of learning and public praise for higher-level thinking and watch student achievement rise.



**Figure 1.5** Adjusting Praise and Celebrations in High-Achieving Classrooms

<i>Focusing Elements for Praise and Celebration</i>	<i>What to Praise or Celebrate?</i>
Fostering problem solving	Metacognition about problem solving and solution development Questioning the assumptions of self and others Discovering errors and understanding what aspects contribute to the error Discussing pros and cons of solutions
Extending elaboration Testing ideas and generalization	Finding evidence to support a point of view Developing criteria for evaluation Using prior learning to inform or form a new situation Using verbs in questions that indicate higher levels of thinking
Supporting creativity	Generating new ideas Shifting perspective easily and using data to adjust thinking Conceiving something new or using something in a unique way Building on other ideas Persevering even as difficulty levels rise
Developing schema	Describing the method of reaching an answer, solution, process, and so on Trying a strategy and acknowledging if it does not get the desired results, and then trying another strategy or seeking out a new method Using multiple strategies and solutions Using brainstorming, plus-minus-interesting, T-charts, pro and con, flow charting, mapping, creating a visual representation that is self-initiated rather than teacher initiated

## SUMMARY

Classroom climate can be the key to learning. Without deep connections, predictable interactions, and self-reflection, student learning suffers. We can make observations, ask questions, and coach students in ways that increase the probability of learning and growth. Good teachers must assess climate and differentiate needed changes to accommodate various students. Test scores are only one factor in creating a body of evidence that allows us to make more meaningful and accurate choices about teaching and learning.

Each of the areas for focus and tools in this chapter is meant to heighten a teacher's awareness. It is difficult to differentiate if you do not pay attention to the climate of a classroom. Each teacher or school must



make a decision about where to start. We will give you more ideas in this book that you can effectively use on particular occasions. Pick and choose your starting point. One teacher may start with monitoring feedback; another may like the idea of praise associated with higher level thinking skills. The key is in the observation and dialogue that takes place every day in every classroom. Classroom climate is a rich source of student data. We can use what we learn to adjust the achievement potential of each student.