



# Leadership Development

*Anywhere, Anytime*

**Practical Tips for School Leaders – #24**

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As plans are formulated to return to brick and mortar schools this fall, there are a number of priorities beyond 'how' we reconfigure classrooms, transport students and serve breakfast and lunch to assure health and safety guidelines are met. School leaders across the country are engaged in conversations about the potential of a wider achievement gap, a surge in social emotional health issues of students and teachers, maintenance of safety guidelines, opportunities for student voice on tough issues and understanding what it takes to be culturally responsive.

Distance learning may have widened the achievement gap which means teachers will need to be more proficient in meeting the instructional needs of individual students. They will also need to focus on relationship building in creative ways considering the impact isolation has had on the social emotional wellbeing of many students. Educational psychology reminds us that learning increases when students are able to connect with each other. Neuroscience prompts us that learning benefits when we feel emotional satisfaction and comfort.

Teachers will need to understand strategies for culturally responsive teaching. For many this will come naturally while for others it may require professional development and support. Why is it important to define 'culturally responsive' teaching? Will PLCs discuss implementation of culturally responsive methodology and the impact on learning and achievement? How will we, as educators, address the social unrest in our country? Why is it ethically imperative for teachers to be equipped to facilitate conversations on the tough questions?

John Couros is taking a break from his blog due to the arrival of a new daughter less than a week ago. Today he provided the following reflective question for school leaders.

*“Do I ensure that my staff utilize a variety of instructional strategies that take into account the different learning styles, ability levels, and social-emotional needs of my students in student-centered, culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and equitable learning environments?”*