

@CSTANJ

@CS4NJ

#CSPDWeek2026

#CompSciNJ

@csteachersorg



New Jersey CSPDWeek

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Empowering Educators

Transforming the narrative for middle and high school learners.

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Alicia Testa
Palmyra Schools



Info:

- Educator who teaches CS
- 28 year of teaching- 27 years teaching Specific Tech, Computer Science
- Taught 3-12
- This is my approach and how I help build inclusive classrooms

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/alicia-testa>

Today

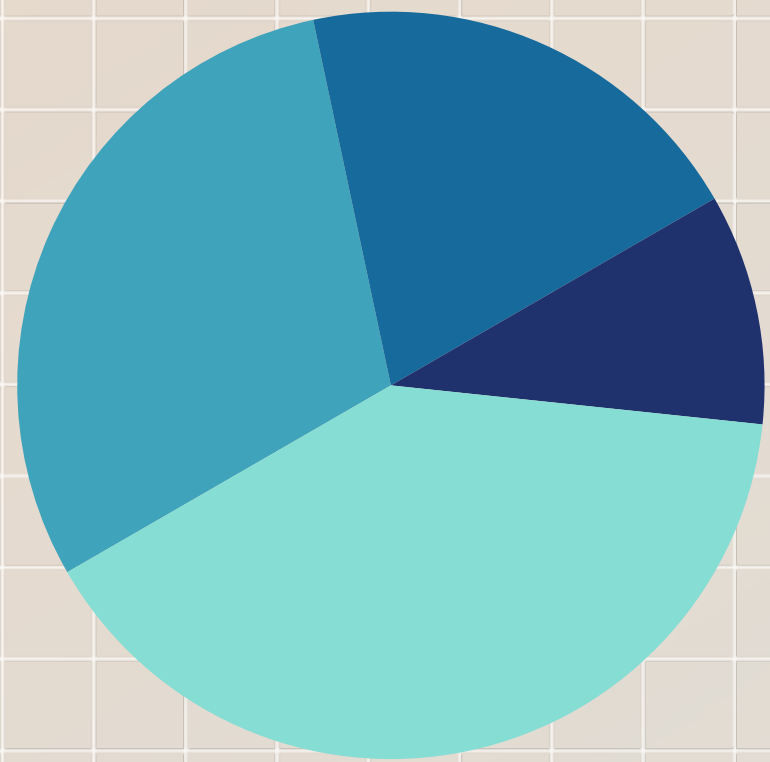
- **Learn:**
 - Listen to what I have been doing in my classroom, and how I build inclusive classrooms, provide opportunities for students, how I talk about bias in CS and technology, utilize AI to offer assistance
- **Practice:**
 - Utilizing the information provided adapt for your own classroom
- **Apply:**
 - Share with the rest of the group

Create Next Steps

[adapted from modern classroom project](#)

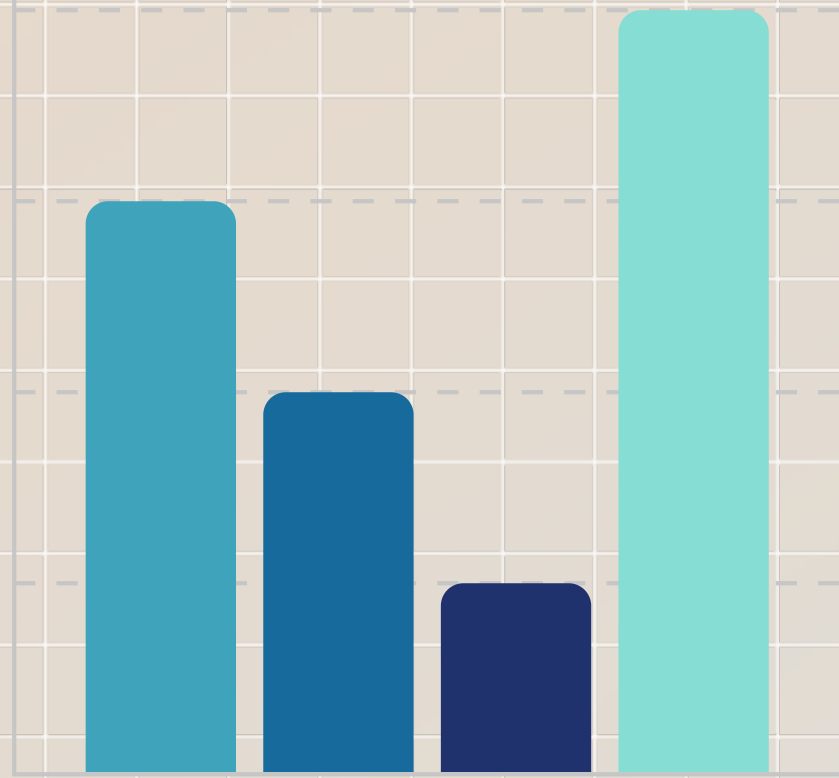


Raising the Bar For My Students



Learning is **NOT** pie chart. If one person knows a lot and has a large wedge does not mean you get a smaller piece.

Alicia Testa



Learning **IS** a bar graph. Each person is their own bar. And in this classroom we help everyone to raise their bar

Alicia Testa

My Classroom:

Video Lessons:

- Screen Pal for recording
- You Tube Channel
- Wayground utilizing AI here for creating questions on my videos

Student Choice:

- You must be willing to work with everyone in the classroom
- Every few weeks check for choices of preference for grouping
- Give some choice in assignments, as well as independent time working
- Formative Practice before assessment

Humanize the teacher

- Make my own mistakes
- Explain my own insecurities, challenges
- Ask questions
- I don't know all the answers

Everyone belongs at the table and celebrate wins

My Classroom

Posters:

- Scholastic Stars of STEAM
- Anime, Video Games,
- Helpful Hints for classwork
- Keeping it simple
- Show Case their work in digital slideshows

Non-CS fun:

- Rebus puzzles
- Floor cushions
- Logic puzzles
- Card games
- Other board games
- Crotchet/Knitting
- Puzzles
- Screaming goat
- Magic 8 Ball

Provide Opportunities

- NCWIT Aspirations in Computing
- Bebras Challenge
- Capture the flag Competitions
- Code Art/Girls who Code
- Send Notes Home (CC Students as well)
- Look for programs: Trio, Upward Bound, Princeton Uni Prep Program

Lifesavers, stickers, pencils go a long way

In Curriculum

Simple:

- Keyboards from around the world
- Amazon Engineer
- Cyber.org Careers
- Inclusive images
- Open ended Greeting card include examples such as Lunar New Year, Hanukkah , Diwali
- Student Reflected in lessons and projects

More Complex:

- EarSketch Your Voice is power
- Actual Debating on topics
- Algorithmic bias Discussions
- Guest Speakers
- Historical issues with Apps, Facial Recognition
- Training Data for AI

Reflections:

- Reflect on own biases
- Use AI to check lesson for bias
- Have time for discussions for helping students learn
- Have students own their learning
- Provide spaces for students to give feedback
- Track Data

Mastery Focused

- Breaking down Standards to skills they need
 - Variables can they define them, initialize them, change them, can they distinguish different types, recognize the changes occurring in code.
- On most work they are graded on a Demonstrating, Expanding, Developing and Support Required,
- Formative assessments consistently: Wayground, Quizz, in class questioning. (not graded for accuracy but for learning)
- Pear Assessment for Summative Assessments (Students are allowed to bring in Written Notes)
- Focused on repeated assessments giving multiple chances to continue to show mastery
- Projects are built in using same language of Demonstrating Expanding, Developing Support required
- Reflection is a must!!!

I am not an expert

Just a girl trying to make it better

- I look for connections, I don't shy from hard conversation, I talk to all students about the need for inclusion
- LinkedIn, Instagram following diverse companies, experts, educators, getting different perspectives, alum on LinkedIn!
- Sharing stories from alum: might not get the AP Score but are in working in Tech fields.
- I focus on concepts and spend time teaching how to review to find information and have them keep going.
- Work hard at making it okay to not know and to ask.
- Every day is a new day for learning we can all do better each day.

Constantly reminding them this is just the beginning and it does get easier

Fri, Feb 27 at 2:29 PM

Hi Mrs. Testa, this is Catherine [redacted] I was thinking about you the other day when someone asked me about why I was interested in cs. And you are the first thing that pops up in my head because you are the first one to expose me to the field. The most awesome thing is about your class was more so you taught me I can do anything. Now I'm officially a

Catherine >

Now I'm officially a software engineer at cap one (a career I didn't even believe I could do before) and i just wanted to say thank you so much for everything. There are not many black women devs at the company but SURE FEELS GOOD TO REPRESENT. HOPE EVERYTHING IS SO WELL!! just wanted to share :)

EVERYTHING IS SO WELL!! just wanted to share :)

This means so much to me!!!! Yay yay yay. You are a rockstar.



iMessage



Staying in contact with them helps

Still Celebrating them even when they graduated in 2020!

Practice: Choose 1

Examine your own basis

Choose one or more of the following and reflect on yourself

[Cult of Pedagogy Article](#)

[50 Cognitive Biases of Modern World](#)

[Implicit Bias Tests](#)

Explore various Curriculum

Choose one or more of the following to read and explore

[Amazon Future Engineers](#)

[Cyber.org Careers](#)

[Voice is Power](#)

[AI for Oceans \(CodeAI\)](#)

Create

Spend time building a project, setting up a form, gathering data or uploading a lesson in AI to have it determine bias

[IBM Algorithmic Bias](#)

Apply: Choose 1

Examine your own basis

Share your reflection with someone, the group, or on social media

Explore various Curriculum

Reflect on how this can be used in your classroom and share with someone, the group or social media.

Create

Share, Share, Share!!
Mark on your calendar when to go back and look at this and /or send yourself a email

[Futureme.org](https://futureme.org)

More....

Here is more items I have used in my classroom or for myself to aid in creating the classroom :

- [Modern Classroom Project](#)
- [Screen Pal](#)
- [Right Question Institute](#)
- [PearAssessent](#)
- [Explained Episode: Coding](#) (Netflix)
- [Connected: The Hidden Science of Everything Episode 1 Surveillance](#) (Netflix)
- [Internet of Everything](#) (Only Parts shown)
- CNN Decades Videos on Technology (Skipping certain information, HBO MAX)

More....

Here is more items I have used in my classroom or for myself to aid in creating the classroom :

- [RISE model for Feedback](#)
- [Facial Recognition Bias \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Algorithmic Justice League](#)
- [NCWIT Aspirations Awards](#)
- [Coding with Culture \(This Morning workshop\)](#)
- [Pew Research in STEM](#)
- [Princeton University Prep Program](#)
- [Trio Programs](#)
- [Be there Free Course](#)



**Raising the bar one
step at a time
Thank you!**

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