

Call and Response: Tiny Successes



After over a dozen years in classrooms, I planned my first field trips this year! I was worried about the quality of students' experience, as well as behavior in unfamiliar spaces, but the trips have provided wonderful experiences for students, community partners, and me. In these years after mass quarantine, I've been craving adventure, and our students have, too.

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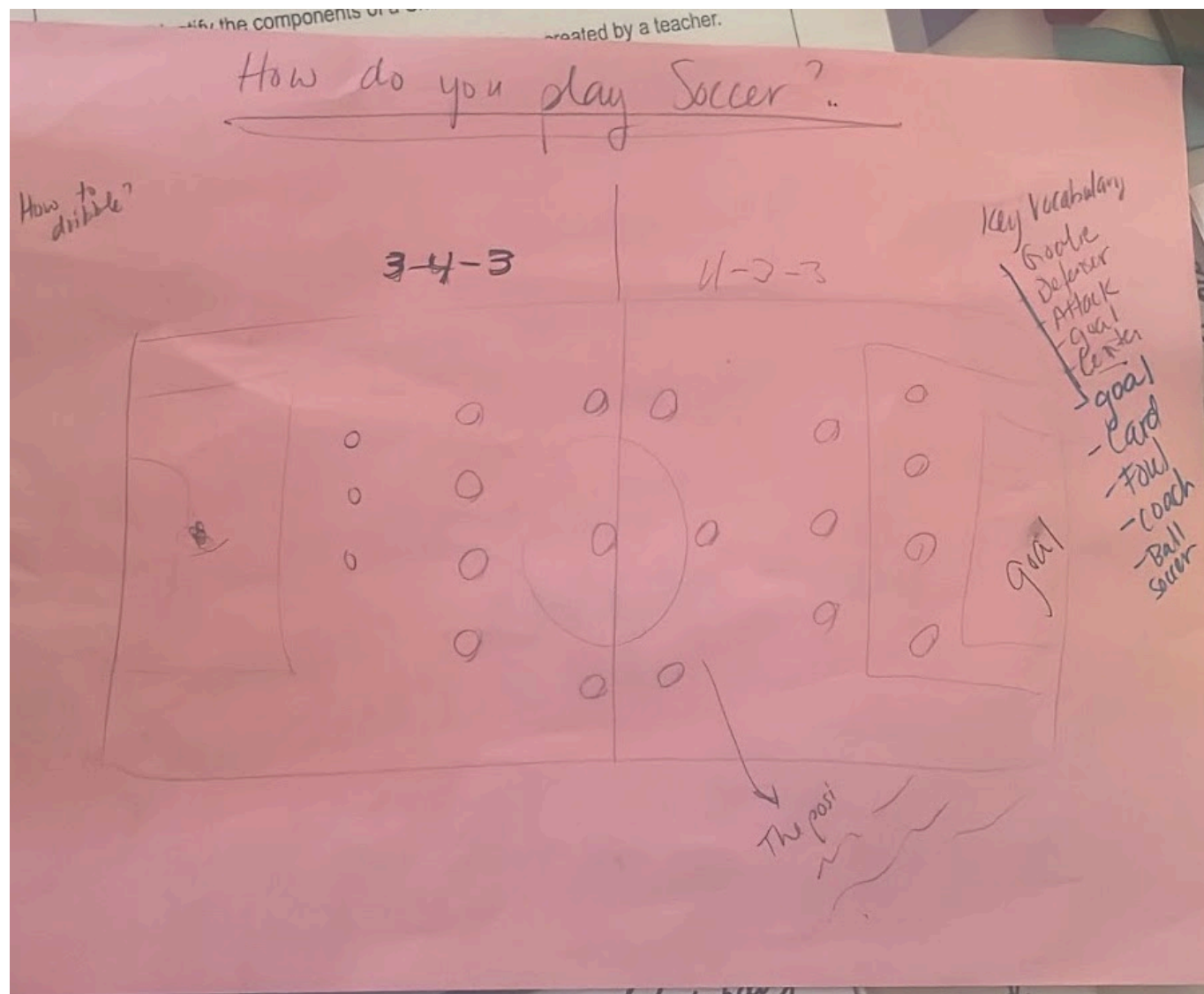
- [Kirstin Milks](#), Knowles Senior Fellow

A student who failed geometry last semester because he rarely attended □ got an A on the first test of the semester and is attending class!!

- Anonymous

One small win I had recently was using soccer to explain what a scientific model

was to students. Kids were so engaged and started to build models about their research question right away. I am going to laminate that model example to save for eternity.



- [Monique Rivera-Velez](#), 2018 Knowles Teaching Fellow

I hate teaching balancing chemical equations. It's hard for students and they call me out for teaching math in science class. My first year teaching about one-third of the students actually understood it. This year, I used my Knowles budget to buy some magnetic circles (recommended to me by another Fellow, Hannah Korslund, 2021 Cohort). I cold-called students and had them balance equations on the whiteboard in front of the whole class. On day two, we were balancing hard equations, when one chronically absent student LEAPT out of his seat when I read the first problem. He showed the whole class how to balance the equation. The way his eyes lit up as he jumped over his partner was a moment of pride for me.

The WHOLE class learned how to balance chemical equations, from the most chronically absent to the top-performing student. It made me feel proud of myself as a teacher. Maybe I don't hate teaching balancing chemical equations.

- [Oliver Yang](#), 2021 Knowles Teaching Fellow

A tiny success is getting my grant for graphing calculators! My school has one scratched, leaking TI 83 for every two students. Ten TI 84 Plus CEs help alleviate that issue.

- [Madelyn Lin](#), 2022 Knowles Teaching Fellow

Sometimes the smallest thing can make the greatest difference. I have a student teacher who is doing a wonderful job and is leading most of my classes. I'm still often present in the room and get a lot of time with my students, specifically supporting those who are struggling or who have missed a lot of class. This morning, while cleaning random marks and pencil drawings off of my classroom tables, I came across a tiny note written on the corner of a table: "I miss Mr. Caldwell." I don't know who wrote it, but it lifted me up, left me feeling valued, and made every challenge throughout the day feel worth it.

- [Ian Caldwell](#), Knowles Senior Fellow

An ongoing feature in Kaleidoscope, Call and Response features short responses to a writing prompt. Do you have an idea for a storytelling prompt? Contact us at kaleidoscope@knowlesteachers.org.