ASSESSMENTS:


This article discussed the importance of student feedback. Giving feedback is a skill in itself. When giving feedback focus on the work and process, relate feedback to the goal, try being descriptive and not give judgment, be positive and specific, and give feedback in a timely fashion.


This article was on one teacher’s method of assessing students in her math class. She looked at how students were able to communicate their reasoning behind their answers. She asked students how they came to their conclusions for correct and incorrect answers. This allowed for her to see if they truly understood or needed further instruction. This article also suggested that assessment and instruction be integrated so that assessment becomes a routine part of the classroom routine. Students should also be allowed to look at problems from different perspectives and explain the method they used to solve problems. Allowing students to choose their own problems also allowed them to decide on parameters that were comfortable for them.


This article defined the difference between formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments occur during the instructional process, before the summative assessments. Summative assessments are assessments of learning, and typically documents how much learning has occurred at a point in time. Almost any type of assessment tool can be used for either type of assessment but some are better suited for one or the other. Formative assessments allow to assess for learning. These types of assessments allow teacher and students to see where they are now, where they are going, and how they can close the gap.


This article discussed considerations when developing standards-based curricula and assessments. First, the written curriculum documents need to give direction, focus, and accountability in the learning environment. Second, the learner outcomes students are expected to know by the time they graduate must be aligned to the state standards. Third, the written, taught, and tested curriculum must be applied.


This article discussed the use of alternative assessments instead of traditional paper and pencil assessments. Alternative assessments may include projects, observations, checklists, journals, illustrating, etc. Climbing a three level ladder was used as an analogy to look at how teachers use alternative assessments. Level one is the first step where teachers use one or two alternative assessments each grading period. Level two is the second step where teachers use
more than one alternative assessment and use a variety of them in a grading period. Level three is the third step nearing the top. Teachers use alternative assessments on a regular basis.


This article is a teacher’s reflection on the use of instructional rubrics in her classroom. A rubric is an assessment tool used to list the expectations of work and articulates gradations of quality for each expectation, from excellent to poor. There are positives and negatives to using rubrics and she describes them as, “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.” The Good: they help teachers orient us towards our goals. They help teachers clarify expectations and focus the instruction. They help my students understand the goal of an assignment and focus their efforts. The Bad: they are not entirely self-explanatory. The Ugly: issues of validity, reliability, and fairness apply to rubrics.


This article suggested using assessments to support instruction; assessments for learning rather than assessments of learning. Assessment for learning requires adjusting teaching as needed while learning is still taking place. That emphasis is what students are getting out of the process rather than on what teachers are putting into it. One study showed that students who were taught by teachers who used assessment for learning achieved in six or seven months what would otherwise have taken a year. There is no one size fits all approach to doing this. Some ideas include clarifying and sharing learning intentions; using effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks; providing feedback; activating students as owners of their own learning; and activating students as instructional resources for one another. None of the ideas are new but by implementing them student achievement can improve.


This article discussed considerations when developing standards-based curricula and assessments. First, the written curriculum documents need to give direction, focus, and accountability in the learning environment. Second, the learner outcomes students are expected to know by the time they graduate must be aligned to the state standards. Third, the written, taught, and tested curriculum must be applied.


This article gave seven specific assessment and grading practices that can enhance teaching and learning. 1) Use summative assessments to frame meaningful performance goals. 2) Show criteria and models in advance. Provide a rubric or show an example so students know expectations. 3) Assess before teaching. These assessments might include: skills checks, concepts maps, drawings, pre-tests, and K-W-L charts. This allows teachers to differentiate instruction. 4) Offer appropriate choices. Teachers need to allow students to work to their strengths. 5) Provide feedback early and often. Feedback must be timely, specific, understandable to the receiver, and formed to allow for self-adjustment on the student’s part. 6) Encourage self-assessment and goal setting. The most effective learners set personal learning
goals, and self-assess their work. Teachers can help cultivate these habits of mind. 7) Allow new evidence of achievement to replace old evidence.


Around the world educators are not held accountable for how students perform on standardized tests. There are many assumptions of the United States versus everyone else. We have to remember that we're not always comparing the same thing on testing. In some countries only the elite students go onto secondary school and are tested on high stakes tests, versus the United States where everyone goes to high school and takes these tests.


This article discussed teachers looking at student data to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and making informed instructional decisions. The teacher determines a student’s current level, identifies goals, then the teacher measures the student’s academic progress regularly (weekly, biweekly, or monthly). This can be done in a variety of ways. The teacher can adjust instruction to improve student learning. Research states that when teachers use student progress monitoring, students learn more. Probes can be administered quickly and results are immediately understandable. Monitoring can be done on regular and special education students in an inclusive classroom.


This article discussed a teacher’s understanding of assessments in the classroom. She is an advocate of informative assessments and shares her ten understandings of what they are in this article. Her understandings are: 1) Informative assessment isn’t just about tests. 2) Informative assessment really isn’t about the grade book. 3) Informative assessment isn’t always formal. 4) Informative assessment isn’t separate from the curriculum. 5) Informative assessment isn’t about “after.” 6) Informative assessment isn’t an end in itself. 7) Informative assessment isn’t separate from instruction. 8) Informative assessment isn’t just about student readiness. 9) Informative assessment isn’t just about finding weakness. 10) Informative assessment isn’t only for teachers.


Effective 21st century assessment goes beyond traditional testing to look at the accomplishments of learners. This article discussed using electronic portfolios as a way to show work over time. Work may be collected over a semester, a year, or even several years. Work can be shown in a variety of ways including web pages, e-movies, visuals, audio recording, and text.

**BOOKS:**


This book began with what “innovation” means. There are many definitions and it is an evolving concept. It is about new ways of seeing and doing things as well as breakthrough ideas. Being innovative can be messy and disruptive at times. It is also recognizing opportunities that
others overlook. It can be the idea of taking something and making it better. Innovations create a new normal, for example: seatbelts and smart phones. Genuine innovation is difficult and rare. Educators need to look at their own strengths and weaknesses as an innovator first. They should also recognize opportunities as well as look for ways to create them. Educators should also be aware that innovation can be a process that is messy with failures and frustrations at times. Not all ideas are the “jackpot” idea though. It is important to be able to generate ideas but know how to critically analyze them as well. Some ideas aren’t ready and it is ok to say no. Innovators are passionate about their ideas, which helps keep them motivated. Teachers can help students discover their passions.


This book stated that today’s educational system is dominated by teachers’ lectures, reliance on textbooks, students working in isolation using low-level skills, and students’ thinking devalued by teachers looking for one right answer. It was suggested to create a safe environment for students to think, explore, chase their own ideas, take risks, and ask questions. Students are teacher dependent because of the feedback given to them. Teachers often say things such as, “no,” “good,” “right,” and “wrong.” In conjunction with asking these questions, the book mentioned to allow students to share their responses before the teacher does. Students sometimes believe or assume that the teacher knows more than they do. So once they hear the teacher’s response it is difficult for them to create their own opinions or understandings. The ideas in this book require bold changes in the classroom and thinking, it is recommended to take one step at a time.


The logistics of PLCs were discussed in this book. It mentioned to use a four phase model and to have group members volunteer to be part of the group.


This book had applicable ideas that covered a range of topics. Many of the ideas covered seemed to be geared toward a department chair position but could be applied to any teacher. This book also had many resources ranging from checklists and surveys to unit examples and effective meeting notes that are helpful.


This book offered teaching strategies for integrating thinking skills, cooperative learning, graphic organizers, and authentic assessment into classrooms. The ideas presented in this book are based on the latest brain research of students.


It was discussed in this book how major and forward thinking accomplishments are happening outside the U.S. and then questioned if U.S. students are being taught for the present and future. Many schools are set up the same as the 1890s, is that the best set up? The book
mentioned that we need new forms not reform. The willingness to try new things and change things up is the first step. The text mentioned to start little. It said that students are in the 21st century waiting for teacher and curriculum to catch up.

This manual provides the guidelines for addressing GLBT issues in the St. Paul, MN school district.

This text suggested that teachers collect data and analyze it. This data should then be used to make changes and improvements for students’ academic needs. It was also stated to collect only the data that is needed. Some schools collect data on everything and then there is too much to even know what to do with. In my school, we do a considerable amount of data collection, especially in reading, but I find that we are able to use it to assist students in areas of need. Jensen also went on to say that teachers should hold high expectations no matter students’ economic backgrounds. There should be no excuses. Teachers should assign tough work and expect students to do it and to do it right. Building relationships is also an important component of helping students of low-income situations.

The book expressed the idea of a hairball really starting out as nothing and then two hairs intertwining and then another one and so on until it is a massive hairball is completely true. I found it interesting how this is compared to life and business. There are many pieces that make up the whole and it is easy to conform (for most) and get sucked into the giant hairball. Not all have to be a part of the hairball; rather they can “orbit” it. People can break rules, experiment and be non-conformers going off on their own tangents while still being in the realm of the hairball.

This book was written with information intertwined with real stories and experiences of actual teachers, students, and other American Indians. American Indians have strong family ties and their extended families are many times just as important as their immediate families. The extended family often times helps raise and discipline children. It was mentioned that if an educator is not aware of this strong bond they might feel sorry for the student that they are living with an aunt or uncle. When in all actuality that is completely normal for them and these relatives are like a mother or father figure to them. Just because American Indians were required to do or not to so something in the past shouldn’t mean we have to be stuck in those ways. Somehow the cycle needs to be broken. Some American Indians have the challenge of living in two worlds, their traditional cultures and mainstream society. There is a struggle of where and when their cultures should be taught – at school or home.

This book stated that learning is more complex than simply providing students with facts and information. Learning is influenced by many factors, which the rest of this book went into detail about. Varying economic funding for schools leads to inequalities in staffing, counseling services, safety, and retention in schools. Failure to learn is created through policies, practices, attitudes, and beliefs.


This book gave a general overview of leader attributes and situations they encounter. There were quizzes at the end of each chapter to determine what kind of leader you are.


This book was a resource for websites to visit, different technologies available, and ways to create digital rich classrooms. It is important to remember what our objective is educationally. The goal is to enhance education using technology.


There are several resources people need and they may fall into poverty when they are lacking these resources. The other resources besides financial include: emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of hidden rules. There are hidden rules in each class and what is acceptable in one class is not in another. It is important to remember that students in poverty know a certain set of rules and that they need to be taught the hidden rules of the middle class. They need to be told what is acceptable or what is considered appropriate or not. One way educators can help students in poverty situations is to be good role models. This is most likely a goal of all educators anyways but especially for students in poverty.


The global achievement gap, as this book discussed, is the gap between what even our best public schools are teaching and testing versus what ALL students need in order to succeed as learners, workers, and citizens in today’s global economy. This book talked about seven survival skills people need to be successful in today’s world. The author interviewed several business leaders to find what they looked for in employees. Employers are looking for people who can ask good questions and think critically. They are looking for individuals who can collaborate, adapt, show initiative, communicate, analyze, and show curiosity.


This book offered instructional examples on the basic concepts of Understanding by Design (UbD). This design requires a "backward design" approach that focus on what students should know at the end of instruction. This process focuses on developing students' understanding of important ideas.

This book discussed the different parts of the brain and how they function. It discussed how knowing this information can help teachers implement brain-compatible teaching strategies.

Zhao, Y. (2009). *Catching up or leading the way*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

In this book it was stated that Chinese students are able to achieve high test scores but their ability is low. They have high suicide rates of 250,000 attempts. Just over 26% of those who killed themselves were in the 15 to 26 year old range. This is compared to 31,484 in the United States’ total population. Some students and parents are even willing to buy expensive (and illegal) answer sheets and equipment to cheat in order to do well on college entrance exams. There is this high pressure to do well and score high and yet many are unable to function in today’s job force. Asian countries are creating education reforms that allow for more flexibility, individualization, and creativity in their curriculum as they are seeing the damaging results of standardization and high-stakes testing. China is allowing some universities to accept students not solely on their entrance exam scores but looking at other aspects of students as well.

**BRAIN GYM:**


Brain wave cd sleeve, songs and actions.


This was one chapter from the book. The cerebellum, about the size of a small fist, takes up only 1/10th of the brain, but contains nearly half of all its neurons. It stated that the part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning. Exercise improves classroom behavior, academic performance, and social skills. Educators should purposefully integrate movement into everyday learning.


Article about Park Side Elementary School in Marshall, MN and how they are using brain gym at their school.


This article was about a study done with students in grades 3-5 in California. Half of the students participated in brain gym activities where the other half didn’t. It was a year long structured study and was facilitated by a brain gym consultant. The end results showed that students who participated in the brain gym activities were calmer, relaxed, and their self-esteem had improved. They also performed higher than the other half of the group on the reading standardized test.
A chronology of annotated research study summaries in the field of educational kinesiology. 


This is a collection of research supporting brain gym activities. It highlights different studies that have been completed.

- Experimental research - independent variable is manipulated
- True experimental research- comparing randomly selected groups
- Quasi-experimental research - groups that are not randomly selected
- Qualitative research - reports changes that are difficult to quantify
- Correlational research - compare two or more characteristics from same population


This article stressed the importance of movement and the brain. It gave examples of how the mind and body work together. Movement activities help students meet academic goals.

COMMON CORE:


This article discussed the use of graphic novels to motivate students when reading complex information in content areas like math, science, and social studies. Secondary teachers need to achieve three goals when reading complex texts with students: they need to motivate them to engage in informational text, expand students’ knowledge of content, and equip them with text-processing tools. These goals can be met using graphic novels because they are highly engaging.


In order to meet the Common Core State Standards there is a push to engage students in close reading. Close reading is defined as a careful, systematic analysis of text for a particular purpose. There is concern that students won’t be able to self-monitor, or notice when they do or don’t understand what they are reading. Students need to learn how to independently read a text closely. Readers can ask questions like: What’s the author’s main idea? What details in the text make me think so? How do those details support the author’s main idea? When a student is engaged in close reading he or she can self-monitor for understanding and at the same time, examine how details help clarify the main idea.


This article suggested that students begin learning to read informational texts as soon as possible. This article is a good resource for K-3 teachers to find seven ideas on how to incorporate informational text into their teaching and classrooms. It was stated that the Common Core Standards holds high expectations for students around informational texts and that even young learners can meet these high expectations.


Reading complex nonfiction can be challenging but can also be rewarding when its intricacies are mastered. This article focused on close reading strategies. Close reading is an
outcome, not a technique. It is important to select texts that are accessible, engaging, and complex. Textbooks are generally not good texts to use for close reading because the information is generally summarized and not sufficiently complex because the thinking work is already laid out for the reader. When quality nonfiction text is selected, readers can ask questions as they are reading. They can work harder and see more in the texts they read.


In this article informational text was defined as text that teaches about the physical, biological, or social world. These types of text can be difficult to read. Teachers need to help students find points that help them understand the complex informational text and work their way through to a successful conclusion. Four access points are suggested: 1) Establishment of the purpose of modeling and thinking aloud. 2) Close reading instruction. 3) Collaborative conversations. 4) Independent reading.


One focus of this article was literacy. It suggested going deeper into selected texts for example; instead of covering five novels do two instead. In favor of the common core it was stated that is standards are shared people can collaborate nationwide. If you move you still have the same expectations in the new place. The core helps guides students to develop their own learning. It helps prepare them to be college, career, and life ready. In the opinion of this article standardized testing does not work with the core. Instead checklists, face-to-face, and written and oral examples should be used.


Reading comprehension can be a hard skill to pinpoint. A single score will show a score based on a variety of passages on a variety of topics. An average student that reads passages with familiarity did well on those ones and unfamiliar passages they did poorly. Results show that comprehension highly depends on knowledge of the topic at hand. Any topic you want to be able to read with comprehension is a topic that you must become knowledgeable about. The Common Core Standards call for a better balance of fiction and nonfiction texts.


This article discussed one teacher’s experience with questions asked in class. Students wrote their questions on post-it notes and placed them on a poster in the classroom to be answered later. Most the time the questions ended up just dying there. In order to answer these questions in a productive and educational way the teacher decided to use informational texts to find the answers. The teacher hoped to spark their interest and use informational text for authentic purposes, to answer their own questions. Students were grouped according to ability. Students at higher-level reading levels moved from using a single informational text to using sets of texts from multiple perspectives. Sometimes texts were offered that didn’t answer the questions. Over time students became more proficient in purposefully navigating through the texts. Students continued to put questions on the poster but not only did they increase in quantity but in quality as well.

It has been observed that when reading texts most of the focus is spent on the written words and little time is spent on the graphics. Sometimes graphics are seen as space fillers. However, most graphics support or extend the written text. They provide another route to understand the information, which can help struggling readers. The common core places a strong emphasis on understanding and using graphical elements of texts. As teachers we need to make sure students know the importance of graphics. This article offered some strategies for comprehending these graphics including: visual thinking strategies, question/answer relationships, and questioning the author. In all students need to recognize the importance of graphics and strategically read these graphics to better comprehend the whole text.


The new standards in reading call for increases in rigor and the level of instruction. One of the standards encourages reading more informational text at school to ready students for college and careers. There are different definitions of what exactly informational text is. Some classify it as simply nonfiction and other say it is only a portion of that category. Ultimately it is text that help readers better understand a procedure or process, or provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a topic. The idea is for all students to gain experience with a wide range of texts. It was stated that in elementary school, half the time should be spent on informational text. In middle school the percentage should be about 70%. This means that history, science, and math teachers need to have students reading grade appropriate text in class.


This article shared the process one school in Mexico used to introduce argumentative texts in English to their students. This school was a bilingual PreK-9 school and had the goal for all students to function effectively in Spanish and English environments. For their middle school students they used the website Pros and Cons of Controversial Issues (www.procon.org) to introduce text at the appropriate complexity. Students read the three selected topics and first identified the main ideas of each piece. For their second task they had to determine if the writing was for the pro or con side. The third task was to match arguments with corresponding counterarguments. Students then had to rank the articles from strongest to weakest. The final task was for students to examine all the evidence and decide which side presented the most convincing arguments.

**CONSTRUCTIVISM:**


Young people can learn a lot when the engaged in a topic that fascinates them. Inquisitiveness is what drives learning. Researchers see the brain as a flexible, self-adjusting, ever changing entity. Constructivist learning is the interaction between the environment and the individual brain. Constructivism goes against so many of our institutional arrangements for learning. School does not seem real in comparison to the environments students experience away
from school with their peers. Constructivism is an open-ended form of learning and about reality and purpose.


Science is a search for meaning and schools have a role in nurturing this search for meaning. This can be done by teachers considering students' questions and ideas and investigating them seriously. This article continues to discuss the process of doing this through an example by the Discover Lab in New York.


This article discussed the role of standardized tests in schools and holding teachers accountable. Some of this testing has made teachers teach to the test which does not develop deep learning that students can apply to new situations. This article went on to discuss five practices that constructivist teachers engage in to meet the needs of student and testing. Two critiques were also mentioned. One that teachers abandon regular curriculum to discuss the whims of their students. Another critique was that the constructivist approach lacks rigor.


Art and cultural conditions can be researched and discussed through works of art. In order to do so, works of art that are narratively complex and challenging (but not too challenging) must be found. Works of art should be easily accessible and have been written about extensively. Students can use their own frame of reference for interpreting the art. The constructivist approach to inquiry encourages students to link art to other disciplines. Students need a strong based in history, literature, the sciences, music, and other subjects to support the content of art instruction.

Constructivism and the five e's. (n.d.). *Unknown.*

This article discusses the five "E's" of the constructivist model according to the Biological Science Curriculum Study. They are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. In the Engage stage you could ask a question, define a problem, show a surprising event, act out a problematic situation. The Explore stage allows students to get directly involved. The Explain stage allows learners to put abstract thoughts into communicable form. The Elaborate stage expands concepts and allows learners to make other connections. The last stage, Evaluate, allows teachers to gauge if learners have acquired understanding.


Students are engaged in a constructivist classroom by being actively involved in the learning process. They participate in hands-on activities, discuss with other students, and work collaboratively. Teachers create interest, confidence, and a need for math by using students' energy. Five contextual teaching strategies used by constructivist teachers include: 1) Relating (learning in the context of one's life experiences), 2) Experiencing (hands on experiences such as using manipulatives, problem solving activities, and laboratory activities), 3) Applying (putting
concepts to use) 4) Cooperating (learning by sharing, responding, and communicating) 5) Transferring (applying knowledge to new situation).


In today's education world inclusion is expected. Each teacher is responsible for the learning of every student. This article challenges this idea. It gave the analogy of a gifted tennis player always playing against average players. They are never going to get better if they are never challenged. In regards to education that same thing can happen. No "one size fits all" approach will work. Teachers of gifted students need to allow for flexibility, acceleration, and variety.


This article gave short descriptions of the legacies of six Constructivists: Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Feuerstein, Gardner, and Diamond.


This article described teaching math based on standards established by the NCTM. Moving away from lecture and drill and practice, classroom time should be spent on big ideas, problem solving, reasoning and proof, communicating, connections, and representations. Students should have conceptual tools approach and solve a variety of problems.


This article gave ten suggestions when encouraging students to create their own curriculum. They are: 1) Garner support and start small, 2) Use library sources, 3) give up the guides and get ready to model (be willing to teach without the aid), 4) Develop assessment tools, 5) Allow for noise, 6) Schedule record keeping, 7) Don't panic, a routine will come, 8) Be a learner, 9) Communicate unanimous expectations, and 10) Gather data weekly.


This article challenges some of the ideas of constructivism. The way our mind works is continually changing and there are continually new theories of learning. Learning may be more than 'carpentry' and teaching is more than 'negotiation'.


Problem based learning (PBL) is the epitome of constructivism. Student activity is the norm where students are discovering open ended questions. Teachers design problems so that students learn a variety of skills as well as meet curriculum objectives. These problems are well designed, ones that students can buy into. Teachers are known as coaches and push students to think on a higher level and use critical thinking skills. Students I are evaluated through oral and written presentations and asked to show their knowledge in a variety of ways. Training is suggested for teachers interested in using PBL in their classrooms.

This article focused on finding connections to what is learned. Making connections allows us to solve problems. Teaching new material should also be connected to previous knowledge. Making meaning has to do with finding the connections between our personal experience and the universal issues.


Constructivism in the classroom is easy to imagine but hard to do. This article discusses using the Questioning the Author (QtA) approach to engage students with text. This approach provides focus, poses questions, and keeping students’ answers on track. Keeping the discussion focused can be done using the marking and turning back strategies. Marking takes a student's response and uses it to set a useful direction for further discussion. Turning back reflects thinking back to the students.


Constructivism means more than one thing. There isn't one way to teach or learn jaccording to the constructivist theory. There are three roles in constructivism which are: the active learner, the social learner and the creative learner. The active learner may discuss, debate, hypothesize, and investigate. The social leaner role means that learning doesn't occur individually but ideas are constructed through dialogue with others. The creative role states that learners need to create or recreate knowledge for themselves. Constructivist ideas often require more time than traditional methods of teaching. This idea can be both good and bad.


Constructivist beliefs include the need to challenge and refine students' thinking and make curriculum come alive. They want students to become learners and thinkers, explore questions, and build deeper understanding of knowledge. The challenge is not in embracing these ideas but implementing them. Constructivists value students as thinkers and their ability to ask the right the questions. This article suggested several problem solving strategies that assist in helping ask the right questions. There are also different types of situations that require different approaches to solving them.


This article was about a school in New Zealand that has developed a program called, "City Site." This program allows students in Years 7 and 8 (ages 11-13) to travel through out the city to enhance their learning through real applications. They are guideline set up but their are four main components: freedom, ownership, responsibility, and openness.


This article is an interview with Howard Gardner and his views on education. He explained his opinion on constructivism and behaviorism. He said that a constructivist classroom let's students continually try out ideas and practices for themselves. They have to have a desire to
learn without extrinsic rewards. In a behaviorist classroom one focuses on the answers that are desired.

**CREATIVITY:**


1) creativity takes more than originality (original but still follow academic guidelines)
2) different levels of creativity
   a. mini c – interpretive
   b. little c – everyday creativity
   c. pro c – expert creativity
   d. big c – legendary creativity
3) context matters – stay away from rewarding creativity and contests
4) creativity comes at cost (work, effort, risk)
5) there is a time and place for creativity


Creativity – being original and have high quality. Don’t grade creativity, had a rubric to use as guideline. Give feedback right away then allow for time to go back and work again. Combine current with the past. You don’t always have to show examples of great work, students work will look like that then, allow for students to try!


Research shows that when someone is curious about something they learn more and are more likely to remember it. Children are born with an overpowering need to know. The incessant curiosity that is in a child's first five years of life seems to dwindle when they go to school. Children's curiosity can be fostered or diminished by the people they spend time with. Teachers can encourage curiosity in subtle ways. It is something however that is easier to say than to do. This article offered four suggestions to help children gain curiosity. 1) Hire curious teachers. 2) Count classroom questions. Simply by counting questions can make you aware of them. 3) Make questioning a goal. 4) Measure curiosity - such as video recording and journals.


This article gave examples of how teachers encourage students to notice things in their learning. To really stop and examine and visualize things can create an entirely new perspective on a subject. One art teacher called her students investigators and they began applying their observation skills in other academic areas. To really notice something requires focused attention, suspended judgment, and reflective experiences. When students share what they have noticed they show background knowledge, vocabulary, interests, and questions they may have. We have to teach students to slow down, notice relationships, and use their imaginations.


Understanding versus creativity. Don’t need to be afraid (taking risks, failing, making mistakes).


This article discusses asking questions in the classroom based on four levels. The levels are 1) Details, 2) Characteristics, 3) Elaborations, and 4) Evidence. Planning lessons that incorporate questions on all four levels transforms classroom questions into analytic tasks that require students to think at complex levels.


This article began by discussing China's high test scores compared to the US. China's students are able to take test well but have shown to have limited ability to question, solve problems, and innovate. The US is focused on test scores and getting rid of any curriculum that is not mandated. This focus has put the US in a potential, "creativity crisis." To avoid this we have to think how we can teach students to be independent learners and creative thinkers. This article offered three key ideas for developing student creativity. Key 1: Develop a creativity-friendly classroom. Key 2: Teach the skills and attitudes of creativity. Key 3: Teach the creative methods of the disciplines.


The US is heading towards high-stakes tests, zombies, and outsourcing, we need to take a u-turn. Provide personal learning experiences, product driven, and broaden education.

**DIVERSITY / BIAS:**


This article discussed why the gap persists in student achievement regarding low-income and minority children. Many topics are considered for this gap including: low birth weight, lead poisoning, food supply, being read to as young children, watching television, parent availability/participation, and changing schools. Schools are also a factor such as the rigor of curriculum, experienced teachers, teacher preparation, class size, technology-assisted instruction, and unsafe schools.


This article was about a teacher who has a unit focusing on art and culture in another country. This particular lesson dealt with an Islamic art project.


Cyberbullying is the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten. Unlike traditional bullying, it comes with a wide audience. One-third to one-half of youths have been targeted by cyberbullies. Cannot be tolerated. Formspring in a social media that allows users total anonymity. Schools are needing to be involved in educating students about cyberbullying. Ideas include: debunking misperceptions, build empathy and understanding, teaching online
safety skills, involving students in writing online behavior contracts and involving parents and encouraging them to be involved.

The article shared an activity focusing on friendship and leaving others out.

Rural schools are changing. TDSi involves staff that come in contact with students. The key is to build relationships with students. It is not an easy discussion but there are no right or wrong answers.

Leo, J. (2010). Let the hot air out of bullies. *Teaching Tolerance*, (Fall), 12.
An activity that involves teaching students about bullying. Students learn to use critical thinking and empathy skills to become advocates for themselves.

Discusses how does a person who is gay or lesbian survives in a rural community. Some live in the closet until they are able to move to a more accepting community. Some are kicked out of the house when they tell parents. There are six LGBT friendly actions schools can do: post a sign "safe zone", confront homophobic remarks, seek opportunities to incorporate into curriculum, do not assume a student is gay, organize and encourage administrators ways to create a safer schools for LGBT students, and contribute to a Gay-Straight Alliance if available.

This article was about a teacher's social justice unit based on reading different literature selections. Students had to focus on a particular group that has suffered from prejudice and discrimination. They had to reflect on their readings and then write a story based on the literature.

This article was about a student Lawrence (Larry) King who was openly gay, very out there, had a troubled life from the start, and pushed his orientation on his classmates. Brandon was another student in Larry's class who had witnessed gun violence, his mom had a meth addiction, his grades were dropping, and he was Larry's "crush". Larry was murdered by this classmate, Brandon, in class, by gun shot. The teachers and administration failed to fully address the issue.

This guide discusses the bullying basics. Bullying is one of the most serious and pervasive challenges facing schools today. There are many forms of bullying including physical, verbal, cyber, and psychological. This guide also suggests ways to prevent bullying in the classroom and how to deal with bullying incidences.

This article was about Lexi Jackman-Wheetner, a sophomore in Columbus, Indiana and her concern for her LGBT friends. She decided to create a gay-straight alliance where LGBT students could have support. This place was where they could share their problems, in an environment that was comfortable and safe.

This school welcomes you. A teaching tolerance guide for school leaders. (2013). Teaching Tolerance, (Fall), 31-33.

This article was about supporting LGBT students and their first amendment rights. Make sure they are included in school activities. Discusses clothing and dress policies. Schools need to have an anti-bully plan.

VanDerValk, A. (2013). There are no bullies. just children who bully and you can help them. Teaching Tolerance, (Fall), 38-41.

This article describes bullying as two things happening: 1) the aggressor must intend to hurt or intimidate someone less powerful and 2) the behavior is repeated. Educators can help by supporting students at risk, targeting transition years, and changing the language of bullying.


This article is a reflection of a mother's conversation to her son about racial biases. Black youth are often burdened with societies prejudices. Three suggestions to help them cope are: 1) Name it - help them recognize what is and isn't a racial or gender bias; 2) Oppose it - confront a situation directly; and 3) Replace it - find outlets such as churches and community groups.


This article states that identifying institutional racism is the first step toward ending it. It offers some questions to consider if your school might be racist and then consider if these actions are moving students closer to educational opportunities or not.

INNOVATION:


This article was a large PLC for the state of Alabama. The keys to making it work included: relationships, willingness to make it work, being flexible, learning from one another, forming networks to make things seem more manageable, reflecting to determine what was learned and where they can go next.


This article discussed how Ontario turned around its school system from failure to excellence. During the most intensive time of improvement educators relied on teachers’ unions, superintendents’ and principals’ associations. There was a deep commitment by the adults and
they had trusting professional relationships. Ontario focused on three main goals and provided professional learning. The goals were: 1) improve student achievement, 2) reduce gaps in student achievement; and 3) improve public confidence in the public education system. They looked to officials to help, focused on research and data, established a sense of urgency, held high expectations, and removed distractions. They also engaged students, parents, and communities, and implemented character development programs in the schools.

Innovation is little steps and relationships. It is about working together and talking about it. There are three types of capitals to make it work: Technical (the money), Human, and Social (relationships). There are also different capacities that need to work together to make it work: instructional capacity (classroom), organizational (district), and local/regional (city, county, state).

Nine states have introduced legislation to cut or drop the Common Core. Core requires changes in our teachers, tests, materials and professional development, and our expectations. Thirty-seven states are having difficulty implementing the core. One of the problems is that everything is happening so quickly.

This article discusses Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to improve student writing. VTS generates critical-thinking skills, including creativity. VTS uses three simple questions: 1) What’s going on in this picture? 2) What do you see that makes you say that? 3) What more can you find? The VTS process has helped teachers become facilitators and allow students more control in their learning environment.

This article discusses a mindset of creativity and innovation in an educational setting. The idea of the maker movement is to be makers of things and not just consumers of things. The maker mindset is to seek out jobs in STEM or creative fields as well as make their own jobs and industries. Ideas of the maker movement include creating, exploring, and tinkering whether it is in a wood shop, sewing, or working with circuits.

This article discussed taking what successful people have done and trying to replicate it to make it work for you. Often solutions to problems in school, e.g. absenteeism, tardiness, and others, stare us right in the face, but are invisible in plain sight. This article suggests paying attention to the Positive Deviance (PD) approach. The approach requires one to look at an individual or group whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems then their peers although everyone has access to the same resources and challenges. They gave the example of malnourished children in Vietnam and how the researchers
looked to those who were poor and not malnourished. They discovered what their caregivers did and then taught others how to do the same thing.


This is a name of a program to redesign elementary schools. This program looks at prevention, early interventions, use of innovative reading, writing and language curricula, extensive professional development, and parent involvement. They have seen positive results. It originally piloted in mid 80s and numbers of schools grew substantially in 90s, the Bush administration reduced this program but it is currently on the rise again. Most educators support this and ready for a major change in their schools.

**LEADERSHIP:**


This article discussed the need for teachers to receive sufficient coaching to continue teacher development. Principals have a hard time helping teachers improve because of so many obligations so it is suggested to have teachers be peer coaches. Different coaching techniques were suggested but the main theme was to perfect one small element with the aid of an expert who can give bite-size feedback at the right time. Narrowing the focus of an area that can be improved upon is more manageable than a list of things to change. This article concluded that most powerful ability of teacher leaders is to help other teachers grow.


This article encourages teachers to become leaders in their schools. It discusses some of the reasons why teachers are hesitant to become leaders such as not wanting to elevate oneself above other teachers, teachers plates are already full, they don’t want to side with management, and some schools have taken the business model as their approach to running schools. One principal discussed their approach to encouraging all teachers to lead by requiring all of them to take on an extra responsibility at the beginning of the year. The tasks range from parent committee, staff development, and so on. This principal also promoted teacher leadership by supporting teachers’ passions.


This article discussed a model of leadership called collaborative leadership. The goal of this model is not to find out who the best teachers are but to share the unique talents and interests of all teachers and learn from one another. This model can take a variety of forms including teacher inquiry and social activism. In teacher inquiry teachers brainstorm a variety of questions that will be the focus of their inquiries. When teachers engage in inquiry, they are creating conversations with students that might not otherwise exist. In collaborative leadership teachers may be leading or supporting others in someway and they are doing the same. Collaborative leadership is not about hierarchies or who is establishing who is best.

Many teachers leave the profession in the first five years. The education sector has spent little time thinking what motivates teachers. This article discussed three themes that can help motivate teachers: mastery, purpose and autonomy. With mastery it was suggested that teachers' expertise should be match the responsibilities of their job. Many teachers enter the profession to influence the lives of students. In order to keep teachers doing this there are some programs ideas offered in this article to help teachers close the achievement gap and influence policy change. Teachers can lead this peers and have and effect. This leads into autonomy where teachers can lead their peers in meaningful ways.


Teaching is a profession that requires everyday acts of leadership. Teaching involves being in relationships with students, colleagues, parents, and the community. Teaching also involves collaborating with these same people. Teachers need to build relationships within and beyond the classroom. The quality of these relationships has a profound influence on the quality of learning.


Teacher evaluations are a part of teaching. Principals are sometimes spread thin and aren’t able to adequately observe every teacher they are responsible for. This article discusses peer assistance and review (PAR) programs in place of or addition to principal evaluations. This program has experienced teachers mentor and review teachers who are new or struggling and provide them with support, guidance, and plans to succeed. Teachers can request to be in the program as well if they are looking for support in a particular area.


According to this article a school needs four types of instructional resources: 1) Instructional knowledge, 2) Instructional tools or materials, 3) Instructional relationships, and 4) Organizational structures.


This article is about a teacher-led school in Denver, Colorado called the Mathematics and Science Leadership Academy (MSLA). This school operates as a public school and is about one of 50 teacher-led schools in the country. The choice to be teacher-led was a decision for kids and the school has created the tag line, “Where everyone is a learner, teacher, and leader.” All teachers in the school serve on at least one decision-making team. Every teacher is also part of a three-person peer observation and feedback team. The use of peer observation, ongoing feedback, and evaluation gives teachers opportunities to learn from and support one another. Being a part of this school requires a different way of thinking and operating.


Many education reforms come from people who don’t actually teach children. Many of these changes are out of sync with the realities of teachers and students. This article gives an
example of a school’s missing work policy. Teachers were asked to send students to a Wednesday detention to make up any incomplete work. In theory the plan sounded like it would work but there were many flaws that ended with teachers taking matters into their own hands. A group of teachers came up with a new solution to the missing work issue and ended up implementing it with in several grade levels. Lessons that were learned from this situation were that teacher drive solutions often are better suited for the problem then those proposed by those higher up and secondly it was a lesson on school leadership. Everyone benefits when teachers have time to collaborate and problem solve.


Teachers are seen as professionals and well respected in Finland. They are required to complete a five-year master’s degree in order to teach. In a survey, teachers were the most satisfied professional group. Teachers have control over curriculum design, teaching methods, and student assessments.


With educators being held accountable for higher standards some schools are seeing a shift from traditional teacher leadership to shared leadership. In traditional leadership there is the principal and usually a department chair or grade-level representative. In shared leadership, often called professional learning communities, all adults continually learn together so that every student achieves at the highest levels. The expertise and voice of teachers is necessary to improve teaching and learning. In a shared leadership, teachers feel an increased sense of ownership in improving student outcomes. In order to create this shared leadership principals must become a staff developer. They must also provide guidance, support, and training for teacher leaders so they feel prepared to lead discussions and have a productive leadership role. Share leadership is a developmental process that becomes more effective the longer it is used. The traditional roles do not have to go, but rather can be used in addition to the shared leadership roles. People may serve in both roles depending on the school.


This article discussed the role of teachers in a test-dominated world. Two teacher unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), have seen losses in membership are on the defense. They have worked to promote teaching as a profession while protecting teachers’ jobs and benefits. The future of teaching in public education may be based on how teachers are evaluated and held accountable.

**MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES:**

Armstrong, T. (n.d.). When cultures connect. Multiple intelligences theory as a successful American export to other countries. In *Multiple intelligences around the world* (pp. 17-26).

This chapter discussed that all cultures value different ways of learning.

Teachers can plan lessons, projects and curriculums around the multiple intelligences theory. There many ways to incorporate the intelligences and allow for a wide variety in the classroom.


This article was an interview with Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences. He answered a broad range of questions geared towards teachers and psychologists.


A Pennsylvania teacher plans her lessons incorporating the multiple intelligences. She reflects on her lessons looking at what intelligences were used and how things could be changed in the future. She also created a checklist to analyze what intelligences were being used in her lessons.


Multiple intelligences, learning styles, and brain-based education are three different theories on learning. When viewed in action they can look similar in classrooms. Each theory promotes personalizing education to meet the needs of students. Solid teaching is still of the most importance. The bottom line is that students learn in a variety of ways and learning is a complex process.


By incorporating the multiple intelligences into lessons, students have opportunities to show understanding through a variety of avenues. This article tells of a school in Missouri that used the multiple intelligences in their lessons and planning.


This article recognizes Gardner’s multiple intelligences as well as Goleman’s five dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. The author suggests that teachers understand their own neurological profiles to see what intelligences are highly developed, moderately developed and underdeveloped. Teachers should then reflect on how their neurological profile affects their teaching and how they can expand their teaching.


This is a handout where each intelligence is explained on a card. Each card highlights six traits that a person who is highly developed in that intelligence might possess.

This chapter explained how one teacher used Math Labs in her classroom. She sets up six stations, five of the stations review previous taught material and the sixth station is with her where new material is taught. Each station has a task card explaining what is to be done. The stations use a variety of the multiple intelligences to meet the needs of all students.


A school in the state of Washington works to highlight Howard Gardner’s eighth intelligence, naturalist intelligence, into their curriculum. The sixth grade science curriculum has two goals in mind: 1) focus on their state’s essential learning requirements and 2) apply Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences into the lessons.


This article discussed how multiple intelligences can influence each other. Sometimes intelligences work in harmony with one another while other times they cause discord.


MRI scans show that human abilities come in many combinations. Imaging confirms that there are differences in the brain between people who learn one way and others who learn another way.


This article talked about Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences are and what they aren’t. The MI theory is an idea about the concept of intelligence. Lessons don’t need to be taught with all intelligences or equal amounts of time on each intelligence.


Article discusses different ways schools are incorporating multiple intelligences into report cards and assessments.


This article discussed learning styles and multiple intelligences. It stated that learning styles develop over time as a person learns and grows.

Schools throughout Australia are improving their schools but looking at the multiple intelligences and incorporating them into their lessons. Teachers are using two approaches described as teaching to and teaching through multiple intelligences. The best teachers use a combination of these two ideas.

**PROJECT-BASED LEARNING:**


Urbandale high school teacher has adopted a new teaching philosophy that allows students to complete “quests” rather than daily assignments. Students complete quality work and learn at their own pace. The learning and understanding is the focal point rather than the final grade.


This article gives a brief overview of project-based learning where students are engaged and actively learning. Students can work on organizational and research skills and have greater flexibility when learning.


This article suggests starting small when starting project-based learning. Focus on a few standards or one subject area. It also suggests to plan ahead, use the backwards design process, this then allows for differentiation as needed. Limit technology, focus on the PBL process and then integrate technology. Lastly it is suggested to know the difference between PBL and projects. Make sure students are exploring and discovering, not just the teacher telling them information.