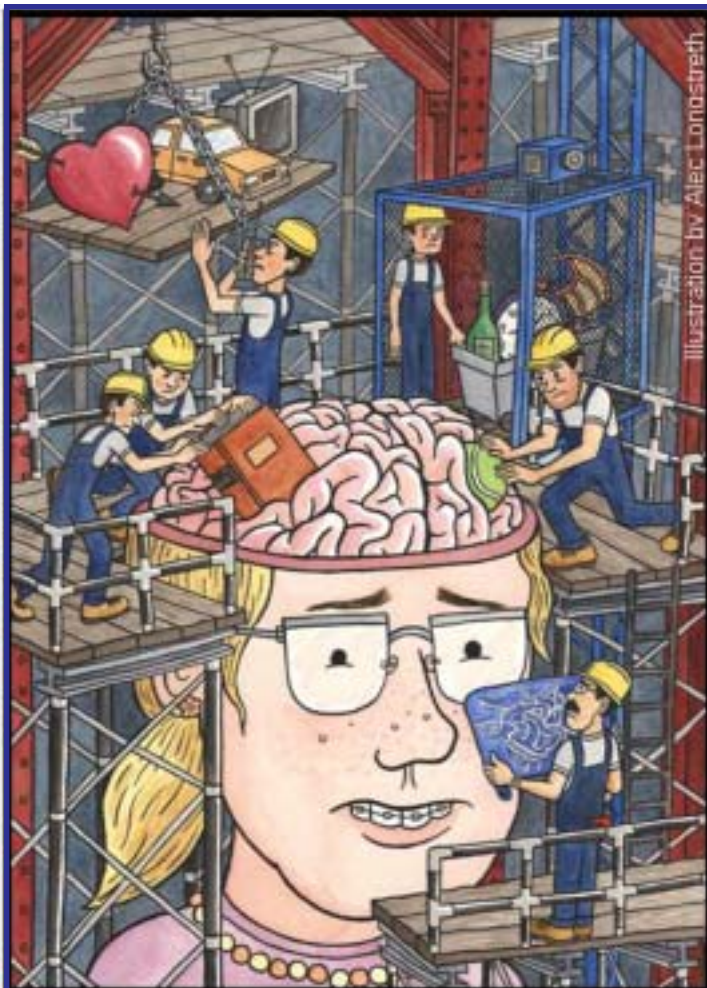


IN Transition

Journal of the New York State Middle School Association



Alternatives and Audience to Increase Achievement

Page 12

Peer Coaching — Transition in the Middle

Page 27

How Will You Remember This?

Page 32

NYSMSA MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

MISSION: The New York State Middle School Association (NYSMSA) represents those who serve the educational needs of all young adolescents in New York State. We are committed to creating, promoting, and supporting effective middle-level programs that are academically rigorous and developmentally appropriate.

VISION: NYSMSA acts on our belief that all young adolescents are entitled to academically-rich and developmentally-appropriate programs. Toward this end, we work collaboratively within the educational community to make high-performing middle-level programs the norm in New York State through full implementation of New York State Education Department's Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs (EE) and application of cutting-edge research.

NYSMSA Goals: Advocacy • Service • Collaboration

NYSMSA Beliefs: NYSMSA's beliefs are listed below. Taking into consideration current research and available resources, these beliefs are viewed within the lens of the NYS Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs, and the Regents Policy Statements and will assist the Association in supporting the improvement of instruction for middle-level students in New York State.

ADVOCACY

NYSMSA believes that we must provide leadership and coordination in advocating for:

- a philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents (youth 10-14 years of age).
- an educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.
- an organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development.
- classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers.
- strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourage, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and partnerships.
- a network of academic and personal support available for all students.
- professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed.

SERVICE

NYSMSA believes that we must provide leadership and coordination to:

- be a significant source of information and resources on young adolescents and their schooling;
- offer support to schools, at all levels of performance, in refining and strengthening their middle-level programs;
- provide a variety of resources (video, publication, teleconferences, position papers, etc.) in support

of appropriate programs for young adolescents;

- member services to public and non-public urban, suburban, and rural schools;
- engage regional directors who provide, assist, and support regional and state activities;
- support the ongoing importance of Office of Middle-Level Education Program in SED.
- disseminate position papers that provide guidance on appropriate curricular, instruction, and assessment issues.

COLLABORATION

NYSMSA believes that we must provide leadership and coordination for:

- implement a collaborative relationship with SED, NYSCEA, universities, departments of higher education, NMSA, National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grade Reform, parent-teacher organizations, and other groups that impact the lives of young adolescents;
- work with other associations in sponsoring professional development activities;
- develop and expand cooperative ventures and relationships with corporations and businesses;
- create networks of educators, parents, and others involved in the lives of young adolescents;
- serve on the boards of supportive organizations;
- engage in continuous planning through participation and shared decision-making;
- influence the quality and content of pre-service and in-service education for prospective and practicing middle-level educators;
- work with constituent groups to identify effective models for curricular, instructional, and assessment issues.

Feature Articles

- 12** Students Need Alternatives and Audience to Increase Achievement
by Rick Heckendorn, Ed.D.
- 15** Using Literacy “Embeds” to Teach Appropriate Behavior
by Ron Klemp
- 20** A Mentoring Model
by Diane Nelson and Melissa Maier
- 24** The Age of Connectedness
by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.
- 27** Peer Coaching — Transition in the Middle
by Susan Ruckdeschel
- 32** How Will You Remember This?
by Vivian Demers-Jagoda
- 35** “Do You Know Me?”
by Scott C. Reinhart
- 37** The Use (and Sometime Misuse) of Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory
by Thomas B. Reardon
- 40** A Reflection on the Process for “Schools-to-Watch” Recognition
by Dr. Timothy P. Martin and John J. Christie

In Every Issue

- 2 From the Editor’s Desk
- 3 A few thoughts from the President...
- 5 The Executive Director’s Message
- 7 Research at a Glance

10 Lea’s Lessons

44 Submission of Articles

On the Cover

“Teenage Brain Under Construction” is an original illustration created by Alec Longstreth (aleclongstreth.com).



From the Editor's Desk

Chris Reed



Chris Reed

Isn't it a pity that every middle-level educator doesn't have the opportunity, at some point in each and every year, to attend an offsite workshop, benefit from a day-long visitation to another quality middle school, or attend a regional or statewide conference

aimed at addressing their specific middle-level needs? I write this column having just returned from the Middle-Level Summit held on August 20 and 21 at the Legislative Office Building in Albany. You will read more about the Summit in the columns written by

NYSMSA President Linda Ruest and Executive Director Dennis Tosetto. Suffice to say, having the opportunity to participate in this dynamic two-day dialog was a high point of my year in terms of professional development and networking.

The implication of these comments for middle-level educators is that there are few opportunities available that will enable you to grow, network, and expand your professional horizons more than well-chosen offsite workshops, seminars, visitations, and/or conferences. Consider registering for the upcoming NYSMSA Conference in Syracuse. The local conference committee has been working hard for well over one year to organize a unique, dynamic, and focused affair for all New York State middle-level educators. You won't want to miss it.

Month of the Young Adolescent

October is Month of the Young Adolescent, an annual international collaborative effort of education, health, and youth-oriented organizations. Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA), Month of the Young Adolescent brings together a wide range of organizations to focus on the needs of this important age range, ages 10 to 15. The key messages for the celebration are:

- The importance of parents being knowledgeable about young adolescents and being actively involved in their lives;
- The understanding that healthy bodies plus healthy minds equal healthy young adolescents;
- The realization that the education young adolescents experience during this formative period of life will, in large measure, determine the future for all citizens; and
- The knowledge that every young adolescent should have the opportunity to pursue his or her dreams and aspirations, and post-secondary education should be a possibility for all.

—retrieved from www.nmsa.org/moya

A few thoughts from the President...

Linda Ruest



Linda Ruest

You may remember that in my Spring 2008 President's Message, I shared with you some of my beliefs regarding middle-level education. And you may also remember that my core belief as NYSMSA Presi-

dent is that "we are all in this together."

Well, it seems that I am not alone in my thinking. In fact, there is substantial evidence that supports this shared, even widespread, belief. On August 20-21, 2008, over 70 registrants, representing over 45 different organizations, participated in the first ever New York State Middle-Level Summit at the Legislative Office Building in Albany, New York, hosted by the NYS Middle School Association.

This two-day event brought together representatives of the major educational organizations, as well as government and business, to focus on a statewide implementation of the mandated *Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs* and *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education* that are included in Commissioner's Regulation 100.4. As a result, there is an increased awareness and understanding of these documents by the Middle-Level Summit participants; however, more importantly, there is a shared dedication

and a concrete plan to bring about an increased awareness, understanding, and commitment to implementation of these Essential Elements across the State and across stakeholder groups.

Summit participants included representatives from the State Education Department, the Board of Regents, the National Middle School Association, the NYS PTA, SAANYS, NYSUT, NYS Council of School Superintendents, and the NYS School Boards Association, as well as State educational organizations representing Art, Business, Math, Social Studies, Reading, Technology, Music, Family and Consumer Science, Science, Counselors, Psychologists, Nurses, Library Media Specialists, Staff Developers, Social Workers, and Teacher Educators. In short, if you are an educator in New York State, you were well represented at the Summit, and an organization that represents you is committed to actively supporting the implementation of the Essential Elements.

And if that isn't enough, we were also joined by representatives from the State Legislature, Pearson Education/Prentice Hall Publishers, and the Rockwell Museum of Western Art in Corning, New York. Each of these stakeholder groups added its active support for the implementation of the Essential Elements and committed to supporting NYS educators in this endeavor.

So, what is next? A plan of action was developed at the Summit, as well as a Middle-Level Summit Committee, that will be led by NYSMSA Executive Director Dennis Tosetto. Members of this committee will work with

Summit participants to ensure that the plan is implemented according to the timeline established, modifying and adjusting as necessary, and keeping all Summit participants informed as to the progress and revised steps that need to be taken to ensure implementation.

You may also remember that at the end of my Spring 2008 President's Message, I issued a "call to action," urging you to contact your Regional Director (www.nysmsa.org) to join your NYSMSA Regional Team and work to move forward the middle-level agenda in your region. I continue to recommend that course of action, as there is so much that you can contribute in that capacity: planning conferences and meetings, serving on NYSMSA committees, contributing to *In Transition*, etc. But now, you have yet another course of action: contact the statewide organization that

represents you in your subject area or job area. If you're a counselor, let the counselors' association hear from you; if you're a principal, contact SAANYS or CSA; and so on. Let the leaders of your organizations know that they have your support in this initiative. Let them know what you need or, better yet, what you can contribute to help them in their middle-level efforts.

After all, if not us, then who?

Membership and Publication Information

In Transition is a benefit of both individual and building membership in the New York State Middle School Association. Annual membership dues are \$50 for individual membership and \$150 for building membership. Memberships are on an "anniversary date" basis; renewal invoices are mailed approximately one month prior to end of membership.

For any changes in membership information, please contact Julie Schwartz at the NYSMSA office by e-mail (schwartz@nysmsa.org) or phone/fax (914-747-9241).

Individual and Building Membership applications can be downloaded from our Web site: www.nysmsa.org. Additionally, new membership applications paid via credit card can be completed online.

**NYSMSA gives permission to its membership to reprint
any portion of this publication.**

The Executive Director's Message

Dennis M. Tosetto



Dennis Tosetto

Do you know what is supposed to be going on in your middle-level school and your classroom(s)?

Okay, now that I have your attention (and your dander up), let me explain. The purpose for the question is not to challenge

your professional competence. Rather, it is aimed at raising a level of concern over what we, as educators, know about what was mandated when Commissioner's Regulation 100.4 was revised a few years ago. (Please go to www.nysmsa.org to read this regulation and the other related SED documents referenced below. Both the documents and considerable explanation are available when you click on "Middle Level Essentials" in the blue left-hand column on the home page. You will then be able to scroll down to an appropriate title or sub-title.)

The SED descriptor for CR 100.4 is "**Program requirements for grades five through eight.**" This regulation provides a detailed explanation of what must be in evidence in every school and classroom that provides instructional programs to these middle-level students. Much of the regulation sets requirements for operational matters such as those that pertain to the state assessments, units of study, and acceleration for credit.

CR 100.4 also provides three models that can be used by a school district to organize a middle-level school program regardless of the school's grade configuration. Model A can be implemented by all schools with middle grades. Models B and C allow for some particular school districts to submit an application requesting permission to work around some of the operational requirements as long as the submitted application demonstrates that the objectives of waived operational requirements will be met in other ways.

We will not further explore in this writing these last two models because very few school districts have applied to SED for approval of a Model B or C application. Consequently, practically all New York State schools with middle-level grades are currently required to have implemented a Model A strategy.

Included in all three models is a mandate that states, "Districts shall ensure that the middle-level program is aligned with the **Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education** and the State Education Department's **Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs.**" Because the Regents Policy Statement and the Essential Elements have both been in effect since on or before 2003, and the revised CR 100.4 has been in regulation for years, there is no excuse for any school with middle-level grades in any part of New York State to be out of compliance with this regulation.

It makes no difference if a school district or any city in New York State has developed its own policy, program, or plan, because

whatever is locally developed must be congruent and inclusive of what is required in CR 100.4. That is the reality that must be faced or your school district will be out of compliance with regulation and open to criticism for not providing students with a quality program. Besides, we are supposed to be teaching our students to be good citizens and to follow the laws of the land. What kind of example would we be setting if, as educators and adults, we were found to be ignoring those regulations that we chose to not follow?

So, let's go back to the original question: Do you know what is supposed to be going on in your middle-level school and your classroom(s)? If you do not have a professional understanding of SED's Essential Elements, then you can't answer in the affirmative. Does this mean that you have to be able to recite the seven Essential Elements in sequence? No. I can't, and I don't recommend that you spend a lot of time learning to do so.

Having said that, I do believe that every educator in New York State should know and understand the Essential Elements. They should be able to participate in an intellectual discussion about them. Additionally, they should be aware that they are research-based, good for students, and congruent with the National Middle School Association's comprehensive booklet on middle-level education entitled *This We Believe*. In other words, while you don't need to memorize them, you do need to know and understand them and you must apply them in your schools and classrooms.

Both the Regents Policy Statement and the Essential Elements were developed cooperatively with a large number of practicing middle-level educators, so we can be assured that they contain the "right stuff." Why do I recommend that every educator know and understand what is contained in both of these documents? There are three reasons. First,

whereas many certified educators do not currently teach middle-level students, that could change at some point in their careers. Second, much of what is contained in these materials speaks to what are good, cutting-edge educational practices regardless of grade level. Third, our colleagues should understand and be able to speak to why we do what we do at the middle level.

We are also responsible for ensuring that every college student graduating with a teaching degree is knowledgeable about what is included in CR 100.4 and skilled in the methods and organizational approaches outlined in the Essential Elements. Moreover, when interviewing candidates for teaching or administrative positions, there should be specific questions about what is required by New York State at the middle level and how to apply, in practical ways, the particulars of what is included in this important regulation.

We owe it to our students to provide the best educational opportunities possible. NYSMSA and many other of the state's education-related organizations are in agreement that the time is now to bring about both awareness and compliance with CR 100.4. Please join us in this effort by informing educators, parents, and school board members of this important mandate and also promote related discussions in your school community. Only by working together cooperatively can we ensure that all of New York State's middle-level students will receive the best comprehensive education that can be provided.

Research at a Glance

Jeff Craig, NYSMSA Director of Research and Technology



The purpose of this feature of In Transition is to provide a succinct research reference for middle-level practitioners. Topics will reflect timely issues and best practices. To suggest a topic for a future Research at a Glance, send your suggestion to craig@nysmsa.org. This edition's column suggests some ways that schools can conduct their own local research into the extent of implementation of the Essential Elements at their school. As always, you can find dozens of resources about the Essential Elements at the Middle Level Essentials section of nysmsa.org.

Researching Your Implementation of the Essential Elements

Essential Elements Research

The *Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs* describes the expectations for middle-level programs in New York State. There are seven elements:

- A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents (youth 10-14 years of age).
- An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.
- An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development.
- Classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers.
- Strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourage, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and partnerships.
- A network of academic and personal support available for all students.

- Professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed.

The Essential Elements document, with details that correspond to each element, is available as a Microsoft Word document at nysmsa.org. The Essential Elements were developed as a coherent set of guidelines for middle schools. The Essential Elements are more than guidelines, however. They are research-based recommendations that result in increased student achievement. Two research studies have been conducted that demonstrate increased student achievement with greater Essential Elements implementation. In both of these studies the increased student achievement was measured on New York State Intermediate Level Assessments, which makes for a strong argument for implementation of the Essential Elements in all middle-level programs in our state.

The first study was published in 2000 and it identified the positive correlation between implementation of the Essential Elements and student achievement as measured on the NYS Intermediate Assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts (Payton and Zseller, 2000). A second study was undertaken to replicate the first study with one difference: differences in needs and resources between

schools would be considered (Payton, 2001). In that study, the data clearly show that high achieving schools are implementing the Essential Elements to a greater degree than low achieving schools, no matter their level of resources. Quite simply, the more schools implement the Essential Elements, the higher is their student achievement (Craig, 2004).

Right now, a comprehensive study is underway to assess the level of implementation of the Essential Elements across the state. Principals of all middle-level programs (defined as a school with seventh grade in it) have been asked to confidentially submit information about their school, its program, and student achievement. During the research project, the data and the data collection instrument remain under wraps in order to protect the integrity of the study. Once the research is complete and the data are analyzed, middle-level educators should have a good estimate of the statewide level of implementation of the Essential Elements and we should have a more detailed understanding of the relationship between Essential Elements implementation and student achievement. In the meantime, you can conduct your own “research” at your school — assessing your implementation of the Essential Elements.

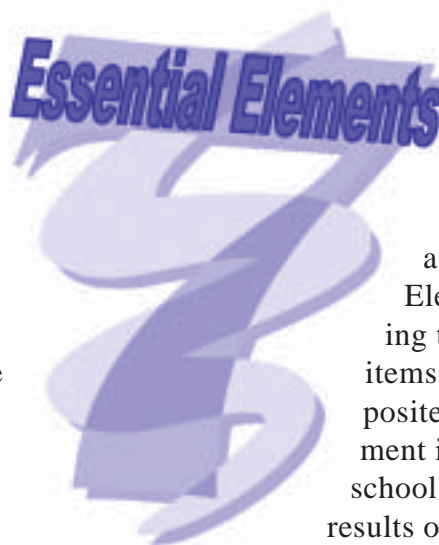
Researching Your Implementation of the Essential Elements

Schools can evaluate their own level of implementation of the Essential Elements. Schools shouldn't really consider such an evaluation as optional or unimportant. Since the Essential Elements are part of the Commissioner's Regulations, schools ought to be regularly assessing their Essential Elements implementation and using implementation data to guide school improvement efforts.

There are several data collection tools that are available to schools that are designed to provide information about the level of implementation of the Essential Elements. They range in their complexity and the level of specificity of data they provide. All of these tools are easily downloadable from nysmsa.org in the “Middle Level Essentials” section of the website.

The simplest instrument to use is the Essential Elements Degrees of Implementation Scale. This is a variation of the data collection device that was used by research teams in the 2000 (Payton and Zsellar) and 2001 (Payton) studies. The scale has six-steps to it; observers assess pieces of the Essential Elements implementation according to the six-step scale. After items are rated individually, a composite score of each Essential Element is created. Administrators and school improvement teams could use results of this analysis to suggest priorities for improvement. Overall, use of this instrument provides a slightly subjective perspective that can at least provide schools with information about relative implementation. The instrument is retrievable at <http://nysmsa.org/associations/611/files/Essential%20Elements%20DI%20Scale.doc>.

A more detailed tool that schools can use was released in late 2004: rubrics for the *Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs*. These rubrics, used correctly, provide an assessment of Essential Elements implementation that is more objective and more specific than the tool described above. A step-by-step application of the rubrics will provide schools with information about their implementation compared against a researched and calibrated scale. Not only do schools see where their implementa-



tion is, the rubrics provide concrete advice for next steps and improvement opportunities. The rubrics are retrievable at <http://nysmsa.org/associations/611/files/EErubrics04.pdf>. A companion organizer to assist you in using the comprehensive set of rubrics is available at <http://nysmsa.org/associations/611/files/EErubricsSelfReviewRatingForm.doc>.

A third way for schools to assess their level of implementation of the Essential Elements is by using the tools that are included with the Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch application. The Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch (EE:STW) program recognizes middle-level schools in New York State that have a high level of student achievement and a high level of implementation of the Essential Elements. To date, ten middle-level programs in New York State have earned the EE:STW designation. The application to become an EE:STW school includes a thorough assessment of the implementation of the Essential Elements. The assessment is available for schools to use whether they complete the application process or not. In fact, many schools have used the assessment part of the application for their school improvement planning. Information about EE:STW, including the assessment tools, are available at nysmsa.org in the “Schools to Watch” section.

A helpful and comprehensive set of three protocols has been developed for schools to use that will guide their own Essential Elements research. Each of the three protocols guides users through a step-by-step process that is both easy to use and deliberately designed to provide schools with good information. The first protocol builds awareness of the Essential Elements. The second protocol is the set of steps that walk schools through an analysis of the Essential Elements in their school. The third, and final, protocol assists schools in applying their Essential Elements implementation assessment to the school

improvement planning process. The complete set of protocols is available at www.nysmsa.org or <http://nysmsa.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=38>.

No Reason to Wait

The statewide Middle-Level Summit that occurred in Albany this past summer (described elsewhere in this volume) has begun a set of actions aimed at increasing the level of implementation of the Essential Elements across the state. This important and bold initiative will move middle-level education forward in our state. Schools don't need to wait for this effort to use the Essential Elements and improve their school's student achievement. Using the tools described above, schools can act immediately to assess their implementation of the Essential Elements and to increase student achievement.

References

- Craig, J. S. (2004, Fall). The essential elements: What does the research say? *In Transition, XXII (1)*, 9-11.
- Payton, David. (2001). *The New York State Education Department's research study of the essential elements of middle-level education, Spring 2001*. Albany, NY: New York State Education Department.
- Payton, David and Zsellar, Elaine. (2000). *The New York State Education Department's preliminary research study of the essential elements of middle-level education, Spring 2000*. Albany, NY: New York State Education Department.



Lea's Lessons

Lea Macdonald

Building a Community of Learners

As I traveled the state and country this summer working with middle-level teachers, one question was universal: how can we create classrooms where all students can learn, feel safe, and be respected? In light of the push for high stakes testing and accountability, I was amazed and excited to hear teachers going beyond the “test” and talking to the heart of the matter. In *Turning Points 2000*, there is a chapter devoted to the importance of relationships in the school community. When middle-level students feel that they belong to the group and are accepted by their teachers and their peers, motivation and performance increases. Belonging within a supportive web of relationships motivates young adolescents to take the risks necessary to ensure academic success. To teach diverse learners in a classroom requires building community. This is the heart and soul of differentiated instruction and best practice in the classroom.

Teaching young adolescents in an interactive and engaging way necessitates creating a cooperative, tolerant classroom. In this environment, students will learn to share ideas, to work together collaboratively, to tolerate differences, and to create a place where all students feel valued and respected. In order for meaningful engaged learning to take place, the foundation must be laid in the beginning of the year to develop a sense of community in the classroom. Teachers must be willing to invest time to develop collaborative skills that

will yield greater learning throughout the year. Your investment will yield powerful results:

- The class develops a sense of community and trust.
- All students feel respected and valued.
- Students interact more freely because they are safe from ridicule.
- Students learn to tolerate differences and respect others' ideas.
- Classroom management is proactive and consistent.

In this article on creating a community of learners, the focus will be on ways to build the foundation of a cooperative, tolerant classroom. There are three premises that will guide us on this journey:

- Students have different learning styles, interests, and intelligences.
- Cooperative interaction increases learning and social skill.
- All students can learn.

In the beginning of the year, I involve my students in orientation activities to break social tension and build rapport. During advisory the first week of school, the students are engaged in an ice-breaking activity, “Know Your Neighbor.” Each student must get the signature of another student who has seen the same movie, wears the same size shoe, etc. It immediately breaks the ice that first scary day of school.

Second, students make a “heart map” of the things most important to them. They share their hearts with each other and the class, and

we create a large heart bulletin board where their hearts will remain for the school year.

Also, during the first week of school, I have my students take a self-assessment of their learning styles, a multiple intelligence survey, and complete an interest inquiry form. They record their dominant modalities, intelligences, and interests on a 3x5 card that I keep on file and use for forming teams throughout the year. To end this class period, students are actively engaged in a “Human Intelligence Hunt” to discover the many talents that their class has brought to seventh grade social studies this year and, individually, complete a multiple intelligence survey to guide them through the year. Although the school year has already begun, it is never too late to build community.

In order to build a sense of shared decision-making, students work in teams to brainstorm the class rules for the year. As each team presents its list on chart paper, the whole class votes on the top ten rules for the class. Students working together, making decisions, taking ownership of their learning have already begun before the textbooks have been removed from the shelf.

Before beginning a cooperative lesson based on content, students work to build team identity and recognize each person’s contribution to the team by participating in one of many team-building activities. For example, I have students work in teams of three; one team member is blindfolded while the other two members of the team help the blindfolded person put a picture puzzle together. Students learn how important each member is to the team and to solving the problem or task.

Collaborative small group activity has been shown to be an especially effective mode for school learning and increased achievement; however, group work requires teaching students the rationale and techniques that will ensure group and individual success. Begin

early in the year to lay the foundation of collaboration. It’s worth the effort!

Making A Heart Map

On a blank outline of a heart, write down things that you hold dear and close to you.

What’s at the center? The edges? What’s in your heart?

1. People, places important to you
2. Things you do well or like to do
3. Hobbies, interests, sports, clubs
4. Family, friends, pets
5. Unusual experiences
6. Favorite movies, books
7. Adjectives to describe you
8. Cultural symbols representing your heritage
9. Anything you want to share about “YOU”

Keep in mind...placement of information:

- things most important to you go in the middle;
- least important go towards the edge;
- things that are not a part of you anymore can go outside the heart.

Lea Macdonald (leamiddle@att.net) is a social studies teacher and the curriculum coordinator at Pleasantville Middle School; 40 Romer Avenue, Pleasantville NY 10570. She also served as NYSMSA Region VI Director from 1996-2003 and is a nationally known consultant and keynote speaker.



Students Need Alternatives and Audience to Increase Achievement

Rick Heckendorn, Ed.D.

Student-centered classroom

We have long known that active learning makes it most likely that students will learn (Dewey, 1938). As students create their own zone of proximal development, they can link new knowledge with previous knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Each student constructs his/her own knowledge to create a schemata to be able to incorporate the new knowledge into what the person already understands (Bruner, 1990). Students can even assist each other when mutual respect exists to create a classroom community, as Christensen has shown (Bigelow, 1994).

Within a student-centered environment, teachers should encourage choices for students and each individual student voice. Alternative assignments empower students and increase their classroom involvement. Students' voices gain more respect when they speak for themselves to the classroom audience without the teacher repeating their answers. Students do not want to hear our teacher voices too often. In fact, teachers should strive NEVER to repeat a student's answer. Thus as teachers we should offer alternative assignments to motive students' interest and offer students direct access to their classmates as an audience by having them speak for themselves without teachers' well-intended but needless repetition of students' answers. A student may repeat the answer, but not the teacher.

Two teaching strategies offer the possibility of achieving the alternatives and audience that will involve and benefit all students in class: orbitals (Stevenson, 2002) and original dialogues. Each strategy offers choices and opportunities for students' voices to be heard and involved in the classroom.

Six factors in teaching

There are six factors that underpin my philosophy of education that need to be mentioned. They are planning, content, strategies, caring, flexibility, and formative assessment. The teacher has to carefully write down the plans for the day's lesson so that everyone knows what they are learning and why they are learning it (Kellough & Kellough, 2007). The teacher has to know the content thoroughly to be able to see the depth and possibilities of the concepts involved (Schubert, 1986). For the orbitals, the students will take on this role. Strategies should vary and constantly, actively involve students (Singer, 2003). Caring about the students encourages them to try and to achieve (Noddings, 1984). Flexibility does not contradict the planning of a lesson, but it allows a teacher to be receptive to students' questions and curiosity (Miller, 1990). Formative assessment includes checking for students' understanding as part of every lesson (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Let us first look at orbitals as a teaching strategy to provide alternatives and audience.

Orbitals

Orbitals require each student to pick something that interests him/her and talk for five minutes to the class without notes. They are graded on their ability to speak authoritatively and enthusiastically, to answer questions, and to exercise good eye contact and clear voice quality. The writing component includes a one page paper in which the student shows the connection of his/her chosen subject with English, social studies, math, and science in one paragraph each. They are graded on the use of

correct English. My recommendation is to have one middle-school student present an orbital each day. I provide a question sheet for the student audience where they respond to two items in a positive way: something that I learned from the orbital and something positive about the student's presentation.

Alternatives and audience with orbitals

This is a completely student-centered activity that is based on students' choices of their interests as their topics. The audience also has the choice of what to volunteer to talk about: the information learned, the method of presentation, or both. I do not repeat anything that the student presenter offers. Students may repeat something or repeat a question, but each student thereby takes on an independently respected position in class where his/her voice has to be heard and considered. This is integral to creating that classroom community based on respect for each member of the class.

Let us turn to original dialogues as a teaching strategy to provide alternatives and audience.

Original dialogues

Original dialogues are a strategy used to get students to react to a historical event intellectually and emotionally. I have written several dialogues that I use with middle school students to get them involved in presenting important information in a dynamic manner to the class. Students have the choice to volunteer to read aloud a part that they prefer. I include mostly short single passages so that nobody has to read too long. I attempt to include five to seven students as actors. Students are encouraged but not required to read with passion.

Alternatives and audience with original dialogues

The class discovers who has innate acting ability or the desire to be center stage without having to know a lot of information. This outlet

allows students to enjoy each other as they learn information that each person provides by reading the script. This student-centered activity relies on the teacher to write an original dialogue to get students involved in the content. Students can relate and become involved in history that comes alive as real people talk about real issues that concern them. Many students love to act in front of others and have the choice to do so. It is important to prepare questions that allow students to grasp the complexity of the issues presented. Students who are part of the attentive and entertained audience participate as they answer the questions either as a whole class or as collaborative groups that report back to the class.

College class results with orbitals

I have used orbitals successfully in the middle school methods class that I have taught for the previous six years. Students are continually amazed by how much interesting content they learn from their peers. The choices offered to them empower them, because each becomes the source of the always-important content. Yet each has to construct, write down, and be able to explain the connections with the four major subjects that they post on the blackboard computer program so that everyone in class has access to all. The importance and respect afforded to the presenter and audience alike is thus reinforced. Students indicate that orbitals increase the closeness of our classroom community, because everyone knows something personal about everyone else and everyone gains enormous respect because each is an expert in something that s/he can teach to the rest of the class.

College class results with original dialogues

I have utilized original dialogues in the social studies methods class with exemplary results during the past six years. This activity motivates students to understand more because they care about the situation presented. Students have the option of several choices for mini-

lessons that they do for a class demonstration lesson. Each year, several students have taken the original dialogue option and have written fine pieces of work that we have acted out in class. Each student receives a copy of each dialogue via the blackboard computer program, so all students have many dialogues to be able to use once they begin to teach. Despite the many hours of work it takes to write a dialogue, I remind these future teachers that they will have it forever. Perhaps they will want to tweak it (flexibility), but their students will respect them for their planning, content knowledge, and caring exhibited in being able to write creative work for them.

Summary

As every math teacher knows, $A + A = 2A$. For my application of this formula I submit: **Alternatives** and **Audience** lead to greater student **Achievement**. Give students choices and allow each student's voice to be respected within a caring audience and students will learn more and be more involved. To express this math formula in another way, $O + O = 2O$; that is, **Orbitals** and **Original dialogues** lead to **Outstanding** student involvement and performance. Give students the chance to talk about their interests and to act out your conversations and their involvement, listening, and respect for one another will increase.

Conference Postscript

I am pleased to be presenting a session on orbitals and another session on original dialogues at the upcoming Syracuse NYS Middle School Conference in the fall. Please join me and see for yourself that orbitals and dialogues can increase student involvement and student learning because it offers them alternatives and an audience who listens and respects their voices.

References

- Bigelow, B., Christensen, L., & Karp, S. (Eds.) (1994). *Rethinking our classrooms*. Milwaukee: Rethinking School, Ltd.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box; Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 10, 139-148.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books.
- Kellough, R.D., & Kellough, N. G. (2007). *Secondary school teaching*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Miller, J. (1990). *Creating spaces and finding voices*. New York: State University of New York.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schubert, W. (1986). *Curriculum: Perspective, paradigm, and possibility*. New York: MacMillan Publishing.
- Singer, A. J. (2003). *Social studies for secondary schools: Teaching to learn, learning to teach*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stevenson, C. (2002). *Teaching ten to fourteen year olds*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dr. Rick Heckendorn (heckendornr@mville.edu) is Associate Professor of Education at Manhattanville College; 2900 Purchase Street; Purchase NY 10577.

Using Literacy “Embeds” to Teach Appropriate Behavior

Ron Klemp



Approximately one-half of all classroom time is taken up with activities other than instruction, and discipline problems are responsible for a significant portion of this lost instructional time (Cotton, 1990).

The class begins as the teacher hands out a pre-reading activity called the “Anticipation Guide” (Duffelmeyer, 1994). Students are asked to put a check mark next to those statements with which they agree. If they disagree, they can leave it blank. The statements are not about content, but about the under-story of content: the behavior of the class. There has been a problem with students calling each other names and teasing each other, and a few of the incidents have escalated into near fights. This lesson is designed to bring to the surface the issue of name calling so that the class can correct the problem through a cognitive experience. The students respond to the statements and discussion ensues. Some vehemently agree and some disagree with added fervor. From there a short vignette will be read, and then questions will be asked, and another discussion and some writing will close out the activity.

As a classroom teacher and former school dean of discipline, I often wondered how teachers can move beyond the traditional sanctions of “discipline” to some strategy that allows students to experience cognition about the behavioral events and challenges that so many of our students present. During most of its existence, the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools has identified “lack of discipline” as the most serious problem facing the nation’s educational system (Cotton, 1990). Today’s teachers tend to have to assume

the persona of a “bullfighter” (metaphorically), whereas it’s important to see discipline as an opportunity for social growth. As I tell my university students, “Those of us who are teaching middle or high school students in this year 2008, or in any year in the near future as well as in our recent past, are in somewhat of a default position of having to help raise kids.” At the end of this quote, I take note of all the heads that nod in agreement to that statement. Even in 1987, it was noted that “School personnel, students, and parents call attention to the high incidence of related problems in school environments — problems such as drug use, cheating, insubordination, truancy, and intimidation — which result in countless school and classroom disruptions and lead to nearly two million suspensions per year” (Harvard Education Letter, 1987). I am not sure that much has changed since then.

Teachers are often at a loss as to how to address the issue of socialization and behavior beyond the traditional admonition or ejection from the class. Part of this turbulence can be attributed to students’ development of more formal or critical thinking. Sometimes this translates into hostility toward adults and others as students cope with emotional issues, grappling with self-esteem, and knowing limits (Irwin, & Vaughn, 1988), thus having negative effects on adolescents. With the implementation of advisories and/or homerooms in middle schools, attempts are made to provide guidance and even commercial programs are sometimes enlisted.


But the more practical use of *School DayZ* is for the classroom teacher. *School DayZ* was developed to provide teachers and students the

opportunity to have literacy “events” that include reading, speaking, thinking, and writing, embedded into a narrative involving some pressing issue concerning behavior that could be easily understood and addressed. But more importantly, the issue or problem could also be discussed and something could be learned. In a sense, the little stories provide a parable of the classroom and a means to tap intellect to solve problems.

The essential idea of *School DayZ* is to provide a means for teachers to address situations as they arise in their classrooms. Through the metaphor of a story, teachers can gain more skill at mediating events that conflict with their own sense of efficacy. They also engage students in meaningful discussions to create reference points on which to build further discussion and feedback as students relate to stories of their peers, fictitious though they may be — and maybe not all that fictitious, in some cases.

Figure 1

School DayZ



Directions to Students:
Below you see some statements and a blank space next to each one. When you have read the statement, put a check mark in the space next to those with which you agree. If you disagree, leave it blank.

1. It is okay to make fun of someone as long as everyone is laughing.

2. People who witness others being picked on are responsible to stop it.

3. Some people don't mind being picked on because it gets them attention.

4. Teasing people is just part of the normal school conversation.

My experience has also taught me that when students are organized in a way that promotes rather than inhibits discussion and self-realization, there is opportunity for students to advance their social as well as their cognitive literacy, hence the structure of *School DayZ* as a three-part interactive process:

- Anticipation or frontloading to spark controversy and emotional response (figure 1)
- An easy to read and relevant open-ended story (figure 2)
- Discussion questions that students can also respond to in writing that foster higher order thinking with a target trait as the final question (figure 3)

School DayZ is an organic means of having teachers develop an inductive school-wide approach to teaching behavior and, therefore, classroom management. The labels of “self discipline,” “respect,” “self-worth,” “responsibility,” “honesty,” and “caring” provide some ideas to launch the effort, but teachers could ideally develop their own labels. Each episode ends with the students providing their own definition of a target core trait that is also the underlying theme of the particular vignette. Teachers create their own situational vignettes, adhering to the structure of the samples so that they can consistently work these routines into their instruction while helping students who may have reading difficulty, or who make up that “strategic” reading that is the largest group in many if not most of our schools.

Figure 2

Ann in the “Meddle”

Geoffrey is a quiet teenager who has missed a lot of school due to a severe illness. He is a bit behind the others in reading and he has trouble pronouncing some words because of his medication. Mary and Alfredo like to tease him, and they think he actually enjoys it. In reality, he ignores them most of

the time, but he has been known to tell them when enough is enough!

Ms. Johnson, their English teacher, has tried to explain in a vague way why Geoffrey has been absent from class so often in an effort to get the students to leave him alone.

What I don't understand is why the other kids in the class are so mean to him.

My name is Ann and I'm in middle school. I have class with this guy Geoffrey. He is kind of "geeky," but he is nice. All of our teachers have told us that he is sick and will be missing a lot of school. I feel sorry for him and when the teacher told us about him I kind of teared up. But the others around me blew it off. "So, he is stupid anyway, who cares?" "I do, it's messed up that he is sick!" I replied.

When Geoffrey started to attend class all the time, I guessed he was okay. But Alfredo and his friends in class started bugging him all the time. Ms. Johnson was oblivious, even though I told her that it was happening. I think she just didn't want to see it happen. Mary would whisper his name — "Geoffrey" — and then laugh when he turned around.

"That's mean!" I shouted.

"Shut up, Ann!"

"Mind your business!"

"Ann likes you, Geoffrey," they would say when I stuck up for him.


My friends would tell me to leave it alone because I was making Alfredo and the others mad because I was sticking up for "that weirdo." They said that I might be making things worse for Geoffrey because the taunting was becoming more serious. One day I got so mad that I said something so loud that Ms. Johnson heard me and I had to tell her that the boys were being mean to Geoffrey. Then they got in trouble and Ms. Johnson

was on to their behavior, but did little to stop it. I figured that nothing was going to change until I did something myself to correct the situation.

The vignette is created with fictitious characters and may also be situations that are analogous to the issue such as the one above. The narrative is written in student friendly language and is largely dialogic, so that it is easier to read in most cases. Also, while the pedagogy is built on group discussion based on the "cooperative literacy" model (Klemp, 2002; Klemp, Ogle & McBride, 2007) of classroom organization, the activity can still be conducted whole group. There are individual components as well that allow the teacher to vary the approach to using the vignettes.

Figure 3

School DayZ



Directions to Students:
On your own, write your answer to the following questions:

1. How do you think Geoffrey feels about the way Alfredo and Mary treat him at school?
2. Why do you suppose that Alfredo and Mary are so intent on teasing Geoffrey?
3. Describe what you think the other students' responsibility is in this case.
4. What would you suggest that Ann do in this situation with Geoffrey?


Core Trait: In your own words, define the word "Caring."

In order to experience the cognition of the issue, questions are posed that reflect some high order thinking. We want students to infer, to analyze, to predict, and to apply what they are learning and reflecting on during the instructional episode. And finally, we want them to “define” the core trait in their own words as the final question. Once the vignette is read and discussed, the students respond to the questions (figure 3) either in writing or through discussion. It may be preferred in some cases that the students respond in writing and may be graded. Some teachers may wish to have discussion only, but that is a school or faculty decision.


As a school-wide effort, teachers would either create or select a vignette that pertains to a particular issue they wish to address, and use their copies as a black line master to produce for their classroom use. Figure 4 provides another example of a vignette focused on a classroom disturbance. These are not uncommon in many situations, but often these same situations never get addressed in a way other than the issuance of punishment: but nothing is learned. Classroom teachers who continually deal with behavioral issues would also make use of this project.

Again, the intent is to provide a means for teachers to become more strategic in their guidance of students, while allowing them to preserve their relationships with students by providing this growth opportunity, creating a cognitive path to changing behavior, and controlling their environment of the classroom. These discussion sessions usually result in something that resembles a class meeting to problem-solve. “When members of a class meet to make decisions and solve problems, they get the self-esteem building message that their voices count, they experience a sense of belonging to a community, and they hone in on their ability to reason and analyze” (Kohn, 1994).

Figure 4



School DayZ



Directions to Students:
 Below you see some statements and a blank space next to each one. When you have read the statement, put a check mark in the space next to those with which you agree. If you disagree, leave it blank.

- _____ 1. Teachers really only like smart kids.
- _____ 2. It's okay to hit or kick something if you get mad.
- _____ 3. Grades don't really tell what a student knows.
- _____ 4. Parents should not always expect good grades.
- _____ 5. Some kids just can't control their behavior.

Making the Grade

“Okay, students, today you will receive your progress reports. I am sure most of you will be pleased,” said Mrs. Smith. She had been a classroom teacher for over 20 years. Mrs. Smith was well liked by most of her students. She was a very calm and relaxed teacher. Some thought she was a little old fashioned. She was very active in her church and got along well with all of the parents who came to see her from time to time.

Marcus, who was seated in the back of the room, yelled, “Hey Sarah, what did you get? All A's I'm sure.”

“I bet all of the girls got A's and some of the geek boys,” he continued. “Mrs. Smith likes all of the smart kids.”

Suddenly Robert jumped up and said, “I am not taking this report home!” He yelled, “I didn't make any zeroes this term! I am not accepting this.”

“You just don’t like me, Mrs. Smith,” he wailed.

Mrs. Smith walked over to Robert’s desk and asked him to read his report in detail. She stated, “I’ve written explanations concerning the zeroes.”

Robert refused to listen to anything Mrs. Smith had to say. He threw his paper in the garbage and began screaming at Mrs. Smith. Then, he kicked the garbage can over and stormed out of the room.

Directions to Students:

On your own, write your answers to the following questions.

1. Why do you think Robert reacted to Mrs. Smith the way he did?
2. If you were Mrs. Smith, how would you handle this situation?
3. How might Robert resolve the issue and maintain a good relationship with Mrs. Smith?
4. Based on the information about Mrs. Smith and Robert, how would you end this story?

Core Trait: In your own words, write a definition for “Respect”.

Recently a situation emerged in Florida where a group of girls and a few boys got together to video the relentless beating of an individual girl who was accused of posting messages about the girls who did the beating. Their idea was to allegedly film the beating and post it on the Internet. While this case is being adjudicated, we can’t help but wonder why the opportunity to talk things out was lost and the first and last resort was to cause bodily harm. These students were not known to be discipline problems. This situation symbolizes that we desperately need to build resilience along with a

sense of judgment for our students to allow conflicts to be resolved. In an article by Howard Johnston, “Youth as Cultural Capital: Learning How to Be,” the point is echoed that ways of acting in ways of propriety and in a civilized manner falls more to the schools. We cannot afford to have students influencing others to “pound” at their problems and risking the safety of others. As the adage states, “If you starve with a tiger, the tiger eats last.” We can’t afford to wait that long.

References

Cotton, K. (1990). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. North West Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved April 2008 from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

Duffelmeyer, F. (1994). *Journal of Reading*, 37, 452–455.

Irwin, C.E., & Vaughn, E. (1988). Psychosocial context of adolescent development. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 9, 11–15.

Johnston, Howard. (1992). Youth as cultural capital: Learning how to be. In J. Irvin (Ed.) *Transforming middle level education: Perspectives and possibilities*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Klemp, R. (2002). Peer to peer accountability through cooperative literacy. *In Focus*, 38, 4–12.

Klemp, R., Ogle, D., & McBride, B. (2007). *Building literacy in social studies*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kohn, A. (1994). The truth about self-esteem. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 75(1), 272–280.

Ron Klemp (ron.klemp@lausd.net) is the Secondary Literacy Coordinator for the Los Angeles Unified School District.



A Mentoring Model

Diane Nelson & Melissa Maier

From Pulmentum to Pizza: An Interdisciplinary Collaborative Roman History Lesson for Sixth Graders

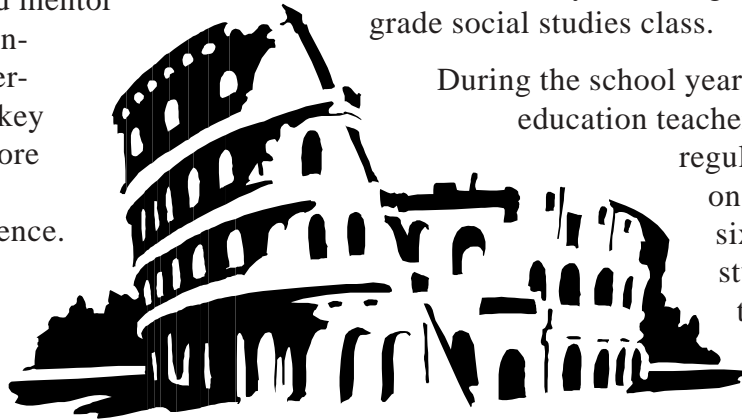
Introduction

The important job of mentoring carries with it the responsibility of helping a new teacher develop skills and independence while becoming a more confident teacher. According to a NYSUT publication, *Implementing District-based Teacher Mentoring Programs*, the knowledge, organizational skills, and wisdom of the experienced mentor teacher coupled with the energy, enthusiasm, and eagerness of the newcomer are key ingredients leading to a more productive and satisfying beginning teaching experience. Professional development is a two way street, so that in addition to their enthusiasm, recent college graduates often have strong technology skills and can be a great resource for veteran teachers.

Important components of a mentoring program are model teaching and coaching. With the goal of strengthening the model teaching and coaching component of the district's mentor program, the senior author created a collaborative mentor/mentee lesson as one model for the district mentoring program.

Background

The two teachers bonded during February break in 2008 when a group of fifteen district teachers traveled to Rome following a series of planning and study sessions over a three-month period. Each teacher was assigned an area of Roman studies to research and present to the rest of the group. The teachers compiled a curriculum reference resource for other teachers in the district. The Home and Career Skills teacher/Mentor Coordinator created an interdisciplinary lesson on Roman Cuisine, History and Geography for a sixth grade social studies class.



During the school year, the special education teacher, who had a regular mentor, taught on a team with a sixth grade social studies teacher who teaches a unit on Roman history every spring. The Home and

Career Skills teacher teaches a unit on cultural foods, including Italian food, with her eighth grade class.

The teachers collaborated on a lesson on the historical and geographic origins and contributions to Roman Cuisine. The new teacher created the visuals using Smart Board technology as a way to increase student interest, clarity, and motivation. The lesson was presented twice over two days so that all the students on the team participated.

The Lesson

At the beginning of the lesson, the students were given the opportunity to taste pulmentum, the grain-based mush or bread used for nourishment by the Roman legions. Pulmentum later developed into polenta after the introduction of maize to Europe in the 15th century from South America.

Next, the students considered a familiar and tastier food, pizza, and were asked to try and guess, after a series of prompts via the Smart Board presentation, which country or geographic area contributed the food items that go into making a pizza. Wheat, mozzarella, olive oil, and salt are indigenous to Italy; tomatoes came from Mexico; garlic from Greece; parsley and yeast from Egypt; and black pepper from India. In addition to the Roman connection, the prompts tested geography and history studied earlier in the year with immediate feedback. The use of food helped to bring history alive in the classroom. The lesson was designed to challenge all students regardless of their skills level. On the first day, the veteran teacher taught the majority of the lesson and the new teacher assisted with the Smart Board presentation. On the second day, the new teacher taught the majority of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the students enjoyed a pizza treat fresh out of the oven.

Learning and Self-Assessment

The lesson was well received by the students. The social studies teacher and other members of the sixth grade team noted that the presentation was a creative way to make an interdisciplinary connection and test prior

learning. The Smart Board's interactive and visual technology supported the lesson and maintained student motivation.

Both teachers agreed that the collaborative team lesson was beneficial to the new teacher as a teaching model and mentoring activity.

The new teacher noted that, in addition to the actual lesson planning, it was helpful to observe the veteran teacher get the students' attention, maintain momentum, and manage the class. The new teacher was able to incorporate some of these techniques in her lesson the next day. The veteran teacher was excited to learn about the teaching possibilities of Smart Board technology.



Reflection

Team teaching, interactive technology, and multi-sensory experiences contributed to the success of this lesson. Besides the students, both teachers benefited from this collaboration by complementing each other's skills.

One of the most important jobs of mentoring is helping the beginning teacher transition from preparation to practice. Besides activities that include instructional practice and classroom management, a good mentoring program includes mentor training, after school meetings throughout the school year for mentors and mentees, orientation to the school culture, and information about the collective bargaining agreement. Instructional practice and classroom management activities include modeling instruction, observations, coaching, joint lesson planning, and team teaching. Collaborative team teaching can

help a new teacher develop teaching and classroom management skills and become a more confident teacher.

References

Angeli, C. (2008, Spring). Distributed cognition: A framework for understanding the role of computers in classroom teaching and learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 40 (3), 271–279.

Enhancing learning with technology — Differentiating instruction. Retrieved from <http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/diffeentiating.html>

Field experience handbook — The coaching process. Retrieved from www.education.umd.edu/teacher_education/sthandbook/coaching.html

Jajjar, L.J. (1995, June 12). A review of the fundamental effects of multimedia information presentation on learning. Retrieved from <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/reports/TechReports95.html>

Marcus, A. S. (2007, May-June). Representing the past and reflecting the present: Museums, memorials, and the secondary history classroom. *Social Studies*, 98 (3), 105–110.

NYSUT. *Implementing district-based teacher mentoring programs*.

O'Connell, J. & Henri, J. (1997). Information literacy: Teacher's perspectives of the information process. Retrieved from <http://www.davidvl.org/250CourseSpr04/b11.html>

Schacter, J. The impact of education technology on student achievement: What the most current research has to say. *Milkin Exchange on Education Technology*. Retrieved from <http://www.mff.org/pubs/ME161.pdf>

Diane Nelson, Mentor Coordinator for the Mamaroneck School District, teaches Home and Career Skills at Hommocks Middle School; 10 Hommocks Road, Larchmont NY 10538; (914) 220-3300. She also is a registered dietician.

Melissa Maier, who was a Special Education leave replacement at Hommocks Middle School, teaches at Pleasantville Middle School; 40 Romer Avenue, Pleasantville NY 10570; (914) 741-1450.

NYSMSA's 28th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 23–25, 2008

Syracuse, New York

The Middle School Mind: A Work in Progress

How do early adolescents think? Learn? Feel? Act?

Thursday, October 23

School Visitations

Full-Day Pre-Conference Workshops

- Differentiation for the Middle School Mind
- Who Is in Control? Strategies to Successfully Address Oppositional Behavior
 - What's Best and Right in Inclusive Classrooms
 - Learning Smarter: Study Skills for the 21st Century
- MILES (Metacognitive Initiative for Learning and Educational Success)
 - The "N-Spired" Math and Science Classroom
 - Technology in the Middle School

Banquet with Keynote Speaker

Jane Bluestein, author of *21st Century Discipline* and 10 other books

"The Win-Win Classroom: A Fresh and Positive Look at Classroom Management"

Friday, October 24

General Session with Keynote Presentation

Dr. Robert Sylwester, author of *A Celebration of Neurons* and *BrainConnection.com*
"The Tween Brain"

100+ Practitioner Workshops

Feature Presentations

Trade Exhibit

Saturday, October 25

Breakfast with Champions Session

"Using Classroom Technology That Works"

Individual and group registration materials are available online.

Visit www.NYSMSA.org for additional details.



The Age of Connectedness

Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.

The very intention to teach is an act of love.
—Frank Siccone (Wright, 1997)

The classroom needs to be a safe haven where children feel secure and are able to establish a bond with a significant and empathetic adult.
—Claire Thornton (Thornton, 1998)

School is a place for laughing, learning and loving.
—Esther Wright (Wright, 1994)

The Information Age came into being during my lifetime. In the true spirit of acceleration, I believe that the beginnings of the next major shift came right on its heels. This current “wave” has to do with the way human beings connect with everything around us, and the quality of our relationships with people, institutions and things. Perhaps an inevitable result of a deluge of information coupled with explosive breakthroughs in communications technology, this trend may also illustrate a need for balance, or what Naisbitt calls the “high touch” counterpart to “high tech” (Naisbitt). This shift has begun to impact all of our relationships — from our personal affiliations to our “relationships” with our money and possessions, the businesses we frequent (and operate), the medical community (and our bodies), our political structures, our spiritual institutions, our problems (and our talents for solving them), nature and the environment, and the information, technology and resources available to us, as well!

This idea of “connectedness” represents a change in our awareness, too. It includes a growing realization that everything is interre-

lated, and that our actions — and, some say, even our thoughts — can have an impact beyond anything we may have previously imagined. It’s about what Peter Senge calls “systems thinking,” and the shift of mind “from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world” (Senge, 1990). It’s a mind-boggling leap from a thought structure which focuses on individual parts of a whole, to one which is moving toward holism, devoted to “understanding the system as a system, and giving primary value to the relationships that exist among seemingly discrete parts” (Wheatley, 1994). And while this notion certainly refers to more than just our connections with people, it also requires an acknowledgement that human growth and change happen most frequently in the context of human relationship — and that the nature of these relationships, and the energy dynamics within them, have an impact on the growth and change that occurs.

Education has always had an enormous “human factor,” accounting for the influence of adults and peers in a school setting. Archbishop Desmond Tutu recounts his experiences in an impoverished South African ghetto school with “hardly any facilities to mention” (Bluestein, 1995). And yet, there was one math teacher, a Mr. Ndebele, who inspired extraordinary learning in his students. There were no discipline problems and every one of his pupils passed the state public exams, many receiving distinctions for their achievements in this subject area. This success could hardly be attributed to the abundance of resources or technologies. The badly overcrowded church that was used as a school

lacked even the most basic amenities such as desks and chairs. (The pews served both purposes, depending upon whether one sat on the seats or the floor). Reverend Tutu attributes Mr. Ndebele's influence to the way he connected with his students: "He made us feel so special, and that was something, coming as we all did from an environment that conspired to make us feel utterly dejected, nonentities, whose parents counted for nothing in the land of their birth" (Bluestein, 1995).

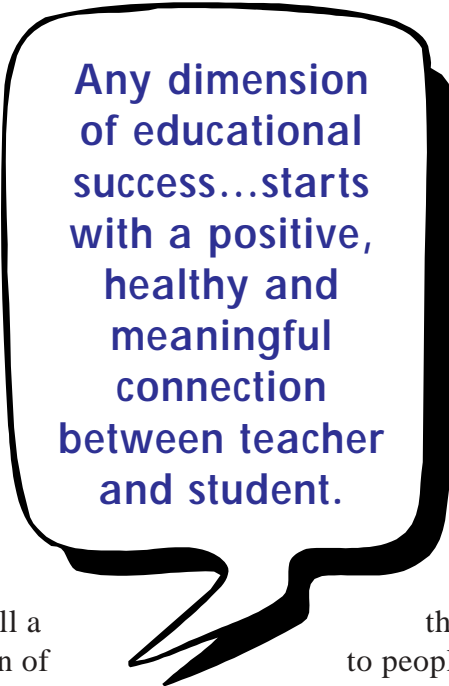
I don't remember anyone ever telling me to look at my students with my heart instead of my grade book, but I know that I was able to connect better — and teach better, and get better results — whenever I was able to pull that off. The potential, indeed the necessity, exists for anyone who works with children. Being a knowledgeable, passionate teacher, skilled in instructional technique and entertaining delivery certainly counts for something, but I believe that the quality of the bond between a teacher and student will give passion and skill a place to take root. Any dimension of educational success, whether we're talking about academic achievement, discipline issues, or social and emotional development, for example, starts with a positive, healthy and meaningful connection between teacher and student. Successful teaching — which hopefully means more than simply transmitting information from teacher to learners — means successful relationships.

Unfortunately, much of the scant attention that has been paid to this aspect of education has focused on win-lose power dynamics, advanced in the name of discipline and control. In this regard, much of what has passed

for conventional wisdom simply ends up creating more stress in the teacher-student relationship. For the most part, the idea of any relationship between teachers and students has frequently been very specifically discouraged. Comments like, "I don't care if they like me (as long as they respect me)," or "Don't smile before Christmas," insinuate that a close, enjoyable bond between an adult and child will preclude the possibility of adult authority, instructional success or mutual respect. In fact, these goals are typically more attainable in the context of a posi-

tive relationship — one in which both children and adults can feel respected, valued and safe. And for some children, as far as finding a place to connect with a positive, caring adult goes, school is the only game in town. So the quality of the relationships in this setting matters. A lot.

But there's something a little strange about relationships in this context of connectedness. It's not like our social concept, where we think of relationships in reference to people we like or choose to spend time with, or people we're thrown together with by virtue of our jobs or family relationships. Connectedness broadens the concept, and includes relationships with people (and things) we don't seem to actually have any real connection with. This is because the connection isn't necessarily a material, emotional, conversational or overtly interactive one. But make no mistake about it: at a certain level, there's definitely a connection, whether the individuals are interacting or not. It may be based on caring and respect; it may reflect hostility and mistrust. There's also energy in indifference, in being ignored,



Any dimension of educational success...starts with a positive, healthy and meaningful connection between teacher and student.

overlooked or marginalized. In a school setting, any connection has the potential for tremendous impact on children's learning and behavior, and on their feelings and beliefs, as well.

I like the idea of looking at education through this lens of connectedness. The concept encourages us to look beyond the content dimensions of instruction to the ways in which the energy dynamics inherent in our relationships and interaction patterns impact teaching and learning. It holds us accountable for the way we treat one another, the way we allow ourselves to be treated and the energy between us. In many cases, it will challenge us to examine and change some of the more destructive relationship dynamics which pervade the instructional environment, and erode the emotional climate in these settings. But perhaps most importantly, it gives us a rationale for going through our priority list and, if it's not already there, elevating the concept of community to the top.

Excerpted from "Brave New World: The Changing Role of School," in Creating Emotionally Safe Schools by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. ©

References

Bluestein, J. (1995). *Mentors, masters and Mrs. MacGregor*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.

Naisbitt, J. (1982). *Megatrends*. New York: Warner Books.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Thornton, C. (1998, April/May). Needed: Responsive teachers. *Momentum* 29 (2). Referencing an article by Exline, J.

(1993). Children in crisis in the classroom. *Momentum*, 24 (2), 12-16. *Note:* In the original context, Thornton made this comment regarding children who live with violence and fear. While certainly appropriate for this population, I believe that the need for a "safe haven" and "a bond with a significant and empathetic adult" would benefit any child coming to school.

Wheatley, M. J. (1994). *Leadership and the new science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Wright, E. *Loving discipline A to Z*. (1994). San Francisco: Teaching from the Heart.

Wright, E. (1997). *The heart and wisdom of teaching*. San Francisco: Teaching from the Heart.

Dr. Jane Bluestein is an award-winning author and teacher educator. She currently heads Instructional Support Services in Albuquerque, NM. Dr. Bluestein is the author of *Creating Emotionally Safe Schools; Being a Successful Teacher; Mentors, Masters and Mrs. MacGregor: Stories of Teachers Making a Difference*; and *High School's Not Forever*. Her latest book is *The Win-Win Classroom*. She can be reached at (800) 688-1960 or (505) 323-9044. Visit her website at janebluestein.com.

Peer Coaching — Transition in the Middle

Susan Ruckdeschel



There's a new rage about student peer review. It's called Peer Coaching, an interactive method young writers use to develop an internal, permanent, and intuitive dialogue for editing their work. Students use specific protocols, or *peer coach*, to establish writing goals, give-and-take feedback, and listen actively. It is through this action, executed in three steps, that students employ a method of communication and decision-making for producing finished products. This is particularly important and effective in middle school years, where students have difficulty transitioning from teacher-directed goals and prompts to what comes from within their own writing effort, or writing from the inside. Rooted in what research says about the brain's response to cognitive stimuli, literacy development, high stakes assessment performance, and the need for peer feedback in process writing, peer coaching leads to higher writing skill, analytical thinking and problem solving, effective communication, and better test performance when writing-on-demand. It's a simple three-step process, based on the fundamental belief that writers need each other for coaching writing effort.

Simply said: Writers *need* other writers. Authors of writing craft have been saying it since at least the seventies (Graves, Kirby & Liner, Robb, Vacca, Wiggins, Levine, Tomlinson). Rooted in the effective teaching of writing, it's been demonstrated through many models — Elbow (1973) and his use of “teacherless writing groups;” Kirby & Liner (2004) through self-evaluation writing processes; Lucy Calkins and Donald Graves (1982, 1983) through peer response groups;

Macrorie (1984) through “Helping Circles” — to name some. Most recently, tested for its ability to improve scores on high-stakes assessments, Moran & Greenberg (2008) researched and then field tested a similar process by helping students become “Meta-Editors.” Rothstein & Lauber (2000, p. 205) say: “Every writer must learn to self-edit. Yet, at the same time, the writer needs a peer; a person willing to read or listen to the writing and address the writer's concerns. The peer editor must also respond gently, with just enough judgment or ideas to encourage the writer to continue writing and make the necessary changes.”

Dr. Mel Levine, a pediatrician who has researched the adolescent mind extensively, tells us that we all have unlimited storage capacity in long-term memory, while short-term memory has limited storage capacity. When we take information from short-term through doing, and reflecting, and seeing, and listening...we move it into long-term.

“It's a good thing short-term memory is short. It needs to be short because there is a constant torrent of new data competing for limited mind space. Therefore, information has to enter and exit short-term memory swiftly. We always need to make room for ever-arriving new information...short-term memory has a serious space crunch...can hold a mere seven numbers at a time...Most older children and adults can absorb and repeat about seven numbers” (Levine, 2002, p. 95).

Peer coaching takes information from short-term to long-term through the “doing” of reading, writing, listening, articulating,

speaking, and re-ordering information via a steep decision-making process, and three simple steps.

The Peer Coaching Overview and Three Steps

“Students struggle endlessly to get their thoughts into words and just as often to use words to construct their thoughts. And their attempts to find thoughts within the words they hear or read can be just as taxing. That’s where the language system comes in” (Levine, 2002, p. 120).

Students learn and practice the articulation and intentional dialogue of peer coaching until it becomes intrinsic, automatic, and intuitive. The precursor to an internal assimilation needed for independent problem-solving, it focuses on improvement specific to a selected writing piece in any content area, of any genre. Through collaboratively focusing on one identified area unique to each writer, students develop clarity in multiple areas of writing effort. It is the critical think-through process required of peer coaching that distinguishes it from other models, because students must *independently* identify their own trouble-spots, beginning with goal-setting, then responding and adjusting. So where initially it is about goal-setting, ultimately it’s about critical decision-making. Where it differentiates from the conventional peer review or conferencing is *inside* of the thinking and the language they use to get to the end — articulating needs, establishing listening points, responding, and then communicating this response to peers in the form of feedback. Here’s how peer coaching works:

1. State the Need.
2. Respond to the Need.
3. Take What Is Needed and Leave Out What Isn’t.

In order to work Step 1, writers must set goals for an individual writing piece while

still in the drafting stages, establishing an expectation for their writing effort. If this expectation comes short, and they don’t know why or how it does, they will have identified an issue, offering it up to peers for review. If no issue arises, then students can send goals up for review, to ensure it rises to its own expectation. This problem-solving allows them an opportunity to trial-and-error their own writing inside of a writing process, getting them to a place where they’ll develop clarity on what they need, or what they might need more of in their writing. When students establish criteria of their own, then ask for help in manageable, interpretable chunks, they’re far more likely to work with it — because it’s something from within them that they’ve asked for.

After goal-setting, the next step, or sub-step, is to articulate this need to peers, using discourse that is most effective in asking for anything, through “I” statements: *I need* and *I want* — *I need some help with my ending; I want some feedback on how it sounds so far and maybe what to include next* — clarifying and establishing specifically what they need for their writing to make it better. Or through goal-setting (*I want this to flow; I want to make people cry; I want to make people think about the environment; I want to get an “A” on this paper*).

Peers as listeners must then leverage their listening to the writer’s stated need. They are trained in Step 2 to listen intentionally, and actively, so that they know *exactly* how to respond with productive, focused, and strategic dialogue. So there are two major roles that students take on when peer coaching: Writer/Reader, and Listener/Responder. Editor and Manager are optional roles, and work to further refine the steps inside of the steps.

After having summarized and read their writing piece aloud (Step 1), then having received feedback from Listener/Responders (Step 2), Writer/Readers must make a very

important decision as to what feedback to keep, and what feedback *not* to keep (Step 3). This is an internal, critical decision-making process that must also be taught — how to decipher productive feedback from non-productive feedback — because it hinges tightly upon what the Writer/Reader asked for. Because our students usually come to us with very fixed thoughts about who their inner-circle of friends will include and will not include, who they must relate to and who they will *not* relate to, it is something they must learn to do with intention. This is the magic of peer coaching, and why it works so well in middle school.

Here are a few field-based basics on the “why’s” of peer coaching — basics based on my work in the field with student writers, and the pedagogy I continue to apply.

- Students, often hesitant to change or alter their “creations,” don’t always know what they need to make their writing better. Nor do they always know what they want from their audience. When writers become stuck, they need support to become unstuck. Students need clear direction; they need to know what they want for their writing to make it better, and they need feedback from their peers.
- Students, however well meaning or *not* so well meaning, need direction in responding to peers both in and out of the classroom. Not always effective in how they respond, they can lapse easily and quickly into negative discursive environments, or simply say the wrong thing at the wrong time. Students need to be focused and oriented to the reader and his or her stated needs in order to be supportive and offer effective feedback. When they are, they respond despite any extraneous distractions or circumstances.
- Students respond to themselves, and to each other, better when they set goals for their writing — goals specific to each

writing piece, and to themselves as writers overall. Goal-setting helps students identify and pay attention to areas that need focus, or “trouble-spots.” When students establish criteria of their own, then ask for help in manageable, interpretable chunks, they’re far more likely to work with it — because it’s become manageable, and something from within them that they’ve asked for. The key is to get them in touch with these inner thoughts and ideas...through goal-setting. Laura Robb (1998, p.11) reminds us that “Incorporating a student’s suggestions in a progress plan honors the child and motivates him or her to make an effort. The bonus is that students often have top notch ideas!”

- Peer coaching holds great promise for transitioning students from writing effort that responds to what teachers or assessment prompts dictate, to becoming independent, proactive thinkers about what they write, who they write for, how they write it, and then how to get from Point A to Point B. This is the kind of transition that leads to independent writers, thinkers, and communicators across all content areas, despite learning aptitude, gender, or race. It is the transition in the middle that helps them get to the end.

Teaching Tips

- Use of these “I” statements versus “You should” statements will work to offset any possibilities for negative perceptions of feedback, eliminating over-personalization and defensiveness. Dr. Levine (2002) reminds us of the importance of effective social communication: “In relating to one another, kids constantly have to absorb and interpret social feedback. They need to pick up the sometimes subtle cues etched on the facial expressions or body movements of those with whom they are interacting.”

- When students are peer coaching — in groups, with buddies, as whole class — social conventions can get confusing. Successful employment of this protocol and its outcome will hinge largely on how closely students follow these new conventions — the roles and their proper execution.
- Have on-going dialogue with students at first, continuing as needed (they'll need reminding or re-coaching along the way!). Remind students about the use and effectiveness of "I" statements when communicating feedback, and of its relevance to

their on-going dialogue with one another, along with the give-and-take process of peer coaching using "I heard..." or "I felt..." versus "You should..." or "You ought to..." Initiate a discussion about this type of communication as a group: *Why is it better to use "I" statements? What happens when we don't?* Model with some examples. When they understand the why behind the what, it will become a natural process for them, they'll integrate it quicker, *and* they'll learn to communicate better with one another overall.

Examples of Listener/Responder feedback statements in response to Writer/Reader stated goals and issues:

Stated Goal or Issue	Peer Feedback Statement
<p>Goal/Issue (fourth-grader): <i>I want to make people laugh, and I don't want it to end as soon as it does because I don't think they laughed enough yet.</i></p> <p>If Peer Questioning were used: <i>How can I make it longer to make people laugh more?</i></p>	<p><i>I liked the way you introduce the silly character, especially his underpants showed just enough to make us laugh, but nothing inappropriate. Keep having him do silly things, like tripping and just being silly. It doesn't have to end where it ended — we want more</i> (laughs as she remarks).</p>
<p>Issue on a poem (seventh-grader): <i>I don't usually write poems, and I want to give this to my mom for Mother's Day, but I don't want her to feel bad after reading it. It's about a fight we had once, but it ended up ok.</i> (The goal for this student's piece was to write a poem that made her mother feel happy inside.)</p> <p>Peer Questioning: <i>Do you think my mom will like this poem and feel good about it even though it talks about a fight we had once?</i></p>	<p><i>I love how you talk to your mother in this poem. The words you use, like Pretty Woman and Always Everything make her sound very special. If I were your mom I would not feel bad, because it is more about how much you love her than it is about the fight you had. The fight sounds real when you mention "red-faced girl with bulging eyes." But if you want to be sure she doesn't feel bad remembering the fight, then maybe leave out some detail. I know we're always supposed to use detail, but this time leave it out there and maybe add some more in the loving spots.</i></p>

<p>Goal (fifth-grader): <i>I want to write a historical fiction story and maybe make it into a novel.</i></p> <p>Peer Questioning: <i>How can I make this short story into a novel?</i></p>	<p><i>I like how the character starts talking right away, and she's another kind of slave from a country other than Africa, going back far in time — that's really interesting! I didn't know they had slaves in other countries. You could make this longer into a novel by having her tell about how she got there in the first place, and then writing about all the things that happen to her before becoming a slave. Maybe have her writing it in her diary...</i></p>
<p>Goal for persuasive essay (ninth-grader): <i>I want this to make people think about global warming and want to take action.</i></p> <p>Peer Questioning: <i>Does this essay make you think about global warming and want to take action?</i></p>	<p>Student 1: <i>I liked how you grab the reader from the beginning. Maybe you could scare them a little more with some more information about some of the local effects of global warming, like flooding, tornadoes in mountainous areas, etc.</i></p> <p>Student 2: <i>I like the way it sounds because it sounds like you're talking right to the person face-to-face. Maybe you can jazz it up a little bit by getting a little "in your face" with them about it — maybe use scarier words to do that, say things that might scare them into being more aware of the environment and global warming.</i></p> <p>Writer: <i>Like what?</i></p> <p>Student 2: <i>Like telling them about how long it takes for a diaper to biodegrade, or a piece of plastic. You could even talk about some of the whacky weather things that have been going on, like tornadoes and earthquakes.</i></p>

REFERENCES

- Calkins, L. (1983). *Lessons from a child*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Graves, D. (1994). *A fresh look at writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Jensen, E. (2005). *Teaching with the brain in mind* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Kirby, D., Kirby, D., & Liner, T. (2004). *Inside out strategies for teaching writing* (3rd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Levine, M. (2002). *A mind at a time*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

- Moran, P. P. & Greenberg, B. (2008). Peer revision: Helping students to develop a meta-editor. *Ohio Journal of English Language Arts*, 48, 33–39.
- Robb, L. (1998). *Easy-to-manage reading & writing conferences*. New York: Scholastic.
- Wolfe, P. (2001). *Brain matters: Translating research into classroom practice*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Susan Ruckdeschel (sdeschel@optonline.net), an author and national educational consultant, is Professor of Literacy, University of Phoenix Online.



How Will You Remember This?

Vivian Demers-Jagoda

There is no learning without memory. If we teach something today and students learn but cannot remember tomorrow, there is no proof that learning has occurred. Teachers are not only facilitators of information, but also providers of memory strategies, so information will be retained and recalled.

The research is in. The experts, including Jensen, Sprenger, Walker, Tileston, and O'Brien, have published strategies to help our students increase their recall. Take this article as a way to turn theory into practice. I had the opportunity to do just that, teaching "Learning Smarter" (Study Skills for the 21st Century) to seventh graders for twenty weeks a year for the last thirteen school years. Over 500 students per year learned, practiced, applied, and benefited from these points.

Ask the question of your students, "Do you understand?" Then follow with the question, "How will you remember this?" Educators following simple memory points can and will increase the recognition and recall of important key facts and concepts for their students.

Key Concepts

Apply key concepts of memory retention appropriate for middle school students, such as:

Chunking: With short-term memory, adults can handle seven, plus or minus two, pieces of information. An average twelve to fourteen year old's memory slots can hold only five or six pieces of information in one learning situation. Vocabulary lists, processes, and sequential lists need to be chunked into groups no larger than six pieces. If a list of 20 vocabulary words, perhaps in a foreign lan-

guage unit, were to be chunked into groups of fives and practiced over four class meetings, the rate of recall will be substantial.

BEM: The principle of BEM stands for Beginnings, Endings, and Middle. The beginning of any learning situation is the easiest to recall. Next, the easiest is the ending of any learning. The middle information is the most difficult to remember. So, taking that same list of 20 vocabulary words, spread the learning over five practices, with the smallest chunk size in the middle. An example would be chunks of five, five, three, three, and finally four words.

Practice: Repetitions of information consolidate the information for long-term memory. It takes 3-10 repetitions or practice to learn and retain. From classroom experience, the following plan increases the recall for students:

File Information in Long-Term Memory 5-7 Different Ways

- Hear it (listen in class)
- See it (look at visuals)
- Write it (take notes)
- Review it (study tonight)
- Check it (tomorrow morning)
- Make a study aide
- Hook to memory technique
- Check it again the next morning

10-24-7: The timing of your brain for memory consolidation is ten minutes, twenty-four hours, and seven days. If you review informa-

tion using that timing, you will be benefiting from the rhythm of your brain. After ten minutes of new information in a lesson, students need to practice and process for a minimum of two to ten minutes. Teachers can use this time for sample problems, journal writing, or rehearsal questions. Then more new information can be entertained with practice following again. Twenty-four hours later, the information should be brought back to short-term memory to be rehearsed and consolidated. Most classroom teachers assign homework for just this reason! Corrections or discussion allow for the twenty-four hour later timing. But, to increase recall substantially, the information should be revisited and repeated seven days or one week later. If the student can recall the information one day and one week later, it has been registered in the long-term memory for later recall and use. Timely review will increase the probability that the brain will retain the information and “forget zones” will diminish.

Sleep: Sleep is extremely important to learning and memory. It is during our sleep cycle that information is consolidated and filed away in long-term memory. During sleep, REM cycle (rapid eye movement) is when the brain rehearses the day’s learning. This “instant replay” enhances memory consolidation. Eighty percent of REM occurs during the last few hours of sleep. Unfortunately, the onset of hormonal changes during puberty causes the adolescent’s biological clock to shift. A natural bedtime moves closer to midnight and waking time after 8 a.m. If the school day starts early, REM time often suffers, with memory recall as the victim. Additional practice is essential!

Only Study What You Don’t Know: When information is practiced and rehearsed one day and one week later, students will easily discover what has registered in their long-

term memory and what has not. But only if, as teachers, we structure the revisiting. Memory flashing is a technique that students can use to reflect on what they know. Completely from memory, ask your class to write down what had been previously taught in class (perhaps a ticket-into class). Compare the copy with the original and see what was missed. The students are instructed only to study what they missed or don’t know.

Impress the Brain: Memory techniques, such as songs, rhymes, acronyms, and acrostics have been used in the classroom. Make up your own! My Study Skills class was joined in scheduling with the Health class. Co-teaching the class, we renamed it HALO: Health And Learning Opportunities. We used a halo as our class icon and used the letters to also represent our class rules, such as:

- H:** Have all class materials and be ready to work
- A:** Attitude is everything; positive attitude is expected every day.
- L:** Listen attentively.
- O:** On time; class begins at _____.

In Summary — EUROPE

Using that idea of impressing the brain, the acronym EUROPE summarizes memory strategies that can easily be used in class:

- E**=exaggerate; make items larger in size based on importance
- U**=unique; highlight, underline, circle, box in key facts
- R**=repeat; 3-10 times to create a memory trace
- O**=organized into appropriate chunks
- P**=picture; add a picture or icon
- E**=emotions; anything emotional makes an impression

Memory is learning that “sticks,” with the ability to recall, retrieve, and apply. Use the current research to improve students’ registration, retention, and retrieval. We can help our students develop more “Velcro” for our curriculum.

References

Jensen, E. & Dabney, M. (2000). *Learning smarter — the new science of teaching*. San Diego: The Brain Store.

O’Brien, D. (2000). *Learn to remember*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Sprengr, M. (2007). *Memory 101 for educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Walker, D. T. (2004). *What every teacher should know about learning, memory and the brain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Vivian Demers-Jagoda

(vdemjag@netscape.net or www.learningfundamentals.us), a retired middle school teacher, is a staff developer and on-site presenter for National Middle School Association.

October — Month of the Young Adolescent

Ideas for Schools and Communities

- Celebrate Month of the Young Adolescent with a kick-off party.
- Plan weekly activities for parents and students such as a carnival night, an open house, a math game night, a read aloud night or a crafts night.
- Have local places of worship hold informational services concerning the importance of adolescents in the community.
- Encourage local businesses to have an open house and share information concerning future career opportunities.
- Suggest that local community organizations offer open recreation times.
- Ask local medical facilities to offer free health screenings for young adolescents and their families.
- Provide informational nights at the local school, highlighting the diverse needs of young adolescents.
- Work with young adolescents to create a community garden.
- Organize a mentor program for young adolescents in your community
- Visit, tutor or volunteer at your local middle school.
- Urge your community to proclaim October as the Month of the Young Adolescent.

—retrieved from www.nmsa.org/moya

“Do You Know Me?” Or: What Inquiring Middle School Minds Need to Know

Scott C. Reinhart



I often find myself face-to-face with young adolescents in a hallway teeming with more of the same. They are in a hurry, whether need be or not, but often halt the surge to engage me in a micro conversation. With so many varieties, shapes and sizes, one shouldn't expect common questions, but inevitably they appear. One such question is “Do you know my name?” or simply “Do you know me?” For a principal of a 750+ student school, this can be a tough question, and with all the post-Columbine research, one that cannot be ignored.

At Calkins Road Middle School, we utilized the Essential Elements rubric and the self-evaluative process portion of our “National School to Watch” designation to identify various areas of building-wide focus. Two areas — Essential Elements 3, Organization and Structure, and 6, A Network of Academic and Personal Support — became particular areas of focus. Simply, we wanted to know how connected our kids were to us and where to rectify any deficiencies. In addressing those specific Elements, we decided that we needed reliable data to assess how well we knew our kids, and which individual students we need to connect with. With that end in mind, the “Do You Know Me?” project was born.

Data collected over the last two years helped us identify individual students who were in danger of “slipping between the cracks” and also provided overall demographic and organizational patterns. Sharing the resulting data with faculty and staff enabled them to address gaps.

As we enter the third year of the project, the process of gathering the data has evolved

and hopefully improved. Working with the school counselors, we have gathered faculty and staff feedback regarding the process and feel that we are in a much stronger position to gather valid data. The first year, we found a secure location (faculty and staff only) to hang large sheets of chart paper. Written on the chart paper was the name of every student in the building, alphabetically according to grade level. Posted conspicuously were six questions and instructions. If you could answer “yes” to four of the six questions, the faculty or staff member placed a check next to the student's name. Two to three weeks were allotted for completion of this project.

For 2008-2009, the process will be as follows:

When: Midyear

Where: Online. All students' names will be found in a secure location online. Faculty and staff results will not be visible to each other.

What: Answer three of the following six questions with either a “yes” or a “no.” Three “yes” answers will result in a check for that student.

1. Do you know the family background (sibling, parents, marital status of parents, socio/economic status, etc.)?
2. If this student is having a “good day” or a “bad day,” would you know it?
3. Have you connected with this student outside of class time (for example: lunch time; academic support; casual conversation; extracurricular activities)?

4. Can you confidently describe to someone else this child's personality and character?
5. Can you identify the members of this child's peer group?
6. Can you identify this child's interests (sports, hobbies, etc.)?

The "Do You Know Me?" project fits with our philosophy of teaching individuals and takes the guessing out of answering the question. The data provided gives us what we need to ensure that our kids are connected to sig-

nificant adults, which all the research says is a critical ingredient in the recipe for healthy development. It also provides me the opportunity to answer that eager question knowing that even if I don't, someone most assuredly does.

Scott C. Reinhart is principal of Calkins Road Middle School; 1899 Calkins Road, Pittsford NY 14534; (585) 267-1900.

October is the

Month of the Young Adolescent



For more information, go to
www.nmsa.org/moya

The Use (and Sometime Misuse) of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory

Thomas B. Reardon



Having taught eighth grade English for numerous years, middle school methodology at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and, as of late, having served as an administrator in an elementary school, I felt this was an appropriate time to share some observations on the role and use (or misuse) of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory.

What sparked this article was a recent discussion of Gardner's work in my *Middle Level Education: Theories and Practice* undergraduate section. Though all of my students were well aware of its basic premise, they had spent little time looking at its application in the classroom. I am thoroughly convinced that, though this theory has a high sense of name recognition, its importance is sometimes "glossed over" under the assumption that it is understood, and at the discretion of the creativity of the instructor for its application. I will confess that, when asked to name the eight intelligences (linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist), I always seem to neglect to mention one.

In this discussion, we looked at an overview of Gardner's work and, in many ways, praised him for his ability to quantify a somewhat obvious educational tenet: students learn best when they can experience the knowledge through a medium they understand and/or enjoy. Many publications exist to provide teachers with different ideas for how to accommodate the various intelligences in the classroom, and we spent time perusing some of these publications for classroom lesson ideas.

By no means is this article a criticism of Gardner's work. The classification of the various types of cognitive learning and the call to action for teachers to attempt to reach as many of these (if not all of them) in their lessons has served to illustrate for teachers that a classroom is not simply a place for students to complete worksheets and take notes. Gardner's theory has pushed me as a classroom teacher to look at every topic I've introduced through an eight-sided lens, and attempt to solve the perpetual issue of creating the "perfect lesson" that all students will understand and retain. I can't imagine looking at lesson planning without this theory, if for no other reason than that it attempts to maximize student engagement. This is a premise in everything we do in the middle school.

It is important to note, however, that while the theory's purpose is to provide an added dimension to learning and classroom instruction, its over-use (and use as a defense) can serve to impede student progress. During my final year of teaching eighth grade, I had the pleasure of having a student (Dennis) who was extremely well-versed in technology. In fact, recent revisions and additions to Gardner's work suggest that a "technological intelligence" is certainly plausible as we progress into the 21st century. Other documentation has suggested that there are over 100 different intelligences and learning styles, which, while excessive, reinforces that Gardner's work is continuously evolving.

Regardless, Dennis was very savvy at creating websites, and even worked to make his own animated movies. As an English

teacher, I often allowed students to independently select a mode of expression in order to illustrate their understanding of a particular topic. As a less formal assessment, I would allow the students once per quarter to complete an independent project based on the reading we had completed in class. In classic Gardnerian style, I provided students with a list of possible modes of expression (write a song about your book, make a television commercial, write a newspaper article, script a play, etc.). The final option on any type assignment was always: create your own idea and submit it to me for approval. With many students still craving the structure of previous assignments, the majority of the class would adhere to one of the choices on the list, always attempting to find the “easiest” one to complete. Dennis, however, was one of my few students who proposed his own idea, which was to create an abridged animated film of the story.

At first, I was enchanted by his technical abilities, as his creations were fit for Hollywood (at least in my eyes). Dennis, a quiet child who persistently had his head on his desk and would never raise his hand, would suddenly come alive when he was making his movies. When we would show them to the class, he seemed so proud of his work, and praise for his movies were the talk of the hallways. You might say this was a perfect example of Gardner’s theory meshing perfectly with practice.

As the year progressed, Dennis continued to offer little participation in class, write the bare minimum, and be the first one out of the classroom. But at the end of the quarter, he would always jump at the chance to make a film. After viewing three films from previous

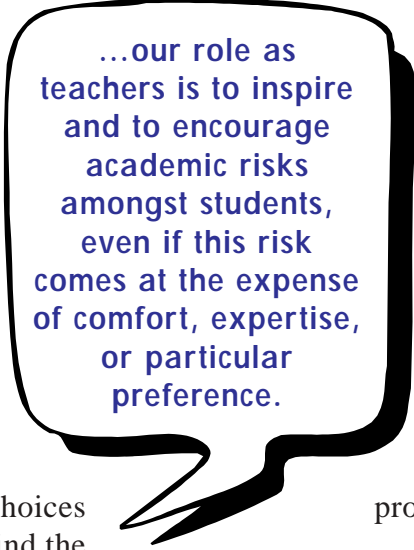
quarters, I suggested to him that he might want to think about choosing one of the other options on the sheet, as there were over 25 to choose from. Almost in a panic, he asked, “I don’t have to, right? I like making the movies. Everything else would be boring.” While I

prodded him to engage in performances

in front of the class, write more in his journal, and raise his hand during lively discussions, I was not making any progress. As we prepared to enter the fourth quarter, I ceased prodding him to do something different, and allowed him to make a film. When I went over who would be doing each project, he breathed a sigh of relief when I read his name, making the simple statement of “I’m a computer geek anyway,” proud of his distinction.

While some might look at this as a child finding and harnessing his strengths, I couldn’t help but ask myself whether or not I was doing this child a service by allowing him to consistently work within his comfort zone. At the age of 13, he had already typecast himself as a “computer geek,” and because of his success and ability to use this skill for achievement, he was unwilling to push himself to do something out of his comfort zone. Was I prepared to send a 13-year-old student into high school without ever having done something out of *his* ordinary?

As middle-level educators, one of the primary words that we should associate with any discipline is *exposure*. At a time when adolescents are experimenting and developing multiple aspects of their personality, likes, and dislikes, I do believe it is our role to allow students to experience things that they might never pursue as they grow into young adulthood. In the case of Dennis, public speaking was a perfect example. Potentially,



...our role as teachers is to inspire and to encourage academic risks amongst students, even if this risk comes at the expense of comfort, expertise, or particular preference.

Dennis might be a wonderful orator, but through the guise of Multiple Intelligence implementation in the classroom and the assumption that educators must always provide a choice of expression for student understanding, he was prevented from becoming one. It is easy to see how this can lead to individual academic stagnation, or an inability or lack of desire to take a risk.

Working in the elementary level, I encounter many parents who, when filling out introductory questionnaires regarding their children, will describe them with such adjective phrases as: *does not work well in groups*, *should not be asked to speak in front of the class*, and my personal favorite, *learns best when using the computer*.

I worry that the over-validation of Gardner's theory by classroom teachers, especially those in elementary and middle-level classrooms, could potentially lead to a generation that is afraid to learn and explore outside of their learning expertise.

I do believe the solution to this potential dilemma is quite basic. We as teachers need to continue to explore multiple methods of conveying our content and peaking student interest, while also remembering that our role as teachers is to inspire and to encourage academic risks amongst students, even if this risk comes at the expense of comfort, expertise, or particular preference.

Thomas B. Reardon (thomasbreardon@yahoo.com) is an adjunct lecturer in the adolescent education department, and is currently an elementary administrator. He has also served as a middle school English teacher and team leader.

Have you visited NYSMSA's website lately?

Go to www.nysmsa.org for...

- the latest information on what's new "in the middle"
- updates on State Education Department discussions
 - articles of particular interest
- Annual Conference and Corning Middle-Level Institute materials
- Schools to Watch information and application form
 - ways to contact your local regional director
 - the NYSMSA book store
 - membership renewal and more



A Reflection on the Process for “Schools-to-Watch” Recognition

Dr. Timothy P. Martin and John J. Christie

In June 2008, the Islip Middle School community on Long Island was delighted to learn they were recognized as an “Essential Elements: School-to-Watch.” This was exciting news for the students, parents, and staff of Islip Middle School. As we look back on the process that afforded us this opportunity, we believe it is helpful to share our experiences with others who may wish to pursue this recognition program.

In the spring of 2006, during the heat of state assessments, assistant principal John Christie and I began to wonder if we were still a middle school. With a focus on scoring, proctoring, subbing, administering, benchmarking, field testing, and teaching for success on state assessments, we could not help but ponder this notion.

So, in our opening day teacher orientation, we invited staff to join us throughout the 2006-2007 school year to look at our school. The question was posed, “Are we a middle school following the middle school philosophy, or are we simply a school with the words *middle school* in its name?” This open invitation was met by approximately twenty staff members in our first morning meeting later that September. This meeting, and the next in October, would end up being round table discussions. From the first meetings, we developed a single, simple essential question, “What does it mean to be a middle school?”

As you know, the NYSMSA annual conference is in October. Our assistant principal attended the conference and had the opportunity to sit in on an Essential Elements: School to Watch (EE: STW) presentation. In short, he

came back to the November meeting with all the insight and information for us to look into this process as a tool to answer our essential question.

Our committee would become known as the Islip Middle School Coffee Hour. We would meet for the next several months researching our essential question. We pursued the four domains set forth by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes would be the cornerstones of our efforts. Subcommittees would evolve, each charged with applying the applicable rubric to their domain. These efforts resulted in surveying students and staff, enabling us to gather real-time data on our school.

Arriving in Niagara Falls for the NYSMSA Annual Conference and building relationships was one of the first steps toward the EE: STW journey. The practitioner workshops that take place during the Friday of the conference allow schools to learn from the work of their colleagues from across the state. Oliver W. Winch Middle School was actively involved in the leadership of the annual conference and had a team of teachers presenting their work on the EE: STW process. The prior evening they were recognized at the conference dinner as one of the Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch. The Friday presentation and the related material that accompanied their one hour presentation provided a framework for Islip Middle School to look to as we embarked on the application.

We encourage any school interested in being evaluated by the STW team to seek out a practitioner workshop on EE: STW or call a building leader in your region that has been recognized.

From November 2006 through March 2007, the Coffee Hour deliberated and shared their ideas in a free-thinking forum regarding our essential question, “What does it mean to be a middle school?” We reached a consensus that evaluating our middle school through the lens of the Essential Elements: School Self-Study and Ratings Rubric was worth our time and effort. The decision to administer the survey can simply provide a benchmark for instructional leaders and teachers to assess their middle-level programs’ current reality without having to move forward with a complete application.

During a faculty meeting in April 2007, the EE: Self-Study and Rubric was distributed. The EE: Self-Study and Rubric was cut and pasted from the NYSMSA website into Survey Monkey, an online software tool used to create and distribute surveys via the web. The survey is rooted in the Essential Elements: 1) philosophy and mission, 2) educational program, 3) organizational structures, 4) classroom instruction, 5) educational leadership, 6) a network of academic and personal support, and 7) professional learning and staff development. The Essential Elements are adapted into the framework identified by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform to include: 1) academic excellence, 2) developmental responsiveness, 3) social equity, and 4) organizational support and processes, which make up the framework of the EE: Self-Study and Rubric.

The survey was reviewed with faculty and questions regarding participation were asked and answered. Survey response was entirely voluntary. It is important to note that moving

forward with an STW application requires a team effort. The faculty and staff need to see the value in the process. A link to the survey was placed in the network folder so all teachers were able to access the survey. Individuals who wanted to complete a hard copy of the survey were also able to do so. The benefit of completing the survey online is it makes quantifying the Likert scale portion of the EE: Self-Survey and Rubric more manageable. The window for the survey remained open until the end of the school year. One disadvantage to completing the survey electronically was that one had to complete the survey in one sitting. With both quantitative and qualitative responses embedded in the EE: Self-Study and Rubric, it takes between 30-45 minutes to complete. Individuals who wanted to complete the survey over time completed a paper copy of the instrument.

Following the closing of the survey the heart of the application is complete. Everything one needs is now in hand, although there are 30–40 hours of work (estimated) required in completing the statistical and narrative portion of the application draft. Faculty response to the EE: Self-Study and Rubric is the essence of the narrative portion of the application. Online statistical analysis was completed to identify the mean response for each quantitative item in the instrument. This is another benefit to completing the survey using statistical software; computation of means and other statistical analyses is easier.

Large numbers of personnel are not needed in the laborious gathering of data for the formal application. However, faculty stakeholders are essential once the draft application is complete to ensure the thoroughness of the document. The following are suggested resources for completing the application: 1) a pot of coffee (optional), 2) EE: Self-Study and Rubric responses, 3) BEDS data, 4) New York State School Report Card,

5) access to Nystart for most recent data not released on the report card, and 6) access to discipline reports (internal reporting or VADIR report; you are likely to need both.)

Completing the statistical portion of the application may take several weeks. Our suggestion is to work on the document consistently for 1–2 hours a day. Within a few weeks the data entries will be complete. The qualitative responses to the EE: Self-Study and Rubric make up the narrative portion of the application. Since qualitative responses have to be sent with the completed application, take the time to categorize every respondent's qualitative answer into the four categories and sub-categories before beginning narrative. This effort will save time in the long run, allowing the narrative to write itself once responses are put together.

When the rough application was finished, both students and teachers were coming through the doors in September 2007. The work of the Coffee Hour began again in earnest. Each member received a draft and went to work refining the document. The finished product as a result of the collaboration among nearly twenty teachers was better than any one set of eyes looking at the application. The STW application was looked over again, and again, and again, until we believed we had a representative example of the Coffee Hour's best work.

Once the application was forwarded in October, it became a waiting game. Our application was extensive, with what we believed were key practices essential to be a true middle school. The peer review committee receiving our application would determine the next step in the process.

In December 2007, I received a call from the New York State Education Department with some exciting news. Marybeth Casey shared with me that our application caught their eye, and with that the next phase was

entered. She said we would be receiving a site visit in the coming months. The task of the site visit was simple. They were to evaluate the sentiment: Did we walk the walk and talk the talk?

Well, sharing this news with the Coffee Hour created a great sense of reward for all the time and effort invested. However, I would be remiss if I did not add that it also created new anxieties. "What does this site visit entail?" and "How will we go about putting it together?" were immediate thoughts. We had several conversations with the visiting team leader, Mark Fish from Oliver W. Winch Middle School, a past STW recipient. An aggressive plan for the two-day visitation in January was developed. Time was short and logistics were involved. The sub-committees retooled and began to mobilize their respective teams. We created forums to meet with students, parents, teachers, building and district administrators, and Board of Education members.

On January 24, Marybeth Casey along with Mark Fish and his team arrived at our school. After brief introductions, they were off and on their way. The remainder of that day and the next, the team of five were everywhere. They continually met with various constituents as prearranged. When they were not at small group meetings, they were in classrooms. When they were not in classrooms, they were in the "command center" inputting their data. As fast as they came, they left; it was like preparing for Thanksgiving dinner. There was very little feedback to us from our visitors, as they appeared to have a formal process in place that limited dialogue with the school teaching community.

So now we waited, and waited, and waited. What seemed to be eternity was in actuality only a few weeks. In March, I received a call from Marybeth Casey with her findings. She shared lots of wonderful things

about our school that the visiting team observed. She also discussed with me some things we could do better and areas we could grow in as a middle school. At the end of our conversation it was official; Islip Middle School would be recognized as a School to Watch in 2008.

On a closing note, the recognition we received was not our original intent. As a learning community, we were wondering what it meant to be a middle school. We would end up gaining so much more than the answer to



That was great news. Since that phone call, we have had an awards ceremony attended by Dr. David Payton, who presented our school with a plaque and a banner for display. We also brought a team to Washington DC for the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform (National Forum) Annual Conference and recognition. We sat with Congressman Peter King and Senator Clinton's education secretary as we shared the accolades. Our team presented to a national audience Islip's advisory program, which we take great pride in each day. We plan on attending and presenting at the NYSMSA annual conference this fall. Our school has received several written and personal inquiries about the process which led to this article.

this question. Using the criteria set forth by the National Forum and NYSMSA, we were able to reflect on current practices and begin to implement some new suggestions brought forth by the process. The Schools to Watch process is an excellent tool for self-reflection in this day and age of accountability and proves to be extremely rewarding.

Dr. Timothy P. Martin (TMartin@Islipufsd.org) is principal of Islip Middle School; 211 Main Street, Islip NY 11751.

John J. Christie (JChristie@lvcsd.k12.ny.us), formerly assistant principal of Islip Middle School, is principal of Locust Valley Middle School; 99 Horse Hollow Road, Locust Valley NY 11560.

Submission of Articles

In Transition accepts manuscripts for publication consideration. Our journal is produced by the New York State Middle School Association and is dedicated to those teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and others serving the needs of students aged 10-15. *In Transition* is a juried publication; all manuscripts are reviewed and approved for publication by a panel of members from the NYSMSA Board of Directors.

Manuscripts describing successful programs, stimulating projects, exemplary teaching techniques, unique team concepts, action research, and promising practices are welcome! We are particularly interested in articles on implementing the new Standards, teaming, interdisciplinary instruction, authentic assessment, flexible scheduling, integrating technology into instructional programs, and application of the *Essential Elements*.

Please note the following format guidelines:

LENGTH: 400-2,000 words (two to eight pages)

FORMAT: MS Word or compatible, double space, Times New Roman 12, 1-inch margins. Citations of referenced works should follow current APA standards.

ILLUSTRATIONS: All illustrations, tables, charts, photographs, etc. must be high quality, black and white or grayscale. Photographs must be in JPEG format and include captions identifying subjects, activity, and source or photographer. All illustrations become the property of NYSMSA.

COVER PAGE: Each article submitted **must** include a cover page with the following information: Title, Author, Position, School and/or Home Address (please indicate which), School and/or Home Telephone Number (please indicate which), E-Mail Address, and (optional) a brief synopsis of the content of the manuscript.

SUBMIT TO: All documents must be submitted as e-mail attachments to:
editor@nysmsa.org

Please note: Only e-mail submissions will be considered; do not send fax or paper copies of manuscripts.

DEADLINES: To be considered for publication, manuscripts must be received by August 15 for the fall issue, January 15 for the winter issue, April 15 for the spring issue.

NYSMSA Board of Directors 2007-2008

Officers

President

Linda Ruest
NYSMSA West
2201 Pine Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
(716) 282-6511
ruest@nysmsa.org

Executive Director

Dennis Tosetto
NYSMSA West
2201 Pine Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
(716) 282-6511
tosetto@nysmsa.org

Vice President

Nancy Sampson
Pioneer MS
P.O. Box 619
Yorkshire, NY 14173
(716) 492-9376
sampson@nysmsa.org

Secretary / Historian

Mark Fish
Oliver W. Winch MS
99 Hudson Street
S. Glens Falls, NY 12803
(518) 792-5891
fish@nysmsa.org

Past President

Jeannette Stern
Wantagh MS
3299 Beltagh Avenue
Wantagh, NY 11793
(516) 679-6350
stern@nysmsa.org

Essential Elements: Schools-to-Watch Program

David Payton
payton@nysmsa.org

Research and Technology

Jeff Craig
Jamesville-DeWitt MS
6280 Randall Road
Jamesville, NY 13078
(315) 445-8360
craig@nysmsa.org

SED Liaison

Marybeth Casey
NYSED 319EB
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-0059
casey@nysmsa.org

Regions & Directors

Your region is determined by your school's BOCES; for retirees and businesses, it is based on place of residence or business location.

Region 1 BOCES

Monroe #1
Monroe 2-Orleans
Wayne-Finger Lakes
Steuben-Allegany
and ALL Livingston County

Region 1 Director

Terry Quinn
Our Lady of Mercy HS
1437 Blossom Road
Rochester, NY 14610
(585) 288-7120
quinn@nysmsa.org

Region 2 BOCES

Cayuga-Onondaga
Madison-Oneida
Oneida-Herkimer-Madison
Onondaga-Cortland-Madison
Oswego

Region 2 Director

Bruce MacBain
Moravia MS
P.O. Box 1189
Moravia, NY 13118
(315) 497-2670
macbain@nysmsa.org

Region 3 BOCES

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery
Herkimer
Washington-Saratoga-Warren-
Hamilton-Essex

Region 3 Director

Chris Reed
Glens Falls MS
20 Quade Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 793-3418
reed@nysmsa.org

Region 4 BOCES

Broome-Tioga
Delaware-Chenango-
Madison-Otsego
Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga
Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga

Region 4 Director

Tom Phillips
Watkins Glen CSD
303 12th Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891
(607) 535-3220
phillips@nysmsa.org

Region 5 BOCES

Capital Region
Otsego-Northern Catskills
Questar III

Acting Region 5 Director

Olivia Sutton
Oliver W. Winch MS
99 Hudson Street
S. Glens Falls, NY 12803
(518) 792-5891
sutton@nysmsa.org

Region 6 BOCES

Dutchess
Orange-Ulster
Putnam-Northern Westchester
Rockland
Sullivan
Ulster
Southern Westchester

Region 6 Director

Jim McIntyre
Crispell MS
PO Box 780
Pine Bush, NY 12566
(845) 744-2031
mcintyre@nysmsa.org

Region 7

ALL New York City Districts

Region 7 Co-Directors TBA

Contact: NYSMSA President
Linda Ruest

Region 8 BOCES

Nassau
Eastern Suffolk
Western Suffolk

Region 8 Director

Shawn Robertson
Lynbrook North MS
529 Merrick Road
Lynbrook, NY 11563
(516) 887-0282
robertson@nysmsa.org

Region 9 BOCES

Cattaraugus-Allegany
Erie #1
Erie #2-Chautauqua-
Cattaraugus
Genesee Valley (except
Livingston County)
Orleans-Niagara

Region 9 Director

Monica Kwiatkowski
Cuba-Rushford MS
5476 Route 305 N
Cuba, NY 14727
(585) 968-2650
kwiat@nysmsa.org

Region 10 BOCES

Champlain Valley
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton
Jefferson-Lewis
St. Lawrence-Lewis

Region 10 Director

Teal Abel
Theresa Primary School
125 Bridge Street
Theresa, NY 13691
(315) 628-4432
abel@nysmsa.org

Administrative Assistant

Julie Schwartz
NYSMSA
P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570
(914) 747-9241
schwartz@nysmsa.org

NYSMSA
is your source for
Middle-Level Staff Development

28th Annual Conference
The Middle School Mind:
A Work in Progress

Syracuse NY
October 23-25, 2008

Information is available at
www.nysmsa.org



NYSMSA
P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570