

District Specialists

H.E.L.P. NEWSLETTER

January 2018

HONORING EDUCATORS' LEARNING PRACTICES



Upcoming District Wide Professional Development Opportunities

January 4: Poor Students, Richer Teaching (PK-12) in the Horace May Library 3:45-4:45 pm

January 11: Daily 5/CAFE Part 1 (K-8) in the Lincoln Library 3:45-5:15 pm

January 18: Trauma Sensitive Teaching (K-12) in the Lincoln Computer Lab 3:45-4:45 pm

January 25: Daily 5/CAFE Part 2 (K-8) in the Lincoln Library 3:45-5:15 pm

February 1: Common Formative Assessments (K-12) in the Horace May Library 3:45-4:45 pm

Book Club

We will be offering a book club featuring the book, *Even on Your Worst Day You Can Be a Student's Best Hope* by Manny Scott. He is one of the students that the movie *Freedom Writers* was based on. Secondary staff will meet in January and Elementary staff in February. Please contact Gigi Nicoson for more information if you are interested in attending.

Teaching Strategies

K-2 Reading: "Teaching a New Sight Word" This strategy is meant to be used in a small group. 2-3 minutes. Introduce the word by writing it on a dry erase board. Make sure students watch you write it so they can see left to write construction of the word. Tell students the word and ask them to look at each letter as you slide an index card left to right across the word. Erase a letter near the end of the word. Ask them to tell you the missing letter. Write it in when they tell you. (Could also use magnetic letters). Repeat 2 or 3 times with different letters. Give students magnet letters (or some other form of letters) and ask them to make the new word. They can use the teacher's model if necessary.

Students will read the work while sweeping underneath with their finger. Have them move one letter up at a time while spelling the word aloud. Students mix up the letters and remake the word (make sure they are building the word from left to right). Use index finger to “write” the word on the table. Cover the magnetic letter word with an index card and have students “write” word again. While word is covered, will write the word on a whiteboard. They can peek if needed. Erase word and write it again. Finish up by dictating a familiar word they already know how to write so they have to retrieve it.

3-5 Reading: “Word Maps/Foursquare” Learning new vocabulary words can be tough. This strategy can assist students in understanding the new words. Students put the new vocabulary word in the center box. Then, they fill in the other boxes with words or phrases about the word. They should be answering questions like, “What is it like?”, “What is it?”, “What are some examples?” Help students generate synonyms, antonyms, and illustrations for the word. The more students work with a word, the better they will learn it. Here are two templates to get started!

<http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/wordmap.pdf>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/content/pdfs/wordmap2.pdf>

6-12 Reading: “Visualize” As reading becomes more advanced, students might start to have a difficult time comprehending. Teach students to stop and visualize what they are reading. Have students stop and sketch a scene from their novel. When students compare their sketches to those of their peers, they will be surprised to see the different interpretations of the same text. These discussions will help to better their comprehension of the text. Of course, you don’t have to visualize by drawing. You can stop and think about the visualization as well. Modeling this skill would be beneficial to many students who struggle in this area.

K-12 Math: “Number Talks” Number talks can and are appropriate for all grade levels. In only 10-15 minutes a day students will strengthen their oral language skills, deepen their understanding of number sense, increase their fact fluency, and will develop numerous skills involving higher level thinking. Number talks is not something to add to instruction, but is considered a way to enrich instruction. Here are some steps to implement successful number talks into the classroom. The link for the book is below.

Before your Start:

- The roles of the teacher and student are turned “upside down.”
- Now students are “supposed to figure out something rather than being told the steps to follow. Now they are supposed to explain **why**, when in the past knowing **how** was enough. Now they are expected to test new ideas, with mistakes just another part of the process. Now they need to believe that their wrong answer can be opportunities rather than blemishes on their mathematical self-esteem. And the answer isn’t what matters anymore. This is a big change for students” (pg. 13).

· “Number Talks are about students making sense of their own mathematical ideas. The minute we start to explain, we take little bits of their ideas-and their autonomy as thinkers-away. We, in essence, do the thinking for them” (pg. 13).

· “Students don’t need to learn every strategy they see. They just need to have strategies that make sense and work efficiently for them so that they will be able to reason flexibly with numbers” (pg. 14).

· Number Talks should have a purpose.

Establishing Norms: (pg. 14)

1. There are many ways to see, or do, any problem.
2. Everyone is responsible for communicating his or her thinking clearly so that others can understand.
3. Everyone is responsible for trying to understand other people’s thinking.
4. Don’t write the students’ name next to an answer, and don’t indicate **in any way** whether you think an answer is right or wrong. (Who has a different answer?)
5. “There is a dance between supporting and stretching students’ understanding; its choreography is based on what you learn about your students each time you do a Number Talk. This will become your own formative assessment in action” (pg. 11)

Steps for Number Talks: (pgs. 11-13)

1. Students put paper and pencils away (they may need reminding) and put their fists unobtrusively on their chests to show the teacher they are ready (shifts the attention from groups to themselves).
2. The teacher writes a problem on the board, document camera, or visualizer (horizontally to discourage the use of rote procedures).
3. The teacher watches while students solve the problem mentally and put up their thumbs when they have had enough time to think.
4. When most thumbs are up, the teacher asks if anyone is willing to share what they think the answer is. The teacher noncommittally records just the answer on the board and asks if anyone got a different answer, continuing to record each answer that is given (students should be taught not to indicate whether or not they think the answers are correct, and voting should not take place because you are encouraging positive discussions).
5. When the teacher is satisfied there are no other answers, she asks if anyone can explain how he or she figured the problem out (describing the steps is not enough, students need to be able to explain why their process makes sense).
 - a. “Who has a strategy he or she is willing to share?”

b. “Is anyone willing to convince us that your answer makes sense by telling us what you did?”

6. When volunteers begin to share their strategies, they first identify which answer (assuming different answers have been offered) they are defending (the teacher records the thinking of each student without assumption).

7. After a student shares a strategy, there are several things a teacher might ask in order to work with that student’s thinking (there is no “right” question). The overall goal is to help the students communicate more clearly and/or to emphasize the meaning behind his or her strategy.

a. Does anyone have a question for _____?

b. Can you say more about _____?

c. Can someone explain _____’s strategy in your own words?

d. What connections do you notice among the strategies we’ve discussed?

8. Number Talks do not naturally end after fifteen minutes; often, they can go much longer if you let them-and sometimes you want to let them (those that didn’t get a chance to share, can always share tomorrow).

9. This is the “challenge-and joy-of teaching and listening to students” (pg. 17).

[Making Number Talks Matter Link to Book](#)

American Indian Culture Tip: “Storytelling and American Indian Culture” Now that we are in the full swing of Winter, culturally it is time for the tradition of American Indian storytelling. Like many cultures these stories are told to teach morals, history, cultural traditions and explanations for the natural world. Teaching lessons that include these traditional stories is a wonderful way to connect American Indian culture into the classroom, but an aspect to keep in mind is that these stories have to be told in the winter time. For various traditional reasons, that differ from nation to nation, these stories should only be taught when snow covers the ground.

These stories have been passed down orally for generations, and as such there are various versions of each story out there. One nation may tell a story with a different events or group of characters, though often the different versions of these tales share aspects of morals and teachings. One more thing to remember is to treat these stories respectfully and avoid words like “myth” or “legend” as they may be seen as rude and dismissive.



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