

Barbara Poole
North Syracuse School District
Leading the Learning
April 7, 2011

As the school year began I decided I wanted to try to change the way we used staff meetings. I have always felt the "stand and deliver" approach was not only tiring at the end of the day, but it wasn't beneficial for professional growth. So, right off the bat I tried to change things around. The announcement type of information turned into a "Weekly Shout Out" format. Each Friday I write what I hope to be more of a personal letter to the staff that included some funny comments, observations, important information and maybe some celebrations. This seemed to be a big hit right from the start. This staff never had a weekly correspondence from the previous administrator and they enjoyed the change. They indicated they like the open and up front communication it provided. They also felt information was disseminated all at the same time and people received the same information, whether it was a reminder or an announcement.

I enjoy doing the "Weekly Shout Out" but at times find it challenging. Being the only administrator, there are weeks where I struggle to get it out on time....and a few times it has been Monday before I get it emailed. In addition, being a well-established pre-school, with a very structured routine, there are some weeks where I don't have a lot of information to convey. However, staff doesn't seem to care. I've received a lot of positive feedback and they appeared to look forward to the weekly letter.

In establishing the weekly letter, I hoped this would enable me to provide more staff development during our monthly meetings. As I related to you in September, I started to incorporate some of the Leading the Learning with my opening day staff meeting (see attached).

From that point there have been 6 staff meetings. I have only had the opportunity to implement staff development scenarios for 3 of those meetings. The January meeting was cancelled due to weather, in February the psychologists presented a workshop on DIR and last month (March), Stan came to discuss the budget cuts being made to our program.

For the three others I organized, we broke into small groups for discussions. The October meeting focused on the "Depression" article we did not cover in

September. Groups were divided by birthday months. After reading the article they spent time discussing the behaviors they see exhibited in the classroom and strategies to deal with those behaviors. In November, the staff was divided into groups using color coded paper they received as they entered the room. Within the groups they reviewed an article on ADHD. Discussion focused on the article and what they used to address the behavior in the classroom. Each group then reported out. For the December meeting, the staff broke up according to their perspective classroom teams. The groups were comprised of the teacher, the teaching assistants and at least one therapist (OT, PT or Speech) that worked with the class. The groups then reviewed the draft of our new Pre-school Teacher Checklist (see attached). The purpose was to suggest changes and come to a consensus as to what we would use. Each group reported their conclusions.

The plan for the April meeting will be to review and discuss an article called "Finding Focus." I hope to have them understand the use of movement to focus their students within the classroom. I haven't thought about how I will divide them up yet....but I am sure I will try something different.

Where will I go from here? My focus next year is to implement the new information we learned regarding teacher evaluations, walk-throughs, communication and the pre and post observation forms.

Weekly Shout Out - Nov 17th - 29th



Hi Everyone,

Okay...let me try this again. Hopefully the computer will cooperate. As I typed the dates above, I realized Thanksgiving is next week. I can't believe how time has just flown by. It seems like yesterday we were opening our doors for the school year. I also realized this is the time of year to reflect and be thankful for everything we have in our lives. I just want to take a moment to "Thank" everyone for their hard work and dedication to Main Street. Your commitment and support since I walked into this building in October 2010, has been exceptional. Without you, I would not have the knowledge or understanding of this program. Thank you for being what I feel is a true family.

Now for the informational update. Monday the Health and Safety Committee met. Thanks to Gayle and Andy the children will be able to use the sink in the kitchen before eating their lunch. Buckets will no longer be used. Andy and Jeremy will lower the soap and towel dispensers. We are looking for a step stool...so if you have one available, please let Andy know.

In speaking of the lunch room, please make sure you look around and pick up the food and junk left on the floor. Too many things have been left and it can be awhile before Andy has a chance to clean the cafeteria. Piles of food on the floor, does not present a pretty image of our building and can be a safety concern.

Thanks for your help in this matter.

Another safety issue pertains to the windows on your entrance door. These windows cannot be covered. If they are, you need to remove the art work or designs as soon as possible. Windows must be uncovered because when there is an emergency, the fire department and/or police must be able to see into your room when the door is closed. Please remove materials or the custodians will be asked to do it.

Just as a heads up, PTO will be providing a Holiday breakfast for the staff on December 1st. You should have received a flyer or will be getting one soon providing you information. I also plan on having a Holiday breakfast as it gets closer to the break. I will let you know as soon as I have the date established.

We are trying to schedule the "Right to Know" presentation before the Christmas break. One more thing to add to your plate ☺

I would like to remind teachers once again. Please do not dismiss from the zoom room or the gym/stage area outside room 100. Parents are blocking traffic and it is again becoming congested. And speaking of congestion....I appreciate everyone who is parking along the fence and back areas. This has been a big help to the flow of traffic and it will be very beneficial when the snow flies. Plowing should keep snow away from the side fences so we should be ok.

For those who still need Medicare training, I have been told the webinars should be available as of the end of this week or early next week. Those have to be done individually because they will need to track you signing in. If you choose, you have the option to attend one of the one of the sessions being offered at BOCES. Please let me know if that is your choice.

Also, IEP Direct training is being set up. The District will offer several sessions, both during the day or after school to accommodate everyone. As soon as I have dates, I will let you know.

OK...enough. The only thing I have left to say is:

HAPPY THANKSGIVING! I hope you have a safe, relaxing holiday vacation!

Barbara

Weekly Shout Out Dec 6 – Dec 10 2010

Hi Everyone,

Wow...another week is done. Time is just flying by. With all of the holiday preparation and excitement I am sure the break will be here before we know it.

Not a lot is happening next week except for our Dec 8th half-day. Wednesday morning we will start with our annual "Right to Know" presentation. It is an 8:00 AM start time for regular staff and a 9:00 AM presentation for the Pre-K TAs. As for the afternoon....BPT met last Monday and asked to have some IEP Direct training in reference to the new state mandated IEP. Though formal training will be provided by CNYRIC, Beth, Kathy and I will try to give you an overview of what is to come. Therefore, all teachers and therapists are report to Gillette Road Middle School's library instructional room. We would like to start at 12:30 and if we are done early, then we are done early. I will also give you information pertaining to the ESY requirements. I placed a proposal in MLP for those who would like to claim the hours. Be careful though because I don't think you will be able to claim them again when formal training is offered.

The TAs will have an option to complete CPR training (limited to 20). That has also been posted on MLP so you can get credit. This has to run 12:00-3:00 because it has a 3hr minimum requirement. Training will take place here at Main St. For others, Deb Groff will also offer a workshop on lifting techniques. With the new responsibilities of moving gym equipment and the demands of our students, it would benefit those not doing CPR to spend time, even as a refresher, to review the techniques. Deb thinks it will last 30-60 minutes. Start time is still being determined. Please discuss other ideas and options with Kelly. I will get it posted on MLP so you can get your service hours.

Just a heads up....I am planning to once again provide you with a holiday celebration get together. The date is tentatively set for 12/20 with a snow date of 12/22. Further information will be coming soon.

Teachers, please let your parents know the Yankee Candle pick up scheduled for Monday, Dec 6th is cancelled. I just spoke with Chris Fehrman and she still does not have a delivery date. Just as soon as we know we will get that information out to you.

I hope everyone has their shovels out and ready to go. Sounds like it will be a snowy weekend! Do I hear chants of "snow day next week"? Hope everyone has a great weekend.

Barb

Weekly Shout Out - Feb 28 - March 4, 2011

Hi Everyone,

WELCOME BACK! I hope you had a relaxing vacation and are ready to face AR. Things were pretty quiet around here, so it is great to see everyone again.

If you have not heard, Jean Adkins broke her ankle last Friday while shoveling snow. She had surgery on Saturday and will hopefully be home from the hospital today. I would expect this to be a long recoup time, so I am sure she would appreciate cards. I am trying to find a sub, but until then Cheri has offered to help out as much as possible.

This week is school spirit week. Please remind parents. PTO is also bringing in the Bubble Man on Wed to help the students celebrate. Times are 10:00 and 1:00 PM

Now that March is here, it is time for Pre-K registration. Please remind parents of current students that they can register this week. Open registration will start next week.

Also, please remind parents of transitioning students that they still need to register their children for kindergarten at their home school. Registration times for each building are located on both the District website and Main St's website under "Building News." If they have any questions, I will be more than happy to assist them.

Please remember, the Therapy Ball is set for March 31st at Barbagallo's. Pass the word to all of your friends and also any alumni parents with whom you may have contact. The more people who attend, the more money we raise!

Be aware we have a leak in the roof of the gym. A work order has been sent. However, until then we have a plastic children's pool placed to catch the falling water. Though there are cones around it, students will be drawn to its location. Please make sure you supervise your students and keep them away from the pool.

Also, a heads up from Andy.... an update on the parking lot lights. The plan is to pull the center light pole off the cement foundation with a crane on Friday, March 18th, (Superintendents Conference day). The pole will be placed on the ground near the cemetery fence after they unbolt it. They plan to cone off the back parking lot, so that no one could park past the light poles. Depending on how many people may be returning to the building for the DIR workshop, some of you may have to park across the street at the NSEA building if space is available there. When I get more information, I will send it along to you.

I think that's it for now. I hope everyone has a wonderful week.

Barb

Opening Day Staff Meeting
Barbara Poole

Opening Day...was I nuts to try to change the normal stand and deliver presentation? Knowing the staff was chaffing at the bit to get into their rooms, would they get angry if I tried something different? Especially something I wasn't sure about myself? Those were the questions rolling around in my head as I tried to implement what we learned at the workshop. I was a nervous wreck...but I must say, overall, things went much smoother than I expected.

Setting up the "ovals" was somewhat of a struggle because I missed the AM presentation. But knew I had to determine what I want to accomplish...the end in mind. My ultimate goal is to change our staff meetings to be more productive, more focused on staff development. To do that, I needed to know what was important to the staff. What were they curious about and what were they worried about as we faced many changes in the building this school year? To obtain that information I used the 3 2 1 strategy as a ticket out the door for their feedback. I then planned to analyze that information to structure future staff meetings. I also developed a "Weekly Shout Out" – an email to staff, covering the stand and deliver information that was usually down at meetings.

But outside of this end goal, I also wanted to have fun with the staff and have an icebreaker that would introduce 14 new staff members. To begin, I used visuals...placed on the Elmo was a welcome statement and some directions. Staff was seated at round tables. They began by answering the question "The first day of school I feel like ____ (one of the pictured animals) because ____". Each table had to come to consensus and then report out. They had some great comments and many people enjoyed it. Next came the "Get to know you" activity. I gave staff 5 minutes to get to know the new staff member at their table. The person with the birthday closest to our Sept 2 date had to get up and introduce the person and provide as much info as possible. This took the pressure off of the new person and we learned a lot during introductions.

Once everyone was relaxed...only about 20 minutes in...we covered required information. Staff received a folder and visuals were placed on the Elmo. This section lasted about 30 – 40 minutes. I had planned on an activity to discuss an article that was in their folder, but realized it was getting late and they were antsy to go to their rooms. I therefore tabled that activity until our Oct staff meeting. But before they left, I had them complete the 3 2 1...3 things you want to learn about, 2 things you are concerned about, and 1 fun thing you did this summer. I thought I would end on a high note and use the summer info to share in the "Shout Out". My one mistake...I forgot to copy the 3 2 1 paper. Oh well...so we used the paper placed on the tables for previous activities.

As the meeting ended and staff members turned in their "ticket out the door," I received a lot of positive comments from the faculty. Just about everyone said they enjoyed themselves, received the necessary information and still had plenty of time to get to their classrooms. They thanked me for doing something different. That made me feel like I accomplished what I wanted to do. I know...not really oval #2...but I'll take it. Now I am in the process of analyzing their responses and will use it to frame our future staff meetings.

1. Managing ADHD Behavior

“ADHD is not easy to manage,” says consultant Mary Fowler in this thoughtful *NJEA Review* article. “Yet, it is a highly manageable condition. We can’t cure it, but we can enable students to reduce any disabling effects of this condition. We simply have to do what we know.”

Fowler empathizes with educators who work with ADHD students: “Fidgety, loud, disorganized, hurried, careless, and off-task behavior coupled with messy, incomplete, or missing work are tough challenges in the classroom, even on a good day,” she says. Part of teachers’ stress comes from the expectation that ADHD is curable by interventions. “Here’s the real deal,” says Fowler. “Though the root causes of ADHD are neurobiological, the manifestations of ADHD happen in the day-to-day functioning. They are seldom (if ever) fixed once and for all because these problems often arise from environmental expectations, conditions, and triggers. Thus, these students are highly susceptible to the world around them and the world within them.”

Most ADHD problems are “POP” or “point of performance” – that is, the student has difficulty being on task – that is, doing what you are supposed to be doing, when you are supposed to be doing it, in the way you are supposed to do it. “Generally, students with ADHD know what they are supposed to be doing,” says Fowler. “But, where the rubber meets the road – at the point of performance – they lose traction and don’t do what they know. Distractibility, hating to wait, restlessness, losing materials, or missing pieces of the whole interfere with their best intentions to do what is expected and do it well.” It’s not a matter of choice – it’s a symptom of ADHD and a sign that an intervention is needed.

“Here’s the good news,” says Fowler. “ADHD point of performance problems can be managed effectively (not to perfection).” Here’s what we know:

- Interventions have to happen in the here and now and on an as-needed basis.
- They work when they are used.
- Their use often requires coaxing and coaching from a teacher, parent, peer, visual cues, or technology.
- They may be needed throughout the school day, month, year, or lifespan.

But shouldn’t students learn to use the interventions on their own? If students did, says Fowler, they wouldn’t have ADHD! “We can provide self-awareness and self-management strategies. Still, these students (and adults) will require coaching to do what they know.” For example, Johnny calls out in class. “I didn’t see your hand raised. Why are you calling out? Don’t you know the rule? *Wait*.” Johnny says, “I can’t. If I wait, I’ll forget.” If the teacher relents and lets Johnny speak “just this one time,” his blurting is reinforced and the teacher has not managed his behavior. “In students with ADHD, ‘think first’ or ‘wait’ do not enter into the self-control picture,” says Fowler.

So what’s a better response? Don’t try to curb the need to call out. Instead, tell the student to write down the thought, or give a silent signal to wait. Or, with a young student, call

on him or her immediately, preempting the blurt. “Where the student is unsure or anxious about what to do, assure the student that individual attention will always be given as soon as everyone else is on track,” says Fowler.

Another technique is the two-responder answer method. Students are told up front that you will be asking every question twice, even if the first answer is correct. This encourages students to listen to one another, encourages students to wait, and allows reticent students a chance to get a piece of the action.

Fowler thinks a GPS navigational device is a good role model for teachers dealing with ADHD students. “It doesn’t get hung up in the past and the future,” she says. “The GPS lives entirely in present time and its aim is to get you to your destination... even if that means charting a new course. Though I sometimes worry that one day my GPS will go ‘bonkers’ because I’ve gotten off track, to date my receiver hasn’t lost its cool or showed any irritation. No yelling, no blaming, no shaming, no name calling, no idle threats, no long diatribes. When I miss a turn or get off track – it simply says, ‘Recalculating’... Most students with ADHD don’t require different teachers. They require cool, calm, ‘recalculating’ teachers who use effective and hands-on approaches.”

Fowler believes there are three essential “GPS” components for successful ADHD interventions:

- *The scaffold* – Structures, strategies, supports, and skills the teacher puts in place that enable students to improve performance. We can expect off-task behaviors when tasks are too long, too hard, too boring, have too much repetition, the student doesn’t quite know what to do, and the student doesn’t have the skills to perform well. We can improve on-task behavior by modifying these conditions. Teachers can anticipate and co-opt fidgeting by having students sit on stability balls, use treadmills, use manipulatives, use color overlays on written material, switch between high-interest and low-interest tasks, and use digital media.

- *Ongoing monitoring* – “In general, ADHD interventions fail because their use isn’t monitored or adjustments are not made along the way,” says Fowler. “Monitoring behavior guides and directs the performance along the path.”

- *Positive feedback* – Three-quarters of the feedback ADHD students receive is negative, says Fowler. When she asked a student what ADD meant, he said, “It’s just another way to call a kid ‘bad.’” These students desperately need the opposite. “Feedback encourages, appreciates, and supports the person,” says Fowler.

Students with ADHD have trouble paying attention. “Once their minds wander, they often can’t find their way home,” says Fowler, “‘home’ being where they are supposed to be focusing their attention. ‘Home’ may be obvious to you, but it is not to them.” She suggests:

- Add interest and novelty to tasks.
- Talk less and do more.
- Use silent signals to redirect attention.

- Use specific directives (*Turn to page 17 of the textbook*).
- Simplify visual presentations.
- Make task structures clear.
- Highlight directions and give them one at a time.
- Micro-size – break down all tasks into manageable parts, monitor each phase, and provide positive feedback.
- Use self-monitoring strategies – track time on task, use timers, graph daily performance.

ADHD students also have trouble retaining information in working memory. It's like the problem we have when we're silently reciting a new phone number we're about to program into our phone and the phone rings – it's lost! "Now imagine that you have ADHD and your attention constantly gets pulled to an internal or external distraction and needs to be redirected," says Fowler. "Now add some impulsivity – the hate to wait, rush through without thinking through – part of ADHD. Couple that with some hyperactivity and shifts in attentional focus... You can tell working memory (or working with memory) has been disrupted when you find yourself saying, 'Now, where was I?'" Here are her suggestions:

- Get students to write things down on dry-erase boards, and use cue cards, posted formulas, and rules.
- Use models, rubrics, timelines, planners, graphic organizers, checklists, daily action plans, and step-by-step guides.
- Use color to attract attention, categorize, distinguish objects, and organize information.
- Design and monitor organizational routines and make time for their use.
- Post the daily schedule.
- Use peer support when appropriate.
- Train students to use mnemonic strategies like POW – plan, organize, write.
- Make and use flash cards.

"Increasing On-Task Performance for Students with ADHD" by Mary Fowler in *NJEA Review*, March 2010 (Vol. 83, p. 8-10), spotted in *Education Digest*, October 2010 (Vol. 76, #10, p. 44-50), no e-link available

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Preschool Teacher Checklist

Student: _____ **DOB:** _____

Date: _____ **Reporter:** _____

Cognitive/Pre-academic Skills

Attention:

Completes activities (large group/small group/independent)

Length of attention 5/10/15

Self initiated task

Adult initiated task

Distractible

Impulsive

Perseverative

Transitions?

Able to demonstrate calm body, active listening, attention and cooperation for a ten minute activity(w/age appropriate verbal prompting)

Color:

Matches

r b g y o pu br bl pi wh

Receptive r b g y o pu br bl pi wh
(points to when named)

Expressive r b g y o pu br bl pi wh
(names when pointed to)

Shape:

Matches circle square triangle rectangle diamond heart star

Receptive circle square triangle rectangle diamond heart star

Expressive circle square triangle rectangle diamond heart star

Number/Math:

Gives "just one"

Rote counts to _____

*Point counts w/1:1 correspondence to _____ *at least 5*

ID's numerals

Receptive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Expressive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Makes sets of

Understands and uses quantity descriptors (some/none/all/many/few)

Completes patterns

ABABAB

ABBABBABB

Match objects

Sort objects by one attribute (color, size, shape, function)

Body Parts: see Brigance for full list

eyes/nose/mouth/hair/feet/ears/head/legs/arms/fingers/thumbs/toes/neck

Receptive

Points to 5/10

Expressive

Points to 5/10

Early Literacy:

Letters:

Receptive

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Expressive

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Knows letters in name

Recognizes name in print

Recognizes peers names

Reads environmental signs/words

Books:

Independently selects

Turns right side up

Turns pages

Selectively looks at pics

Finds named pics

Picture reads

Answers comprehension questions

Predicts

Attention for adult led books

Memory:

Digit repetition 2/3/4

Returns items to their place

Demonstrates knowledge of daily schedule

Sings familiar songs (last word/phrase/all lyrics)

Speech/Language Skills

Expressive Language:

Gestures/Signs

Pat phrases

True words

Vocabulary includes:

Nouns

Verbs

Attributes

Combines words

Grammar

Plurals

-ing

Pronouns

Intelligibility?

Expresses needs (verbally/sign/pictures)

Uses prepositions

Asks questions

Rhymes

Tells function of objects

Receptive Language:

Follows directives

Routine

Novel

Complex/multi-step

Answers questions

Gives personal information on request:

*First name

*Last name

*Age

*Sex

Siblings/parents names

Processing time?

Social Emotional Skills:

Imitates

Makes choices

Asks for help

Defends Possessions

Play

Solitary/Parallel/Cooperative

Takes Turns/Gives Turns

Emotions

Labels

Demonstrates range

Regulation?

Initiates social interactions

Sustains social interactions

Friendship seeking behaviors

Group games

Fine/Sensory Motor Skills:

Writing Utensil L or R or Both

Grasp

Marks paper

Imitates strokes

Horizontal

Vertical

Circle

Cross

Draws and labels recognizable picture

Draw a Person (see Brigance or Gesell scoring)

Approximates letters in print

Scissors L or R or Both

Grasp

Snip

Cut

Cut on line

Towers _____ blocks

Visual Tracking

Puzzles

Inset # of pieces _____

Interlocking # of pieces _____

Sensory

Touch

Playdough

Finger Paint

Sand/Water

Deep Input/Crashing

Avoids

Seeks

Well Regulated

Self Help/Adaptive Skills:

Toileting

TT or Diaper

Pulls up pants

Washes and dries hands

Cares for belongings

Hangs coat/backpack

Cleans up

Dressing

- Coat on/off
- Shoes and socks on/off
- Zip
- Snap
- Button

Feeding

- Open cup
- Straw
- Utensils
- Bite/chew
- Stuffing?

Gross Motor Skills:

Standing

- One foot for _____ seconds
- Opposite foot for _____ seconds

Walking

- Backward
- Forward on a line
- Up stairs (hand or rail held/marking time/alternating)
- Down stairs (hand or rail held/marking time/alternating)
- Balance beam

Runs

Skips

Gallops

Jumps

- Two feet together distance of _____
- _____ jumps consecutively
- Backwards

Hops

- Preferred foot _____ hops
- Other foot _____ hops

Kicks a ball

Catches a ball

Throws a ball

DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: BUILDING /DEPARTMENT GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RESULTS

School Name: NSIEEP

School Year: 2010-2013

District Goal/Indicator: All students will be ready for kindergarten.
 Building/Department Goal: All students will reach desired learning outcomes and demonstrate indicators as described by the NYS Prekindergarten ELA Standards.

Strategies / Major Tasks & Activities	Indicators of Success	Results (Were Indicators of Success Achieved?)
<p>1. Teachers will focus in on exposing students to their name in print.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on locker • on cubby • name spot • papers • backpack • parent activities <p>2. Teachers will encourage letter identification throughout daily activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading books • finding names • games • art projects • parent activities <p>3. Teachers will focus on students being able to give personal information upon request through games and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first name • last name • age • gender 	<p>-90% of students leaving preschool (4 year olds) for kindergarten will recognize first name in print -70% of students returning for a second years of preschool (3 year olds) will recognize their first name in print</p> <p>-80% of students leaving preschool (4 year olds) will point to at least 10 uppercase letters when named -50% of students returning to preschool (3 year olds) will point to at least 3 uppercase letters when named</p> <p>-90% of students leaving preschool (4 years olds) will be able to state first/last name, age and gender -50% of students returning to preschool (3 year olds) will be able to state first/last name, age and gender</p>	

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: BUILDING /DEPARTMENT GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RESULTS

School Name: NSEEP

School Year: 2010-2013

District Goal/Indicator: All students will be ready for kindergarten.

Building/Department Goal: All students will achieve core performance indicators common to all NYS Prekindergarten standards.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: BUILDING /DEPARTMENT GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RESULTS

School Name: NSEEP

School Year: 2010-2013

District Goal/Indicator: All students will be ready for kindergarten.

Building/Department Goal: All students will reach desired learning outcomes and demonstrate indicators for kindergarten participation as described by the NYS Prekindergarten Math Standards.

Strategies / Major Tasks & Activities	Indicators of Success	Results (Were Indicators of Success Achieved?)
<p>1. Opportunities for students to listen to teacher or peers will be provided in both structured and unstructured activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circle time • small group time • snack time • playtime <p>2. Opportunities for students to interact with peers and work toward a common goal will be provided in both structured and unstructured activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circle time • small group time • snack time • playtime 	<p>-80% of students leaving preschool (4 year olds) for kindergarten will be able to sit and calmly listen and work with other children for at least 10 minutes</p> <p>-50% of students returning to preschool (3 year olds) will be able to sit and calmly listen and work with other children for at least 10 minutes</p>	

Strategies / Major Tasks & Activities	Indicators of Success	Results (Were Indicators of Success Achieved?)
<p>1. Teachers will focus on counting objects throughout daily activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calender • snack time • playtime <p>2. Teacher will provide opportunities for students to sort and match objects according to size, color or function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playtime • structured activities 	<p>-80% of students leaving preschool (4 year olds) for kindergarten will be able to point count with 1:1 correspondence to at least 5</p> <p>-70% of students returning to preschool (3 year olds) will be able to point count with 1:1 correspondence to at least 3</p> <p>-90% of students leaving preschool (4 year olds) for kindergarten will be able to sort objects by one attribute</p> <p>-60% of students returning to preschool (3 year olds) will be able to sort objects by one attribute</p>	



Finding Focus

Meditation and yoga can help kids concentrate

As a teacher, I love incorporating breathing and yoga into my classes. I don't attempt anything too complex. (Who wants to do low plank on a high school floor?) But I have found that teaching a few strategies can help students (and me) relax, refocus and re-energize.

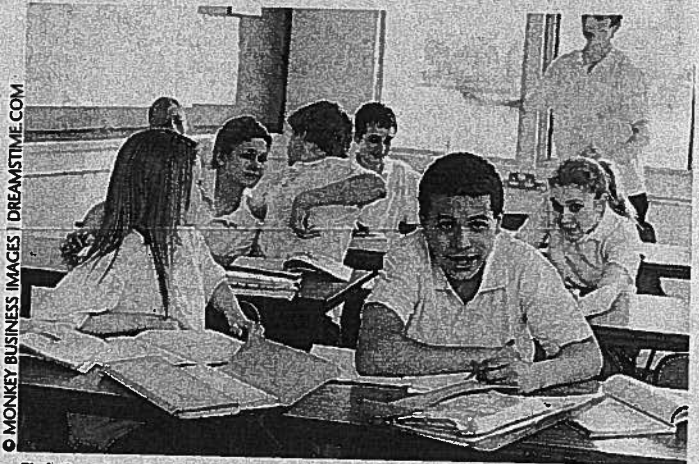
Simple breathing is a wonderful place to start. As learners, we need to be conscious of breathing since we can become sluggish and depressed when our brains are deprived of oxygen. On a Friday afternoon, when students become chatty and distracted, I turn off the lights for a minute of quiet, calming breath. Julie Daniel, a speech pathologist for North Syracuse Central Schools and a certified YogaKids and Grounded Kids instructor (www.yogakidsofcny.com), likes to have her pupils try a "Take 5" breath. She asks children to hold up their hands and inhale as they lift each finger and silently count to five. They exhale to the count of five as they fold their fingers back into their palms.

Daniel also likes to teach visualization. A "Balloon Breath" refreshes the mind. Children close their eyes and imagine a balloon in their laps steadily inflating as they breathe in through their noses. Their arms encircle the balloon as it rises and falls. Visualization is a strategy I learned from my yoga teacher, Lisa Sarick at CNY Yoga Center. For my SAT preparation class, students are often terribly nervous about taking the test. Simple breathing helps to calm them, and I have them visualize themselves feeling confident as they effortlessly complete the test.

Besides breathing, I like to teach a few poses to kids. Whenever I sit for most of the day, I am struck by how stiff and uncomfortable I feel and how distracted and unproductive I become. And yet we ask kids to remain in their seats for extended amounts of time while still expecting them to learn and perform.

Erin O'Toole, a yoga instructor at CNY Healing Arts and a fellow high school teacher, recommends ragdoll pose. Students stand and fold at the waist, letting their arms dangle toward their toes. The goal isn't to touch the toes but rather to let the stomach rest along the thighs. Because it's an inversion (a head-down pose), it will refocus and stimulate the brain. O'Toole even shows students how they can do this posture while seated at their desks. She invites students to sit with both feet flat on the floor and fold the top of the body over the legs, the stomach resting on the thighs.

Daniel likes to teach a seated twist. She guides students to sit tall in their chairs. They twist to the right, placing their right hands on the seat of the chair, their left hands on their right knees. They remain in the twist and breathe. Each time they breathe in, she asks them to visualize their spines growing longer. When they breathe out, she asks them to deepen the twist.



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Fighting frantic Friday: When students grow distracted, some calming breaths can help them get back to learning.

Then, they switch sides. Twists stimulate our nervous system, which allow us to remain calm and focused, ideal for learning.

Both Daniel and O'Toole suggest tree pose for building focus and concentration. Invite kids to stand tall. They may visualize roots growing from their feet that connect them to the ground. They bend one leg and place the sole of that foot on the inside of the standing leg. While kids may start at the ankle, as they grow more confident and balanced, they may lift the foot higher on the leg. Some like to keep their hands in prayer position at their chest. Personally, I enjoy sending my arms into the air and imagine that they are the branches to the tree, my hands actively reaching toward a sun. Hold for several breaths and switch legs.

Yoga, meditation and steady breathing help calm, focus, and energize us. In our test-driven culture, teachers are pressured to cover more and more material and it's difficult to create conditions where learning happens best. But these techniques of movement and breath can be done at home too. During a homework break, your child might slip into rag doll pose. Or, during a frustrating series of math problems, she might try a few calming breaths. Helping your child attend to her body and breath will enhance her health as well as her capacity to learn. ■

Emma Kress, a teacher at Cicero North Syracuse High School, has held a variety of educational posts at levels from pre-K to 12th grade. Send comments about this article to editorial@familytimes.biz.

ROXBORO ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL MESSAGE BOARD: MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS April 7, 2011

Submitted by:
Steven Wolf, Principal
Linda Jackson, Associate Principal
Ellen Leuthauser, Administrative Intern

At the February 8th staff meeting, we presented an article from Alan Mendler. The staff read the paragraph and talked about it to their elbow partner. We realized that since the topic was surrounding surviving power struggles with students, that there would be great interest and lively discussion and we were not disappointed.

We received very positive feedback from the activity. The discussion went beyond the meeting and we were able to track who borrowed which books we put in the new Professional Development library for the staff.

We used that information in our team meetings by asking teachers what they found valuable in the book(s) they borrowed.

At the March 1 staff meeting, we presented "Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners". The book was ordered for all teachers as a result of discussions centered on the changing needs of our student population. We utilized the 3-2-1 review "ticket out the door" and requested that the teachers return them to us when they were completed.

We looked at Chapter 1: Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century and determined that our focus should always be on student learning. This would include differentiation of instruction.

We divided into small table groups and discussed looking at data to drive instruction and using Performance Pathways to review what the kids have done on local and state assessments.

The staff understood and discussed what it meant to say that we are in this together. The staff then collaborated with their colleagues when looking at the materials

Building vocabulary has been key to working with AIS students at our school. From page 201 we discussed the difference between "helping" our students versus teaching the student.

Blog on website to discuss what people have been doing with the new resources you were given. Steps to get on Blog:

1. Go to RRMS webpage from the Main District Page
2. "STAFF WEBSITE" on the left
3. Password RRMS_300
4. Character Ed – Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners
5. CLICK on Meeting The Needs Of Diverse Learners

RRMS MESSAGE BOARD: MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE LEARNERS

[My Message Boards](#) » [Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners](#) » [Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners](#) » Messages

Topic

Started By: R. Staff

Feb 28, 11 19:39

What strategies have you tried from the book, Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

Replies

From: Scott

To: R. Staff

Mar 21, 11 16:10

I love the "book club" bookmarks on page 143. I've really need a more streamlined way of helping support the readers during Literature study since they are often reading over a two week period. Up until this point the conversation has often been tough to get going because of the time lapse and trouble many have with discussion on reading. This resource has helped the kids focus, guide and value the idea of Posing Questions.

From: Ellen

To: Scott

Mar 28, 11 15:47

Thanks for sharing, Scott. I will try it with my 7th graders. I have also used the Fiction Book Report Template on page 294. It supports all my learners to report about a book that they have read. Keep the great ideas coming.

From: Linda T

To: R. Staff

Apr 4, 11 16:35

This is a great reference book and I particularly like the graphic organizers which are easy to print out if you use the CD that accompanies the book. I also like the vocabulary development section which suggests multiple ways for students to build their vocabulary. Some of these have led me to develop graphic organizers for AIS students.

From: Steve W.

To: Linda T

Apr 6, 11 20:37

When we first received these books, I was interested in all the different organizers, prompts, games and strategies that I was looking forward to sharing with everyone. This text, however, really struck a chord with me. I could see how this one would best work with our students.

If you look on page 200-201 regarding questioning and prompts, the Bloom's Taxonomy Wheel would be a great thing to share with our kids. The vocabulary terms are those we see in our assessments. The more the kids see and hear these terms, along with the examples and the evidence in the outer ring of that diagram, the more confidence they can develop in their own vocabulary. I would suggest that someone try using this diagram with the kids. Give them a copy to put in their folders or notebooks for every subject to use as a reference. I would also put an enlarged copy in the classroom and referenced to whenever one of those terms arises during instruction regardless of the content.

- **What to do when you are not getting the results you want. - Pg. 123**
- **Anchoring Activities – Pg. 135**
- **Growth Producing Feedback - PG. 159**
- **Grouping Practices - Pg. 170**
- **Mnemonics – Pg. 185**
- **Learning Logs – Pg. 250**
- **Learner Responsibilities – Pg. 225**
- **Foldables - Pg. 273**
- **Habits of the Mind – Pg. 96**

Gangloff, Audrey

From: Wallace, Patrick
Sent: Wednesday, April 06, 2011 9:48 AM
To: Gangloff, Audrey
Cc: Cordone, Dave; Slater, Nikki
Subject: Leading the Learning 3rd try

Audrey Gangloff
Pat Wallace
Dave Cordone
Nikki Slater

Computer Gremlins - Pat

Leading the Learning 4/07/11

1. Walking Tour (Mission Statement)

As we focus on our Mission Statement at Gillette Road Middle School, how would it look as a Student?

Teacher?

Leader?

2. 3:2:1

3 Three ideas that promote our mission:

2 Two types of data to support what we are doing:

1 One area requiring more assistance or information:

3. Correlated 3:2:1 data.

4. Ideas to promote mission: *Share teaching strategies.*

Areas requiring more assistance or information:
Staff development, collaboration, ideas to develop mission between individuals.

Ideas to promote our mission: *Support and encourage student involvement with the ideals of the mission.*

Ideas to promote our mission: *Communication*

5. Correlated data

6. Multiple measures activity with staff group share.

7. Correlated Multiple Measures data.

8. Scavenger hunt activity: Introduce staff to the book *Instruction for all Students* introduce

homework extension.

9. Pair share activity on active learning strategies,
homework extension.

10. List of strategies used from Leading the
Learning to date.

Three ideas to promote our mission:

3

- mutual respect
- enthusiastic positive attitudes
- across the spectrum collaborative participation

Two types of data to support what we are doing:

2

- teacher evaluations -
re: students efforts + attitudes
- those damn tests

One area requiring more assistance or information:

1

- how to better work as a team to promote student success.

Gillette Road Middle School
BPT Meeting
9/27/2010

3 *ideas to promote our mission*

- Positive role model, lead by example.
- Communication, share teaching strategies, learn and work with others.
- Support and encourage student involvement with the ideals of the mission.

2 *Types of data to support what we are doing:*

- Availability and interpretation of New York State, district and local test data.
- Discipline referral data, to use to keep students in the classroom.

1 *area requiring more assistance or information:*

- Staff development, collaboration, ideas to develop the mission between individuals.

Ideas to promote our mission: Share Teaching Strategies

41

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>

Areas Requiring More Assistance or Information: Staff development, collaboration, ideas to develop the mission between individuals

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>

Ideas to promote our mission: Support and encourage student involvement with the ideals of the mission

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>

Ideas to promote our mission: Communication

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>

Ideas to promote our mission: Support and encourage student involvement with the ideals of mission

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>
<p>Teachers</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Parents</p>	<p>Get students involved by modeling good behavior</p> <p>Recognize and reward students for behavior</p> <p>Ask for student input and thought about mission statement</p>	<p>Daily</p>	<p>Staff collaboration</p> <p>Gillette website</p> <p>E mail blasts</p> <p>In school activities</p> <p>Fun nights</p> <p>Afterschool activities</p> <p>Class visits by administrators</p> <p>Special guests</p>

Areas Requiring More Assistance or Information: Staff development, collaboration, ideas to develop the mission between individuals

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>
Teachers/ Staff	Smart boards	Before school	Staff development
	Cyber bullying	Afterschool	Workshops
	Collaboration	House meetings	Guest speakers
	Technology	Staff meeting	Building planning team
	Data collection /interpretation	Professional development days	
	After school tutoring		

Ideas to promote our mission: Communication

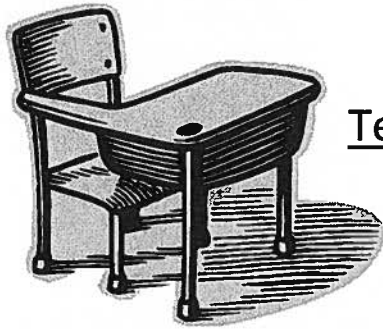
5

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>
<p>Teachers</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Parents</p>	<p>Morning announcements</p> <p>Gillette website</p> <p>Posted copies of mission statement in classrooms</p> <p>School newsletter</p> <p>E mail blasts</p>	<p>Daily</p> <p>Weekly</p> <p>Monthly</p>	<p>School announcements</p> <p>School TV station</p> <p>Thought of the day</p> <p>Gillette website</p> <p>Interaction with students in classrooms</p> <p>Mission activities in school</p> <p>Parent newsletter</p> <p>Teacher share board in teachers room</p>

Ideas to promote our mission: Share Teaching Strategies

<i>Who – target audience</i>	<i>What – details</i>	<i>When – timeframe</i>	<i>How – action plan</i>
Teachers Staff Students	Smart boards	Team meetings	Post on school website
	Smart board training	Department meetings	E mail
	Idea share	House meetings	Interaction with peers
	Content sharing across all areas	Staff meeting	In school activities
		Professional development days	Use learned strategies to teach students
		Conferences	

Multiple Measures



Tests:

Benchmarks /Traditional assessments

Formative /Summative evaluations

G made

Performance assessments

Pre /post tests

Observations:

Writing folders

Notebooks

Portfolios Scrapbooks

Common Curriculum:

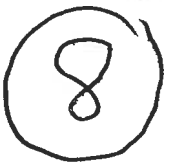
Curricular based test

Student Efforts (Growth)

Running records/ Reflective responses

Student self-reflection

Student Projects



Scavenger Hunt Activity

PURPOSE:

To become familiar with Instruction For All Students.

OUTCOME:

To be able to use Instruction For All Students effectively.

Divide into groups of four by finding 3 others who each have a different color post-it from yours in their book. Each group of 4 will work together to complete this activity.

Scavenger Hunt

- Review Table of Contents
- Where would I go to find the Standard's Based Planning Process?
- What are elements of the Standard's Based Planning Process?
- What Active Learning Strategy would you use if you want students to access prior knowledge – select one and indicate on what page you would find the strategy?
- Pick one Active Learning Strategy that you would like to try before the next staff meeting

Homework Extension: Bring back 1 strategy that you have tried (Active Learning)

Bring books to next meeting

Sharing Activity

6

Find a partner and discuss the Active Learning Strategy that you tried and share the positive and/or negative outcomes of using this strategy. Share if you altered it in any way to fit your needs, how using the strategy impacted student learning and how it impacted your own learning. Be prepared to share what your partner discussed with someone at another table.

Homework Extension:

Choose a trend from our building data and look for a strategy on pages 88-89 that will address the trend you chose. Try this with your students before the next staff meeting and be prepared to share your experience.

Purpose:

To share "Active Learning Strategies"

Outcome:

To be exposed to different learning strategies that your colleagues used, with the possibility of implementing them with your own students at a future date.

use with 10

Data Team

March 18, 2011

The data team met and reviewed ELA and Math data to identify areas that our students need to concentrate on across all curricular areas. We identified the following:

Predicting patterns

Vocabulary – content and test taking

Multiple step processing

Decoding directions

Identify relevant information vs. irrelevant information

Verbal language experience

Use context clues

After identifying these areas the group brainstormed strategies to help students:

More verbal interaction among peers and adults

How to approach questions

Assessing learning styles

Apply skill to real life

Study and test taking skills

Practice with concrete skills

Hands on practice

Students and teacher verbally explain how a they solved a problem

Strategies Used at Staff Meetings

- Scavenger Hunt
- Random Grouping Strategies
- 3-2-1
- Ticket to Leave
- Framing the Learning
- Jig Saw
- Walking Tour
- Discussion Partners
- Line-Ups