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Sixth through Eighth Grade

The Teachers' Newsletter

from Illinois Classrooms in Action

Grade band lessons, ideas and information

Focus: Favorite Websites and Ideas

Volume VII Issue 9 Summer 2019

Inside this issue:

If you have any suggestions, questions or concerns, click HERE to contact our editors.

Rethinking Data: How to Create a Holistic View of Students

Taken from a posting on MindShift
The excerpt below is from "Hacking Education: 10 Quick Fixes For Every School," by Mark Barnes and Jennifer Gonzalez.

Collect a Different Kind of Student Data

For at least a decade now, the driving force behind education reform has been data. We talk about collecting data, analyzing data, and making data-driven decisions. All this data can certainly be useful, helping us notice patterns we might not have seen without aggregating our numbers in some way, looking for gaps and dips and spikes, allowing us to figure out where we are strong and where we need help. In terms of certain academic behaviors, we can quantify student learning to some extent and improve our practice as a result.

And yet, we know this is not enough. We know our students bring with them so many other kinds of data. So many other factors contribute to academic success: the atmosphere in their homes, the demands of their out-of-school school schedule, the physical concerns that distract them, the passions and obsessions that consume them. These things are much harder to measure, so we don't even try, focusing instead on the things we can convert to numbers.

Collect Data on the Whole Child

Most teachers make an effort to get to know their students, and many regularly distribute surveys at the start of each school year to speed up that process. The problem is, most teachers read these surveys once, then file them away. Sure, they might have every intention of returning to the surveys and reviewing them later, but far too often, that time never comes. We rely on our day-to-day interactions for relationship building, and although we get to know some students quite well this way, others just fade into the background.

A 360 Spreadsheet is a place for teachers to store and access the "other" data we collect on our students, giving us a more complete, 360-degree view of each student. It's a single chart that organizes it all and lets us see, at a glance, things we might otherwise forget.

Many teachers already keep track of students' birthdays. Think of this as a birthday chart on steroids.

Here is one example:

Name	Passions	Family	Activities	Academics	Food and Drink	Physical	Skills	Other
Adams, Toby	Chicago Cubs Fortnite	Lives with mom and dad	Baseball Chess Drawing	Loves Percy Jackson books Hates cursive	+ Peanut M&Ms - Oysters	Asthma Broke arm last year	Knows a little coding	New to the area, moved from Chicago Scared of dogs
Carter, Jaylen	Fortnite Martial Arts	Lives with mom, sister Kayla (3) and dog Reggie	Tae Kwon Do	Started to like math last year	+BBQ -Cantaloupe	Left handed	Cooking	Loves being outside Roller-coaster
Fong, Jenny	Earrings	Lives with mom, dad, sister Lucy (15) and brother Michael (7)	Soccer Gymnastics	Loves to read but doesn't want to be seen carrying big books	+Peaches, grapes, cherries - Sour cream and onion potato chips	Occasional eczema Starting to wear con-tacts	Hair braid-ing Great with special needs kids	Wants to be a pediatrician

Favorite Websites for English & Language Arts Teachers

The following are just a few of the websites that offers English & Language Arts teachers with classroom resources to assist with implementation of standards.

Teaching Tolerance: Teaching Tolerance is "a place where educators who care about diversity, equity and justice can find news, suggestions, conversation and support." This is a resource when teachers want to make sure teaching is more socially aware. It is filled with well-crafted commentary about teaching social justice and resources for teachers.

Kahoot: Kahoot is simple to "create, play and share fun learning games for any subject, for all ages, for free!" The teacher makes up questions, or finds a game that already exists, and students answer using their cellphones. With leaderboards and podium finishes, students are totally engaged in what used to be boring reviews.

Goodreads: Goodreads can organize shelves of books that have been read or they can be rated so others can check them out. Reviews can be written as well as the ability to share favorite quotes. The site can generate recommendations based on things that have been liked in the past and this site can be a place to send students in need of a good book.

Purdue Owl: Whether students need clarification on grammar, style or proper citations, this site can help. With printable and online practice and teacher resources, the OWL does an admirable job of fulfilling its goal of assisting students "in their development as writers—no matter what their skill level."

Read Write Think: This website provide educators, parents, and afterschool professionals with access to the highest quality practices in reading and language arts instruction by offering the very best in free materials. Partner of this site includes the International Literacy Association and National Council of Teachers of English.

NCTE: The National Council of Teachers of English organization is devoted to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education. Check out the Resources tab for books, journals, meetings, and Web resources

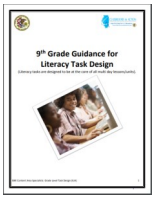
> "Civilization begins when everyone eats.
>
> Democracy begins when everyone reads."
>
> *Willy Thorn*

Guidance for Literacy Task Design

Illinois Literacy in Action is a website that highlights resources designed to assist teachers with some of the biggest challenges when implementing the ELA standards.

One resource that assists teachers is a guidance document for designing literacy tasks. These tasks have the standards at heart and also support the integration of reading and writing. These tasks also assist teachers in preparing students for state assessments.

The title of this resource is "Guidance for Literacy Task Design". These grade specific, multi-step resources are available by clicking on the homepage, clicking on a grade level and then selecting "Guidance for Designing Literacy Tasks" under "The Essentials" heading.



#ShiftTheLift

Research shows American students are getting by too easily in most math classes. It is still common for the teacher to do most of the talking while the student remains a passive receptacle of information. Most educators know that the cognitive demand needs to shift to the student—where they are choosing the mathematical reasoning to apply and justifying the choices, but struggle with understanding how to accomplish this feat. Student Achievement Partners suggest four strategies to shift away from direct instruction toward learning environments in which the students are doing the work.

- Provide structures (such as collaborative groups, think-pair-share, shoulder partner talk, etc.) to provide safe ways for students to share their developing mathematical thinking.

- Resources: www.ilteachandtalk.org/, *Never Say Anything a Kid Can Say!* article, Questions to Encourage Problem Solving

- Intentionally sequence sharing of student work to show the development of a mathematical idea.

-Resource: Selecting and Sequencing Students' Solution Strategies

- Utilize incomplete and/or partially correct student work to honor and celebrate mistakes as learning opportunities.

- Resources: Mistakes Grow Your Brain

- Provide feedback and create the expectation that students revise their work.

- Resource: Feedback in the Mathematics Classroom

This conversation will continue during our upcoming #ILMathCom on Thursday, May 16 from 3:30 -4:30. Joanie Funderburk, Director of IM Certified Facilitators at Illustrative Mathematics, will discuss how math educators should stop working harder than their students and "Shift the Cognitive Lift" in math class. In this session, learn about tools for identifying when and how you might be doing this, and resources you can use to shift the cognitive lift back to your students.

Register here.

> "When I was in front of the class demonstrating and explaining, I was learning a great deal, but many of my students were not! Eventually, I concluded that if my students were to ever really learn mathematics, *they would have to do the explaining, and I, the listening."*
>
> *~Steven C. Reinhart, "Never Say Anything a Kid Can Say!"*

Free Professional Learning

Were you unable to attend the NCTM 2019 Annual Meeting in San Diego? They have posted several feature videos here, https://www.nctm.org/Conferences-and-Professional-Development/NCTM-2019-Annual-Meeting-and-Exposition/ .

Also, be sure to join us at one of our upcoming free, virtual #ILMathCom events. Check out www.mathteachersinaction.org/ilmathcom.html to access the complete listing of upcoming events, register for #ILMathCom events, or to watch the recordings of past events.

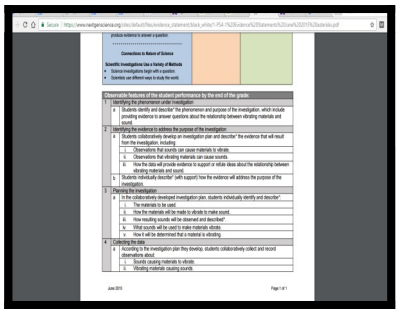
The Opportunity Myth: Thursday, May 2, from 3:30-4:30 PM CST
Mary Pittman, Project Director for TNTP, will share the results of TNTP's newest national report, The Opportunity Myth, and we will discuss what commitments can we make as a profession to unravel the "Opportunity Myth"?

Three Things You Can Do Over Summer Break to Improve Science Instruction

Find Phenomena

Phenomena play an important role in science instruction. A phenomena is anything interesting that your students can use the science concepts and skills they develop to explain. The summer is a great time to look for phenomena that will engage your students as well as lead them on the path to figure out some science! The Impact on Science Education project at the University of Illinois has created a website called Phenomena Finder (https://bit.ly/2DrljoO) to help teachers find phenomena for the topics they teach. The website not only provides educators with the ability to search for phenomena using DCI's, but it also provides sample questions and possible paths to take to explain the phenomenon.

Get to Know Your Standards



The Next Generation Science Standards are three dimensional. In order for a student to be proficient in a performance expectation, he/she has to have a solid grasp of the disciplinary core idea, cross cutting concept, and science and engineering practice. Time invested in digging in and unpacking the performance expectations for a grade level would be well spent. NGSS has developed evidence statements, found here https://bit.ly/2qlXE33 ,for each performance expectation to give teachers a detailed picture of what students will be able to do when the expectation has been achieved. These are the gray descriptors found under the Performance Expectation.

Take a moment to look over the progressions of all three dimensions in order to see how they evolve through the grade levels.

DCI Progressions
https://bit.ly/2oWEmQq

Progressions of Practices
https://bit.ly/2MZmHIQ

CCC Progressions
https://bit.ly/2DwtbHp

Look Over High Quality Examples Units

There are several sample units posted on the NGSS website (https://bit.ly/2r2o7Dn)

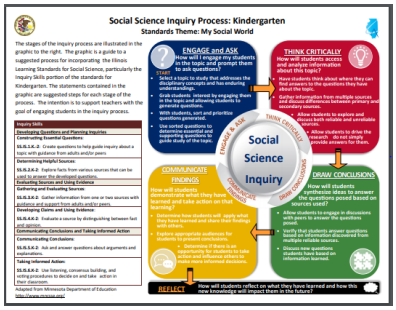
that have been identified as "Quality Examples." This is a great opportunity to see how a quality unit is structured and to get a feel for creating a sequence that will help students to figure out the science concepts. Consider looking at the middle school unit, "How Can We Sense So Many Sounds from a Distance" from *Next Generation Storylines.*

Inquiry Process Graphics for Social Science

Inquiry is an ongoing cycle of learning to use knowledge at increasingly complex levels as a way to integrate content. Through the inquiry process, students (individually and or collaboratively) identify issues, pose questions, investigate answers, pose more questions, weigh the evidence, come to conclusions, and take action on their learning.

In the Social Science Standards, inquiry skills are used by students while applying the disciplinary concepts to construct essential and supporting questions and determine helpful sources to conduct investigations and take informed action.

Illinois has created inquiry graphics that illustrate the stages of the inquiry process and guides the process for incorporating the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science, particularly the Inquiry Skills portion of the standards. The statements contained in the graphic are suggested steps for each stage of the process. The intention is to support teachers with the goal of engaging students in the inquiry process. Click here and scroll down to access templates for each grade level.



Resources for the 6-12 Social Science Teacher

The Right Question Institute - This organization has worked with and learned from educators to develop a teaching strategy that provides a simple, yet powerful way to get students asking their own questions and building off their peers' questions.

DocsTeach - DocsTeach allows educators to engage students in the exploration of a variety of primary sources from the National Archives, one of the most exciting components of DocsTeach is the ability for educators to create or share activities using sources. Register for a *FREE* account at DocsTeach to save and share the primary sources as well as create and explore activities!

iCivics - Offers not only 20 games to engage students in civics but also has over 200 resources for educators, including lesson plans, WebQuests, and DBQuest and Drafting Board modules. Resources can be searched by content or standard (IL specific standards search!) with the creation of a *FREE* account.

Illinois Civics - Contains civics resources specifically for Illinois teachers spearheaded by the McCormick Foundation. Resources for teachers include a teacher resource toolkit, lesson plans, professional development, and connecting with civics mentor teachers.

St. Louis Fed - Econ Ed - Offers free economics and personal finance lessons, activities, and readings provide flexibility and real-world connections, making it easier to prepare students with 21st century skills for college and career readiness. Check out their *FREE* EconLowdown portal and many other award winning lessons/programs.

National Geographic Classroom Resources - This site offers a number of resources to teachers. Teachers can explore collections or choose a grade level, resource type and subject to narrow down the resources appropriate for their classroom.

Stanford History Education Group - Offers three portals to engage students in the social sciences. Reading Like a Historian provides over 130 document-based lesson plans including several that use the Structured Academic Controversy structure to help students learn to discuss controversial issues. Beyond the Bubble provides over 80 easy-to-use assessments that measure students' historical thinking rather than recall of facts. Finally, their Civic Online Reasoning portal provides assessments of civic online reasoning—the ability to judge the credibility of digital information about social and political issues. Gain access to all three portals with the creation of one *FREE* account.

If the world changed, and you are not doing anything to prepare the kids, you are doing a disservice to them.

Tom Driscoll

Social Emotional Skills in the Learning Environment

Teaching and Learning Supports

ISBE SEL GOALS

1 Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

2 Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

3 Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

Check us out on the web under Climate and Culture: Illinois Classrooms in Action

SEL Family Supports Children's Mental Health *at Home Supports*
http://bit.ly/2GCiIZZ

Teaching Resiliency

http://bit.ly/ILCIA_Resiliency9_12

SEL Goal Aligned Activities

The purpose of Stanford's student project is to '...help change the perception of failure from something to be avoided at all costs, to something that has meaning, purpose, and value."

Prepare students in their resiliency through exploring videos by college students regarding their transparent stories of 'not being good enough' and 'epic failures'.

- Have students write reflections on their thoughts and feelings if they were in similar situations. 1
- Have students write reflections on what they believe these students might be thinking and feeling. 2

Trauma Informed Care
tips for teachers
http://bit.ly/ILCIA_Trauma

How ACES impacts our lives. - Infographic
http://bit.ly/ILCIA_ACES_infographic

Teaching Stress Management

Teachers and Students, Got Stress?

- ☐ General Lack of resiliency?
- ☐ Physical, then emotional exhaustion?
- ☐ Difficulty being organized?
- ☐ Lack of Humor?
- ☐ Frequent Absenses?
- ☐ Frequent Illness?

Dialogue Circles Create Connections

1 Classroom materials and videos at http://bit.ly/ILCIA_DialogueCircles

Listening is an essential skill within the learning environment that enhances relationships and learning. Many who feel increased stress (including around week-ends and holidays), reach out to friends and peers to share. Teachers may even feel overwhelmed with requests from students to listen to experiences and/or needs, adding to their own stress levels.

One school shares through videos and materials how 'dialogue circles' (based on restorative circle design) has helped students feel connected to each other and to appropriately share and listen to peers to lower stress.

Raising Awareness for Youth Mental Health

Understanding Your Emotions video

https://youtu.be/KYfRzAIl7TQ 1

3 Bookmarks available at: http://bit.ly/2UEEO2L

Additional SEL resources can be found on www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/sel