



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2008-2009

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New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
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Celebrate Read Across America Day

The National Education Association annually sponsors Read Across America. Now in its twelfth year, the program focuses on motivating children to read, in addition to helping them master basic skills.

The nationwide reading celebration takes place each year on or near March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Across the country, thousands of schools, libraries, community centers, and more participate by bringing together kids and books, and you can too!

Started by a small task force in 1998, Read Across America calls for every child to enjoy a book with a caring adult. The NEA likens Read Across America to a pep rally, celebrating books and motivating kids to read more. In schools all over the country, green eggs and ham will be cooked, assemblies will be held, and Cat in the Hat costumes will be worn. "Teachers and principals seem to be more than happy to dye their hair green or be duct-taped to a wall if it boosts their students' reading," states the NEA's Read Across America webpage

Dr. Seuss changed the landscape of children's books with his controlled-vocabulary tales of antic cats (*The Cat in the Hat*), colorful meals (*Green Eggs and Ham*), and dozens of other zany tales.

When Dr. Seuss set out to write *The Cat in the Hat*, he wanted to write a story that used simple, mostly monosyllabic words that readers could readily comprehend. His use of the patterned, rhyming text has become the foundation for many controlled-vocabulary texts for young readers.

The following is a simple scenario for elementary or middle school teachers who want to conduct an NEA's Read Across America event in their classroom. This is

by far the most typical celebration and can be easily adapted to other situations.

- Consult with your school librarian. It's likely that he or she is already familiar with Read Across America and may have ideas to offer. Reserve books in advance—there may be a run on Dr. Seuss titles!

- Invite guest readers to come to your class on March 2 and read to your students. By far, this is the most popular activity. There is something powerful about a policeman, firefighter, mayor, radio personality, pastor, high school quarterback, or grandmother sharing their love for reading. Be sure and ask your guests to talk about why reading is important in their lives, and about their favorite books when they were kids. Afterwards, have your students write thank-you notes.

- Make arrangements for a birthday cake, if resources allow. You might want to have it decorated with "Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss." If funds are short, ask if any parents are enthusiastic bakers. Easy alternatives are cupcakes or cookies. Add fruit punch or juice for a beverage.

- Get some hats! Everyone wants the famous Cat in the Hat hat, make your own from red and white construction paper. A 39 oz. coffee can has a good diameter for the crown, and you can trace a large dinner plate for the brim. This makes a fun class project

- Reproduce Certificates of Participation and Appreciation. Children love receiving tangible acknowledgement of their efforts, and your adult helpers will appreciate being thanked.

Story continued on page 2 ...

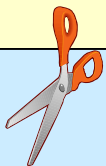


HELPFUL WEBSITE FOR TEACHERS



<http://www.theideabox.com/>

THE IDEA BOX: a special website for games, puzzles, recipes and crafts. This database is for early childhood teachers.



Cutting Corners

OLD BOOKS FOR BORDERS

I always have a few novels or picture books that get "loved" to pieces at the end of the year. Instead of recycling them, I use an art knife to cut the pages out and use as a quick border around a bulletin board. This looks great for a literacy board or a writers board. My students love to guess which book I recycled.—JM

Reach Across America Day (continued from page 1)

- Send information home to parents, along with parent reading tips. Some parents may offer to help, and a few may volunteer to be guest readers.
- If you're an NEA member, contact your Local Association and let them know about your plans. They may offer ideas and support.
- Explore this site fully for ideas and resources. There is a lot of information that will be useful if you want to expand on the basics.

Put on your hats for the big day! Enjoy your guest readers. Eat birthday cake,



“It is books that are the key to the wide world; if you can't do anything else, read all that you can.”

-- Jane Hamilton

Read Across America Poem

You're never too old, too wacky, too wild,
To pick up a book and read with a child.
You're never too busy, too cool, or too hot,
To pick up a book and share what you've got.

In schools and communities,
Let's gather around,
Let's pick up a book,
Let's pass it around.

There are kids all around you,
Kids who will need
Someone to hug,
Someone to read.

Come join us March 2nd
Your own special way
And make this America's
Read to Kids Day.

drink punch, and don't forget to sing "Happy Birthday" to Dr. Seuss. *Read, read, read, and have fun!*

Your reading event can be as simple or elaborate as time and inclination allow. Whether you choose to scale up or down, keep in mind the basic premise and it's almost sure to be a success:

- ◆ On March 2, the National Education Association is calling for every child to be reading in the company of a caring adult.



THANK A TEACHER



Senator Dianne Feinstein
Democrat/California

“Virginia Ryder (Grant School/San Francisco) took me under her wing, giving me individual attention, and enabled me to go a good high school. I thank Ms. Ryder for her extraordinary service and thank all of the wonderful teachers across the country who work tirelessly to ensure that our children reach their highest potential.”—*Dianne Feinstein*



Make Fewer Trips to the Office

Use a four-section expanding file folder to hold papers that need to be taken to the school office.

You can label slots “Photocopies,” “PTA” (for the various forms, money, and so on that children turn in), “Mailroom” (to give to secretaries or put in other teachers' mailboxes); and “Miscellaneous” (for any other papers that need to be delivered). You also can label a large folder or legal-size manila file “To Be Laminated,” add papers to the folder throughout the week, and then take everything to the office at once after you have a good-sized stack to be laminated.



New Teacher Support Participants:



Kitty van Straaten

Lebanon High School

CDC

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"For many years I have been involved with students and I have always felt enthusiastic about teaching. When a student feels proud about something they have learned, I share that feeling. Special Education turned out to be a good choice for me. I can use my creativity, flexibility, and enthusiasm for learning."—Kitty van Straaten



Doug McIntosh

Mt. Juliet Middle School

6-8 grade
Speech & Communications

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"To help kids grow and mature in life. To give kids the tools, skills and confidence to take life head on."—Doug McIntosh

Teaching Strategies using Comic Strips



Grab your students' attention and keep it. Let your students read the comics while you use these fresh language arts teaching ideas. Parents, teachers, and other staff can keep you supplied with comic strips by bringing in their daily and weekend newspapers. They are all full of comics.

One page of colorful Sunday comics will provide enough material to teach language arts to one class. With very few donations you can recycle the comic section of the newspaper, forego the photocopied worksheets, and allow your students' imaginations to go to work.

Comics can be used to teach virtually any grade language arts skills. Literally

from kindergarten to high school there are a number of fun, stimulating, educational activities that can be done using comics.

Comic strips without captions can be used by teachers with students of any age to allow them to interpret the action.

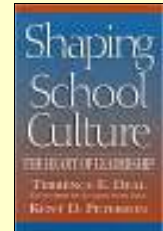
A challenging use of comic strips for high school students is to show one comic strip without captions. You may choose a comic without text. Or you may white out, or cut out, the captions that are associated with the pictures.

Have students write a short paragraph interpreting the comics. Be sure to instruct them to use good

grammar and spelling. Use the written work to evaluate the students' progress in writing and grammar.

As a communication project have the students share and discuss their interpretation of the comic strip. Lead students in a discussion of how personal perspectives influence their interpretation of the comic. Encourage students to use the comic strip interpretation to explore how different backgrounds, including cultural, political, emotional, and religious may influence their interpretation of comics. Discuss how this same type of perspective applies to our interpretation of people, events, and institutions encountered in their everyday lives.

From the Bookshelf:



Shaping School Culture : The Heart of Leadership by Kent D. Peterson, Terrence E. Deal

Just as culture is critical to understanding the dynamics behind any thriving community, organization, or business, the daily realities and deep structure of school life hold the key to educational success. Reforms that strive for educational excellence are likely to fail unless they are meaningfully linked to the school's unique culture. In *Shaping School Culture*, Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson show how leaders can harness the power of school culture to build a lively, cooperative spirit and a sense of school identity.

The authors draw from over twenty years of research on school improvement as well as from their own extensive work with school leaders across the country to identify viable new strategies for effective school leadership. They describe the critical elements of culture—the purposes, traditions, norms, and values that guide and glue the community together—and show how a positive culture can make school reforms work. Deal and Peterson also explore the harmful characteristics of toxic cultures and suggest antidotes to negativity on the part of teachers, students, principals, or parents.



The Girl Who Could Fly—
Ages 9-12



Master Teacher Tips...

Motivation

Making negative generalizations about the school can affect students—and your efforts to motivate students in your class. For instance, you should never make such comments as “This place is so disorganized” or “You can’t get anything done here” or “How can I teach with all the interruptions?” these are serious professional mistakes that can backfire on you and become barriers to the success of your students. These kinds of statements actually give you and students an excuse for not teaching, not learning, and not achieving. Remember, you undermine the motivation of those you lead if you introduce performance negatives or dampen the mood in the classroom. When you have such feelings, keep them to yourself or share them with someone who can correct the situation.

When students are getting restless and complaining and you need to help them stay focused on the task at hand, try this technique: Respond to a student complaint by asking a clarifying question. This shows your appreciation, interest, and concern while keeping you in charge. Simply ask, “What part of what we’re doing makes you restless?” Then rather than capitulating to the request to stop, see if you can make a minor adjustment that positively affects students’ motivation. If you do nothing and ignore the comment, students may tune out and quit and let you plow ahead alone.”



Upcoming Events

Youth Leadership Month

American Crossword Puzzle Week
February 27-March 1

National Tooth Fairy Day
February 28

Return the Borrowed Books Week
March 1-7

Read Across America Day
March 2

For a Laugh!

