



PITA

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Provincial Intermediate Teachers Association

Again, another school year is almost finished. At PITA we have been actively planning our activities for the coming year and we are excited to present them to you. At the end of summer, the Start UP! Program will be running. This program is designed for Early Teachers preparing for a new teaching assignment. It will equip them with units, lessons and tools for the busy start-up period in a classroom. Throughout the year, PITA also offers a Fall Conference, a day-long conference in beautiful Whistler Village and a mini-conference given in Prince George.

This year in my classroom, I have focused on providing activities that encourage students to act in a kind and considerate manner. Here is another one of these ideas...for parents, this time. This can be done in conjunction with Mothers' Day or Fathers' Day, or as a separate activity carried out purely to show appreciation.

Amanda Arneill

iAppreciate.....

Use iMovie for students to show their parents their iAppreciation through an email or DVD

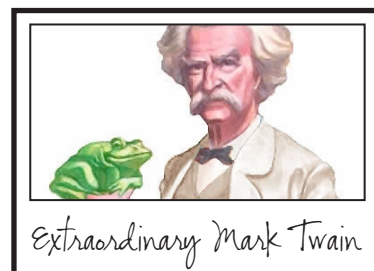
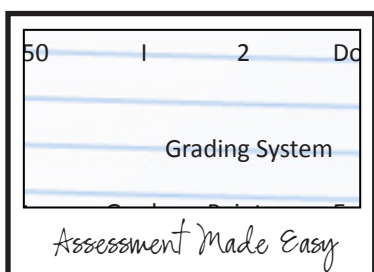


For Mother's Day or Father's Day, it can sometimes be a challenge to find a craft or gift idea that elicits enthusiasm in the students. This idea is guaranteed to be one that kids will love and parents will be able to enjoy for many years to come.

Have your class practise reciting a poem about families, love or the importance of caring. Once they have mastered that, film their recitation. Each student should then prepare their own piece that they would like to say to their parents. It can be in the form of a poem, speech or song that they would like to sing on camera. One at a time, the students will be filmed performing their original piece.

Next, it is off to the editing room! iMovie is an example of a video editing program that you can use to splice the bits of the video together to create individual montages for each student. Many of the students may even be able to do this step for themselves. Each video would begin with the poem read by the whole class and then move on to the portion created by the parents' own child. These videos can be emailed or burned onto DVDs and sent to the parents as a video reminder of the love that their children have for them.

in this ISSUE



PRESIDENT'S note

The 'TOC Tool Kit' The Kind of REAL Help Teachers Need

By Ray Myrtle

If you are in a classroom like I am, when you have to be away, you face the task of spending an hour or so preparing materials and explanations about the lesson and the students. Sometimes, many of us just choose to go in to work to avoid the workload of planning for a TOC, when it's not the best choice for our health.

On the other hand, TOCs sometimes arrive in a classroom without clear directions or almost any directions at all. This is stressful for TOCs and not helpful for our students.

The TOC Tool Kit is something we are developing to help in these situations. The idea is to help TOCs 'Turn Lemons into Lemon Aide' and use the time as a TOC to develop valuable skills and be more of a 'special guest teacher' in the classrooms they visit, teaching a special topic such as 'Study Skills'.

For example, the study skills workshop might give strategies for teaching students how to: "Learn to organize homework time, prioritize long and short term assignments,

use your planner in a productive manner and amaze teachers with your classroom etiquette. Learn test-taking, note-taking and research skills for a more successful school year; explore how health is directly related to study skills.”

We are now exploring French, Art and other subjects to select and prepare lessons that are appropriate for any intermediate grade and provide opportunities for good instruction.

We hope this process will develop workshops for TOCs that will support them in developing skills to:

- Build knowledge and skills that will be useful throughout a TOC’s career as a classroom teacher.
- Provide a ‘special program of instruction’ that a TOC can offer to ‘add value’ to their time in the host teacher’s classroom.
- Provide TOCs with a ‘special presentation’ which can be given repeatedly in many classes so that TOCs can refine and improve their presentation.
- Provide knowledge and skills for TOCs that will be an asset to any school that might hire them as classroom teachers.

This REAL help is the kind of help whereby working together, we can create planning and complete preparation beyond that which can usually be done alone. It is practical and classroom tested. That’s what I believe teachers need.

If you have a suggestion or would like to become involved in this program let me know.

I can’t let this issue pass without mentioning the PITA Whistler Mini Conference on May 6th; I think we had the strongest workshop line up this year. Watch for this conference again next year!

Finally, a couple of things have reminded me of the substantial work we all do in supporting each other. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this in one’s professional life. We really cannot learn it all alone! I do believe the best way to improve and to survive in teaching is to work closely with a person or a group. There are many opportunities in most schools; PITA and many other groups offer another way to connect.

Ray.



ASSESSMENT *made easy*

Regular assessment is an essential component in the classroom. However, it can be difficult to ensure accurate and frequent evaluation with the growing demands placed on classroom teachers. One of the easiest ways to assess is to set a general standard of grading that can be applied to most work and have the students help develop the criteria.

THE 5-POINT SCALE

I use a 5-point scale in two formats: one with ex-

pectations and one with letter grades (Figures 1 & 2). Then, as each assignment is given, we discuss what each number will look like based on this scale. In some cases, the students will use their own descriptors like “Wow” for a 5 or “okay-ish” for a 2.5 or 3. This allows them to really buy into the system and take ownership. I keep the criteria to a minimum (usually no more than 2-3 specific measures per assignment).

I post several copies of each table in conspicuous places throughout the classroom and refer to them regularly. I also provide a copy to put in the front of each student’s planner for easy reference.

HOW I USE THE 5-POINT SCALE FOR JOURNALS

Before the students write in their Journals, we decide which three things we will use for grading the writing. The first is always neat/complete. The other two can vary from use of transitions, details, connecting words, format, paragraphs, etc. Deciding what to assess can be determined by whatever lessons you have taught or on which you have been working. After you have been using this system for a while, the students can even begin to decide what they’d like to focus on for themselves. The criteria are written on the top left-hand side of the page by the students before beginning the assignment, along with name, date, subject, etc. This prevents the teacher from having to write it out 30 times and also keeps the focus of the day’s work in a conspicuous place for the students to see (Figure 3). Each Journal is then marked out of 15 with the students giving themselves a mark before handing it in.

Fig.1 Grading System

Percent	Grade	Points	Expectations
86 – 100	A	5	Exceeds
73 – 85	B	4	Fully Meets
67 – 72	C+	3.5	Meets Most
60 – 66	C	3	Meets Some
50 – 59	C-	2.5	Minimally Meets
Below 50	I	2	Does Not Meet

Fig.2 Grading System

Percent	Grade	Points	Expectations
86 – 100	A	5	Excellent
73 – 85	B	4	Very Good
67 – 72	C+	3.5	Good
60 – 66	C	3	Satisfactory
50 – 59	C-	2.5	Minimally Acceptable
Below 50	I	2	Needs Improvement

FURTHER APPLICATIONS OF THE 5-POINT SCALE

Using this system has enabled me to save time and focus on specific skills. It has made writing so much easier, especially for those students who struggle, because they only need to focus on the criteria being graded for that particular week. This scale can easily be used for those students on adapted programs or IEPs. It is a good way for students to focus their practice of necessary skills and thus have a better chance to perfect them. As well, it is a huge time-saver in terms of marking since only the criteria listed at the top needs to be looked at by the teacher.

One of the easiest ways to assess is to set a general standard of grading that can be applied to most work

When first using this system, you can either proscribe the criteria, or, even better, post a potential list of ideas that the students can refer to for suggestions when deciding. As the year progresses, you can continue to add new skills and concepts. Once a criterion has been used enough, you can even upgrade it to a non-negotiable: meaning, that it becomes part of the “complete” mark. For example, after the first term, even though I don’t penalize students ever for spelling, it is expected that if students are unsure about the spelling, they circle the word to show me that they either don’t know the spelling or are aware that it might be incorrect.

For Reading, use a clipboard with each column

Fig.3

	Me	Teacher	
Neat/Complete	/5	/5	Date: 01/03/11
Details	/5	/5	Subject: Journal
Connecting Words	/5	/5	Name: Clarissa
JOURNAL/TITLE			

labelled with whatever skill or application you wish to assess. Then, in your reading groups or one-on-one, you can quickly assess one or more of these with ease. In fact, this technique can be applied to any subject area whether the focus is on content, mastery, or skills. Further, once the students are familiar with the process, they can self-assess and the teacher can provide feedback, encouraging greater communication and growth.

KID-FRIENDLY RUBRICS WORK HABITS

A key element for assessing work habits is using kid-friendly language that, again, is developed through one or two lessons with student input. I have included an example below that was developed with a class (Figure 4). When interims go home, I have the students highlight where they think they are, and I highlight in a different colour. It’s quick, easy and helps students to develop self-assessment skills. It tends to be quite an accurate picture, especially since the students are very familiar with the criteria and had a chance to include their own ideas of what G, S and N mean in practical terms. For daily use, students can write a G, S or N on any assignment to continually remind them of their progress.



Fig.4

Work Habits

	G	S	N
RESPONSIBILITY	▪ All my work is handed in	▪ Most of my work is handed in	▪ Many assignments are missing
	▪ I am on time for school	▪ I am sometimes late	▪ I am often late
	▪ I have everything I need at school & can find it easily	▪ I usually have everything I need at school & can find it most of the time	▪ I frequently do not have everything I need at school or cannot find it
	▪ I am ready to work during class time	▪ I am usually ready to work during class time	▪ I do not use my class time well
COOPERATION	▪ I listen to the teacher carefully & follow instructions	▪ I usually listen to the teacher & follow instructions	▪ I am not a very good listener & often do the assignment incorrectly
	▪ I work well with others	▪ I usually work well with others	▪ I do not work well with others
INDEPENDENCE	▪ I know what to do & I get it done	▪ I sometimes need help figuring out what I need to get done	▪ I need to be reminded often about what I'm supposed to be doing
	• I can take the initiative & don't need to be reminded	• I can work towards helping myself with some reminders	• I often have to be told to do things instead of doing them on my own

Again, I post several copies around the classroom and refer to them regularly. I also provide each student with their own copy to glue into the front of their planners.

Kid-friendly rubrics can be applied to any situation. I have recently started to work with my class on “translating” the Performance Standards into accessible rubrics. It is really great to see the ownership and understanding that develops through the process of creating the rubrics and the students’ own use of them in school.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The 5-Point Scale and the Kid-Friendly Rubrics are tools that can be applied to most assessment needs. The scale starts with general and moves towards the specific. The rubrics enable students and allow them to really understand what is required of them. The best assessment practices are those that are meaningful to both the student and teacher. Hopefully, these tools will help your assessment be more manageable, useful and productive.

by SB Hogg



TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES



<http://edu.glogster.com/>

Create interactive online posters, individually or in groups, with Glogster EDU. Glogster is an easy to use way to create collections of information and excite students to learn. Introduce them to this tool and they will look forward to sharing their knowledge!



<http://www.pbs.org/teachers/>

PBS Teachers is a wealth of lesson plans, resources and videos that can help you in all areas of the curriculum. Organized by grade level and subject, you can learn about anything from how to make a clown face to natural disasters.



**THINKING
outside
THE BOX**

Fall Conference 2011

Friday, October 21 & Saturday, October 22

North Delta Secondary School
11447 82nd Avenue, Delta, BC

Registration starts June 1, 2011

PITA AGM

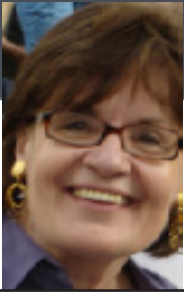
October 22, 2011, 12:30pm
North Delta Secondary School
11447 82nd Avenue, Delta

This AGM will include a motion to continue our practice of paying for one day a week release of a member of the Executive to manage PITA business.



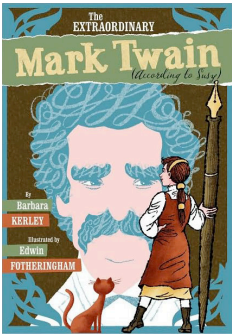
Provincial Intermediate
Teachers' Association:
A PSA of the BCTF

CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION



Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received. (H: Diana Cruchley 2006, 604-464-7058, dcruchley@shaw.ca.)

THE EXTRAORDINARY MARK TWAIN (ACCORDING TO SUSY) BY BARBARA KEELEY



A collection of anecdotes about the “real” Mark Twain who lives at home with his family, as told by his beloved daughter Susy.

Barbara Kerley, Scholastic, ©2010, ISBN 978-0-545-12508-6

A BOOK “IN THE STYLE OF...”

This book has a particular style. For the most part it is Susy’s foray into biography. However, glued into place in the book are miniature excerpts from Susy’s actual words. Students can copy this writing style. In Social Studies, this could take the form of the story of an explorer with inserted pages from his “diary” commenting on the events described on that page. In Science, it could be the story of a whale’s life with interspersed diary items from the whale. In Art, it could be a research report on a particular artist, with short imaginary diary inserts on occasion. Be sure students realize the diary entries need only be 2-3 sentences long.

SPINAL MENINGITIS

In 1886, Suzy died of spinal meningitis at age 24. This could be a time to ask students in groups to create a rapid writing assignment and an oral presentation on various diseases that attack neurologically:

- spinal meningitis
- multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson’s
- epilepsy
- dementia

ideas and inspiration to use with

VOCABULARY

This picture book still has some terrific vocabulary words to explore with students: *quirky, billiards, pronouncement, drought, ferocious, inspiration, distracted, leaves of a book, quarry, procession, anchored, incessantly, deficiency, mugwump, chronicled, correspondent, impressive, manuscript, irksome, in good trim, despite, and expurgate, anecdote, copyright, gait, balk, octagonal, manuscript.* These *might* be all of them...but then again.

WORDS FOR AUTHORS

There are many words peculiar to being an author which students could learn as part of a mini-themed vocabulary unit. Many of these words appear in this picture book. Some sample words might be:

- *draft*
- *editor*
- *publisher*
- *expurgate*
- *biography*
- *autobiography*
- *bind*
- *glossary*
- *typeset*
- *manuscript*
- *proofreader*
- *copyright*
- *chronicle*
- *memoir*
- *leaves of a book*
- *index*
- *spine*
- *font*

PERSONAL WRITING

A springboard from a picture book to personal writing should provide at least three topics. Here are some ideas:

1. What my parents appreciate about me, with anecdotes as examples.
2. What I appreciate about my parents, with anecdotes as examples.
3. My “secret” private places (Ex. Susy hides her diary under her pillow).
4. My writing method (when, where, how, proof reading, e-mail, etc.).

WRITING AN EXTRAORDINARY BIOGRAPHY

In the last page of the book, Barbara Kerley, provides a 6 step approach to writing a biography. As you read the book aloud, ask students to make note of the methods that Susy uses to write her biography, and then have them write theirs using the same system. This is a good listening skill and students are likely to note the following:

- a description of the person
- quirks and not so fine qualities
- anecdotes
- what the person says about themselves
- the early years
- public and private life (wife/husband/children)
- daily routine
- achievements

Duplicate Barbara Kerley's page and discuss it with students prior to them trying their hand at biography. Tell them you want an "authorized" biography (which means discussing it with the person they are writing about). Students can then select someone they admire and write a biography about him or her.

SPELLING MISTAKES

Mark Twain says that his daughter's spelling was "*frequently desperate*". Give students her incorrect spellings have them try to spell the words correctly. They may need to use a dictionary for this exercise.

Suay's incorrect words are: *discribed, incorectly, mustache, ex-cept, extrordinary, sute, doute, Missouri, in good trimm, varius, chreatures (for creatures), expergate, donky, prosession.*

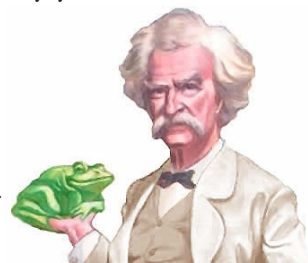
The first English dictionary was written by Samuel Johnson in 1755. The first American dictionary was Noah Webster's in 1806. After this, spelling began to "solidify" into "correct" and "incorrect" spelling. Susy was writing in 1885.

FUN WITH STRAIGHT PENS

Acquire a class set of straight pens and nibs, and a supply of ink so that students can try to write a journal entry using the materials that Susy would have used. Remind students that children in BC schools in the 1950's started with pencils, and in about grade 3 were allowed to "*graduate*" to the straight pen if their writing was neat enough.

THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY

Read the above mentioned short story of Mark Twain's to your students. It was published in 1865 and is the first piece of writing that made him famous across the USA. Calaveras County has held a jumping frog contest and festival every year since 1928. Show the students a YouTube video of the contest in action to help them appreciate how funny Mark Twain was and perhaps seek out other writings of his.



MARK TWAIN AND COPYRIGHT

Mark Twain was particularly interested in copyright that protected an author's intellectual property. In 1906, he was the final and featured speaker before a government inquiry into the proposed copyright legislation. The issue mattered to him as a source of income through his lifetime, his wife's, and that of his children. Read the quote below to your students. If they are old enough, they may be interested in the entire speech at bpmlegal.com/cotwain/html or by Googling *Mark Twain on Copyright*.

I am interested particularly and especially in the part of the bill which concerns my trade. I like that extension of copyright life to the author's life and fifty years afterward. I think that would satisfy any reasonable author, because it would take care of his children. Let the grandchildren take care of themselves. That would take care of my daughters, and after that I am not particular. I shall then have long been out of this struggle, independent of it, indifferent to it.

Discuss the issue of copyright with students. How long should copyright last? For whom is the benefit? You may also want to discuss students' own potential violations of copyright from the internet.

Decimal Multiplication Can BE Fun!

Multiplication can be tricky for students. Multiplication with decimals can be positively confounding. Ann-Marie Hunter has developed a decimal number line strategy for successfully teaching this intermediate skill to her budding mathematicians.

She believes that using this method helps students to visualize the value of decimal numbers; their use of the visual tool will improve their number sense when completing multiplication questions. Using estimation on a decimal number line will eventually allow them to successfully do the estimating in their heads (seeing it in their heads, rather than having to use the number line). After much practice, they will be able to recognize how it works to round each factor in the question to a number with only one leading digit (or significant digit). For example, 257.85 becomes 300, and 4 332 becomes 4 000, for the purpose of estimating the answer and finding out where to place the decimal in the answer.

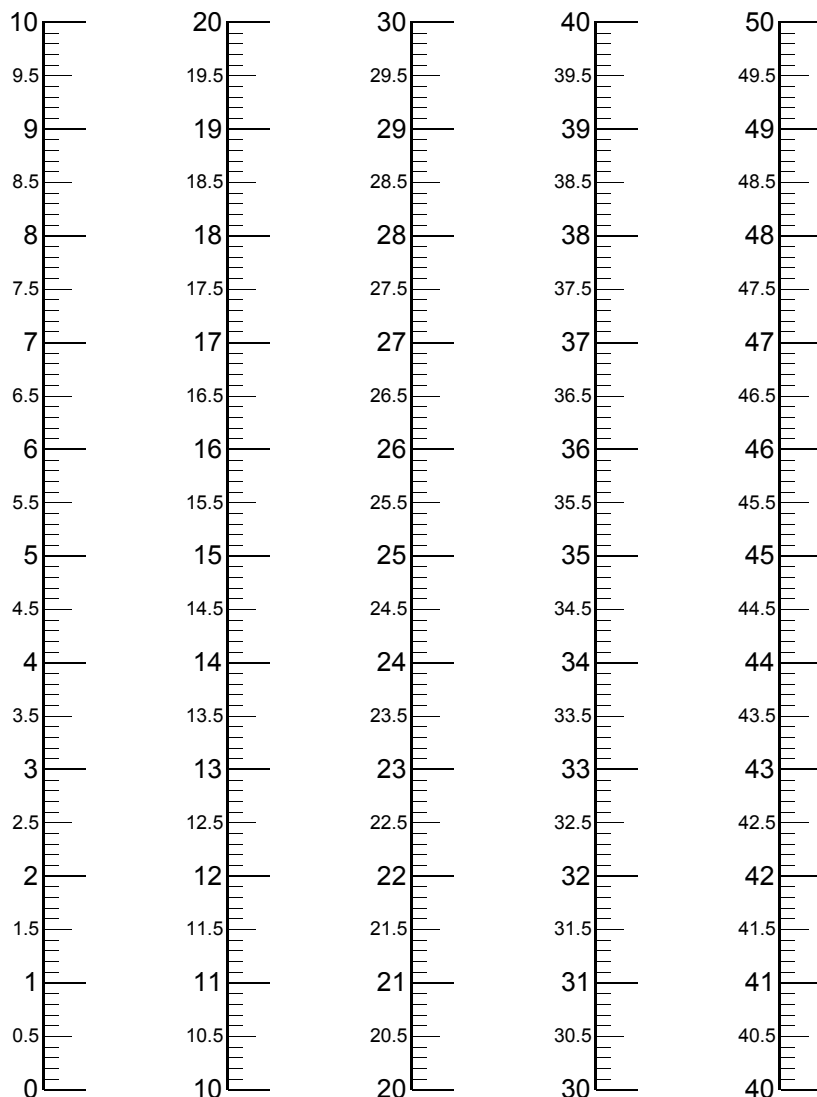
The decimal vertical number line is an integral part of understanding the concepts necessary for this skill. To use it successfully, Ann-Marie guides her students as they move through the following steps:

1. Find each number from the decimal multiplication question on the decimal number line.
2. Estimate the factors of the multiplication question to the nearest whole number, or the nearest 10, or 100, etc.
3. Use the product of the two rounded numbers to predict the answer to the decimal question.
4. For example: If the question is 4.7×8.2 , the students can see that those numbers are closest to 5 and 8, respectively. (Using the decimal vertical number line, the students can actually “visualize” how close each number is to whole numbers, or 10s, or 100s, rather than just using tricks for rounding.)
5. The approximate answer becomes 5×8 , or 40.
6. When they multiply 4.7×8.2 , by using their skills for double digit multiplication (without decimals - actually calculating 47×82), they get 3854.
7. Using the estimated answer, they realize that the answer is close to 40, so the decimal must be placed between the 8 and the 5 to give the correct calculation. (Again, this replaces the 'trick' I used to teach about counting the number of digits behind the decimal in each factor and then ensuring that there is that total number of digits behind the decimal in the answer!)
8. So it is calculated that $4.7 \times 8.2 = 38.54$

Applying this same procedure to questions like: 18.78×6.4 , students would be lead to round the factors that are larger than 10, to the nearest 10, to find the approximate answer to the question. $18.78 \sim 20$, and $6.4 \sim 6$. Then, they would use the skills of multiplying by multiples of 10 to give them the approximate answer of $20 \times 6 = 120$. After multiplying 18.78×6.4 (in practice, 1878×64), their answer would be 120 192. They would then identify that the decimal must be placed between the 0 and the 1, giving an answer of 120.192

Please note* This decimal number line tool isn't a good one for decimal numbers less than one. For example, $0.5 \times 0.4 = 0.20$ or 0.2. So, the trick of counting digits after the decimal becomes necessary for these types of questions.

FOR a PRINTABLE COPY OF THE FULL VERTICAL DECIMAL NUMBER LINE UP TO 100, GO TO WWW.PITA.CA.RESOURCE.



VERTICAL decimal number LINE

quick tip

Make it safe for kids to tell: Every couple of weeks, give students a writing topic for a 10 minute silent write. Give them the choices for writing, that include an anonymous note about what you should know, e.g. who is being picked on, how people are feeling, a change they'd like to make in the class, etc. At the end of the writing time, everyone turns in their papers with no one knowing who wrote on the assigned topic and who has given you other information. If you do this early in the day, you can read the comments and address them in an appropriate way in a class meeting.



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