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App smashing



One Letter  
at a Time:  
Reader's  
Workshop



Fall Conference  
at-a-glance  
brochure



Middle Years  
Novel Ideas



Quick Tips:  
Ignite Your  
Students'  
Creativity

... and more!

## GET CHANGED QUICK!

Fun, High Activity, Easy Setup PE Games

In PE I try to get students out into the gym from the change room as fast as possible and keep them moving for the entire period. I try to make warm ups as fun as possible and begin a game right away with those who are ready to go to encourage students to change quickly as they hate to miss their favourite warm up:

### Warm Up Games

- **Lines:** Run to this line, back to that line. Hop on one foot along a blue line, walk backwards along a black line, etc.
- **Traffic light:** Red, green, yellow with stopping on red, running on green and walking on yellow.
- **Bean bag tag:** Students touch each other lightly with a bean bag and the person tagged get the bean bag and is it.
- **Bench switch:** You need four benches. Have students sit on a bench and when I say switch, they must switch benches. The last person to reach a bench goes to the center and stays inside a painted circle. The next time I say switch, people in the center can tag others that pass through the center. When almost everyone is in the center we change games.

### Three High Student Participation, Easy Setup, and Engaging Games

The first two games were created by Grade Seven students that I taught a number of years ago. The last game was taught to me by a Grade Four student who had learned it at camp. His name was Leif, hence the name Leif Ball.





**Hero**

**Supplies:**

- Foam rubber coated small sized balls
- Coloured pinnies for each team and have the “heroes” wear a third, separate colour.

Split your class in half with a team on either end of the gym. Each team has a hockey net to defend and no one except the goalie is allowed into the crease. The object of the game is to score as many goals as possible on the other team’s net. Students can try and score from their own side of center or pass the ball to each other and run in to the opposition’s end. Once students cross the center line they can be touched by any player on the other team and must sit where they are tagged.

Each team has a hero that is similar to the doctor in Doctor Dodge Ball. The hero has ten seconds in enemy territory to run across and tag their downed team mates. The heroes must make it back to their own side before they finish counting to ten. They must count out loud as they are rescuing others and opposition team members may not grab or block the hero. If the hero does get tagged out then the other team wins that round and you can restart another round.

The game is fast paced, and you will likely lose count of the score. By the end students won’t worry too much about that but will have had a great workout.

**Variations:**

- Start with two balls and then add in more to increase the pace of the game and involve more students.
- Add more “heroes”.

**Wall Ball**

**Supplies:**

- 20-30 balls

Split your class into two teams. Place twenty to thirty balls along the center line. The object of the game is to hit the the other team’s wall within the area between the floor and a chosen height. Use any visual line on your gym walls:

painted lines, top of the storage room doors, gymnastic mats, or masking tape dotted line to indicate the crossbar or goal line.

Everyone on each team is both an attacker and defender. They try to stop the ball from hitting their own wall, while trying to throw a ball from their own side to hit the other team’s wall.

Scorekeeping: I have one person for each team switch sides to count how many balls hit the other team’s wall. I usually give them two minutes and then whoever gets the highest total gets a point for that round. The scorekeeper gets to pick the next person to take their place. You can alternate boy/girl if you have a co-ed class. Line up the balls on the center line between each round, have players go to their own wall and then start again.

**Variation:**

- Younger students can play across the width of the gym instead of the length because they are not quite strong enough to throw the ball from one side of the gym to the other.

**Leif Ball**

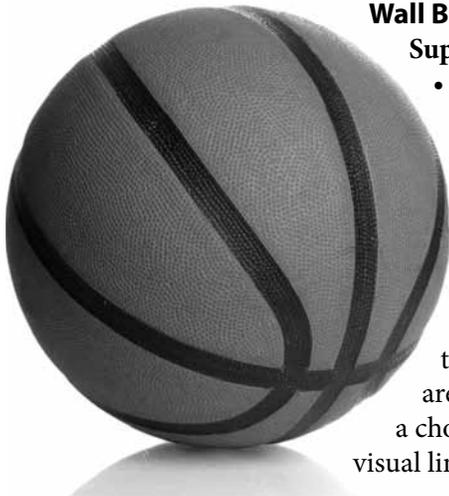
**Supplies:**

- 4-5 foam or utility balls

There are no teams for this game, everyone is on their own. Place the balls anywhere in the gym. To play, students hit the ball once with their hand, attempting to eliminate other players by hitting another player below the knee. The ball is played by hitting it by hand directly off the floor or out of the air as no one is allowed to pick-up or kick a ball. No one is allowed to play on their knees to try and reduce the target area for themselves.

When students are eliminated they still get to play. They sit on the center line and can still hit the ball towards students that are still in. After a few minutes you reduce the playing area by using just one half of the gym. If students go out of bounds they are eliminated and join the students that are sitting on the floor. You then stop and reduce the playing surface to one quarter of the gym, and then one eighth, and so on. The eliminated players form the boundary for those who are left in the game.

*Grant McNally has taught intermediate grades in the Coquitlam School District for twenty years. He currently teaches grade 4/5 at Cedar Drive Elementary.*



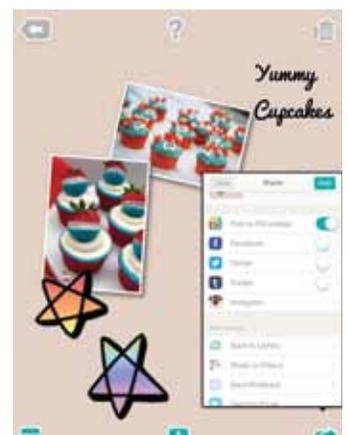
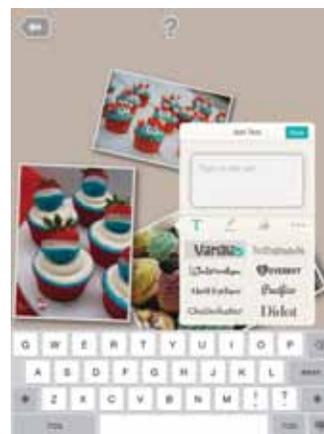
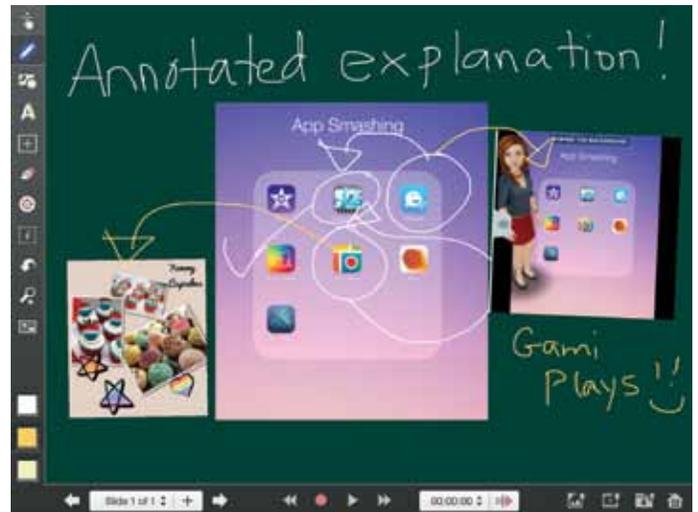
# App Smashing in the Classroom

Technology tools are becoming increasingly popular in the classroom, and none more popular than the iPad. In the past year, iPads have become a regular fixture in my classroom and lesson planning. Over time, my students and I began to realize that most assignments we wanted to accomplish with iPads could not be achieved with just one app. Enter – app smashing, the process by which you create a picture, video, or piece of text in one app and then “smash” it into another app. App smashing is the height of using technology creatively and effectively. Through the process of app smashing, the final product is only limited by student imagination, making the creative possibilities endless!

To effectively allow for app smashing, the creation a student makes in one app needs to be saved in the camera roll. When a creation is able to save to the camera roll, it can then be used in other applications. Students can ‘layer’ together apps and create wonderful, expressive final products. It is at this point, that I caution about when and where you should decide to app smash. In order for app smashing to be effective, it should be utilized to help students accomplish something that was not previously possible in your classroom, not just done for fun or entertainment. A lesson that incorporates app smashing should have a strong connection to the curriculum pieces you are hoping to cover.

Here are four easy apps that can unleash students’ creativity and allow for an app smashing learning time! Video tutorials can be found at [inquirybuddies.com](http://inquirybuddies.com)

**Tellagami** – Free/\$4.99  
 “Tellagami (rhymes with origami) is a quick and easy way to create and share a short story called a Gami.” – Tellagami site. In this app, you just select and customize a character. You can then personalize your Gami with your own voice and photos to be shared with others.



Screen shots of an Explain Everything tutorial describing how to smash Pic Collage, Tellagami, and Explain Everything.

Three ways I have used it:

- Students create a persuasive writing piece. For example, they could attempt to convince the principal that there should be an afternoon recess. Students would create the traditional written assignment. Then they would take their persuasive piece and create a Gami, using their voice to also persuade with their words.
- Students create public service announcements for issues in Social Studies, Science, and Health and Career.
- All about me – French Gami! Adding a new, exciting, fun way to practice their oral French skills!

### **Pic Collage – Free**

Pic Collage is a great way for students to present information at the end of a unit to represent their understanding of concepts. It is also a great app to place text over images and then put into other apps.



Students in various grades at my school created a pic collage to demonstrate their understanding of Healthy Living. They used pictures of healthy food and activities and then added text. The end result was a fantastic visual display of their learning! They then shared these with the class and explained why they chose the images they did!

Pic Collage can be used to take pictures of the work they are most proud of and create a one page documentation of their best learning each term, a sort of at-a-glance portfolio. Again, they could present to the teacher and their parents why they chose these six or seven items and why they were proud of these particular assignments.

### **Explain Everything – \$2.99**

Just like its title, this app can be used to explain everything. It is a whiteboard type screen that allows students to record audio, video, write, and move objects all while recording in real time. Students are able to annotate any object and explain their thinking. The beauty of Explain Everything is that it can be used in any subject area at any grade level. A Pic Collage creation can be smashed into Explain Everything. For example, the portfolio at a glance



mentioned above can then be imported into Explain Everything. The student can now annotate and explain why they chose each item. The portfolio at a glance can now be saved and sent to iMovie where students can then share their videos with teachers, parents and other students.

Win registration to the 2014 myPITA conference by emailing your name, phone number, and one compliment or criticism about this newsletter publication to [newsletter@pita.ca](mailto:newsletter@pita.ca). Limit one entry per person. Conference registration only applicable for the 2014 Fall conference.

### **Book Creator – Free/\$4.99**

Book Creator allows students to create their own original books that can then be saved in iBooks. I love Book Creator, because it is a great tool for leveling the playing field. Every student is able to make a fabulous looking book for a



variety of subject areas. Students in my Grade 7 class last year made ABC books about Ancient China using the Book Creator app. In the end, every student, whether they were artists or not had a visually amazing final product. Students in the Grade 5 class down the hall made books about themselves and their heritage. They incorporated collages they made in the Pic Collage app as well as Gamis created in the Telligami app. Many students made the Gami of a grandparent they had interviewed, and used their actual voice. Students also created books to describe their learning on year long inquiry projects. These final books included tutorials made in Explain Everything, Gamis created in Telligami, collages from Pic Collage and so much more! App smashing at its best!

*Nadine Keyworth is a grade 8 teacher and a digital literacy coach in School District 35 Langley. She is passionate about the authentic integration of technology in her classroom. Her blog is [inquirybuddies.com](http://inquirybuddies.com) She is also the Treasurer for myPITA. She is presenting workshop B09 Using Technology to Support Literacy in the Intermediate Classroom and C09 iPads in the Math Classroom at the 2014, Fall myPITA in Langley.*



*It is awesome. It is personal, so no one but Miss Ewan sees it so you can be honest. Also, sometimes it is easier for me to get my ideas down on paper, so writing it helps me share my thoughts.*

Jason Grade 7

## assessment for learning

# One Letter at a Time

## Creating Enthusiasm with Reader's Workshop

As a teacher, I am interested in my students' reading habits. I dutifully complete several reading assessments each year. However, the most valuable and honest information I receive is from letters my students write me called Reader's Workshop Letters. These letters have revolutionized my understanding of student reading habits.

*I like them because you can write about anything. You can ask questions or ask for recommendations! The books Miss Ewan recommends are always awesome.*

Catie, Grade 7

At the beginning of the year I set up Reader's Workshop. This is a time for independent reading as well as working on the Reader's Workshop Letters. Students write me a letter every three weeks. Their letters are a

personal conversation creating a place for honest feedback as well as an opportunity for me to connect with kids. Students can tell me that they do not like reading or that they struggle with reading, as this is a starting place. I provide students with a list of possible ideas to talk about in case they are stuck for a topic. I would rather students discuss two to three ideas in detail than skim the surface. I do not worry about spelling or grammar; I just care about the ideas.

What have I learned? How to create better readers. As I read the letters, I make note of authors kids love and recommend new books. I read about problems like dyslexia and how being ELL makes it challenging to find books. I celebrate students getting excited as they begin to identify as readers and I get to discover new authors for myself as I receive recommendation after recommendation. I learn how to be a better teacher for each student in my class. I learn so much through this small assignment is due every three weeks and I cannot imagine my class without it.

The first letter can be the biggest challenge. A few students will miss the point and provide a summary of the book they are reading. Kids are hardly ever asked to write about their reading habits, ideas, and strategies. This freedom can be scary to kids, but once they understand the concept it becomes a powerful tool.

This is not a high stress assignment, but used as assessment for learning or formative assessment. You can also use it with the personal writing performance

standard or as evidence of use of reading comprehension strategies. It is a powerful tool that is both predictable for the students and effective for the teacher.

### Reader's Workshop Letter Assignment Handout

*Reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting.*

Edmund Burke

Reader's Workshop will be a time for you to read a variety of books and explore reading comprehension techniques. Every three weeks I will ask you to write a letter to me regarding your current reading and the Reader's Workshop time. The feedback I receive from these letters will allow me to design instructional time to help you improve. It is important to remember that this letter is meant to be a communication tool and is not for retelling or summarizing stories! What you choose to write about is up to you, yet it can be difficult for some to determine what to write. Below are a few helpful suggestions to write about:

- What makes you want to read?
- Current authors, genres, and/or characters that you are enjoying and why.
- How we can best introduce or expose students to new books they might enjoy?
- Tell me about your reading: Write about what is going well, what can be improved, any help that you need, books you are interested in reading.
- What I can do as your teacher to ensure the enjoyment and sharing of reading during Reader's Workshop.
- What have you learned as a result of your reading?
- Do you have any current frustrations about reading?
- How do you like to share about reading?
- Any difficulty you are having finding books to read – why you think you are having so many problems.

Remember that regardless of what you write about, it should be detailed and well explained. Try to avoid writing about many topics with little detail. Rather focus on adding detail, explanations, opinions, and your thoughts.

*Melissa McEwan teaches grades 6/7 at Maywood Elementary in Burnaby and is on the myPITA executive.*



Give a little or a lot, there are lots of ways to be involved with myPITA: write or edit newsletter articles, be a member of a committee, on the executive, or help plan and run the conferences and more. Contact [president@pita.ca](mailto:president@pita.ca) for more information.

## myPITA executive

# President's Update

Summer 2014

### Resource-sharing

Although the ongoing dispute with the government has been very stressful and discouraging, we remain committed to our students and the professional development that helps us to be the best we can be. We encourage you to reinvigorate your teaching passion by networking with other dedicated teachers and browsing through the rich resources available on our website and on our associated wiki. BCTF has also launched a resource-sharing online service called TeachBC which replaces the old lesson aids library. Please browse and send in your own contributions to [pita.ca](http://pita.ca) and [teachbc.bctf.ca](http://teachbc.bctf.ca) and be sure to check out the resources and workshops offered by PITA's spin-off group that now operates as a non-profit cooperative: [startupyourclass.ning.com](http://startupyourclass.ning.com).

### Our new name: myPITA

There was rich discussion at last year's AGM about changing our name to better reflect our inclusion of teachers who teach the full range of middle years, Grades 4–9, and intermediate teachers. After further research and focus group discussion, the Executive decided to go ahead with the name change to myPITA (Middle Years and Provincial Intermediate Teachers Association). Teachers can access our website through both PITA and myPITA.

### Password

The password to access some resources on our website will be changing immediately following October's conference. Members will be emailed the new password.

### This year's AGM

Please join us for our AGM on Saturday, October 25 at 12:15pm at Yorkson Creek Middle School in Langley. There are two important resolutions to be discussed at this year's AGM. The first is a decision about membership fees for 2015 and the second is a decision to provide release time for the operation of the organization.

### Membership fees:

Fees were raised at last year's AGM to \$45 to make it possible to offer members the convenience and support of

a two year membership. The necessary resolution to allow PSAs to provide two year memberships was pulled from the BCTF's AGM at the last minute last Spring when a representative of an Advisory Council mistakenly believed that PSAs could already provide two year memberships, making a vote redundant. As this has not proven to be the case, we are back to square one of seeking approval from the Executive Council and the representatives at next Spring's AGM. In the meantime, we could consider reducing our one year membership to \$25 and offer a two year membership for \$45 when we are permitted to do so.

**Why offer two year memberships?** The goal of all PSAs is to encourage ongoing, interactive Professional Development – the sharing of wisdom and resources. PSAs therefore want to give new members time to develop a relationship and benefit beyond merely attending a conference. Wherever conferences are held, some members cannot attend because of travel costs or time so with annual memberships, relationships keep getting broken. A two year membership would allow members to stay connected and supported even during years when they don't attend a conference. It would also stabilize our systems and finances, making it much easier for our small group of volunteers to manage PITA's operations on top of our teaching loads.

The most common way for teachers to join is through participation in a conference and for many teachers this fee is reimbursed by Pro D funds. You may be wondering if that means that someone would get a discount on their conference fees if they attend two years in a row. This just isn't feasible from a workload perspective. A small group of volunteers gearing up for a conference just doesn't have the time to check the membership status of hundreds of teachers in the intense period leading up to a conference. We suggest a paradigm shift. Instead of thinking of the conference charge as including a membership fee, you could think of your participation in the conference as one way of strengthening the PSA you have chosen to join. Your conference registration would entitle you to two years of membership, including newsletters and online resources. Membership fees are used to subsidize newsletter and conference costs. A two year membership

**Continued on page 12**

# FALL 2014 CONFERENCE

**Friday and Saturday, October 24 and 25**

Offsite parking with a free shuttle from Langley Events Centre and Carvolth Exchange Park and Ride to

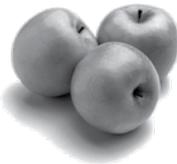
**Yorkson Creek Middle School, Langley**

*It's fast and easy to get to the Langley Events Centre 15-20 minutes from Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, or Surrey and 30-40 minutes from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Delta, Richmond, or Vancouver*



**Featuring:**  
**Adrienne Gear**  
**Diana Cruchley**  
**Tom Schimmer**  
**and**  
**40 other speakers**  
**presenting more than**  
**70 workshops**

**Register today**  
**at [mypita.ca](http://mypita.ca)**



## session one

ID	Workshop
A01	Assessment through new curriculum
A02	Nonfiction Writing Power: Linking thinking and writing to the content areas
A03	Tiger, tiger, burning bright: Painting in soft pastels
A04	Creating relevance with stories
A05	Inquiry buddies
A06	Picture books with pizzazz: All new for 2014–15
A07	Practically perfect poetry: From brainstorm to form
A08	Chris van Allsburg in the intermediate classroom!
A09	Teaching students with complex learning needs, including FASD
A10	Mathematical habits of mind
A11	Add pizzazz to Math with thinking games
A12	A new approach to understanding anxiety
A13	Texts take core French to a new level
A14	Looking at educational technology through Bloom's Taxonomy
A15	Cultivating creativity in your classroom
A16	Student inquiry...and then what?
A17	Twitter for new Tweeps!
A18	Teach students Business basics with Junior Achievement!
A19	Leading and learning through the Arts
A20	Do you want facts with that?
A21	Collograph: An easy introduction to relief printing
A23	Marketplace

## friday 9:30–11:00

Presenter	Grades
Tom Schimmer	4–9
Adrienne Gear	4–7
Jill Doyle	4–9
Bill Morphet	4–9
Bonny Kelly	4–9
Diana Cruchley	4–9
Bryan Gidinski	4–9
Nimi Sidhu	4–9
Janet Hohner	4–9
Susan Oesterle	4–9
Barbara Johnson	4–9
Deborah MacNamara	4–9
Wendy Carr	4–9
Isabella MacQuarrie	Middle School
Faith Garriock	4–9
Scott Hodges	6–7
Katherine Mulski	All
Irene Phan	4–9
Karen Deibert	4–9
Linda O'Reilly	4–9
Thomas Kero	Middle School

## session two

B01	Infused assessment
B02	Ideas for applying Reading Power strategies to your literature circles
B03	Step-by-step figure drawing
B04	Cartooning, anime, and manga
B05	Genius hour: An introduction to passion based learning
B06	Extreme writing: 16 ways to get your kids to beg for journaling
B07	Fact and fiction: Using research for multiple genres in writing
B08	Novel works
B09	Using technology to support literacy in the intermediate classroom
B10	Heart matters: What to do with children's feelings?
B11	It's not about the device, it's about the learning
B12	iMovie trailers for FSL learners
B13	BC Hydro Energy Connections program
B14	More of the best science demos ever

## friday 12:00–1:30

Tom Schimmer	4–9
Adrienne Gear	4–9
Jill Doyle	4–9
Wendy Anderson	4–9
Gallit Zvi	4–9
Diana Cruchley	4–9
Bryan Gidinski	4–9
Lori Villeneuve	Middle School
Nadine Keyworth	4–9
Deborah MacNamara	4–9
Shawn Davids	4–9
Katherine Mulski	4–9
Denise Browne	6–7
Peter Hopkinson	6–9

## session two continued

ID	Workshop
B15	Teaching government shouldn't be scary!
B16	Applicable Aboriginal lessons
B17	Yoga and tai chi with Action Schools! BC
B18	Math makes sense? You bet...and it's fun!
B19	PE is fun! Minor games for all ages and spaces
B20	The environment is your classroom
B21	Teaching students with complex learning needs, including FASD
B22	Marketplace

## session three

C01	Best evidence
C02	Reading Power: Review and what's new?
C03	Animation in any classroom
C04	Drawing inside and out
C05	Learn to play again with improv
C06	Inquire within: Rapid research that works
C07	Let the good times role: Critical thinking and writing in role
C08	Crashing into inquiry
C09	iPads in the Math classroom
C10	Cultivating a caring and collaborative classroom
C11	Teambuilding through social-emotional learning
C12	L'enseignement et l'apprentissage en immersion avec la technologie
C13	Inspiring creativity in the 21st Century classroom
C14	Visual journaling through ancient cultures: Egyptian amulets
C15	Enhancing learning through physical activity with Action Schools! BC
C16	Quick-ease: Stressless teaching and learning
C17	Genius hour: An introduction to passion based learning
C18	Ovoidism: Learning from the art of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun
C19	History is a verb
C20	Marketplace

## saturday sessions

D01	Guys write!: Nine sure-fire ways to inspire reluctant boy writers
D02	Measurement miracles and geometry greatness
D03	Ovoidism: Learning from the art of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun
D05	Literature circles: Engaging and easy to manage
D06	Looking at educational technology through Bloom's Taxonomy
D07	iMovie trailers for FSL learners
D08	Start Up! your classroom
D09	Classroom management for TTOCs

## friday 12:00–1:30

Presenter	Grades
Dameon Lorensen	6–9
Lisa Pugh	4–9
Shana Alexander	4–9
Kurt Gurney and Pat Bathurst	4–9
Trevor Rosencrans	4–9
Thomas Kero	Middle School
Janet Hohner	4–9

## friday 1:45–3:15

Tom Schimmer	4–9
Adrienne Gear	4–7
Jeff Chiba Stearns	6–9
Dave Stevens	6–9
Graham Myers	Middle School
Diana Cruchley	4–9
Bryan Gidinski	4–7
Lori Villeneuve	4–9
Nadine Keyworth	Middle School
Elaine Jaltema	4–9
Sheldon Franken	4–9
Katherine Mulski	4–9
Holly Lloyd	4–9
Melissa Lee	6–7
Shana Alexander	4–9
Barbara Feuring	4–9
Gallit Zvi	4–9
Thomas Kero	6–9
Tom Morton	4–9

## saturday 9:30–12:00

Diana Cruchley	4–9
Ann-Marie Hunter	4–9
Thomas Kero	6–9
Elaine Jaltema	4–9
Isabella MacQuarrie	Middle School
Katherine Mulski	4–9
Ray Myrtle	All
BCTF Facilitator	All



# FALL 2014 CONFERENCE

**Friday and Saturday, October 24 and 25**  
**details**

- Two fabulous days featuring over 70 workshops in every subject area
- Morning coffee, tea, fruit, and pastries
- Catered lunch of gourmet sandwiches, desserts, and more
- A welcome bag of teacher goodies
- PITA membership including: newsletters, password access to our continually-expanding online teaching resources

## **cost**

Discount fee available until September 30  
/higher price begins on October 1

- BCTF members \$155/\$190
  - Non-BCTF Members \$205/\$240
  - TTOCs, student teachers, and SEAs \$70
  - Saturday only \$45; students and TTOCs \$22.50
  - Register as a group of 3 or more and receive 10% off
  - Online registration closes October 21.
- In-person registration October 24 and 25 only for available workshops

## **location and transit**

There is NO on-site parking on Friday. There is ample free parking at the nearby Langley Events Centre with a free shuttle service running continuously from the Langley Events Centre and the Carvolth Transit Exchange 8–9am and 3:15–4:15pm. Please be ready to board the shuttle by 9am. Come early to enjoy the coffee (bring your mug), baked goods, and visit the Marketplace vendors. Shuttles will run every 30 minutes throughout the day; [www.mypita.ca](http://www.mypita.ca) for departure times from each location. Registered guests at the Holiday Inn Express and Sandman can register for a free Friday shuttle service between the hotel and the conference; not available on Saturday. NO on-site parking on Friday. On Saturday parking is available at Yorkson Creek Middle School and in the surrounding neighbourhood.

## **accommodations**

Friday only shuttle to conference available. Rates valid until September 23.

### **Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Langley**

8750 204th Street, Langley  
604-882-2000 or 1-888-771-7666  
[www.hiexpress.com/langleybc](http://www.hiexpress.com/langleybc)  
Rate Code: PIT  
Includes: Hot breakfast, free parking, and Wi-Fi  
Per night: \$97 for 2 queens

### **Sandman Hotel, Langley**

8855 202nd Street, Langley BC  
604 888 7263 or 1-800-726-3626  
[www.sandmanhotels.com](http://www.sandmanhotels.com) | [www.sandmansignature.com](http://www.sandmansignature.com)  
Rate Code: Provincial Teachers' Conference: Group #285382  
Includes: Free parking and Wi-Fi  
Per night: \$79 for 2 doubles

**Register today at [mypita.ca](http://mypita.ca)**

## A Timeline Should Be a Revelation

The timeline is an underachiever. It is a feature of textbooks but seldom realizes its potential to make history meaningful to students. According to Linda Levstik and Keith Barton, timelines “typically connect one thing that students don’t know much about—dates—with something else they don’t know much about—wars and politics.”<sup>1</sup> Here are some ways that timelines could overcome their desultory reputation and realize their potential to stitch together scraps of knowledge into a coherent big picture of the past.

### Tasks and Tips for Timelines

- Have students construct their own timelines as much as possible. Many excellent software and web site programs exist for constructing timelines, but students can make them just as well with butcher paper, coloured felts, photocopies, and any bric-a-brac that enlivens the product.
  - Encourage students to use visuals in their timelines. Use drawings or photographs of clothing and machines or tools from the past to go alongside wars, politics, and dates.<sup>2</sup>
  - Use the previously mentioned images to layer one topic on another on a timeline in order to look at continuities alongside examples of change.
  - Create a class timeline that everyone can see and refer to it often.
  - Have students connect any history topic, current events item, or their Heritage Fairs project to the class or individual timeline.
  - Conclude each Social Studies lesson by asking students which events or people or primary sources should be placed on the line. Students will often suggest discrete events with fixed dates so encourage the inclusion of elements of continuity that aren’t attached to any clear date such as food or family size.
  - Ask for timeline elements that show what life was like for a variety of people at a given time, for example, from different regions, ethnic groups, and social classes.
  - Encourage students to add relevant personal connections to the timeline. The Bringing History Home project suggests, “If a student finds something at home that relates to history, invite them to add it to the line. A dynamic, messy, full-to-the-brim timeline is a sign of a class that’s engaged in history full-tilt.”<sup>2</sup>
  - Once you have a number of items, use the timeline to tell the story of the period of history you are studying. This will help students make sense of the various elements and see the big picture. Give each student a placard or poster with an event, person, or trend that is present on the timeline. Get students to organize themselves in a line in the correct sequence to become a human timeline. Then, in order, have each student tell their portion of the story. This activity can also be done with cards in a small group.
  - If there are some timeline elements that don’t fit the one story use this as an opportunity to talk about different stories and different perspectives and explain how they could fit the story. Although a story can give meaning to the disparate elements of a timeline, we need to be cautious and critical in building one. Each story is a hypothesis to be investigated and retold based on more in-depth inquiries.
  - Allow time to discuss what the timeline reveals about the process of change, using questions such as those suggested by Christine Counsell of Cambridge University:
    - What story does your timeline show?
    - Why did you choose that event?
    - Why haven’t you included...?
    - Don’t you think this time line really shows...?
    - When I see your time line I see...
    - But that bunching up at that bit suggests speed! But the clustering up suggests things happened more quickly!!
    - Should you really end the time-line there?
    - A timeline should never be boring... it should be a REVELATION.”<sup>3</sup>
- Exploring evidence to answer an inquiry question in depth is at the heart of understanding history as a process of interpretation and the heart of Heritage Fairs projects. It is, in addition, one of the central ideas of the proposed new Social Studies curriculum.



*Kingsway: The biography of a street* shows an example of change over time in cars and not a specific event and date.

However, to make history meaningful students also need to link their inquiry to other significant narratives, for example, mainstream narratives such as the development of Canada or the evolution of human rights. Otherwise, students are left with fragments of knowledge. As well as helping to establish a sense of a period and reinforcing chronology, timelines can help embed the in-depth inquiry into the warp and weft of a bigger historical fabric. A timeline should be a revelation.

Piece adapted from Seixas and Morton (2013). *The Big Six*. Toronto: Nelson.

### Footnotes

1. Linda Levstik and Keith Barton. (1997) *Doing History*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 75.
2. Elise Fillpot. (2010) "Constructing Timelines," *Bringing History Home*, <http://www.bringinghistoryhome.org/about/introduction>, accessed 14-02-2012.
3. Christine Counsell. "Teaching about Historical Change and Continuity," *Schools History Project*, Leeds Trinity University College, <http://www.schoolshistoryproject.org.uk/ResourceBase/issues/CounsellChangeContinuity.htm>, accessed Feb. 17, 2011.

*Tom Morton, BC Heritage Fairs. Learn more about history as revelation at the History is a Verb workshop C19 at the myPITA conference, October 24, in Langley.*

### **President's Update continued from page 6**

system would allow us to save both time and money. Since we are a non-profit group, resulting savings would allow us to reduce future conference fees.

Win registration to the 2014 myPITA conference by emailing your name, phone number, and one compliment or criticism about this newsletter publication to [newsletter@pita.ca](mailto:newsletter@pita.ca). Limit one entry per person. Conference registration only applicable for the 2014 Fall conference.

### **Release time for running myPITA**

Every one of the members of our Executive does important tasks to keep our organization strong and supportive. The job of the President is to participate in the PSA Council, attend six days of meetings at BCTF, and ensure that all of our obligations are met, all reports submitted, and all Executive and committee members receive the support needed for the Fall conference, Spring mini-conference, newsletter, and website. This year, we hope to continue our support for the zonal and district days in Prince George and Nanaimo and offer more support for district days around the province.

After spending eight years contributing hundreds of hours on the Executive, I want to reclaim some personal time. Unfortunately, none of our wonderful current Executive members feels able to step into the Presidency at this time. We propose therefore to ask the membership to approve a one-day-a-week release for the President for the school months between the October 2014 AGM and the October 2015 AGM. BCTF would ask the President's district to pay his/her full salary and myPITA would reimburse the district for the cost of the replacement teacher for one day a week. This model was used by a previous President for several years. The large membership base of myPITA creates extra workload for the President but it also provides enough revenue to pay for this one day a week release. The participation of about 850 teachers at last fall's conference produced a surplus large enough to cover the cost. It is assumed that the President will continue to work from home without need for clerical support or travel costs other than the usual cost for attendance at meetings.

The Executive will be moving the adoption of this proposal at the AGM.

If you are interested in seeking a position on the Executive or on a committee, we would love to hear from you.

Elaine Jaltema [president@pita.ca](mailto:president@pita.ca)

*Elaine Jaltema teaches at Chaffey-Burke in Burnaby and is the President of PITA. She is presenting workshop D05 Literature Circles at the Fall 2014 myPITA conference.*



Write an article or a book, app, or web site review for the myPITA newsletter.  
 Submission deadline for the next issue is due September 30.  
[newsletter@pita.ca](mailto:newsletter@pita.ca)

## language arts

# Middle Years Novel Ideas

Check out the novel section of [www.mypita.ca/resources](http://www.mypita.ca/resources). You will find questions and answers for hundreds of novels, including the three reviewed below, so that you can test comprehension and engage your students in rich conversation. If you have misplaced the password, email [membership@pita.ca](mailto:membership@pita.ca).

### **The Wrap-Up List**

Steven Arntson, 2013, HMH Books for Young Readers, ISBN 978-0544232648, 240 pages.

Like many teachers, I am constantly looking for age appropriate novels that will engage middle-school aged students right from the start. *The Wrap-Up List* is an excellent book with a diverse set of characters that will appeal to students who are fans of romance, mystery, and/or the supernatural. The main character, 16-year-old Gabriella Riviera receives a red envelope from a magical creature called Death that helps people depart to the afterlife. Gabriella has a week to put her affairs in order and try to earn a pardon. After receiving her letter from Death, she compiles her 'Wrap-Up List' which includes a first kiss for herself and three of her best friends. The book is ultimately about identity, acceptance and belonging, important topics that resonate with preteen and teen readers. These topics are effortlessly woven into a wonderful story full of suspense friendship, and love. This book is recommended for students Grade 6 and up.

### **Wonder**

R. J. Palacio, 2012, Knopf Books for Young Readers, ISBN 978-0375869020, 416 pages.

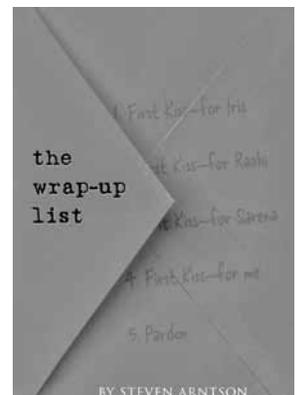
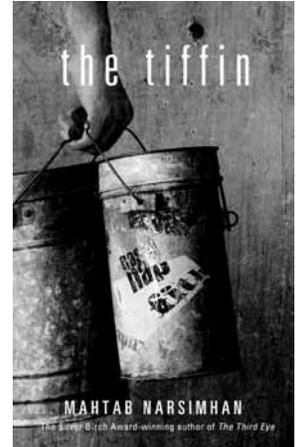
*Wonder* is one of the best books I have read. It is well written from the point of view of a variety of interesting characters. The central character is an unlikely hero and protagonist, Auggie, a ten-year-old boy who has a severe facial deformity that stops strangers in their tracks. Middle school is a world where even your average pre-teen struggles to feel like they belong, and Auggie teaches us that even with the cards stacked against you, your spirit can triumph. I think all students and teachers should take time to read this book which offers wonderful life lessons about kindness, compassion and human connection. We all have an inner strength that we should draw on to stand up for what we believe in, and Auggie stands as a great inspiration for all students and adults. This book is a wonderful addition for all intermediate and middle school classrooms.

### **The Tiffin**

Mahtab Narsimhan, 2011, Cormorant Books, ISBN 978-1770860391, 176 pages.

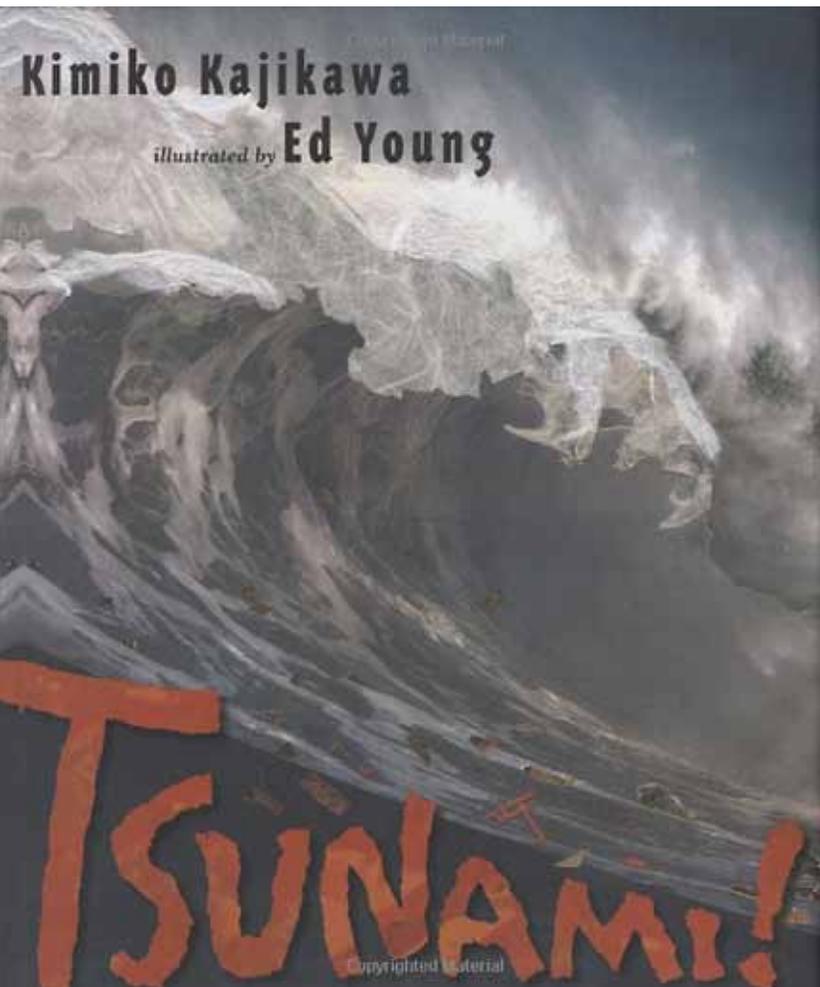
*The Tiffin* is set in modern-day Mumbai and follows a 12-year-old boy named Kunal. His story is crafted around the *dabbawallas*, delivery men who run hot-boxed lunches called tiffins to office workers all over the city. Kunal's story begins when his mother places a note to her beloved into his tiffin, and the tiffin is misplaced resulting in Kunal being raised by a cruel foster father, Mr. Seth. Thirteen years later, when Kunal discovers why his mother left him, he is determined to track down his parents. With the help of an old *dabbawalla*, Kunal makes many discoveries about himself and the true meaning of family. This is a beautifully written tale with phenomenal sensory details. You are transported to India, surrounded by the smell of spices cooking in the street, and the sensation of clothing sticking to the skin in the muggy heat. The relationships are complex and emotions run high. The city of Mumbai is a key character, giving students insight into a city and culture that may seem otherworldly to them but is very much grounded in reality. *The Tiffin* is a great novel for Grades 4-9.

.....  
*Nadine Keyworth is a grade 8 teacher and a digital literacy coach in School District 35 Langley.*



# cruchley's collection

Ideas and inspiration to use with



## **Tsunami**

Kimiko Kajikawa, Philomel Books, 2009,  
ISBN 978-0-399-25006-4, 32 pages.

In Japan, the oldest and wealthiest man in the village lives on the hill in his rice farm. One day he senses a problem, and when he sees the waters recede realizes a tsunami is coming. To draw the village to him, he sets his rice farm on fire and saves them all at the cost of his personal wealth.

## **Kimiko Kajikawa's Books**

Kimiko Kajikawa has been a writer since she was six and she published an article for *Seventeen* magazine when she was in her teens. The author of over a half dozen books, Kimiko is also the author of *Yoshi's Feast*, a famous Japanese folktale retold for the English-speaking audience.

## **Personal Writing**

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

1. A time when something didn't feel quite right.
2. A story about a grandparent.
3. A story of a weather related event in your life: earthquake, fire, falling tree, high wind, etc.
4. Giving up something for someone else like a present or something you wanted.
5. Identify a special someone in your life who helps others and write about what they do.

## **Tsunami**

This is a good time to study the science of the tsunami. These giant waves form where tectonic plates collide, where there is a gigantic, frequently underwater, eruption of a volcano, or after a meteor impact. 86% of all tsunamis come from underwater volcanoes or seismic shifts. These displace huge quantities of water suddenly. The water rushes in to fill the vacuum, thus explaining why the tide seems to go out suddenly and unusually far, and then rushes back out again in the form of a huge wave.

Refer to a list of the most destructive tsunamis in history, such as <http://www.sms-tsunami-warning.com/pages/destructive-tsunamis#.U8bOxKjTayM>. In teams of three have students prepare an illustrated report about one of the tsunamis that includes what caused the tsunami and why its one of the most famous ones of all time.

## **Torn Paper Illustration**

The book is illustrated with torn paper, pieces of cloth, and woven straw. This is an easy style of illustration for students to replicate in their own published book.

## **The Word Tsunami**

In Japanese *tsu* means port and *nami* means wave. The first time it was used in English was in 1897 in Lafcadio Hearn's *A Living God* in *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields*.



# language arts

## Student Tsunami Reports — Rapid Research

Students could research and prepare PowerPoint presentations on aspects of tsunamis:

1. The causes of the tsunami.
2. The destruction of Santorini 3600 years ago that destroyed the Minoan civilization across the Mediterranean.
3. The 2004 Tsunami.
4. The eruption of Krakatoa in 1883.
5. The Alaska Earthquake and Tsunami in 1946. Note: most websites are American in origin, and ignore the damage and death in BC communities.
6. A timeline of known tsunamis, especially featuring ones not researched by other groups.

## Personification and Similes

This book provides many opportunities to discuss and study simile, metaphor, and personification as figures of speech. Provide students with a typed version of the words of the book and ask them to seek them out. They should be able to find:

1. Golden rice fields waiting for harvest
2. A long, slow, spongy motion
3. The sea was running away from the land
4. Tsunami – the monster wave
5. Stalks caught like tinder
6. Like a swarm of ants
7. The sky roared
8. As high as a cliff
9. As wide as the sky
10. Heading for the village with lightning speed
11. Jolt mightier than any thunder
12. The mountain shuddered
13. Spray shot up the mountain like a dark cloud
14. The angry white sea swallowing up the village
15. The sea drew back, roaring, tearing out the land as it went
16. The furious sea devoured the village
17. Still raging as after a typhoon

## The True Story

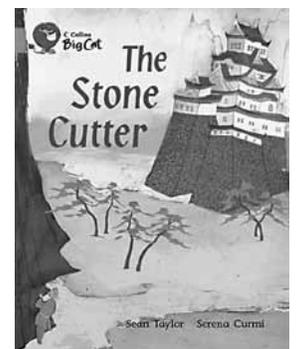
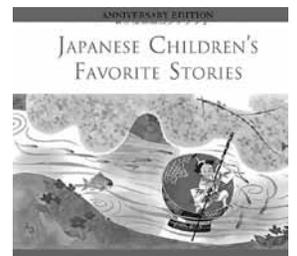
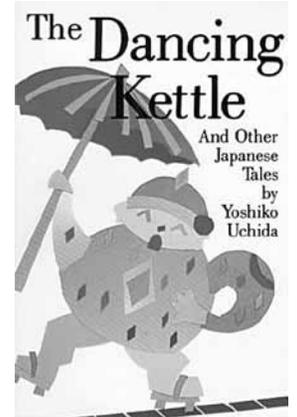
This book is based on a story in the 1897 publication by Lafadio Hearn called *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields*. The original wise wealthy man of the village was Hamguchi Goryo and there is a Japanese museum dedicated to

him. He was 35, not an old man, when it happened but the story is still wonderful. Making him older makes it possible for him to have life experience to tell him what to do. Ask students to research the real person at locations such as [www.town.hiragawa.wakayama.jp/](http://www.town.hiragawa.wakayama.jp/)

## Japanese Folktales

This is a great time to study Japanese folktales. Students can read the story, write their own version, and tell them to the rest of the class as an easy oral presentation. You could teach some of the skills of storytelling as well. Some famous examples in picture book form include:

- *The Dancing Kettle and Other Japanese Folktales*
- *A Tale of Two Tengu*
- *Japanese Children's Favorite Stories*
- *The Two Frogs*
- *The Mirror of Matsuyama*
- *The Stone Cutter*



*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. Contact Diana at 604-522-2863, [dcruchley@shaw.ca](mailto:dcruchley@shaw.ca), or visit [www.dianacruchley.com](http://www.dianacruchley.com).*

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*She is presenting workshops: A06 Picture Books that Pop, B06 Extreme (Journal) Writing, C06 Enquiring Minds Want to Know: Rapid Research, and D01 Guys Write! at the 2014 Fall myPITA conference.*





Contribute an article to the next PITA issue or send your comments to [newsletter@pita.ca](mailto:newsletter@pita.ca)

## quick tips

### Ignite Your Students' Creativity

Inspiring your students to be creative can be challenging. A great way to teach children about creativity is through collaboration and critical thinking; an important part of the 21st Century skills in the latest BC Curriculum guidelines. These are three fun activities to get creative juices flowing, won't break your budget, but will get your kids thinking.

#### Decision making on the fly

Divide your class into groups of five. Two groups of five will be given a piece of paper that will say: 15 things that are: round and red, flat and blue, or green and prickly, etc. Each group has one minute to come up with 15 items. Alternate between each team saying an item from their list. If an item is already said your students will need to quickly come up with an alternative. Anything goes; the whackier the better! Ask your students if everyone participated equally and if not, what could be changed for next time.

#### Improvisation

Organize your students into groups of four. Set the scene: If your chair only had two (or three) legs, what would you use to make it balance? Allow two minutes to talk about the scenario and then have them act out a short play. Challenging variation: set the play in a specific time period or theme they are studying. After each group has presented, ask what worked and what didn't? What would you do differently next time?

#### Creatively Building a Structure

Working in teams of two, create a tall structure using: four straws, two paper clips, two sheets of newspaper, and a limited supply of tape. Each group has two minutes to talk about their idea and then five minutes to build it. Have each group talk about their structure and why they built it. Ask questions about how they would build it differently next time or what they like about their current structure.

*Destination Imagination, Inc. is an international non-profit organization that provides educational programs for students to learn creativity, teamwork, and problem solving. [www.destinationimagination.ca](http://www.destinationimagination.ca), visit our booth at the Fall myPITA conference, or email [bcdestinationimagination@gmail.com](mailto:bcdestinationimagination@gmail.com).*

### Awesome Web Resources

#### Khan Academy Free

[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) lets students choose topics in Math, History, Sciences, and more. The site and videos are engaging and motivating for students of all ability levels, those who need extra instruction or practice and those who want enrichment. The online program moves students up through levels, based on their success. Video tutorials clearly teach the applicable concept. The website features thousands of educational resources, including a personalized learning dashboard, over 100,000 practice problems, and over 6,000 micro video lectures.

#### Sumdog Free or extra features via paid subscription

[www.sumdog.com](http://www.sumdog.com) lets students or teachers select Math topics and levels to be practiced. Students build their skills and speed by choosing from a variety of fun games. Sumdog monitors each student's progress and adjusts the questions and level of difficulty to meet individual needs. This program is free and very user-friendly for students and teachers to use individually or as a class. Teacher purchased inexpensive subscriptions offer students additional Math games plus more teacher options as well as reading and writing activities.

*Elaine Jaltema teaches grade 4/5 or grade 5/6 at Chaffey-Burke in Burnaby in addition to being the President of PITA. She is presenting workshop D05 Literature Circles: Engaging and Easy to Manage at the Fall 2014 myPITA conference in Langley.*



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