

# SECONDARY CONNECTION

MIDDLE SCHOOL / HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018

## RCSD Secondary Curriculum Department

### Catherine Beasley

Middle / High School Social Studies  
Curriculum Specialist

### Sheri Blankenship

Middle / High School District Literacy  
Coach (LDC)

### Dawn Bolton

Administrative  
Assistant

### Cindy Christian

Middle / High School English / Language  
Arts Curriculum Specialist

### Pamela Franklin

Middle / High School Mathematics  
Curriculum Specialist

### Brian Gaddie

Middle / High Instructional  
Technologist

### Angy Graham

Director of Secondary  
Curriculum and Instruction

### Montgomery Hinton

College and Career Ready  
Preparation Specialist

### Cassandra Vanderford

Director of Career Technical  
Education and Acceleration

### LaVonda White

Middle / High School District  
Mathematics Coach (MDC)

### Lorie Yates

K-12 Science Curriculum  
Specialist



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# New Teacher Spotlight

by Cindy Christian

Pisgah High School is the home to many experienced and well-rounded educators. The tradition of excellence continues with the new teachers who are currently a part of their faculty. One of these new teachers is Mrs. Stacy Jackson. As a former Mississippi State University Division I athlete and softball player, Mrs. Jackson knows that hard work and dedication are important to success. Her dedication to her students and their success is evident from the moment one steps into her room. She is originally from Amite County where she was taught by one of her co-workers, Mr. Barry Bean. Now, the former teacher and student work side by side as part of the Pisgah High School community

Mrs. Jackson brings passion and enthusiasm to her classroom each day. However, Stacy began her educational career in a non-traditional way. She has worked in the medical field as a healthcare provider at UMMC for the past eight years. As a medical professional, she discovered she loved working with children and this love eventually led her to teaching.

Stacy received her teaching license from the Teach Mississippi Institute Alternate Route Program sponsored by the University of Mississippi. When she is asked about her experience as an educator and a health professional she states, "The skills and knowledge that I have obtained over the years have given me an eagerness to

share and provide learning opportunities for all children as they prepare for their future."

As a classroom teacher, she is able to provide her students with the information they need to succeed in the real world. When she is asked about her favorite moments so far she states, "It has been fun getting to know the students and learning what works in the learning environment for them." In one of her classes, she provides her students with the opportunity to journal, collaborate, and research their career interests. She is a natural teacher who questions, listens, and responds lovingly to each one of her students. Mr. Craig Yates, the school principal confirms her abilities and claims, "Mrs. Jackson has had an immediate impact on our students and staff at Pisgah High School. The professionalism and poise she brings to the classroom are rarely seen in a first year teacher. In addition to her ability to lead instruction in her classroom, she brought with her a smile and positive attitude that brightens the classroom. We are fortunate Mrs. Jackson chose Pisgah as her new home."

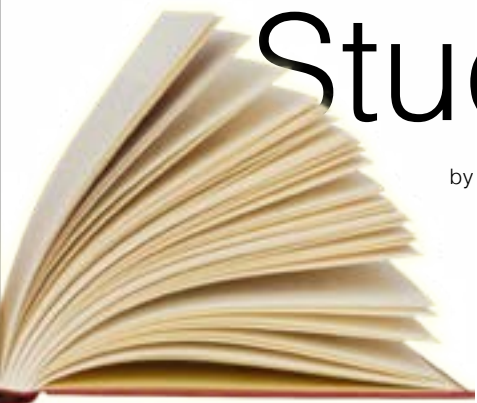
The Rankin County School District continues to improve and move from great to best. New teachers are an integral part of our future growth, and we cannot wait to see how Mrs. Jackson impacts her students and the educational community in our district.

## Stacy Jackson Pisgah High School



# ELA Book Study

by Cindy Christian



Teachers who are part of the 2017-18 Middle School and High School RCSD ELA Book Study Group met on December 12th to celebrate the end of a semester, discuss their texts, and fellowship with one another. The group is currently broken up into five different groups and reading five different texts related to English instruction and curriculum. The texts include: *Notice and Note* by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst, *Readicide* by Kelly Gallagher, *Teaching Adolescent Writers* by Kelly Gallagher, *Book Love* by Penny Kittle, and *Teach Like a Pirate* by Dave Burgess. The teachers were allowed to choose the books they were interested in reading and each month they meet for professional growth and collaboration.



# Poetry Out Loud Recitation Competition

by Cindy Christian

Lights, camera, poetry. The spoken word is a way for students to be able to translate the meaning of a poem to a live audience. The Poetry Out Loud Recitation Contest is a national competition that allows students the opportunity to compete against every other state in the nation for a \$20,000 award. Before students have the opportunity to win this cash prize, they must compete in a school and regional competition. Recently, Northwest Rankin High School held a school wide competition on December 13, 2017. Twenty-seven students in grades 9-12 participated in the local competition. From the field of twenty-seven students, thirteen were chosen as finalists, and three winners were announced. The overall first place winner will compete in a regional contest at Jackson State University in February.



Students who participated in the 2017 Northwest Rankin Poetry Out Loud Competition.

The Poetry Out Loud Recitation Contest provides students a list of poems that they can choose from to recite. Students memorize and study their poem in order to convey the meaning and interpretation of the poem. As Juniper Wallace, the NWRHS Theatre Department Chair, explains, "Poetry Out Loud is an excellent program that exposes students, who otherwise would not have the opportunity, to the power of spoken poetry. Poetry is meant to be read aloud...students who would struggle to comprehend the meaning with only the words on the page can see the true meaning behind the poem through the recitations." If your school is interested in participating in Poetry Out Loud, more information can be found online at [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).



Winners of the NWRHS Poetry Out Loud Recitation Competition: Taylor Mills (1st place), Nisa Hayes (2nd place), Mikayla Moore (3rd place)





# Race to Ron Clark

Would **YOU** like an opportunity to attend the **Ron Clark Academy** this summer? If so, be sure to participate in the **RACE TO RON CLARK** game!

The Rankin County Secondary Department Secondary Curriculum Department will be awarding 10 lucky Middle/High School Teachers a trip to visit the Ron Clark Academy. All you have to do is complete a RACE TO RON CLARK game card by April 27, 2018 for a chance to win! Drawings for the 10 lucky winners will be May 4, 2018.

For more information about RACE TO RON CLARK, click on the link below:

**Click here to get a copy of the game board, and see a video promoting the race!**

Bronze 1 space	Silver 2 spaces	Gold 3 spaces	Platinum 5 spaces
<b>No late arrivals for a consecutive time frame</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1/9 - 2/16</li> <li>2/20-3/29</li> <li>4/3-4/27</li> </ul> <b>Current professional school website</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Schedule</li> <li>Courses Taught</li> <li>Professional Picture</li> <li>Credentials</li> <li>Instructional Resources (syllabus, websites, blogs, etc.) <b>OR</b> link to Canvas course</li> </ul> <b>No absences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School related absences do not count against a teacher</li> <li>1/9 - 2/16</li> <li>2/20-3/29</li> <li>4/3-4/27</li> </ul> <b>Perform duty for a coworker during the school day</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morning/Afternoon/Lunch Duty</li> <li>No more than <b>two</b> per game card.</li> </ul> <b>Attend an extracurricular event for your school</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include proof of attendance (ex. selfie with scoreboard, team members, coach, etc. AND include #Great2Best</li> <li>No more than <b>two</b> per game card</li> </ul> <b>Participate in a school-related service opportunity w/ a school club or organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved service activity</li> <li>Include proof of attendance (ex. selfie with club members)</li> <li>No more than <b>two</b> per game card</li> </ul>	<b>Submit an article for Secondary Connection newsletter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact a Curriculum Specialist for topic approval</li> <li>Submission needs to include a picture or graphic</li> <li>Minimum of 200 words</li> <li>Final article submitted to principal and Director of Secondary Curriculum</li> <li>One submission between January 9 - February 7</li> <li>One submission between February 8 - March 9</li> </ul> <b>Plan a service opportunity with a school club or school organization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a plan with for the service opportunity</li> <li>List the purpose of the project for the community and students</li> <li>Plan of implementation</li> </ul> <b>#observeme - Participate in observation Participate in #observeme by inviting others into your classroom</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hang your sign (<a href="#">Robert Kaplinsky Link</a>)</li> <li>Send a picture of your sign to your principal</li> <li>Tweet a picture of your sign w/ school hashtag</li> </ul> <b>Participate and collaborate with other teachers across the district in professional development opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples include district wide book studies and zoom sessions.</li> </ul>	<b>Create and facilitate professional development for your school</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building administrator approval</li> <li>Topic is a district initiative related to curriculum</li> </ul> <b>Video a lesson in your classroom that demonstrates Best Practices in action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video should be no longer than 30 minutes in length</li> <li>Include a reflection with strengths and opportunities to grow as part of the video</li> <li>Have the principal sign off on completion</li> <li>Submit to correct area</li> <li>Examples of videos could include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gizmo (Science)</li> <li>TI Navigator/Nspire (Math)</li> <li>LDC mini-task (All content areas)</li> <li>FAL Collaborative Activity (Math)</li> <li>Achieve 3000 (All content areas)</li> <li>Utilization of Augmentation, Modification and/or Redefinition from SAMR model</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Host a parent academy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and facilitate a parent meeting with your administrator approval</li> </ul> <b>Examples of parent academy topics could include but are not limited to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dual Credit</li> <li>Testing</li> <li>Upcoming Events</li> <li>ACT</li> <li>Scheduling</li> <li>Subject Area Night</li> <li>New Graduation Endorsements</li> <li>Pre-registration</li> </ul>	<b>Obtain a CDL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drive a sub route for your school</li> </ul> <b>Create a proposal and plan for district professional development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit to Director of Curriculum</li> <li>Topic is a district initiative related to curriculum</li> <li>Should be planned for a minimum of a half day</li> <li>Limited to one submission per teacher</li> </ul>

## Race to Ron Clark

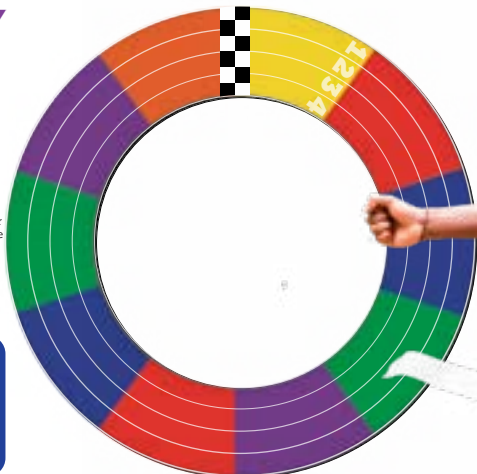
### HOW TO QUALIFY

- Teachers can compete in the "Race to Ron Clark Academy" by performing a series of activities.
- The activities are varied and worth one, two, three, or five spaces on the track.
- A race is considered complete once a teacher reaches the finish line on the track.
- Each completed track is ONE entry into the drawing - teachers may complete as many tracks as they can before the deadline.
- Once a teacher completes an activity, the teacher needs to list the activity in the appropriate space or spaces, and the school principal should sign on the race track space for proof.
- All entries must be turned in to the principal by noon on Friday, April 27th to be entered in the drawing. Principals must submit all completed entries to [rcsd-secondarycurriculum@rcsd.ms](mailto:rcsd-secondarycurriculum@rcsd.ms).

**April 27, 2018**  
Game Board DUE!

**May 4, 2018**  
Teacher Drawing

**May 31 - June 1st**  
Ron Clark Academy  
Atlanta, Georgia



# JUST CLICK IT!

BY BRIAN GADDIE

Computers and new technology: scary things for those unfamiliar with how they work. My focus so far this year has been to assist teachers with the implementation of different apps, programs and tech tools that they use to enhance and transform their classrooms. One thing that I have noticed along the way is that there are many people who are simply not comfortable with computers or other devices. This is where the idea for “Just Click It” originated. The best way to overcome your fears of a computers is to “Just Click It” and see what happens. You won’t break it, but you will learn something, usually one of two things, either “Great it worked!” or “Oh No! It didn’t work”. Something is learned in both scenarios.

The idea of “Just Click It” can be used with students as well. Students are, often times, not comfortable with the type of device or program that is being used in the classroom and will get behind because they don’t want to “break” anything. The point of this idea is to encourage students and teachers to explore the technology they are given, see what it can do, and develop questions during your evaluation and exploration. It is much easier to effectively integrate different types of technology in a classroom when you have explored the basic interface and workings of that device or application.

Some may say that there are some things a person should not click on while using a computer. That is correct. If a royal prince says that he has found \$5 million dollars that belongs to you, you probably shouldn’t “Just Click It.” However, the point of the entire idea behind “Just Click It” is to figure out what works and what doesn’t work and the only way to do that is to start clicking! Seriously, click away! See what happens when you click that small arrow next to the back button on the browser or when you right click on a file and choose the compress option OR when that random window pops up and gives a choice of yes, maybe, or no. Just click it and see what happens! Simple information that can make a big difference in technology literacy and understanding. Just remember, you won’t break it, so click away and start learning today.

## REMINDERS

- Google File Stream is replacing Google Drive on your computer. Make sure that you download Google File Stream as soon as possible. If you need assistance you may contact me at [brian.gaddie@rcsd.ms](mailto:brian.gaddie@rcsd.ms) or the help desk at ITD.
- This is your 5 month warning! New computers will be issued to teachers in may, which means that all teachers need to have all of their files and other saved items off of their computers by May. Move your files to Google File Stream or save them to an external device.
- Remember to be good stewards of bandwidth. YouTube should only be used for educational purposes and the fewer computers streaming on YouTube, the better. Help us have a fast, reliable network in RCSD by using the internet within the guidelines of the acceptable use policy.





# NALYZING & ADAPTING TASKS

by Pam Franklin & LaVonda White

The shift in mathematics rigor to a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application may be hard to accomplish without rich mathematics tasks. Students' exposure to an abundance of skills practice without conceptual understanding or application does not meet their mathematical need to learn through inquiry, reasoning, and sense making. Teachers are the most important resource for students and rich, high-quality mathematics tasks are essential for providing students the opportunity to engage in mathematics learning with deep understanding and excitement.

How do we know if we are providing students with rich mathematics tasks? The task review tool below can be used to help identify rich tasks.

Many websites provide rich, open tasks, but teachers can adapt the tasks they already have to create new opportunities for their students. Jo Boaler suggests five strategies to open mathematics tasks and increase the potential for learning through multiple methods, pathways, and representations.

1. Include inquiry opportunities. For example, instead of asking students to find the area of a 12 by 4 rectangle, ask them how many triangles they can find with an area of 24.
2. Ask the problem before teaching the method. For example, pose a problem for which students need to know a method before introducing the method to give a great learning opportunity through using intuition.

3. Add a visual component and ask students how they see the mathematics. For example, ask students to show their thinking visually. See Exhibit 1.1 and Exhibit 1.2 below.
4. Extend the task to make it lower floor and higher ceiling. For example, one way to make the floor lower is to always ask students how they see the problem. A great strategy for making a task higher ceiling is to ask students who have finished a question to write a new question that is similar but more difficult.
5. Ask students to convince and reason; be skeptical. For example, have students to reason by convincing themselves, convincing a friend, and convincing a skeptic.

We want to hear from you! Let us know how you have provided deeper learning opportunities for your students through rich tasks or by opening a task to make it rich. Email us at [lwhite@rcsd.ms](mailto:lwhite@rcsd.ms) and [pam204@rcsd.ms](mailto:pam204@rcsd.ms).

## Identifying High-Quality Tasks

The purpose of the task is to teach or assess:

☐ Conceptual understanding ☐ Procedural skill and fluency ☐ Application

### Rating Scale:

2 - Fully Meets the Characteristic  
1 - Partially Meets the Characteristic  
0 - Does Not Meet the Characteristic

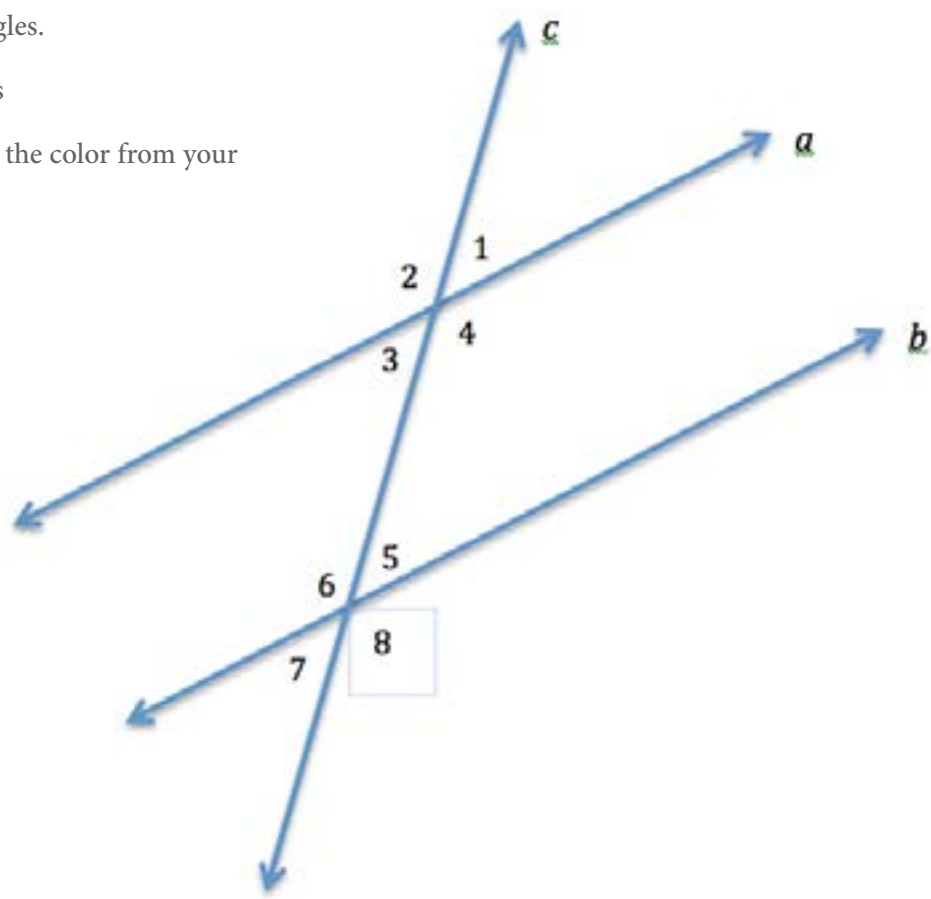
The mathematics task	Rating
Aligns to mathematics content standards I am teaching.	
Encourages my students to use representations.	
Provides my students with an opportunity for communicating their reasoning.	
Has multiple entry points.	
Allows for different strategies for finding solutions.	
Makes connections between mathematical concepts, between concepts and procedures, or between.	
Prompts cognitive effort.	
Is problem-based, authentic, or interesting.	

EXHIBIT 1.1

PARALLEL LINES AND A TRANSVERSAL

Parallel lines a and b shown below are cut by transversal c.

- 1. Use color coding to identify congruent angles.
- 2. Identify vertical and supplementary angles
- 3. Write about the relationships you see. Use the color from your diagram in your writing.



Vertical Angles:

Supplementary Angles:

Relationships:

EXHIBIT 1.2

PARALLEL LINES AND A TRANSVERSAL

Parallel lines a and b shown below are cut by transversal c.

- 1. Use color coding to identify congruent angles.
- 2. Identify vertical and supplementary angles.
- 3. Write about the relationships you see. Use the color from your diagram in your writing.

Vertical Angles

$\angle 1 \cong \angle 3$   
 $\angle 5 \cong \angle 7$   
 $\angle 2 \cong \angle 4$   
 $\angle 6 \cong \angle 8$

Relationships

$m\angle 1 + m\angle 4 = 180^\circ$   
 $m\angle 2 + m\angle 3 = 180^\circ$   
 $m\angle 1 + m\angle 2 + m\angle 3 + m\angle 4 = 360^\circ$   
 $m\angle 7 = m\angle 1$   
 $\angle 8 \cong \angle 2$   
 $m\angle 7 + m\angle 4 = 180^\circ$

Supplementary Angles

$\angle 1 \text{ and } \angle 2$   
 $\angle 3 \text{ and } \angle 4$   
 $\angle 5 \text{ and } \angle 6$   
 $\angle 7 \text{ and } \angle 8$



# Veterans Day Celebrations around the District

by Catherine Beasley

Veterans Day marks a sacred time designated to honor those who bravely served this nation. These men and women are America's heroes and have proudly fought to preserve the freedoms that we all hold dear. On this day, all over the district there were celebrations for our veterans which included service projects, speakers, and lunches. We are so honored and privileged that many of the veterans within our communities took time out of their day to come and speak with our students and show them the true meaning of honor.

## Brandon Middle School

Students in the Student Council made cards to send to veterans at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Jackson to wish them a Happy Veterans Day and thank them for their service.

## McLaurin High School

McLaurin High School has become well known in the community for the attention given to and celebration of our local veterans. Several years ago the Beta Club began a service project to honor a small local group of veterans that they felt were overlooked by the younger generation. From these humble beginnings, the Veterans Day Celebration has grown into a day of celebration for the school and community. The High School Beta Club hosted the 4th Annual Community Veteran's Day Breakfast on Nov. 10th. They hosted more than 30 local veterans from Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These retired and active veterans served in both peacetime and wartime and included personnel from all the military branches. The MHS Beta students have a tradition of sit-

ting and talking with the veterans as they enjoy breakfast together, to learn their stories, and show them how valuable an asset to our community they are. The Art Department always helps make a Wall of Heroes display in the MHS main hallway that puts faces and information about Local Veterans alongside exceptional Patriotic Art work. The MHS JROTC Program provided a Color Guard, Ushers, the Master of Ceremonies, Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Justin Coke, and the MHS Corps of Cadets in full dress uniforms.

All veterans in attendance were honored with a Beta Flag Walk and handshakes from

the faculty and students. Current MHS Bus Driver and US Army Major (Retired) Roy Brookshire served as the Keynote speaker. His comments honored the veterans and inspired all in attendance about the importance of duty, honor, and patriotism. The MHS Flag team performed a "Welcome Home" flag routine and the MHS band provided an impressive performance of the National Anthem and a sober closing to the ceremony with the playing of Taps. It was a special and memorable day for all in attendance and reflects well upon McLaurin High School and all of our talented students.





## Northwest High School

The JROTC collected images from around the school and community to create a video that was dedicated to the service men and women throughout the school zone and community. The school recognizes any teachers, staff, current and former students, along with their relatives who have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gvdY7Zo7Vc&t=42s>

## Puckett High School

On Tuesday, November 14th, Puckett High School held a Veteran's Day assembly for the whole school. The day started with a presentation of the colors from PHS JROTC and a performance of the National Anthem by the school choir. Master Sergeant Luis Vargas, a Vietnam War veteran, served as the keynote speaker and taught students about the meaning of the POW/MIA Table. This was a great opportunity for these students to hear from a veteran and also learn a little about a different side of Veterans day.

<https://www.vfwpahq.org/districtpost-tools/pow-mia-table/>



# Engaging Students in the Practice of Constructing Explanations

by Lorie Yates



*Rust on a nail is an example of a chemical change*

One of key elements of the MS College and Career Readiness Standards for Science is the Science and Engineering Practices. The new standards offer student-centered approaches for building content knowledge, practicing the skills of scientists and engineers, and developing literacy skills. The eight practices that are embedded in the new performance objectives of the MS CCRS for Science are:

1. Asking Questions and Defining Problems
2. Developing and Using Models
3. Planning and Carrying Out Investigations
4. Analyzing and Interpreting Data
5. Using Mathematics and Computational Thinking
6. Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions
7. Engaging in Argument from Evidence
8. Obtaining, Evaluating and Communicating Information

For the Science and Engineering Practices to become habits of our science students, we must provide them regular opportunities to practice those skills. In last month's newsletter, we focused on the practice of Developing and Using Models. This article will focus on the practice of **Constructing Explanations**.

## *What is an "Explanation" in Science?*

Scientific explanations are always based on evidence. In building scientific knowledge and developing a deeper understanding of concepts, students must go beyond making general statements based on memorized facts to articulating the scientific evidence that explains **HOW** and **WHY** something occurs.

As a basic example, most students have memorized by middle school that a rusting nail is an example of a chemical change, but may not be able to explain **HOW** the nail is changing or **WHY**. When students are given the chance to construct a scientific explanation for how rust forms, it takes their learning to a deeper level and helps correct common misconceptions like the rust is under the nail, the rust is "eating away" at the metal, or that rusting only takes place in water. A scientific explanation, constructed from evidence from reading, investigations, and discussions, will lead to a better understanding of chemical changes, the breaking down and recombination of elements and conservation of matter. Putting the statement with the scientific information that explains the how and the why is what makes a good scientific explanation.

Rust is an example of a chemical change because of the formation of a new compound. The chemical equation for this change is

$$4\text{Fe} + 3\text{O}_2 \rightarrow 2\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$$

Oxygen chemically combines with the iron in the nail to form a new compound, iron oxide. Although it looks like the nail is "breaking down", it is actually gaining mass as it changes from iron to iron oxide.

The diagram shows the reaction of iron and oxygen to form rust. On the left, there are 4 individual iron atoms (Fe) and 3 molecules of oxygen gas (O2), each consisting of two oxygen atoms (O). An arrow points to the right, where the products are shown: 2 molecules of iron(III) oxide (Fe2O3). Each molecule of rust consists of two iron atoms (Fe) and three oxygen atoms (O) bonded together.



## What are some strategies that can help you support the practice of “constructing explanations” in science?

1. Develop questions centered around the “how” and “why” of phenomena. For example, rather than ask “why does DNA resemble a spiral staircase?” (which becomes more of a description of the structure of DNA ), ask “How does the structure of a DNA molecule help explain why Jane has blue eyes but neither of her parents have that trait?” A question centered around engaging phenomena leads the student away from recall and labeling, to investigating the how and why. Watch this [Teaching Channel Video](#) for a few tips on the use of phenomena as a focal point for investigations and constructing explanations. Go to [NGSS Phenomena](#) and [#ProjectPhenomena](#) for a collection of relevant, engaging and meaningful phenomena.

2. Scaffold Student Writing. Use sentence starters, prompts, or graphic organizers to give students some ideas of what to include in their scientific explanations. See [Tools for Ambitious Science Teaching](#) for examples of scaffolding for discussions and writing in science. These [posters from Think Big Learning](#) provide sentence stems based on the Crosscutting Concepts of the MS CCRS for Science and help support students in thinking, talking and writing like scientists.

3. Use Talk Moves. Talk moves are strategies that help teachers facilitate productive discussions in class. There are many resources on talk moves for all content areas. Check out [this article](#) from The Teaching Channel.

4. Use Formative Assessment Classroom Techniques and Probes. The Rusty Nail probe from *Uncovering Student Ideas in Science Vol 1* by Page Keeley could be used to start a lesson on chemical changes. Here’s how it might look:

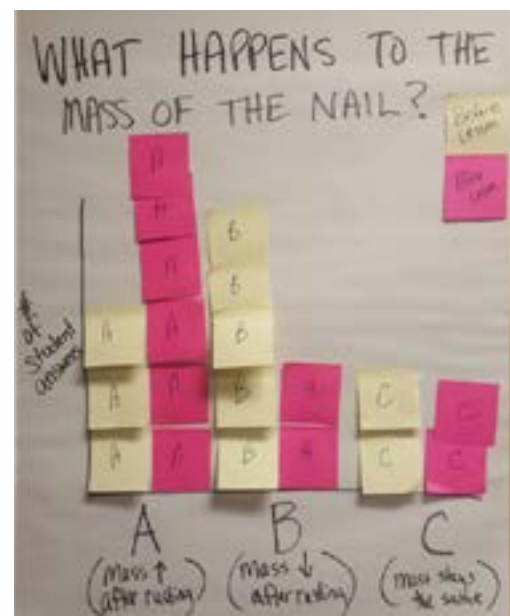
- » Return to the probe and allow students to once again choose an answer, this time on a different color sticky note. They may change their answers if they need to based on the new information from the lesson, but still have students write their final explanation for their choice on the back.

Through a process like this, you are encouraging talk, students are analyzing the ideas of others, building their scientific knowledge, and you, as the teacher, can see how their thinking changes through the course of the lesson

### Why is the Science Practice of “Constructing Explanations” Important?

Constructing explanations is a key practice of science and lies at the core of what the field of science is all about. Providing students with the opportunity to construct explanations helps them not only develop a stronger understanding of the science concepts we teach, but also helps them see how science knowledge in the “real world” changes as new evidence is collected. Students get to experience science, not as a set of textbook facts that need to be memorized, but as an ever-changing body of knowledge. Engaging students in this practice also provides the teacher a forma-

tive way to elicit students’ ideas, identify and correct misconceptions, and formatively monitor how students’ conceptions are changing throughout instruction. And, lastly, providing students with opportunities to practice the skill of constructing explanations in science helps support literacy skills, and other 21st century skills, that are essential to our students’ success inside and outside of the science classroom.



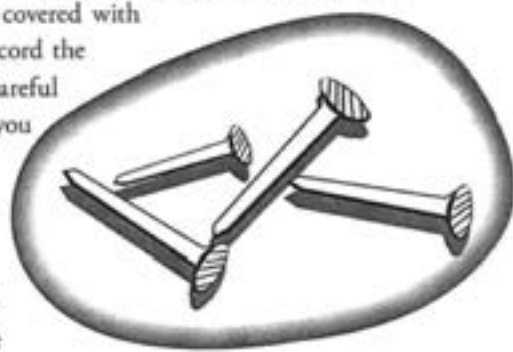
## The Rusty Nails

You have four nails made of pure iron. You record the total mass of the four dry nails. The four nails are put in a moist, open dish and exposed to the air over several weeks. Weeks later you notice the nails are covered with rust. You let the nails dry completely and record the total mass of the rusted nails. You are very careful not to let any of the rust fall off the nails as you weigh them.

What do you predict will happen to the mass of the nails? Circle your prediction.

- A** The mass of the dry, rusted nails will be more than the mass of the dry nails before they rusted.
- B** The mass of the dry, rusted nails will be less than the mass of the dry nails before they rusted.
- C** The mass of the dry, rusted nails will be the same as the mass of the dry nails before they rusted.

Describe your thinking. Provide an explanation for your answer.





# WHAT DOES COLLEGE AND CAREER READY MEAN MONEY WISE?

by Montgomery Hinton

From a study of 2003-2004 high school seniors who went to college by 2006, it was determined that 2 in 5 of these seniors took remediation courses in college. Students attending junior college needed remediation at a rate higher than 1 out of 2 (51 %). The cost of these classes reached over \$1.4 million. Additionally, these students are at a much higher drop out rate meaning they show a tremendous loss in income. In fact, according to a 2006 report by Alliance for Excellent Education, this cost the nation's gross domestic productivity a staggering \$2.3 million. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, college tuition has increased 63 % since 2006. So, the numbers above, if considered to be stationary, would actually look like tuition costs for remedial classes at a stunning \$2.2 million. An additional factor that is overlooked is the cost of college textbooks rose 187.5%.

We must be very intentional with our drive for College and Career Readiness. Holzer and Lerman stated in a 2009 article that 80% of future job openings will require either workforce training or postsecondary education.

Our students cannot afford to simply sit back.

PSAT SCORES ARE OUT! SO WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL ABOUT THE PSAT?

The answer is multi-fold. First, it provides valuable data that can be used to further enrich a student's academic achievement. It provides evidence to guide the student in the direction of which upper-level (and often college, credit-bearing) classes a student should be taking. Additionally, the PSAT gives the student a copy of the test and answers so that the student can prepare for the next high stakes



event by using his or her own individualized Khan Academy account! The greatest mileage gained from the test is that any junior-it can only be taken for credit as a junior-can qualify for a National Merit Scholarship.

\*\*\* In April of a student's junior year, about 50,000 students nationally are notified that they have been selected as a National Merit Semi-finalist. These students represent the highest scoring juniors in the state. Each state has a different cut off score, making the National Merit Scholarship Qualification Test (NMQST) different than the ACT and SAT. The cut scores vary year-to-year. These semi-finalists then undergo a process to move from semi-finalist to finalist.

In late September of the student's senior year, about 67% of the semi-finalists are notified that they have been selected as a commended students. While this does not provide the scholarship pool further discussed in this newsletter, it often does provide a student with some scholarship opportunities.

In February of the student's senior year, about 15,000 students nationally are named as National Merit Finalists. About 7,500 of these students receive notification in March that they have been selected for additional merit scholarships listed below.

In the state of Mississippi, only about 200 students in the entire state qualify for the distinction. These students represent only 1.33% of the National Merit finalist from across the nation and, more impressively, represent only 0.013% of the pool from across the nation.

### SO, WHAT IS AN AVERAGE NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP WORTH?

There are three different kinds of National Merit Scholarships.

#### **National Merit Scholarship:**

- A direct scholarship and provides \$2,500.00 towards a student's freshman year.

#### **College-sponsored Merit Scholarship:**

- A four-year renewable award ranging from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00 per year
- Most colleges want to brag about the number of National Merit Finalist they have. Therefore, they offer very nice compensation for choosing their program.

#### **Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarships:**

- A four-year renewable awards ranging from \$500.00 to \$10,000.00 per year or a dingle-payment from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00. Qualifications are set by the company.

\*\*\* Source: [www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com)

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DUAL CREDIT CLASSES?

According to a longitudinal study between ACT and Texas colleges, a student with dual credit classes greatly increases his or her chances of graduating. Not only that, the student usually graduates at a faster rate than students who do not earn any dual credit hours. Additionally, the dual credit student tends to earn about three additional hours when graduating than their fellow students. Thus, it is easy to conclude that these students not only save time by taking classes in a familiar environment but also the cost tends to be a fraction.

A student in Rankin County School District pays about \$100.00 a semester for dual credit classes. This is a miniscule of the cost of the hourly tuition cost of, as an example, Millsaps College where tuition costs as much as \$1,553.75 an hour. This means an average three-hour class at Millsaps costs \$4,661.25.

The study goes on to say that students with dual credit usually have higher ACT scores, which will translate into higher scholarships! The student also tends to rank higher in his or her graduating class, which again will translate into higher scholarships. Also, these students show lower rates of drop out than students without dual credit hours under the belt. Dual credit students tend to have higher GPAs in the first two years of college also.

So, let's get your child into dual credit today!!!

The ACT has released information stating that taking the ACT multiple times tends to lead toward a student attaining higher grades in college. Additionally, longitudinal studies have shown that retesters show motivation because they have been willing to give up multiple Saturdays. Multiple retesters have shown to be more likely to visit the professor after class or seek help either through asking questions in class or finding a remediation resource.

# SEQUENCING INSTRUCTION TO BUILD STUDENTS' SKILL OVER TIME

by Sheri Blankenship & Catherine Beasley



**Using a standards-embedded literacy module with the content for our courses is definitely a way to feel confident we as teachers are providing students with opportunities to grow and progress as readers, writers, thinkers, and discussers. BUT, how do we continue to help students build muscle in these critical areas even when we aren't in a module? How do we build bite-sized pieces of specific skills into the everyday world of our lessons and instruction?**



One way to consider is to plan **smaller lesson sequences** that are student-centered and offer both the teacher and the student opportunities for quick feedback on how well they have acquired or are acquiring the skills in question. For example, if I am a history teacher, one small **end goal** would be for my students to be able to participate in a rich, small group discussion around primary sources they have read as a part of a larger unit in the course. Now that I know what I want to target for students to be able to do, I can sequence **mini-tasks** in a way that empowers students to engage in the type of thinking it takes to complete the end goal. For example, it might look something like this:

*Defining key conceptual vocabulary words + Summarizing assigned primary source document in chunks + gathering evidence on a graphic organizer* = **student-centered preparation for growing rich small group discussion around assigned primary sources**

One example of Mini-Tasks I might choose to use to facilitate this sequence with my students:

*Key Vocabulary Anchor Charts + GIST Statements + It Says, I Say, and So* = **better prepared students for rich small group discussion using assigned primary source**

This sequence would be replicable multiple times in various units, and the repetition of this practice would help students grow more confident over time about how to be a responsible member of intellectual small group conversations.

This, however, is only ONE example of how/why we might sequence our instruction in this way. The **Sequencing Collection List** is a document that lists some of the main skills history teachers have identified that their students need assistance in having more practice with for their classes, along with some specific **mini-tasks** grouped together in a collection that allow teachers to purposefully plan lessons that allow students to work on these skills in a formative way.

For more explanation of what the Mini-Task is and what it is designed to do, check out this link in the Learn Tab of ldc.org. (You will need to log into your ldc.org account first and then the link above will take you directly to the page) Scroll about halfway down the page that is opened with the above **link** to “Characteristics of an LDC Mini-Task” and read to discover more about what makes a Mini-Task and what it is designed to do.

While it is true that our students are not all currently proficient in the skills we know they will need to be competitive, it IS true that we can meet them where they are and plan and facilitate purposeful instruction that, with regular practice, will move students ever closer to proficiency!

## ELA, SCIENCE, AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS:

# YOUR INPUT – YOUR VOICE – YOU ARE NEEDED!

## WHO

Grades 6-12 ELA, Science, and  
Social Studies Teachers

## WHAT

Task Workshop opportunities to  
collaborate with others in our district  
as we select and refine the Teaching  
tasks for our course modules

## WHEN

Please see the attached google  
docs for more information:  
ELA, Science, Social Studies

## WHERE

Use this Zoom Link to join us at the  
designated time



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RANKIN COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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GREAT TO BEST