

SECONDARY CONNECTION

MIDDLE SCHOOL / HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019 | ISSUE 11

SECONDARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR KEELEY TATUM

FREEBIES
for Science Teachers

*World Language Standards
for Idiots*

**The Social Media
DISTRACTION**

*Analyzing
Sources*

What's **POPPIN'**
in ELA

Spotlight on Art

*The TESTING
Adventure*

Soft Skills

the *Resource* issue

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO TEACH SMARTER



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THE SOCIAL MEDIA & CELL PHONE DISTRACTION: SETTING THE EXAMPLE

BY BRIAN GADDIE

Social Media and cell phones, some of the most commonly heard words today. It's everywhere and a part of almost everything we do. Our schools have it, businesses, students, teachers, administrators, and so many more. We are bombarded by it on a daily basis. I've talked many times with teachers about methods of implementing social media into their lessons and how it can be a really great way to engage students in the assignment or project and that is a great lesson, but it's not what this article aims to discuss. We will look at the other side of social media today, the side that many agree with but many more do nothing about; the side of social media that is distracting not only our students but teachers as well.

I've said many times to teachers that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook have a place in education and can be used to add a relevant perspective to a teacher's lesson. However, current research shows that cell phones are the biggest distraction for students in classrooms today. Over 90% of students over the age of 13 have a cell phone and a majority of those phones are smartphones, which means social media is accessible anytime and anywhere. Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and all the others are at students' fingertips everyday. There is much more research on the effects of too much screen time for children and teens but the purpose of this article is to figure out how we got here in education and where are we headed from here. Why is social media so intriguing? How can we make our classes more interesting than something like Facebook or Snapchat? What are we doing to take our classrooms back from that stingy little device with all of the pretty pictures and interesting status updates? I believe that poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best when he said "What you do speaks so loud that I can't hear what you say."

One effective method of teaching is modeling. You model what you want your students to learn. You show them in addition to telling them and you do it how you want them to do it so that they are fully aware of the expectations placed on them. Have you figured out where I'm going yet? We must model the behavior we desire of our students. Sure, there will always be that student who would rather chew sand than follow the directions of a teacher but for the most part, modeling expectations is an effective way of managing student behavior and your classroom. Cell phones and social media are no different. There must be a definite line between official classroom use of cell

phones and inappropriate use that is distracting. If I am on my phone at the front of the classroom or while I am in class, the behavior I am modeling is in direct conflict with the outcome that I desire from my students. In order to change the environment of our classroom from one that is constantly battling cell phone and social media use we must change the behavior we model both in and out of the classroom when it comes to those things.

There have been several posts shared on Facebook that show the amount of notifications students in one class received during the block. The teacher had the students come up to the front of the room and mark under the appropriate category every time they received a notification. The numbers were astounding! Hundreds of notifications were noted on the paper. Our students are bombarded everyday with some sort of notification or update or post or text message or any number of other things on their phones. Let's figure out a way to clear the air of those distractions in our classrooms. Let's give the students' brains a rest from bombardment and nourish with knowledge and lessons that will follow them the rest of our lives. Overall, let's set the example. Let's be the change we want to see in our students when it comes to cell phones and social media and model the behavior that we expect and know to be necessary for a successful and effective classroom.

TECHNOLOGY REMINDERS

Please remember that your computers are filtered from home as well as at school. Repeating, the school filter is still on your computer at home and it sees what you search for; please be aware.

Spam emails are on the rise. If it looks suspicious or even it doesn't but you weren't expecting the email, it's probably spam. Spammers are good at making their emails look like legitimate emails from a company that you do business with. If you are unsure just go to the actual website on another tab and see if the notification is there as well (Amazon is a good example). As Dr. Amanda Harris so wisely said in the case of suspicious emails, "Ignore, Delete, Don't Click the Link."

Do a little spring cleaning on your computers and get all those desktop icons organized or moved around. And backup everything to Google Drive. ■

Engaging in History

by Amber Armstrong, Anna Lindsey Hall, and Grace Mercer
USH Teachers, Northwest Rankin High School

As second semester began, US History students at Northwest Rankin High School started to dive into their study of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Students were given an opportunity to further their study by taking a field trip to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the home of Medgar Evers. This year, 188 students were able to take advantage of the opportunity to hear and see the experiences of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi.

For the first stop of the trip, students traveled to Jackson to visit the home of civil rights leader, Medgar Evers. The home is currently owned and operated by Tougaloo College, but it is in the process of being turned over to the National Park Service. Tougaloo sent a tour guide from their Department of History and Archives to share with the students about the work that Medgar Evers was doing in the state of Mississippi to help African-Americans achieve equality through education, voting rights, and the integration of facilities. Students were guided through a tour where they were able to hear the story of the night Medgar Evers was murdered in his driveway by Byron De La Beckwith. Being able to see the actual bullet holes in the walls and stand where Medgar Evers was slain, was very powerful for the students.

Then, students proceeded to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum to explore the struggle of Mississippians who fought for freedom and equality. Through the galleries, students were able to learn how Jim Crow laws affected the lives of African-Americans on a daily basis, see the names of lynching victims from all over the state, watch videos on how a grassroots movement began to fight discrimination, and see how, through the Civil Rights Movement, change started to occur in our state. At the museum, students even got to meet Hezekiah Watkins, who was arrested at the age of 13 with the Freedom Riders. Mr. Watkins told stories of his experiences during the 1960s when he was arrested more than 100 times and even shared a jail cell with Martin Luther King, Jr.

This unforgettable experience will hopefully resonate with students and inspire them to "be the change" they wish to see in the world and stand up for injustices happening in the world today. ■



As we embark on our much needed and well deserved summer break, I know we all will be thinking of and planning for the 19-20 school year and how to move our students from great to BEST. This newsletter article is dedicated to a plethora of resources for you to explore while planning for the upcoming year. Let's make 19-20 **supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!**

What's Poppin in ELA?

by Jana Comer

A cover is not the book, so open up and take a look!

Websites

- [Set the Stage to Engage](#)
- [CommonLit](#)
- [Newsela](#)
- [Achieve the Core](#)
- [National Writing Project](#)
- [ReadWriteThink](#)

Using Stations and Games in the ELA Classroom

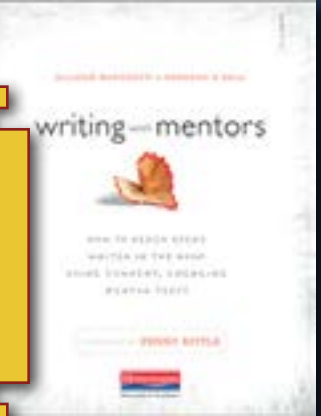
Using games and stations in the ELA classroom can help transform a regular class meeting into a meaningful, more student-centered event that students are sure to remember because they are active participants in their own learning. In using these games and stations, it is crucial to remember "The Rules of Rigor" as explained by Hope and Wade King, authors of *The Wild Card*:

To every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and then the job's a game.

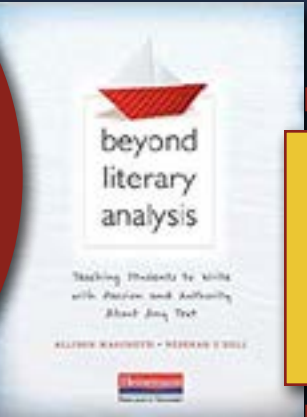
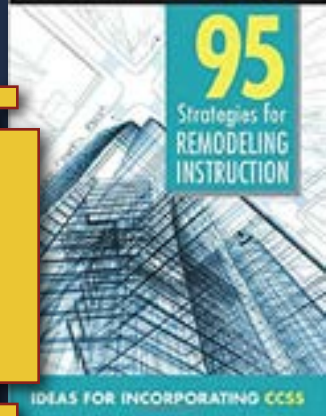
Go for application instead of memorization
No student becomes invisible; everyone is accountable

Books

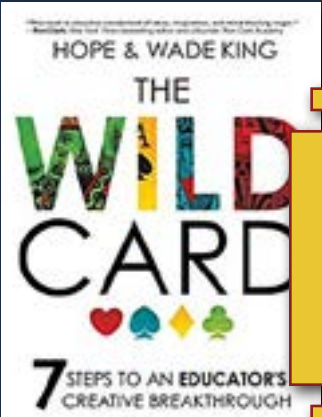
Writing with Mentors: How to Reach Every Writer in the Room Using Current, Engaging Mentor Texts



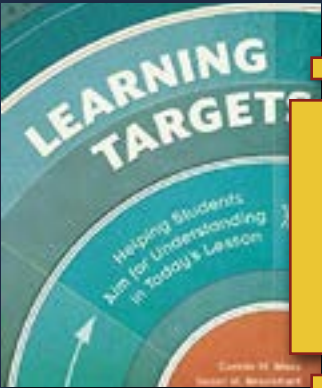
95 Strategies for Remodeling Instruction



Beyond Literary Analysis: Teaching Students to Write with Passion and Authority About Any Text



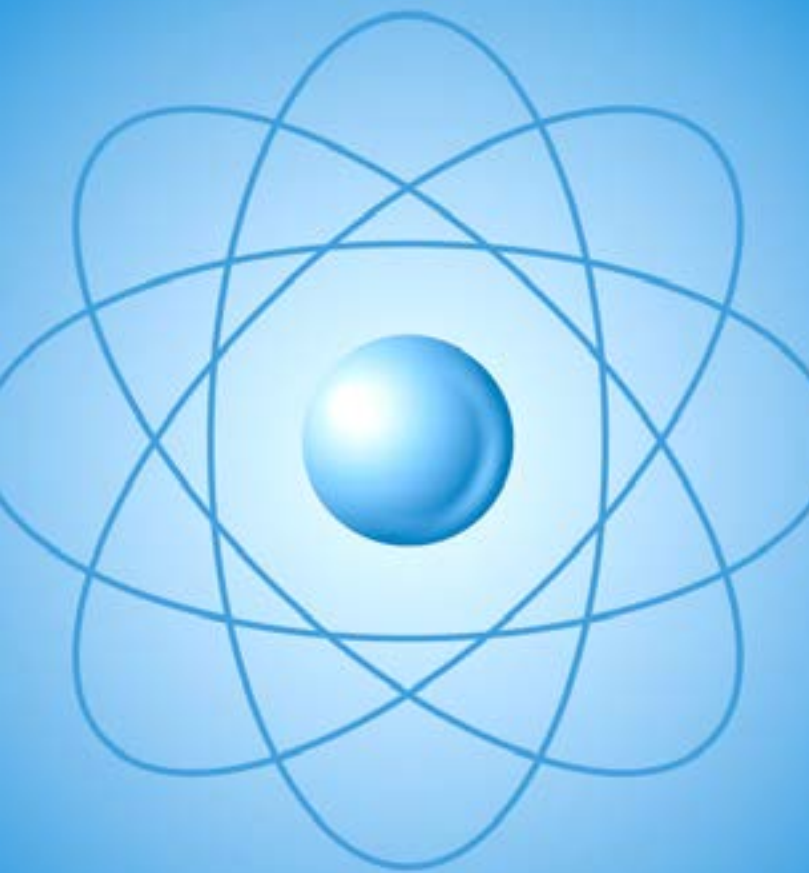
The Wild Card



Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today's Lesson

FREEBIES FOR SCIENCE TEACHERS RESOURCES TO HELP STUDENTS EXPERIENCE SCIENCE!

By: Lorie Yates



From biology to chemistry to earth science, these websites and resources will help your students learn more about the world around them - they'll make observations, notice patterns, and use evidence to support claims. Whether they're exploring with genetic simulations, designing solutions to combat climate change, exploring videos of weather phenomena, or learning from real-world scientists, these resources will help you design lessons that allow your students to experience the content and the science practices of the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Science. Links are embedded in the title of the resource.

Video Channels

YouTube Science Rock Stars

GeekWrapped has collected some of the best science video channels and put them all on one page for easy access. Many of our "go-to" video channels are there: Crash Course, Bill Nye, Khan Academy. However, there are dozens of other quality channels as well. Disclaimer: As always, please preview any video before using it in your lessons.

Annenberg Learner

Annenberg Learner has a wide variety of resources for teacher professional development, lesson plans, interactives, and videos.

NBCLearn

RCSD teachers have access to this collection of historic news reports, original video content, and current events coverage.

PBS Nova Lab Videos

NOVA Labs engages learners in games and interactives that foster authentic scientific exploration. From predicting solar storms and constructing renewable energy systems to tracking cloud movement and designing RNA molecules, NOVA Labs participants can conduct investigations by visualizing, analyzing, and sharing the same data that scientists use.

Real-time Virtual Science Lessons from the California Academy of Sciences

Let's Chat About Weather

Join students across the country to explore these phenomena. Your students will become meteorologists and explore weather patterns around the globe. Then they build on their knowledge of long-term weather patterns to describe regional climates.

Dates: Thursday, March 21, 2019

Scientist's Scoop: Make Every Day Earth Day

In this interactive program, students will take on the role of Planet Heroes as they are challenged to design and implement solutions that will benefit wild-life, ecosystems, and global communities through one surprising avenue: our food systems!

Friday, April 19, 2019

Monday, April 22, 2019

Asteroids, Meteors and Comets - Oh My!

Within the vast expanse of our solar system, between the planets and beyond, amazing discoveries are being made about asteroids, comets, and meteors. In this program, your students will become astronomers for the day by using hands-on models to explore "small bodies" in our solar system, and taking a guided virtual tour of this system we call home. Throughout this interactive program, your class will have multiple opportunities to ask Academy educators questions, and engage in scientific conversations with our experts!

Dates: Friday, May 10, 2019

Meet Real Scientists

Skype a Scientist

Skype a Scientist matches scientists with classrooms around the world! Scientists will skype into the classroom for 30-60 minute Q and A sessions that can cover the scientist's expertise or what it's like to be a scientist. Students get the opportunity to get to know a "real scientist." Skype a Scientist has over 2000 scientists ready to chat, and teachers can choose the type of scientist that will fit their classroom. Let's start a conversation!

NASA Chat With a Scientist

Welcome to the Scientist Chats feature! When there is a live chatting event, the details on how you can get involved will be listed here.

Have a question now for NASA scientists? You can always tweet us @NASAScienceCast, check out [Ask a Scientist](#), or ask us a question with our new [Ask search feature](#).

View [previous NASA Scientist Chat transcripts](#)

Scientists at the Smithsonian

Video archive of interviews with scientists at the Smithsonian.

Article: "Using Social Media and Technology to Encourage Students Evidence Based Discussions"

Article focuses on how to connect with scientists and other science teachers as a way to teach students how to engage in discussions about science using evidence. Author describes how, through Twitter, his students were able to connect with real scientists. By following and interacting through social media, this led to several video chat sessions with the same scientists.

Teachers across the world have used Twitter as a way to follow the ongoing work of scientists. Students can connect with scientists around the world. As a result, many teachers have reached out to scientists who were willing to talk to the class via Zoom, Skype or Google Hangouts.

Science Simulations

Cal Poly Pomona

This website is a collection of interactive multimedia and animations developed in collaboration with the Cal Poly Pomona faculty.

PhET Interactive Simulations

Founded in 2002 Nobel Laureate Carl Wieman, the PhET Interactive Simulations project at the University of Colorado Boulder creates free interactive math and science simulations. PhET sims are based on extensive education research and engage students through an intuitive, game-like environment where students learn through exploration and discovery.

American Association of Chemistry Teachers

Each issue of Chemistry Solutions, the periodical of the American Association of Chemistry Teachers, contains a simulation. This page collects and describes simulations from past issues.

eSkeletons

eSkeletons provides an interactive environment in which to examine and learn about skeletal anatomy through images and content created by the faculty, staff and students at the University of Texas.

ExploreLearning Gizmos - Teacher Blog and Webinars

We know Gizmos is a great resource for simulating investigations, data collection, and data analysis. But, ExploreLearning also provides opportunities to learn new ways of using Gizmos through their regular Blog and Webinar series. Check this out for new ideas on how to get the most out of this resource. ■

Let the Adventure Begin!

by
Montgomery
Hinton

The question often posed is when to actually start testing. Are we testing too much and too often? The answer is a practical yes. Then, it is a resounding no also.

According to an article in [The New York Times](#), Harvard, UCLA, and University of Virginia saw 25% of the incoming freshman class apply with both an SAT and an ACT score in 2013. Additionally, at Princeton, almost 47% of all applicants submitted both SAT and ACT scores. In fact, the dean of admissions states that the more data points they have on a student the better. This is almost counter-culture. However, it is very important to know which one can garner you the best score.

We suggest that any Fall 2019 sophomore or freshman who would like to take the PSAT in October does! Again, you cannot qualify for National Merit without that score which only counts your junior year. Also, it is another test. It is another data point. It additionally could point you in the direction of the test that not only gains you college admissions but also major scholarship monies.

Another reason why multiple testing might also be a real positive is brought to light in this [New York Times](#) article. It is possible that on any given day circumstances that simply cannot be anticipated arise. It could be that you simply don't feel well or even comfortable in the environment that you are testing. Lou Holtz once said that 5% of sports is mental. Motivational speakers often discuss having the mental edge. A lack of mental edge is definitely not what anyone would want for a high stakes test. What

if your dog runs away? Any kind of mental distraction on a test is a setback. Also, as described within the article, the simple classroom environment can be itself disturbing and/or distracting. Band practice, marching brigades, rash weather, or even a proctor can set the tester back.

So, what's the remedy for that? Do it again. Never quit! However, if you prepare and nothing changes, maybe radical change-whether it be of location, technique, mental, etc.-is needed. Be open to all possibilities. Do not let a negative result set you back. While the ACT advertises that 57% of people who test again see a positive result, let's not lose focus that about half (43%) do not have a positive result. So, go again.

You may need a different test i.e. switch from the ACT to SAT. You may want to try to take the WorkKeys test. We highly recommend that you take this test as some point in your junior or senior year. Get some positive wind going! Get some positive results and build from there. Every feather that you can put in your cap could help push you towards a new career or college-opportunity.

As of January 31, 2019, Mississippi has 105,225 people with a National Career Readiness Certificate and almost 1700 employers supporting it. In fact, many businesses in Mississippi will no longer hire an employee who not only does not have a NCRC but who does not have an NCRC credential meeting the employer's required threshold. This [link](#) will take you to the current state of affairs in Mississippi. If you are interested in getting a look at the current condition in Rankin County, simply click [here](#). Bill Crawford recently cited the extreme importance of not only your ACT score but also your ability to market yourself successfully in the workforce. Read the article [here](#). If you are interested in more information on Workkeys, go to our Rankin County School District site [here](#). If you are interested in taking the Workkeys test and you are a junior or senior, please feel free to email Montgomery Hinton at mhinton@rcsd.ms. Please include your name, grade level, and school attending. ■

RESOURCES, RESOURCES, AND MORE RESOURCES

by Rhonda Kilgo and LaVonda White

There is a myriad of educational resources available today for any of the formative or summative needs a teacher may have. Companies from all across the nation are offering products and teachers may become inundated with emails and advertisements. Sorting through resources can be cumbersome and time-consuming. In this article, we are spotlighting some of the resources our district offers and some resources with free versions that our teachers are using across the district.

The resources highlighted in this spotlight are in no way an exhaustive list of all resources available to teachers, nor are they resources chosen based on preference. We would like feedback from you if you are already using any of these resources, if you try any of these resources, or if there are other resources you feel are better suited to teachers' needs.

Resource Name: Edulastic

Cost: Free with upgrade version available for cost

Grades: K-12

URL: www.edulastic.com

Edulastic is a platform for personalized formative assessment for K-12 students, teachers and school districts. With Edulastic, teachers have access to questions, including technology-enhanced items, and pre-built assessments from the free Edulastic Certified item bank. The item bank contains questions from publishers like Engage NY, Inspect and Carnegie Learning. State-released test items have also been included in the item bank. This resource can be integrated with Google.

Resource Name: Go Formative

Cost: Free with upgrade version available for cost

Grades: K-12

URL: www.goformative.com

Go Formative offers real-time data for your classroom through formative assessment. Teachers can create their own formative or choose an editable formative from a public library of thousands of pre-made formatives. This resource allows teachers to upload and transform any PDF or document into a formative. Interactive questions are available, including drawing, drag/drop, audio recording, graphing, essay, math typing, and resequencing. Teachers have access to live responses and can track student growth over time. Integration with Google, Classroom, ClassLink and Clever is available.

Resource Name: Math XL for School

Cost: District purchased per student

Grades: 6-12

URL: www.mathxlforschool.com

Math XL for School is an online homework, assessment, and tutorial program. Assignments are automatically graded and provide immediate feedback for students. Teachers can personalize homework assignments and study plans for their students. Courses created in Math XL for School can be linked to any available Pearson textbook. This resource also offers pre-built assignments and assessments aligned to the textbook you choose.

Resource Name: SMART Learning Suite Online

Cost: District purchased for grade 6-8

Grades: 6-8

URL: www.suite.smarttech.com

SMART Learning Suite is a cloud-based lesson library and delivery platform. This resource allows teachers to save their SMART Notebook, PDF, and PowerPoint lesson files in the library, add game-based activities, and then send lessons to student devices so they can play activities and co-create in shared workspaces.

Resource Name: Desmos

Cost: Free

Grades: 6-12

URL: www.desmos.com

Desmos offers students and teachers free access to four-function, scientific, and graphing calculators. With this resource, users can graph functions, plot data, evaluate equations, and explore transformations. This resource also offers teachers access to hundreds of digital activities for use in their math classes and the ability to build their own activities at Teachers.desmos.com.

As we approach textbook and resource adoption time, we hope to raise awareness of what is currently being used across the district. If you would like more information or have questions about any of the resources featured in this article or others which are of interest to you, please contact the Mathematics Curriculum Specialists. ■



Spotlight on the Arts

by Paula McClain

Professional Development for teachers can go one of two ways: either it is something that you already do or you really learn new approaches and skills that are applicable to what you do. We hope that our district-wide Professional Development days are spent wisely. We strive to really make sure that they are necessary and needed, and not frivolous.

This past February, our Visual Arts teachers district-wide were able to have a wonderful opportunity to learn under the direction of former Art teacher, Candy Cane. If her name sounds familiar, it's because she is also a well-known local Mississippi artist. The teachers spent the first part of their session with Ms. Cane learning how to implement multicultural lessons and new techniques into their programs.

As teachers, we know that sometimes you just need something to spark new ideas, a new way to view things, or just one small thing you could do differently to impact your students' learning. That's exactly what Ms. Cane did for them.

The second part of the day was spent actively stretching canvases and creating art. Candy not only showed our teachers how to do what she does every day, she guided them through actually creating it! Honestly, she gave up the secrets of how she makes art that she sells. She allowed our teachers to be able to learn her techniques, so that may then take them to their own campus.

What went on that during that Professional Development is going to allow our students to learn new skills that will hopefully lead to them: winning art more competitions, obtaining spots in highly sought after college programs, as well as scholarship money. That is the ultimate goal, to benefit our students with everything that we do every day! ■



FINE ARTS CLASSES MAKE YOU SOFT!

AND THAT'S A GOOD THING!

by Paula McClain

Your students today will be searching for jobs tomorrow. So, what exactly are the skills they need?

If they are truly looking for career that will last; not just a job to get by for a few months, they will need to have certain “soft skills.”

To understand what a “soft skill” is, first, you need to understand what a “hard skill” is.

A hard skill is something you learn in formal education, that is quantifiable and easily tested. These are the main components of what you need to be able to actually do your job. These include skills like computing numbers, being able to draft proposals, and writing computer programs.

Soft skills are considered interpersonal skills and really make up the rest of how you do what you at your workplace. In the past, these skills were not focused on; employers found that even though their employees could do the tasks they were asked to do, there was something more that was missing. They needed to address the issue of how their employees interacted with one another as well as clients, customers, suppliers, and vendors.

Hard skills are the “WHAT” and soft skills are the “HOW.” Both are needed to land the jobs that will really impact your students’ lives. Yes, they need to know how to actually complete the task they have been assigned, but how they go about completing that task is just as important in today’s job market.

According to BusinessInsider.com, there is a list of these specific skills that the students of today will need for the careers of the future; all of these skills are taught in the Fine Arts classes right here in Rankin County!

There are four main soft skill categories that Maria Leighton, of BusinessInsider, says that will truly be key to your students getting that all important job after (or during) college:

Leadership
Communication
Collaboration
Time Management

When we break these skills down there are subcategories for each of them.

Leadership consists of body language, strategic thinking and informal leading

Communication includes communication, influence, and feedback.

Collaboration involves listening, building relationships, and managing others.

Time Management has two objectives workplace habits and delivery or completion of task.

Why do employers now have to look at the soft skills of a candidate? According to Alison Doyle, writer for www.thebalancecareers.com, when hiring a potential employee, they not only need to know that the person can do the job they are assigned, but they also need to know how the candidate is going to interact with others. Soft skills are, “Much harder to learn...they are also much harder to measure and evaluate,” say Ms. Doyle. However, employ-

ers are now going through courses and training on how to detect a candidate’s soft skill abilities during the interviewing process.

One of the techniques employers use for this process is pre-screening interviews. This is fairly common in the work world now. Most of these pre-screeners are a list of questions that the candidate answers, but not in person. In the business world, usually candidates for a position, he or she video their responses, and electronically send them in to the Human Resources via e-mail. “First Round Interviews” as these are commonly known by are short and the candidates only have around 5-7 minutes to get their answers in, so first impressions really do matter! These questions are designed almost completely for figuring out the potential candidates’ soft skills, while the hard skills are usually tested through another method.

When looking at the main four soft skills and what skills those are composed of, our Fine Arts Department really comes to mind. I know some people may look at these courses as frivolous or extra, but they truly are focused on teaching all of these skills daily.

I would argue that every Fine Arts class focuses on multiple if not all of these skills.

However, I think we need to look at just a few examples:

Body language, for example, is what Theatre Directors really emphasize. They try to teach students how to convey emotion with no words at all.

You cannot get through a Band season without good communication and listening skills. Being able to listen to your Directors and your Drum Majors, as well as communicate with in your group, is vital.

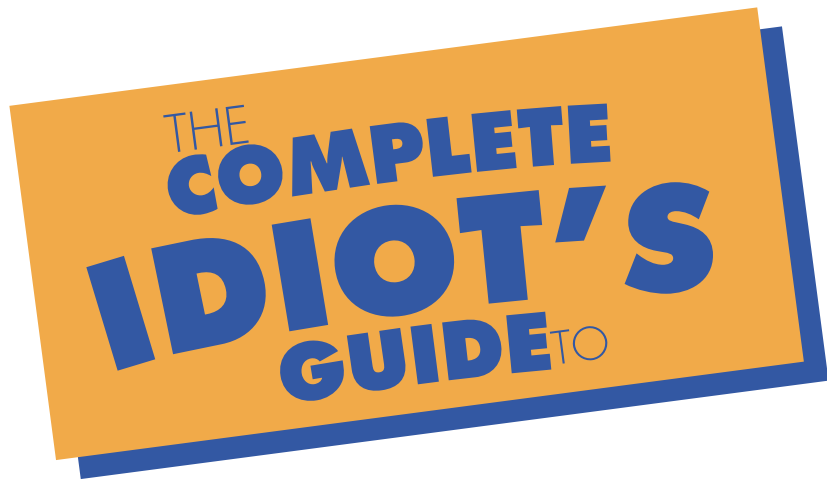
Our Show Choir and Choir Directors focus on students learning to collaborate with one another as well as learn to have good workplace habits. Students learn quickly that they have multiple things they need to accomplish in a short time and must do so while working together.

Visual Arts teachers have students learn the value of managing their time, listening to feedback, and complete tasks in a timely manner. Students in our Visual Arts classes may have several projects that overlap; students must be able to listen to ongoing critique, make changes, and still turn in their projects on time.

You see, our Fine Arts Directors and Teachers really focus on these job skills every single day. It’s just part of the job they do without thinking, but is vital for our students to learn.

So, encourage your students to take a Fine Arts class, even after their one credit is earned. After all, the skills they learn in that class could help them land that all important job that could change their lives! ■





World Language Standards

by **Gordon Vanlandingham**

Every day when I walk into my classroom I'm greeted with visions of a French countryside, and the beauty of the French language. I look around and can hear taxis and smell the pastry shops. I almost feel like I'm in the middle of the Paris—then I'm hit in the face with a stray paper-ball and I'm quickly reminded that I am instead locked in a room with twenty hormonal teenagers that seem to have made it their personal mission to butcher the French language beyond recognition. My question to educators in my district is “When is the last time you were in a world language classroom?”

For many of us the answer is probably high school, or maybe a few of us took a semester or two in college. Aside from that, I would venture that very few educators know how high school world language classes work. This isn't said to call anyone out, but rather to start the conversation on how world language classes function because they are vastly different from other classes. Rather than standards that focus on analyzing texts and backing up claims with evidence, or understanding the importance of “number sense,” world language classes focus on five standards, appropriately called the 5 C's. These standards are overarching for each language, and they change in complexity and difficulty based on the level of language the student is in.

COMMUNICATION

Arguably one of the more important standards, communication is more than just face-to-face communication. Encompassed in this standard are three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Communication in a world language classroom is deeper than just being able to speak the language. Students are expected to be able to speak, read, and write in target language (TL). If getting students to speak wasn't hard enough, imagine having to get them to become proficient readers and writers in a different language! Communication is my personal favorite of the standards. I will say, if you aren't prepared to hear the language you so dearly care about butchered within an inch of its life, then maybe consider a different profession. I love the new and fascinating pronunciations that students come up with!

CONNECTIONS

In addition to teaching students how to communicate across three different modes, world language teachers also strive to connect their curriculum to other classes in the established high school curriculum. Like any class, some of these are easier than others. History? No problem. Geography? Easy breezy. Math? Let's talk about the metric system and do some conversions! But keep in mind, all of these cross-curricular connections should be happening in the TL, which makes everything a little more difficult. While the connections in my classroom might seem a little basic, it is fun to see my students race against each other while doing simple math problems. I've never seen students get more excited to yell out that deux et deux font quatre!

CULTURES

Oh boy, this one is a doozy. As a student in a world language classroom, this was what got me hooked on studying languages. I can safely say that there are plenty of students that don't care a lick about the cultures behind the language they are learning. Just for fun, I encourage you to ask your students how many of them have travelled outside the South, and then ask how many have travelled outside the country. I would dare to say that most foreign language teachers see this as another one of the most important standards. It can be summarized by the Three P's (I know, more alliteration) of a country: practices, products, perspectives. It's impossible to split language and culture—if you're curious about this, look into the term “languaculture” coined by Michael Agar in 1994. Through the teaching of culture, I feel like I am doing my part in broadening the perspectives of my students and making them more mindful of how things function outside of Mississippi. It can also be interesting to see just how far a country can go before students decide they've crossed a cultural boundary. Ask your students how they feel about open-air urinals in Paris!

COMPARISONS

I think of comparisons as the “light bulb” standard when it comes to teaching world languages. It's through the comparison standard that students are able to examine their own language and culture with a new critical eye. I remember struggling in English when it came to grammar, but after I spent many years studying French, certain areas of English grammar were easier for me to understand. I can't even count how many times I've answered the question “Why do the French say (insert something slightly different than what we say in English)?” The easiest response to get them thinking about their own language use is “Well, why do we say it like this in English?” In addition to the linguistic “Aha!” moments, it's great to see students compare their own culture with that of the language they are studying.

COMMUNITIES

A healthy list of standards wouldn't be complete without one that seems just a little bit impractical, right? For world language, it's the community aspect. Now, if you are a Spanish teacher this is a little easier, as students are expected to use the new language to interact with others who speak the language they are studying. Well, there are many more Spanish speakers within a stone's throw than there are French speakers. So, we have to be creative! One cool way that we get communities involved is a pen-pal system that one of the French teachers at Northwest started. It's awesome to see students get excited to be able to read “real French,” like the stuff I have been teaching them is some...foreign language?

If you haven't had the chance to meet the world language teacher at your school, I encourage you to do so! Sure, there are times we mutter under our breath in our respective languages, but we really do have a lot of fun! I think a lot of the fun we get to experience is because our standards are so fluid. Fluidity within our standards allows us to be more flexible and spend more time making these kids into well-rounded world language students. ■

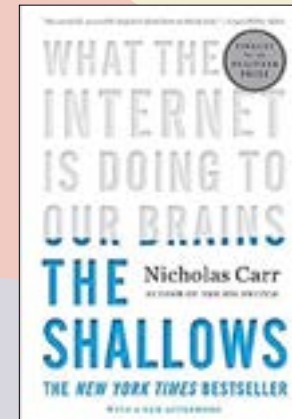
Professional Reading and Colleagues: Invaluable Instructional Growth Resources

by **Sheri Blankenship**

In 1997, the National Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute at Western Kentucky University and two professional reading books changed the trajectory of who I was in the classroom. I knew that I wanted to be able to *teach* writing, not just *assign* it as it had been done to me in my own education as a student, but I didn't know how to do what I wanted to be able to do. Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents* and *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher showed me insights into their own classroom practice and how I, too, might use a workshop model for middle school writers where they could learn to craft the words inside of them to share with the world. Through colleagues introducing me to these teacher researchers and writers, I found a new world of educational research to support my need to continue to learn and grow my instructional practice that has continued for over two decades. Over time, and through networking and sharing what I've been reading and learning what they've been reading with fellow teachers and administrators, I have grown a personal professional

library that has deeply impacted my ability to deepen my knowledge base about what has the biggest potential to make an impact on the students we teach. While we may not have the time and/or resources to go to all the conferences that sound interesting, we can tap into the rich world of educators who have shared their practice and their experiences through books, and we can also tap into the rich resource we have in each other by sharing what has made an impact on our own thinking as we continue to read professionally!

Below, you will find 5 of our RCSD teachers and administrators who have graciously agreed to share some professional reading that has been significant in their own growth as an educator. Please click the link in the right column of the table below to hear what each teacher or administrator has to say about this book! And if you would like more recommendations, here is a [link](#) back to our March edition of last year where you can find five more professional recommendations from our RCSD colleagues. Happy professional reading!



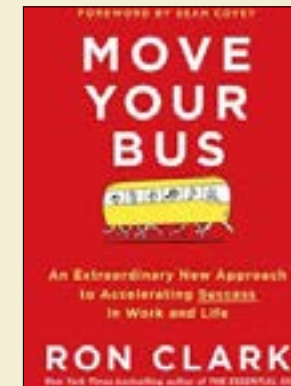
Dre Helms teaches Business and Marketing classes at Florence High School.

[*The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brain*](#)



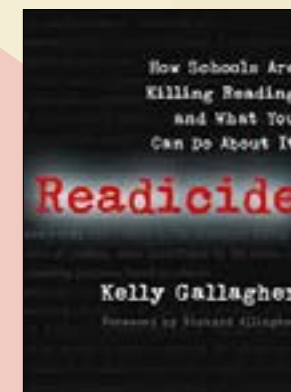
Raquel Hollingsworth is an English teacher at Puckett High School.

[*180 Days*](#)



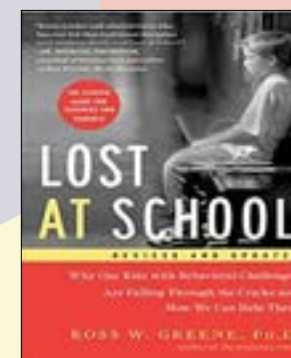
Kelsey Nobles teaches Math at Pelahatchie High School.

[*Move Your Bus*](#)



Keeley Tatum is an English teacher at Richland High School.

[*Readicide*](#)



Lori Nail serves as an Assistant Principal at Northwest Rankin High School.

[*Lost at School*](#)

Analyzing Sources

by Catherine Beasley

During this school year our focus in social studies was on integrating primary sources within the content. By continuing to give students a variety of opportunities to dive into history and analyze different points of view helps to develop their understanding of the context, past a single narrative or event.

The following resources are some that I have seen being used throughout the district this year, as well as some new ones! I hope they can help you continue to stock your teacher toolbox as we move into the last few months of school.

The American Memory Project

A Library of Congress collection of primary source documents focusing on American History. The site includes print images, audio, and video documents as well as lesson plans for teachers.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

This site contains over 60,000 primary source documents on the political and social history of the United States. It includes prints (including maps) and images from 1493 to the present time.

Archiving Early America

This site provides primary source documents from 18th century America.

DocsTeach

An online tool for helping teachers utilize documents from history.

Chronicling America

Search America’s historic newspaper pages from 1789-1963 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present.

Presidential Speeches

A searchable archive of presidential scholarship, public policy, and political history.

Newseum

This site will help bring together rare archival materials, primary sources, interactives and standards-aligned lesson plans for teachers. You can also see a variety of front-page headlines from around the country!

MDAH - Digital Archives

An online catalog of digital copies of original materials from MDAH collections, including paper documents, photographs, maps, audio, and video.

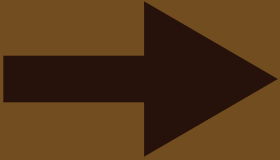
**Remember, there are resources at our Social Studies Resources page on Canvas. If you want me to add anything, please let me know.*

- ➡ OBSERVE ➡
- ➡ REFLECT ➡
- ➡ QUESTION ➡

Teaching students how to break down the information and allowing them purposeful, structured opportunities to practice the skill throughout the content instruction helps students learn how to analyze meaning and learn how to draw meaningful conclusions.

The primary source analysis tool is just one resource that you can use to have students break down the information they are processing in the sources you may be using in your classroom.

Teacher Guides from LOC



- [Library of Congress - Primary Source Analysis Tool](#)
- [LOC - Analyzing Primary Sources](#)
- [LOC - Analyzing Maps](#)
- [LOC - Analyzing Photographs and Prints](#)
- [LOC - Analyzing Political Cartoons](#)

As we move forward with integrating historical skills into our classrooms. We find that there are sometimes barriers to using these great primary and secondary sources with our students. Throughout this year, I have talked with many teachers about some great strategies they have used to help students break down information. In researching some things, I found a great [article](#) you may be interested in (long, but interesting) to help think about how we can potentially overcome barriers that we encounter in the middle and high school classrooms when it comes to utilizing sources. ■

Barrier	Causes	Possible Instructional Interventions
High demands on students’ cognitive resources	Basic comprehension challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose simple tests• Preteach vocabulary• Adapt texts to fit student’s level• Provide legible transcripts• Form reciprocal teaching groups
	Unfamiliarity with historians’ heuristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide reminders through posters / bookmarks• Provide graphic organizers• Model thinking processes• Allow repeated practice
	The challenge of synthesizing across multiple tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide graphic organizers• Allow students to reflect on each text independently and in connection with other texts• Allow group analysis
Limited or misapplied background knowledge	Limited background knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplement textbooks with detail-rich historical fiction• Provide primary sources• Immerse students in illustrative case studies
	Misapplied background knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicitly teach historical empathy• Use refutational texts that confront assumptions
Simplistic views of the world	Dualism, intellectual reductionism, authoritarianism, positivism, or vicious relativism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include controversies• Encourage independent, evidenced-based interpretations• Admit uncertainty• Model tentative acceptance of interpretations• Redesign assessments
A false sense of the discipline of history	Misunderstanding of the role of historians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give explicit instruction on the work of historians
	View history as transmitted rather than actively constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage students in history labs• Encourage student to conduct authentic historical inquiries
	Accept the official textbook narrative as the only narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide alternative sources from multiple perspectives• Use the textbook as one of many sources subject to critique

Figure 1: Barriers to Historical Reading, Causes of Barriers, and Possible Instructional Interventions



RANKIN COUNTY
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GREAT TO BEST