



Building a Teacher's Tool Box
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I can't believe that it is December already! Where has the year gone? We only have 20 days left until 2012! It is just mind blowing how quickly time does fly by.

In light of the New Year approaching, might you be making New Year's resolutions? If so, maybe you resolve to persist in your teaching and in helping students persist to meet their goals. If so, I have a wonderful opportunity to present to you.

Starting on January 9, 2012, I will be embarking on a new form of job embedded professional development, or JEPD. It will be a hybrid course, meaning that you will receive materials electronically by email, and then we will discuss the materials via my blog. At the midpoint, we will meet face-to-face to discuss our findings. The course on persistence will wrap-up in early April. You will earn 24 hours of professional development, with an additional 3 if you attend the face-to-face meeting. The face-to-face meeting will also provide for you a stipend of \$15 per hour plus mileage.

If this interests you, please email me for more information and for a brochure advertising this event. To date, I have 7 people signed up to try out this new form of professional development,

and have had several inquiries about it. The final date to register is December 23. I hope that it will be a wonderful experience for all that participate and that meaningful exchanges will happen.

November has been a busy month filled with much learning on my part. I would like to share some of that learning with you in this newsletter.

First of all, did you know that December 3 was International Disabilities Day? I did not. I found this out when I received my town's weekly paper. According to the article, in the state of New Hampshire, our population is 1,323,531 and of that population, 11.2 percent of the people have a disability. That works out computationally to 148,235 people having disabilities in our little state of New Hampshire! The article continued saying that in regards to those numbers, thirty percent are over 65, and that works out to be 44,471 people if I did my math correctly. That is a large pool of people that are in need of services from the state. I am proud that I am part of one of these types of services that are available to help people with disabilities.

I participated in a webinar titled, "ELL: Emerging Literacy, What We Know, What You Can Do"

You can access the webinar for free at this website:

<http://readinghorizons.com/community/webinars/emerging-literacy.aspx>

You can also access the slides for the webinar as well.

The focus was on English language learners, but much of the webinar could be applied to beginning readers.

There was an excellent resource listed:

<http://www.tchonline.org/Page.aspx?nid=254>

This website contains an abundant source of download-able information. One that Robin Lovrien-Schwarz recommended

was, "Making it Real: Teaching Pre-Literate Adult Refugee Students". I downloaded it and it is lengthy, but it looks quite good. I have not had the chance to read it yet, but a fellow Mentor, Susan Bubp, has, and has passed it along to volunteer tutors and they find it helpful.

Also, I would like to share with you this e-book that I got, titled, "Learning Disabilities 101: Everything you need to know about how learning disabilities affect reading skills". You can find the e-book at the following website:

<http://readinghorizons.com/resources/learning-disabilities-ebook.pdf>

Lastly, I finished an online course regarding youth in ABE classes. The main thrust of this course was to make learning different for your students. One of the ideas posed in the workshop was to change the format of the class every 20 minutes! Yikes! But in thinking of this, isn't variety the spice of life? Can we really expect 16-20 year olds to just sit and take notes?

An interesting concept that was proposed was the inverted classroom. In this model, the students would do the note taking, the reading, and the lecture-type style at home on their free time, so that when they got to school, they would be ready for discussion for projects and more critical thinking skills. This was an interesting idea, but I wonder if it is practical for the population that we service?

The other idea that was stated over and over again is the use of technology. Do you teach with technology? What do you use? Do you think technology is appropriate in some classes and not others? Have you tried Facebook with your students? Do you think that is appropriate? Does your school "block" Facebook?

I would like to know your feedback on this. Please feel free to go out to my blog to see what I think about the inverted classroom concept and also the use of technology in the classroom.

As always, you can access my blog at:

<http://nhldnews.wordpress.com>

You can also access my blog from the Adult Education website, which is: www.nhadulted.org

And finally, I have two ideas for you that have been taken from the book, "Engage All Students Through Differentiation" by Anne M. Beninghof. On page 5, you will find "Detective Tools" and on page 6, you will find "Pattern Towers". If you go out to my blog you will also find another strategy, titled, "Ticket Out the Door".

Enjoy the last few days before Christmas break. I hope that this newsletter comes in handy for you at this busy time. Enjoy the holiday season, and take time to reflect on the past few months of teaching and learning that has happened in your classes and center and what the New Year will hold for you and your students.

Detective Tools

Reading relies heavily on our visual and auditory skills. Detective tools are easy ways to add a physical interaction to any text material, thereby increasing student engagement.

To make this activity more creative, think of making magnifying glasses or purchasing them at dollar-type store.

The process of this strategy is as follows:

1. Describe the job of a detective, and discuss some of the tools a detective might use to find things.
2. Distribute magnifying glasses if using them.
3. As the students read, direct them to find certain things in their reading. For example, put your magnifying glasses on the noun.

Variation.

For students who finish their work quickly, have them be a “detective” to find the following:

- ✚ A word that is new to them
- ✚ A word that follows the “silent e” rule
- ✚ A word that describe as feeling
- ✚ A word that means _____
- ✚ A word you would like to use in your writing
- ✚ A word that has been on a spelling list that has been worked on
- ✚ A word you can tell someone in your family about
- ✚ An action word
- ✚ A pair of words that rhyme

Pattern Towers

Many school concepts surround patterns. By emphasizing patterns, teachers can help students grasp patterns.

For this activity, you will need duplo blocks, wood blocks, or Legos. You will also need water-based markers.

To do this activity, you will need to follow this process:

Write a word or phrase on one of the blocks with the marker.

For example, if you are teaching word families, you would write the word, cat.

Show students how to connect the blocks. Demonstrate how to add to the second word, such as fat.

Instruct students to write as many words as they can following this pattern, and to build as high as they can.

When finished, rinse off the blocks.

Variations

- ✚ Have students build towers with numbers, for example, skip counting, prime numbers, even/odd, multiples.
- ✚ Patterns can be used with abstract concepts, such as community. Have students write community on one block, and then continue to build the tower with all words related to community, such as respect, diversity, peace and so on.
- ✚ Working in pairs is always an option.