



Building a Teacher's Toolbox  
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Prepared by: Robin C. Letendre, M.Ed  
Learning Disabilities Consultant  
Mentor Teacher  
Reading Specialist

[robray1994@gmail.com](mailto:robray1994@gmail.com)

1-603-635-3379

Well, I say it all the time, time does fly, and here we are in 2012! I cannot believe that I am starting my 4<sup>th</sup> volume of this newsletter!

A church that I passed last week had this quote on their marquee, "The bad news is that time does fly; the good news is that you are the pilot." I loved this! If we can see ourselves as the pilot of our plane, then can't we do anything? Can't we get our students to meet their potential? Let us all make that New Year's resolution to help our students meet their goals and let them be the pilot of their own plane.

I invite you to click on the link below to read an article titled, "Engage me or enrage me". Quite interesting...  
<http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/depts/ResearchEvalAcct/documents/EngageMeorEnrageMe.pdf>

I have started to read this book, titled, "Because of Mr. Terupt", about a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and the impact he has on his class and their learning. In the book, there are 7 students who talk about being in class with Mr. Terupt. One of the students, Luke, talked about this math lesson, "Dollar Words" that they had to do. It went like this: the letter "a" is worth 1 cent, the letter "b"

is worth 2 cents and so on. The process was that the students had to think of words that were worth \$1, and they could not come in at 99 cents or \$1.01. This is a fun way to do math, and also a challenge to come up with some words that are thought of independently, and one that I would like to try with my classes. Give it a try and let me know what you think.

I will not be giving you any blogging ideas to think about over the course of the next few months. I have started my online course about persistence, and we are using my blog as a way to discuss the information that is being disseminated. I invite you to take a look if you would like, and if you take a quick look and would like to join us, I will allow you to register by this Friday, January 13, since we have not started reading the materials and applying it to the course and you would be able to “catch up”.

My address to my blog is: [www.nhldnews.wordpress.com](http://www.nhldnews.wordpress.com)

I hope that you were able to rest and prepare for the start of the spring semester. I know that many of you are “between” classes right now, and many of you started right back up again after the Christmas holiday break. I hope that I can continue to provide for you some ideas to use in your classroom with your students.

I know that in the past I have recommended [www.superteacherworksheets.com](http://www.superteacherworksheets.com) as an excellent resource. It still is, but at the start of the year they began charging a \$20 fee for full use of their website. There are many parts to the website that are still accessible, but many are only for members. They do have a great link to 2 passages written about MLK, Jr., as well as some math activities about MLK, Jr. that can still be accessed. If you do not have anything in mind for MLK, Jr., I recommend checking this out and using this with your class.

On page 4, you will find “Prop Bag” teaching strategy. This teaching strategy is taken from, “Turning Best Practices into Daily Practices: Simple Strategies for the Busy Teacher”, by Anne M. Beninghof, published by Crystal Springs Books.

On page 5, you will find “Time Capsule” teaching strategy. This teaching strategy is also taken from, “Turning Best Practices into Daily Practices: Simple Strategies for the Busy Teacher”, by Anne M. Beninghof, published by Crystal Springs Books.

I hope that the New Year is a wonderful one for you and that it is filled with true happiness.

## **Prop Bag Teaching Strategy**

This strategy is useful for generating discussion and developing prior knowledge and connections to the topic at hand.

To begin this strategy, you will need a “prop bag”. You can use anything you would like from a pillow case to an ornately decorated bag.

The contents of the bag will change from week to week, or class to class, depending upon how often you meet.

The purpose of the bag is to help students make connections to the learning that is about to happen in the class.

The contents of the bag should reflect the lesson that you are going to be teaching. For example, if you are doing a math lesson, you would want to put objects within the bag that highlight the main points of the lesson. If you were determining area, you might put a CD case, an envelope, and an empty cracker box and so on, so that students could learn the formula for area, and then apply it to everyday objects.

You can have students hold the bag, take objects out, or talk about ways in which the items work with the lesson.

You might even ask different students to bring in items for the prop bag for the next class if they know the topic beforehand.

## **Time Capsule**

This teaching strategy is used at the end of a unit of learning. This strategy utilizes the students' knowledge to create the time capsule, as well as discerning the pertinent information for the capsule.

For this strategy, you will need a water tight bottle, and if possible a shovel if you are actually able to bury the time capsule on school grounds.

When the unit is complete, have the students work in pairs or groups or collectively and begin to determine what is important to put in the time capsule.

Have students write, illustrate, design and so on what the time capsule will contain.

Once the time capsule has been made, have the class write a letter to a future class about the time capsule and what is inside of it.

If you are able to, bury it on school grounds. If not, see if there is some place in the school that would allow them to place the time capsule for next semester or the following year.

Utilize the internet to help students understand the concept of time capsules and why it is done, and what happens when time capsules are unearthed.