

Back to School Night

Mr. VanZant

5th Grade

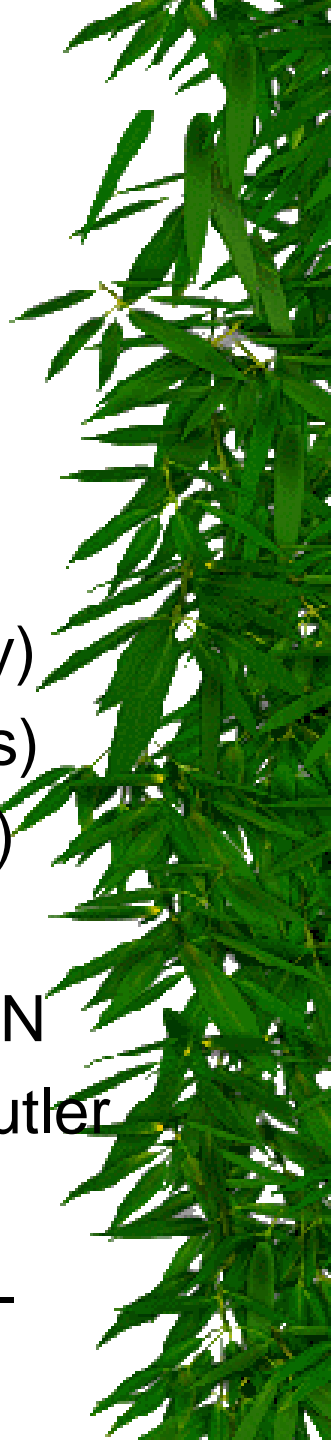
Accelerated Math

Room 218



My Background

- ❖ Education
 - Temple University (BA in Education)
 - Chestnut Hill College (MS in Applied Technology)
 - Wilkes University (Ed. Development & Strategies)
 - Neumann University (Social Emotional Learning)
- ❖ My 25th year in CB
 - 3rd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, and PEN
 - Warwick, Titus, Mill Creek, Bridge Valley, and Butler
- ❖ K-8 Parochial School Board
- ❖ Currently serving on the board of a small, local non-profit organization



Accelerated Math

- ❖ A more “in-depth” pace than the heterogeneous classes, but not necessarily “faster”
- ❖ Primarily Everyday Math: 5th Grade with some 6th Grade lessons integrated
- ❖ Minimal re-teaching and no re-testing
- ❖ Students are experiencing a new type of pace and challenge- it may take them time to get adjusted
- ❖ If students are consistently struggling with content and/or preparation for class, we (parent, student, and teacher) will reevaluate their placement in the class.



Accelerated Math

- ❖ Multiple methods will often be taught.
- ❖ General lesson format:
 1. Revisiting/Questioning/Instruction (Why)
 2. Demonstrating New Processes or revisiting Old (What and How)
 3. Guided Practice
 4. Independent Practice
 5. Enrichment/Reteaching



Accelerated Math

- ❖ Specific instruction on problem-solving strategies and communication about math thinking
- ❖ Problem-solving activities (both independent and collaborative), as well as math puzzles and games
 - ❖ Stamina when computing and when challenged
 - ❖ Flexibility of thinking
 - ❖ Efficiency of processes and communication
- ❖ Open-ended math problems
 - ❖ Playground design
 - ❖ Paper airplane design
 - ❖ Etc.



Assessments

- ❖ Tests
 - At least two days notice
 - No “retests”
- ❖ Quizzes
 - Announced and unannounced
 - Challenging
 - Focus entirely or primarily on newly presented content- not necessarily all that is on the test
- ❖ Problem-Solving Tasks
 - Unannounced
- ❖ Classwork Activities/Projects



Homework

- ❖ Homework will commonly be composed of two pages of Math Boxes (skill review), as well as other problems and puzzles to work out
- ❖ Studying/review of newly taught content is expected nightly.
- ❖ Homework will be checked for completion, reviewed in class, and marked by the students themselves, for correctness.



What can parents do?

- ❖ Guide your child to self-advocate for assistance or greater challenges, if either become necessary.
- ❖ Engage your child, frequently, in conversation about math concepts covered, as well as activities done in class.
- ❖ Understand that sometimes students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency in a concept using a specific method or process, though more often, students will be able to choose which method they use.
- ❖ Encourage your child to work through any challenges.
- ❖ Contact me if math brings undue stress into your home.



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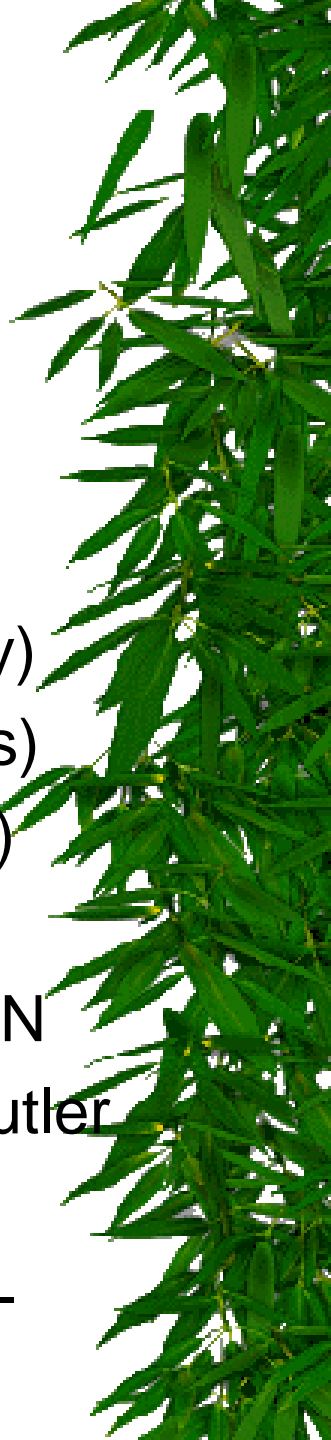
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Subject Areas

- ❖ Reading
- ❖ Writing/Language
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Social Studies



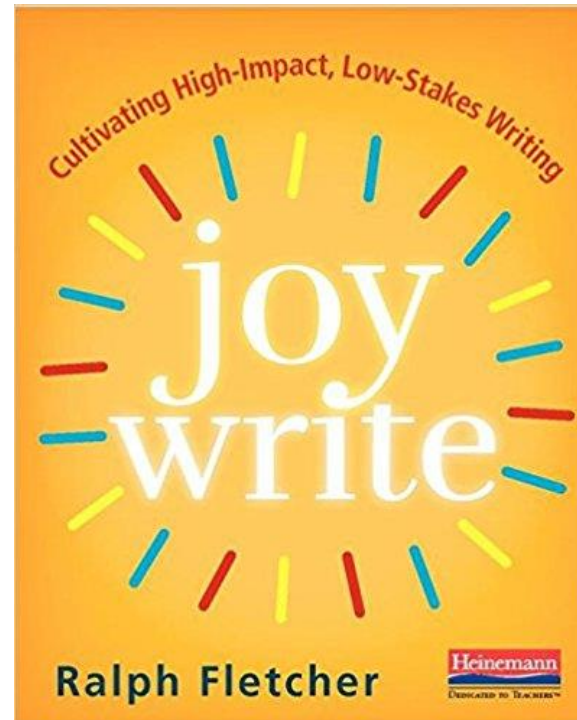
Reading

- ❖ Lead 21
- ❖ *Comprehension Toolkit*
- ❖ Shared Reading
- ❖ IR/Journal Writing
 - ❖ Leveled Library



Writing/Language

- ❖ Narrative, Informative, Opinion, Poetry, Journaling
- ❖ Handwritten and typed pieces
- ❖ Program: *Being a Writer*
- ❖ Handwriting
- ❖ Spelling and Language
 - Spelling lists not in order and not every week



Science

- ❖ Science Process Skills
- ❖ Units of Study:
 - Energy
 - Weather
 - “Nature’s Decomposers”
 - Health & Personal Safety



Social Studies

- ❖ Social Studies Alive
- ❖ Units of Study:
 - Geography
 - US History (Pre-colonial to pre-Civil War)



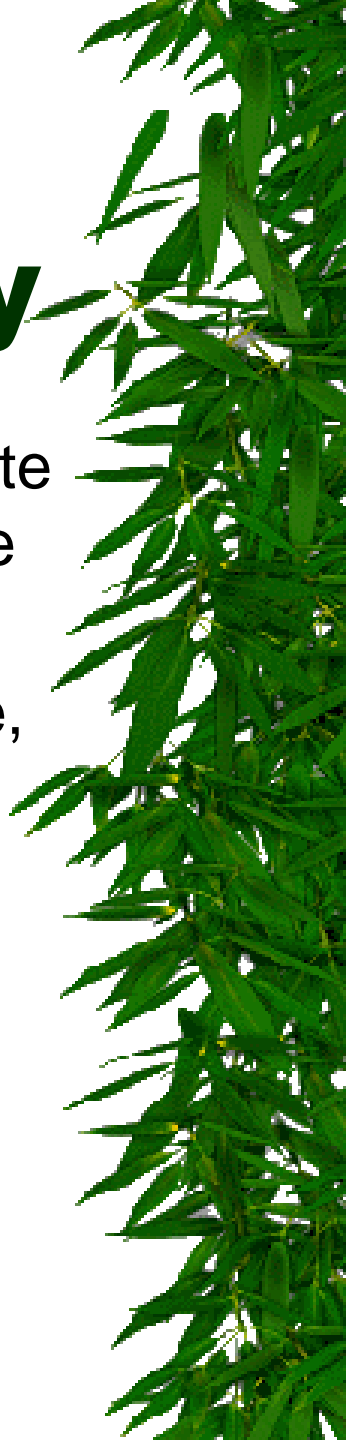
Rapid Changes Education

- ❖ Agriculture workers in the United States
 - 1790 90% of the population
 - 1890 43% of the population
 - 1990 <3% of the population
- ❖ Preparing students for an unwritten future:
 The “Top 10 Jobs” do not exist.
- ❖ 1994 in CB
 - Apple II (5 ¼ floppy disks), no Internet or E-mail,
 <10 phones in a school, VHS, and filmstrips



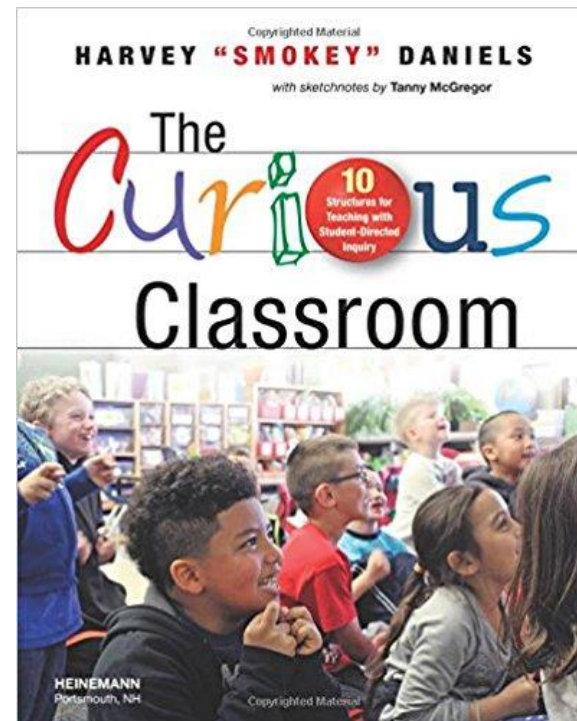
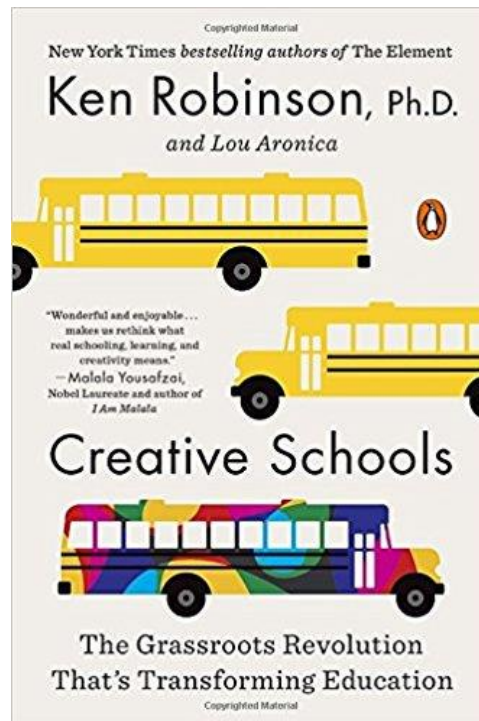
Questions About Teaching and Creativity

- ❖ If teachers do not model creativity and do not devote class time to it, how will students be able to explore and strengthen their own creativity?
- ❖ Can students work toward becoming more creative, if every classroom is learning the same page, the same way, on the same day?



My Answers About Teaching and Creativity

- ❖ Modeling the creative process
- ❖ Creative and collaborative problem solving tasks
- ❖ Some project and enrichment choices
- ❖ Open-ended
- ❖ Pass/fail



“Eternal Skills”

- ❖ Problem-solving
- ❖ Creativity
- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Communication



~~enable~~ **EMPOWER**

- ❖ Giving students the skills to claim their success- no matter what their abilities.
- ❖ Improve one step at a time, success does not just appear.
- ❖ A lifelong path and mindset:
 - It is the journey that strengthens and builds- not arriving at the destination.



Homework

- ❖ 50 minutes, on the average, per night
 - Math, 20-30 minutes of reading, and occasionally, other subjects (spelling, handwriting, “studying” of content)
- ❖ Unfinished class-work could also be assigned as homework
- ❖ Students are able to take texts home
- ❖ PLEASE connect with your child about it
- ❖ If there is no homework, the assignment book will actually read “*No Homework*”
- ❖ “Missed Homework Notice” sent home if incomplete
- ❖ Enrichment homework available on my site



Discipline

- ❖ “Bridge Valley Code of Conduct”
- ❖ Discussions with me during recess (10-15 minutes)
- ❖ The behavior, not the student.



Absence Notes & Transportation Changes

- ❖ Please do not forget to send them into school!
- ❖ Absences default to “unexcused.”
- ❖ There needs to be a “live call” to the office, **in addition to** a handwritten note.
- ❖ Bus changes need to be authorized through transportation.



Snack

- ❖ We have a “working snack”
- ❖ Food items should be easy and safe to eat while working
- ❖ **Peanut and Tree Nut Free**

Birthdays

- ❖ Non-food items:
 - Pencils
 - Erasers
 - Guest Reader



State Assessments and Grading

- ❖ PSSA Math
- ❖ PSSA ELA

- ❖ Trimesters
- ❖ Letter Grades



Communication

- ❖ E-mail: dvanzant@cbsd.org
- ❖ Voicemail
- ❖ Sharepoint (in progress- calendar is active)
- ❖ Newsletters (at least monthly)



Fear and Stress

- ❖ Anxiety appears to be increasing, for both students AND parents
- ❖ ~~High Stakes~~
- ❖ The focus is on managing anxiety, the focus is not on escaping anxiety.
- ❖ Judge favorably.



Mistakes, Growth, and Disagreements

- ❖ We ALL make mistakes.
- ❖ The key is to grow from the ones that we make and to not glorify those made by others.
- ❖ Living “in the positive,” while using mistakes as stepping stones
- ❖ Disagreements should not make people adversaries. A sharing of perspectives can forge connections and has a better chance for a positive result where everyone feels good.



Happiness and Gratitude

- ❖ Research has demonstrated a strong correlation between practicing gratitude and being happy.
- ❖ Daily gratitude journals
- ❖ Teacher Gifts

