



A MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION MONTHLY UPDATE

A MICHIGAN MIDDLE START PARTNER ORGANIZATION

OCTOBER, 2006 * VOLUME 9 * NUMBER 3

The Power of Reflection

A key ingredient in students success is the school's emphasis on taking the time to evaluate current performance, using data as much as possible. The questions that promote *reflection* include "Where are we now?" "How well are we doing compared to what we want to accomplish?" and "What are we learning?"

Reflection helps educators go beyond best guesses or informed hunches about what is and is not working. If our objective is to make real improvements in our schools' systems of learning, our own classroom practices, and our personal and interpersonal effectiveness, we need to solicit and use feedback--both hard numbers and subjective perceptions.

Reflection has a powerful ability to create change when it is applied at the personal level.

Reflection is as much a mindset as it is a process.

Students' ability to reflect on their learning and make adjustments accordingly has been identified as one of the most significant determinants of student success. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Lab conducted a meta-analysis of more than 11,000 statistical findings correlating school factors with achievement (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). According to this study, students' metacognitive processes (planning, monitoring the effectiveness of attempted actions and outcomes, and testing, revising, and evaluating learning strategies) had an influ-

ence on learning second only to teachers' ability to maintain active student participation.

Further, in a study of 26 high-achieving, high-poverty schools in Texas, researchers identified teachers' ability to accurately identify students needs--through the use of assessments and other "reflection" tools--and to plan instruction accordingly, as a common characteristic of successful classrooms (Johnson, 1998).

Teachers were attuned to the special ways in which individual students learned best. They exploited this knowledge to create learning environments that allow many students to attain challenging academic skills. Formative assessments allowed teachers to accurately determine areas of strength and need, participate in the planning and delivery of professional development, and contribute to decisions about the use of other resources (pp. 3-4).

Examples of reflective practices:

- *Examining data* from the most recent schoolwide assessment of student writing.
- Look at the *feedback log*. Last quarter five different strategies on four different assignments were used. This quarter, written feedback was given on two assignments and they worked on vocabulary in two subject areas.
- The committee will be *reviewing data from a survey* of students, staff, and parents and additional data from interviews with playground supervisors and students who have either been injured or have been referred for disciplinary

action related to an injury.

Staff reflection can also benefit students in an indirect way. In a review of the literature on teacher efficacy and achievement, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) found "the perception that a performance has been successful raises efficacy beliefs, which contributes to the expectation of proficient performance in the future" (p. 229). In practical terms, this means teachers will have more confidence in their teaching methods and approaches if they gather data on their own students' performance and use the data to confirm effective practices and uncover ineffective ones. No wonder that we've observed the greatest sense of focus, direction, and vibrant energy residing in classrooms where the teachers (1) purposefully and intentionally link their plans to standards, expectations, and goals; (2) review their student performance each day and week through classroom-based assessments and personal observations; and (3) constantly make instructional improvements based on these reflections.

In summary, reflection is as much a mindset as it is a process, or a set of tools or methods. Reflection is a way of thinking about the world and one's relationship to it. It is the willingness to change because of what the data reveal and the skill to know what to do with the data collected.

Taken from: *A Framework for Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning*, ASCD, 2001, (pp. 14-15)



Leadership Lifeline

Plan the Ending

Afternoon shadows lengthen. The parking lot is nearly empty. A small group stands near one of the remaining cars. Voices are animated. “So what happens now?” asks one. “Who knows,” says another. “It’s the same old, same old--lots of talk, no action”. “Did you notice that no one brought up the problems with the new reporting protocols?” “Yes, the administration has no idea how much time and paper this costs.” “Who’s having trouble?” someone asks. “Our team likes the new process.” “That’s probably because of the (grade level or subject) you teach.” “Anyway,” says another person, “I’m still not clear what we’re supposed to do.”

If your group, like this one, spends much time in parking lot meetings, the right things probably are not being discussed in the formal meetings or they are not being talked about in the right way.

One aid to effective meetings that is rarely focused on is properly ending a meeting. Closing a meeting well requires as much purposefulness and art as opening a meeting. Just as openings have goals, so do endings. Thanking participants, summarizing, and asking for agenda items or leaders for the next meeting are valuable practices. Some other purposes are to:

- * Understand agreements;
- * Clarify who is to do what by when;
- * Assess member satisfaction with the meeting;
- * Test commitments; and
- * Assess standards.

UNDERSTAND MEETING AGREEMENTS

People hear, understand and remember agreements differently. (Ask your spouse.) Dissatisfaction is common in meet-

ings in which members are not clear about which decisions were made, recommendations developed, and what is to occur next. When this happens, especially if it occurs repeatedly, the confusion does enormous damage to morale.

Even worse, it diminishes efficacy--the groups’s sense that it’s work makes a difference. The group’s sense of efficacy has a high correlation to school and project success. As efficacy wanes, teachers are inclined to not work as hard, persevere less through challenging periods, and experience more stress in their work. Consider these options for helping group members understand meeting agreements:

Leader Summary. The leader or facilitator summarizes decisions, recommendations, and other actions. Often this is the least effective option because the same gremlins that hinder members’ listening during the meeting may be at work at this time.

Pairs review. The leader or facilitator asks individuals to pair up to share what they understand about the meeting and then each pair shares to check for alignment with the group.

Convenience store close. The facilitator or leader has members imagine they are in a convenience store and encounter a colleague who wants to know what happened in the meeting. They mentally craft what they would tell this friend, then stand and deliver their summary from which corrections or refinements can be offered by the facilitator or group leader.

Instant minutes. Publish a meeting summary within 24 hours. Group members witness this and know their work is considered important.

Leadership Lifeline cont.

WHO WILL DO WHAT BY WHEN?

A critical understanding at the end of meetings is clarity about next steps. As a facilitator, it is your responsibility to bring consciousness to this area. If the facilitator omits this task, a group member should act. Remember, it is the group's group, never the facilitator's or leader's group. The strategy is simple:

Just before ending, the leader or facilitator asks, "Who will do what by when?" Silence often follows this question, since many times the actionable parts of decisions were not named. The leader then waits until the group sorts this out and names responsible persons and time frames.

ASSESS MEMBER SATISFACTION

Satisfaction and effectiveness, while linked, are different concepts. Checking members' satisfaction with meetings can be a springboard to revising and refining meeting procedures. At least three versions for assessing satisfaction occur to me.

Pluses and wishes. The facilitator asks, "What are some pluses and wishes about this meeting?" The facilitator records responses on flip charts. For the next meeting, the facilitator resolves to maximize the pluses and address items in the wish category.

Gots and Wants. The intent is similar to pluses and wishes, but ideas are recorded on stick notes and posted on chart paper for those wishing to respond. Those who might be quiet during pluses and wishes can express their thoughts anonymously. Again, the data provide feedback from which improvements are made.

Satisfiers and dissatisfiers. This strategy can be used as an ending--or it could be the only item on an agenda. As a meeting closes, it provides data for the group to discuss group effectiveness at the next session. Because it links satisfaction to a specific goal, it focuses on effectiveness. The following example uses student learning as the goal.

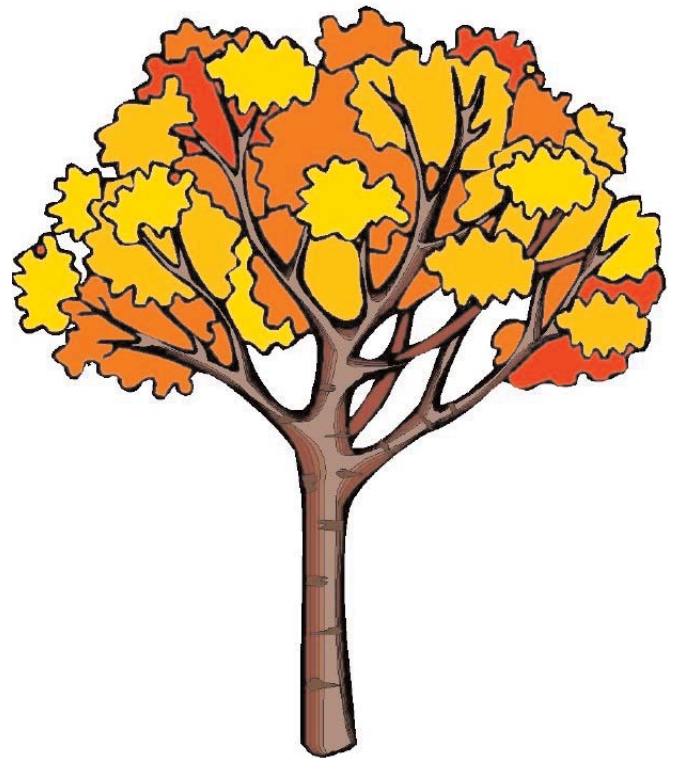
The facilitator asks members to write what they find satisfying and unsatisfying about the impact of their meetings on student learn-

ing. One of at least two follow-ups might now occur at the next scheduled meeting:

1. A group dialogue based on the journal entries.
2. A structured activity based on the journal entries.

The facilitator uses a structured activity when the topic is complex or a need exists to maintain psychological safety during a conversation. One structured activity is "the final word." Members pick one of their written statements for comment. Person A reads his or her selected statement. Each group member takes a turn responding to Person A's statement. No side talk is allowed. When everyone but Person A has talked about the statement, Person A has the "final word" and elaborates on the statement read to the group. Now Person B reads a statement from his or her paper. The process continues around the table until time is exhausted or each person has offered an item.

Taken from *National Staff Development Council JSD*, Fall 2006, Group Wise, Robert J Garmston





Teacher Topics

Making Connections to Prior Knowledge

One of the basic premises of constructivist educational theory is that new learning builds on prior knowledge. As students expand their knowledge, they continuously make connections to previous learning. Teachers and schools often use several direct approaches to begin building a foundation for students with limited academic-related experiences. These include offering out-of-class experiences such as field trips, providing supplemental out-of-school-time activities, or connection with students with community mentors. In his book, *Building Background Knowledge*, researcher Robert Marzano discusses several indirect approaches to help students who have had limited opportunities to construct a base for future learning. Teachers and schools can apply these approaches during the school day to assist students amass virtual experiences.

- **Institute a regular time for reading aloud to students.** Reading is one type of virtual experience. Use books that relate to a subject currently being taught to build academic-relate vocabulary.

- **Encourage students to select and read books, articles and other material.** Have a wide variety of reading materials available to increase the range of information students process. Ask students to keep reading notebooks and to share these from time to time with partners or the class.

- **Use realia to make concepts concrete.** Teaching about anatomy? See if any class member have x-rays at home of their own fractures or broken bones to show to the class invite a guest speaker who can bring props. Look into sites on the Internet that deal with the anatomical system that is being studied.

- **Ensure that students have opportunities to discuss or comment on what they read, listen to, or see.** Language is crucial to fixing virtual experience in memory. Ask the class to write about or represent experiences in a notebook, construct graphic organizers or pictures that represent new information. Inquire, "How might you use this information?" "What do you find interesting about this reading? Why?"

- **Provide visual experiences to your class followed by projects** that are aligned with your objectives and standards. Develop natural disaster scenarios for which students need to plan response and support systems. A virtual experience for this activity might be a film, a TV program, or an online presentation about a recent disaster, such as the December 26, 2004 tsunami. Ask students to brainstorm the range of concerns that are

presented in such times of crises, such as food, water, and housing as well as emotional/social support systems. You could have them e-mail an NGO (non-governmental organization) that is involved in the relief efforts.

- **Create ties to sociological or cultural events or mores.** For example, look at fashion during a specific historical period. Ask students to present ideas of events or attitudes and values that may have caused the fashions of the Victorian era or the dress of the Roaring '20's. What might history say when today's fashions are viewed with hindsight?

- **Use a variation of the KNK chart** to help students make explicit connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge. Make a three column chart with heading below and ask students to brainstorm responses:

What I know	What I think I Know	What I think I'll Learn

The beauty of this method is that there are no correct answers. After the lesson, this chart can be used to help students see the *connection between prior knowledge and new information learned* by adding a fourth column and having them answer a final probe:

What I know	What I think I know	What I think I'll Learn	What I know I learned

By linking lesson to real life experiences and by offering multiple virtual experiences, teachers can help student forge connections among prior knowledge, personal experience, and new concepts or information.

Taken from: *Teacher Today*, March, 2005



Student Station

Who's on Your Board of Directors?

Do you know what the term "role model" means? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a role model as "a person whose behavior is imitated by others." We all have role models in our lives - people who, intentionally or unintentionally, show us how to behave in certain situations.

For most of us, our parents, grandparents, foster parents, or other guardians are important role models. Because we spend so much time with them, we learn to act, speak, and even think in many of the same ways they do. Teachers can often be role models, as well - perhaps there has been a teacher in your life whose wisdom or kindness you'd like to imitate. Maybe you've known a coach who has taught you to play fairly and to be a gracious winner or loser; or perhaps you have a sibling or a friend whom you admire and look up to. Any of these people, and many more, could be role models.

Many of us count one or more public figures, such as sports stars, musicians, or social activists, among our role models. If you dream of being a professional point guard, you'd do well to study the play of John Stockton, Magic Johnson, or Teresa Weatherspoon. If you hope to be a professional cellist, you might want to emulate the technique of Yo-Yo Ma. And if you dream of devoting your life to caring for other people, Mother Teresa might be a worthy role model. While people such as these can certainly serve as models, most of the people who have the greatest effect on us are people whom we know well over a fairly long period of time.

It might be interesting to think of your role models as a sort of Board of Directors for you.

In much the same way that a non-profit organization's Board of Directors influences the activities and culture of the organization, your role models together shape your beliefs, thoughts, words, and actions. In the book *A Single Shard*, Tree-ear's role models included Crane-man, who not only taught Tree-ear how to survive, but who also taught him to be ethical, honest, and hard-working; Min the potter, whose work Tree-ear admired and wished to imitate; and Ajima, who embodied compassion. Without any one of those people in his life, Tree-ear would have been a very different person.

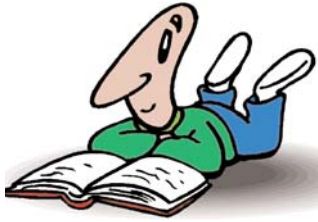
Who is on your Board of Directors? Who are your role models, and in what ways does each one influence you? Role models aren't always a positive influence, by the way... just as an organization can have a member of its Board who is corrupt or wrongheaded, we sometimes choose to imitate behaviors that we shouldn't. Is there anyone whom you should "kick off" your Board of Directors? Are there people whom you look up to and whom you'd like to add to your Board? If so, go for it! Seek out the people who have qualities and characteristics that you admire, and find out what makes them tick. Remember, you are in control of who sits on your own Board!



October "Freebie"

The first 3 people to contact us will receive "Cognitive Coaching" by Arthur Costa and Robert Garmston

duval1p@cmich.edu or 989-774-1198



Student Book Review

A Single Shard

Author: Linda Sue Park

Tree-ear is an orphan boy in a twelfth-century Korean potters' village. For as long as he can remember, he has lived under a bridge with Crane-man, a homeless man who hobbles around on a crutch. Together they scavenge for scraps of food and for straw which Crane-man weaves into sandals and sturdy baskets. The two are content with their simple life; Tree-ear has never known anything different, and Crane-man has lived under the bridge for so long that none of the local people can recall exactly when he arrived.

In his spare time, Tree-ear likes to watch the local potters at their craft. The village of Ch'ulp'o produces some of the finest pottery in the world, and the surrounding land has clay which turns a beautiful gray-green color when it is shaped and fired in the village kiln. Tree-ear particularly enjoys observing Min, an ancient potter whose work is, by far, the finest in the region - he loves to watch Min throw a shapeless ball of clay onto his wheel and transform it from a watery gray lump into a graceful vase with curves like a flower petal, or a tall jug with ribbed lines like a melon.

One day, Tree-ear sneaks into Min's deserted workshop to look at the potter's new vases, and he accidentally breaks one of them. Tree-ear has no money to pay for the damage, but Crane-man has taught him honesty and responsibility, so he offers to work for Min to make up for the cost of the pot he has broken. The potter grudgingly agrees

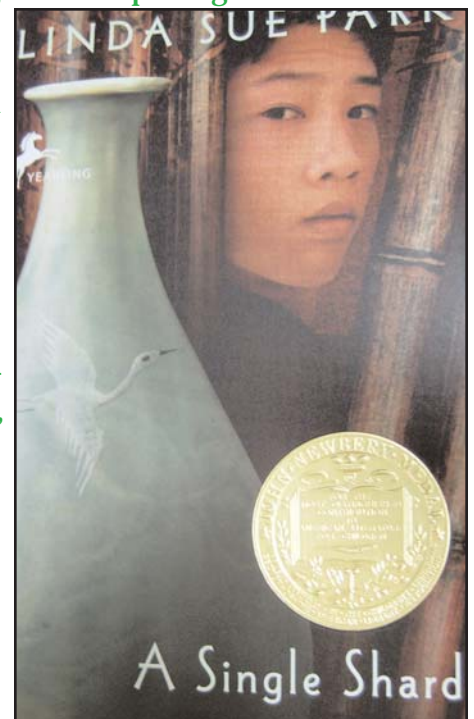
The work is long and hard, but Tree-ear does not shirk. He chops wood for the master's kiln, digs great slabs of clay from the riverbank

and carts them back to Min's workshop, and learns the intricate process of straining clay to make the glaze that will cover the finished pots. He toils for months, day in and day out, in exchange for food for himself and Crane-man; and he hopes against hope that someday Min will teach him to make pots.

Eventually, Min sends him on a journey, afoot and by himself, to the King's Court in Songdo, to show his master's work to the king's emissary. It is a difficult and dangerous journey, and little does Tree-ear know that it will change his life forever.

This interesting and compelling book would make a great read on a rainy weekend! Even though it is set in a different place and time from the one in which we live, you will recognize the characters of Tree-ear, Crane-man, Min the potter, and Min's wife Ajima in the people around you, and it's easy to understand their

actions and motivations. Pick up *A Single Shard* and give it a read!





Family Focus

The Support Assets: Family Support

Every child needs love, affirmation, and acceptance in order to develop in healthy, positive ways. Young adolescents especially need this support, because they are experiencing major physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual changes during their middle-school years.

Parents of middle-schoolers often feel confused and rejected as their children begin doing the developmental "work" of pulling away from the comfortable "safe zones" of childhood and establishing their own identities. Many young adolescents begin spending less time with their families and more time with friends, often seeming embarrassed to be seen in public with their parents. They tend to reject adult opinions about the clothes they wear, the music they listen to, and how late they should stay out. They begin showing more independence and voicing viewpoints that differ from those of their parents.

In spite of this apparent distancing, young adolescents desperately need the love and support of adults during these years of change. It is important for parents and guardians to demonstrate caring and support, while still encouraging their children to develop appropriate levels of autonomy and independence. Kids who experience this kind of unconditional support know that they can count on their parents and are much more likely to turn to them for advice and guidance when confronted with thorny issues.

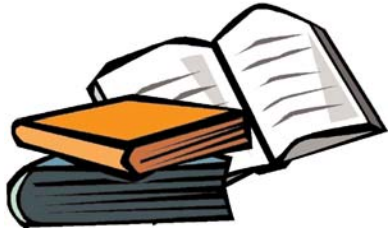
In fact, research shows that young adolescents who experience high levels of family support are less likely than other youth to engage in substance abuse, delinquency, misconduct,

and sexual activity; they also experience higher levels of self-esteem, school engagement and motivation, personal responsibility, and positive interpersonal relationships; and they suffer less from anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.

So, how do parents give their kids that all-important support? They are firm but loving, holding high expectations for their children and being responsive to their kids' needs. They establish rules and standards for their children's behavior, and they consistently monitor conduct and use nonpunitive methods of discipline when rules are broken. They are warm and supportive, and they encourage their children to communicate, give them a voice in family decisions, and consistently recognize the rights of both parents and children.

Most likely, you are already doing many of these things for your kids. Keep up the good work, and stay on the lookout for opportunities to provide your kids with additional family support!





Resource Review

Let's Get Real

Producers: *Debra Chasnoff, Helen S. Cohen, and Kate Stille*

This powerful 35-minute video documentary addresses the issue of bullying in middle schools and high schools. Name-calling and bullying have reached epidemic proportions in our schools, and horrific incidents such as the Columbine school shooting have brought national attention to the effects of the problem on individual students. Since Columbine, much excellent material on bullying has been written and produced, and this video ranks among the best.

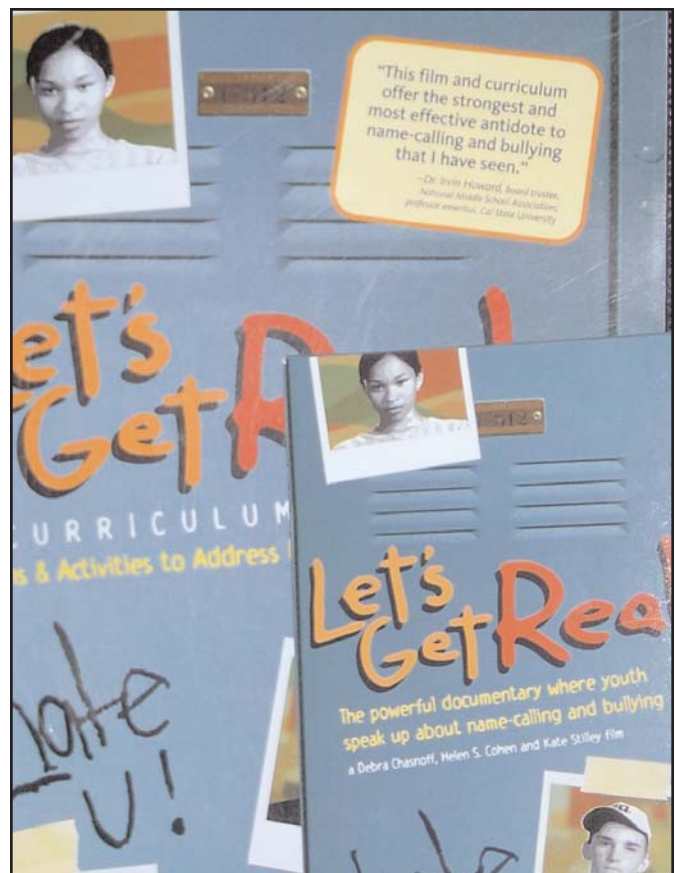
Let's Get Real focuses on the voices of young people - those who have been bullied, those who have been bullies, and those who have had the courage to intervene. With amazing candor and courage, these young people speak up in their own words about racial differences, perceived sexual orientation, disabilities, religious differences, sexual harassment, and more. Their stories are poignant and compelling, and together they make very clear the reasons why we can no longer accept name-calling and bullying as just a normal part of growing up.

The video is aimed at students, parents, and teachers, and it is recommended for students in the middle grades and high school. Accompanying the videotape is an outstanding curriculum guide which includes talking points and activities to address name-calling and bullying. The guide offers an intensive 12-class-period curriculum to accompany and supplement the tape; it also offers a truncated 3-class-period curriculum for those who need a shorter program.

The *Let's Get Real* Curriculum Guide provides a sequence of pre-viewing activities, followed by eight chapters, each of which includes sever-

al discussion starters, cooperative learning activities, suggested assignments and activities, and lists of additional resources. Blackline masters are included, along with helpful suggestions for tailoring the curriculum to fit your own needs and time constraints. A real strength of the curriculum is that it includes activities, assignments, and discussion starters targeted to each of the four core content areas, as well as to Health, Art, Drama, Music, and Nature/Culture.

To borrow this outstanding video and curriculum guide, call MSIM at (989) 774-7678, and ask to check out resource number DV-50 and DV-50a.



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Month of the Young Adolescent



OCTOBER
2006

“CELEBRATE YOUR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS!”

- * Make posters
- * Issue a press release
- * Conduct a parent meeting
- * Plan a school assembly
- * Make badges for students
- * Decorate hallways with student work
- * Have an after school party



Young Writers Contest Winners!

We received more than 130 essays from middle school students. What a wonderful response! Thank you to each and every one who submitted an essay.

You reminded us that great teachers are enthusiastic, fun, caring, and help us to succeed in life. We encourage each student who wrote an essay to share it with their favorite teacher.

The five writers who will receive a \$25 Barnes and Noble gift certificate are:

- Jaeleen Davis, Standish Sterling Middle School, Grade 6
- Emmalee Griswold, Marlette Middle School, Grade 5
- Ella Hager, Portland Middle School, Grade 8
- Jacob Peck, Walnut Creek Middle School, Grade 7
- Stevie Turner, White Lake Middle School, Grade 7



Someone Special to Me
by Emmalee Griswold
Grade: Five
Marlette Middle School, Mrs. Susan Hutchens

Once in third grade, in Brandon schools, Ortonville, I had a teacher. She was an angel. She taught her students to soar higher than their hearts desired. She was a mother. She talked to you kindly and gave you warm surrounding hugs. She was a beauty with laughing eyes and a singing heart. She was a warrior. She fought every obstacle in her way and taught us to grip our own swords as well. She was these things and more.

When I could not lift my feet, she gave me strength. When I sobbed and cried, she made me smile. When I was dull and absent of color, she held me to the sunlight and made me a rainbow.

In fourth grade she was with me again, but we did more things than ever. The second to last month of school, we went to the high school pool and had ice cream at Frosty Boy. Then, the last week of school we had a fourth grade farewell party. We had much fun. I had my first snow cone, watched a watermelon-eating contest, and swam in the lake my first time.

On the very last day, we sobbed and wept, but she took me in her arms one last time and said, with her weeping but proud voice, "Emmalee, I will miss you so, and always think of you. When you write your first book, call me. Remember all I taught you and be brave."

Thank you, Carrie Owings.

Young Writers Contest Essay written by Jaeleen Davis
I am a 6th grader at Standish Sterling Middle School
I am in Mr. Fagan's Class

It was a beautiful school day and I had just started Kindergarten. I was sick and vomiting like a "mad man" so my mother took me to the doctor. The scary thing was that I was so bad that the doctor called an ambulance to come get me to go St. Mary's Hospital. Well, I was only five years old at the time so I didn't know what was happening and I was scared. I had rotavirus. Mrs. Suchoski is the name of my kindergarten teacher and a name I will never forget. Mrs. Suchoski took the time to come see me. She gave me cards that everyone in the class made special for me. She also gave me flowers and said, "Jaeleen, you are a very special and bright girl. I know you are sick now but I want you to always remember that all you have to do is work hard and try your best and you will succeed in life." Mrs. Suchoski stayed at the hospital for at least an hour playing games and talking to me. That day was the beginning of the lessons that she taught me and that are still with me. Mrs. Suchoski taught me to love life, be strong, and never give up. That's why she is still my favorite teacher in the whole wide world. Mrs. Suchoski made me feel special, secure, and that I could accomplish anything! Mrs. Suchoski introduced me to a wonderful world of learning and that school is a positive environment!!!

Jacob Peck
Walnut Creek Middle, 7th Grade
Mrs. Graham Teacher
Mrs. Lewandowski Special Teacher
My Favorite Teacher

“Yeah,” I said, “of course I’ll take another smartie.” Ms. Lewandowski liked to give smarties to smarties. Ms. Lewandowski was my favorite teacher ever. Not just because she gave out a lot of candy but because she was really fun. Ms. Lewandowski was also nice, bright, considerate and helpful. I knew immediately that third grade was going to be great.

Ms. Lewandowski was very animated in her teaching style. This was obvious in the way she taught math. For example, she pretended to snowboard to help teach us about angles. Also, she offered a five dollar reward to the student who could name the mathematical term that was also a food. She always kept our attention and made learning fun.

Even though infectious laughter and excitement filled her classroom, Ms. Lewandowski was still a serious educator. When doing work she would patiently work with us until we mastered the concept of that lesson. Then, she rewarded our academic achievement.

Ms. Lewandowski was a warm and friendly teacher. I especially enjoyed when she brought her cat, Hairy, to school and let us play with him. He was furry and soft. She also introduced us to her boyfriend, Larry. He came to our awesome class parties.

Ms. Lewandowski was a terrific teacher who made a lasting impression on me. She helped me feel comfortable and not so shy. She created a relaxed and enjoyable environment that made learning easy. Her classroom became a haven to which I still return.

Stevie Turner
White Lake Middle School
Mrs. Pate/Grade 7

MY MOST FAVORITE TEACHER OF ALL!!!

I have had a lot of fun, happy teachers, but there was one that just put the sparkle in my eyes. That teacher was Ms. Phillips. There were five reasons that told me that she was going to be my favorite. The first reason was her attitude. She was always happy, with a smile on her face every day. She was everyone's friend, so nice, kind and generous. The second reason was her personality. She was hilarious, and most of the time she bit her tongue to keep from laughing with the class. She was so thoughtful and friendly towards others. The third reason was because of her passion for people. She was always looking out for others wherever she went. If she saw someone spill the contents of their lunch on the floor, she would help them clean it up, give them her lunch, then just go get an apple or granola bar from the Snack Shack and eat that instead. The fourth reason why she was my favorite teacher was because of her perseverance. Whenever she was doing something that she wasn't too thrilled about doing, she would just keep pushing herself to accomplish that task. The last but not least reason why Ms. Phillips was my favorite teacher was because of her kindness towards others. She would help a student if she could tell they were struggling. She would tutor any kid in any class! That is why Ms. Phillips was my favorite teacher.

My Favorite Teacher
by
Ella Hager
Portland Middle School
8th Grade, Mrs. Cornwell's class

When I walked into 4th grade, I was in what we call multi-age. My 4th grade teacher was nice but my 5th grade teacher was fabulous! Her name was Mrs. Barbara Longstreth. She had unique ways for us to learn things; she always played us songs on her piano when both of our classes were together. It was rare for her to get mad because she loved everyone that she knew. She took certain students on "adventures" when we earned it; she took us wherever we wanted to go, and she was generous enough to pay for all of it.

When I was finished with 4th grade, I couldn't wait until the summer was over so I could join her in her classroom the whole year. Then I heard some terrible news from that wonderful woman...she had been diagnosed with lung and colon cancer, But she didn't care, every time she was around other people she acted like nothing was wrong with her. So we all went on and didn't even notice. Then she began to wear wigs and she always made a joke about it. She always said, "One of these days I'm going to get the courage up and wear an AFRO!" then one day she was playing the piano being her wild and crazy self...she put it on.

After I graduated from Elementary school, I couldn't stop crying because I thought I would never see her again. And I didn't except for August 11, 2006, in her church, lying in a casket, more peaceful than ever. I will always love you, Mrs. Longstreth.

***Going to the NMSA
Conference in Nashville
November 1-4 ?***



**Please join MSIM and MAMSE for a
Michigan Reception, Friday November 3
at the Opryland Hotel
from 6-8 p.m.**

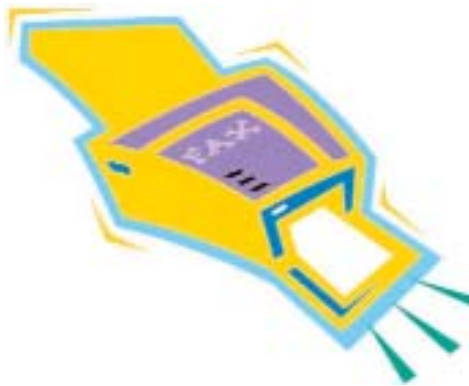


Powerful Quote

"It is a tragedy that, for most of us, school is not a place for deepening our sense of who we are and what we are committed to. If it were, think of the lasting changes it would have made."

-Peter Senge

Contact us:



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