

Mondays with Mike

Delta Opportunity School Food for Thought / Student Heroes

By Willyn Webb



Food for Thought is a “kids feeding kids” program operated out of Delta Opportunity School by the DOS students themselves. We all know that there are students who rely on school breakfast and lunch programs during the week, but may not have the certainty of meals on the weekends. Many of the DOS students relate firsthand that you cannot learn when you are hungry or worrying about if there will be enough food on the weekend. The students of DOS are in school because they value education, making them perfect to address this problem, and they are.

A nine week pilot program with 10 students of the BELA preschool started on November 19th. Backpacks of kid-friendly, nutritious food for the weekend’s meals were sent home with BELA preschool students who opted into the program. At the start of second semester the program expanded to 20 students at BELA/Headstart, 10 at Lincoln Elementary, 10 at Garnet Mesa, and 10 at Delta Middle. This is sustainable for the remainder of this school year due to a service learning grant from CDE.

Stocking our shelves!

Existing relationships made the establishment of this program a breeze. DOS students have a loving relationship with their BELA neighbors, last year providing activities for them in the courtyard between the schools. Additionally, many DOS students have been volunteering at the local food pantry for a couple of years. The food pantry is supporting the program when they have extra donations. Sandy Dombroski of the Delta Food Pantry considers the students a blessing. She came to the ASTRA meetings to be part of the planning stages of the program and share her enthusiasm for the cause. When there are DOS perishables that will not make it through the weekend, they will be given to the Food for Thought backpacks. Special pricing from the Food Bank of the Rockies will be shared by both programs. The additional needed food will be collected through food drives, donations, and the grant money.



“I love the expressions on the faces of the DOS students when they bring the bags of food! They express nothing but sheer joy in the fact that they are helping another child/student. The minute they come in our door they are smiling ear to ear! What an amazing feeling!”
..Angela Fedler, BELA Director

DOS students filling weekend backpacks of food to send home with local preschool, elementary, and middle school students who have opted into the Food For Thought program.

The names of the backpack recipients are kept confidential. DOS students plan the backpack contents according to availability of food, sales at local stores, and the food guide pyramid. They sort the food, fill the backpacks, deliver them, then collect them and start over. Careful shopping and budgeting is happening so that the cost of a backpack’s contents never exceeds \$5.00. According to Kirsten Delaney, a sophomore at DOS, “I think it is cool that our school can give to other kids because we NEVER GIVE UP!”

We salute our student heroes for their service learning projects.



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Thought Provoking Statistics

Last week on the Denver television channels, as well as the national news, there were some thought-provoking statistics on students' use and potential abuse of technology:

The average student spends:

- 2.5 hours listening to music
- 5 hours watching television
- 2.5 hours on video games
- 1.5 hours text messaging
- .50 hours on cell phone
- 38 minutes reading

Those that had no parent or adult restriction on the use of technology did worse in school. 47% that had no limitation had a 'C' or lower average. What does it mean? Think about it.

Clear Learning Objective

Descriptive Feedback should only be about the learning objective.

„I recognized things in myself like commenting about the handwriting and spelling, when I should be commenting on the learning objective. It's been a real revelation to me. I'm aware of it all the time now and when I hear myself starting to say, "You've left a capital letter out there,." I stop really quickly now and go back to talking about the learning objective.

A teacher from Lincoln Elementary School

Descriptive Feedback Reminders

- Feedback should focus on what has been done well and what needs further work in relation to the learning intention.
- Show where and how improvements can take place and set goals.
- Make sure you give time in class for students to go over the feedback and make improvements.
- Get specific – Don't use generic comments like "details," or "Great Job."
- Make sure you have follow up to your comments.

Thanks!

El Pomar Foundation and Betsy Marston

The assistance received from the El Pomar Foundation and Rotary is greatly appreciated by many in Delta County. Thanks to Betsy Marston and Jackie Parks for their assistance in this endeavor:

- ◆ \$1,000 for Child Find
- ◆ \$1,000 for Delta Opportunity School lunch program
- ◆ \$5,000 for windows at the Delta Center
- ◆ \$1,000 for the Paonia Rotary
- ◆ \$1,000 for the Delta Food Pantry
- ◆ \$5,000 for Tri County Resources

Secondary Math PLC Update

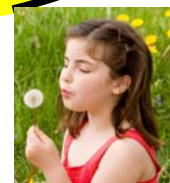
By Paul Rodriguez, Cedaredge Middle Principal

Middle School math teachers and administration met at Hotchkiss K-8 on January 11. The primary focus was to create the 3rd quarter assessment and standardize the scoring. Also, the different grade-level groups reviewed the 2nd quarter common assessment to determine efficiency. Some grade-level groups had time to review and amend the district-developed essentials for emphasis and alignment.

All high school math teachers and two principals met Thursday, January 21. This group's focus was to reach consensus and align the 3rd quarter common assessment. Standardizing the scoring of the assessment was determined. The new Colorado math standards were distributed and used, as the assessments were refined. Application questions were particularly contentious. Further refinements of essentials were discussed, as well as teachers implementing a standards-based classroom. Delta High reported to the group how they were mapping essentials with identification and alignment of specific learning objectives for each essential.

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Erin Lee**, senior at Delta High School. She is a finalist for the Boettcher Scholarship.





How to Turn Mike Miles' Poor Practices into Best Practices

by Connie Vincent, Curriculum Director

On January 18, our speaker, Mike Miles, gave us a list of poor classroom practices which made more than a few of us uncomfortable. Uncomfortable, because many, along with the writer of this article, have used those poor practices more than once in our teaching. I'd like to take each of these practices and provide an alternative way to use the same activities in a different way to make "poor into best" classroom practices. These ideas come from watching some of our most effective teachers in the district doing great things for student achievement. They are truly making instruction "the main thing".

The crayola curriculum: drawing and coloring the novel cover was mentioned by Dr. Miles. Use the "Quick Sketch" activity, which uses similar parts of the brain, to get the same demonstration of learning. The teacher reads aloud from a novel and stops occasionally to have students make a quick sketch of their thinking. The focus can be on characterization, plot elements, theme, etc and it captures how a student is visualizing the content of the novel. This is great for comprehension as well as the demonstration of students' ability to pull theme or character traits from reading. The teacher can then pull random names of students for them to share their sketch and explain it or students can be paired and each time share their visualizations with a partner. The teacher can move around the room and quickly gather if students are picking up the central ideas of the novel. Use a timer for quick sketching.

Stream of consciousness writing: rather than giving a prompt and expecting great writing, teach how to write to a prompt with either a short, constructed response, or an essay-type response. Give students a completed plan outline or web and have them write about it, filling in their own details with a paragraph including all the parts of the plan. Provide a sentence or paragraph starter or topic sentence and have them write. Don't expect them to write a complete response until all parts of the writing process are fully taught. Remember if they practice poor writing habits, they will reinforce their use.

Observer math: Have all students solve the problems being discussed. Have them use white boards to solve problems and then ask them to hold them up so the teacher can quickly see who has the solution and who doesn't. The teacher can then work individually with students who are incorrect. Pair them up and ask them to solve the problem and then explain their solution to the partner. Have the students at the board explain solutions to the class. Remember the discussion around the solving is more important than the answer. If students can verbalize how they've solved the problem, they will have much less problem with writing out their thinking on an assessment. Every student should solve every practice problem.

Dark rooms: Turn on the lights so the brain doesn't go into sleep mode.

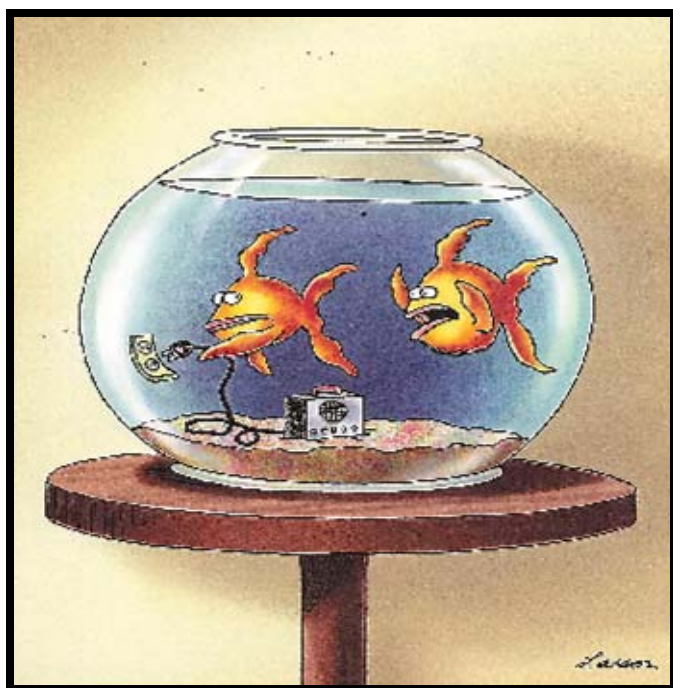
Movies: use clips to teach important concepts rather than using entire movies. Always ask if a movie is the best way to teach a lesson. It's easy, but is it really the most effective way for students to master the learning objective? Is it worth the instructional time it takes?

Poor readers reading aloud: Avoid round-robin reading (each student reading in turn) and popcorn reading where one student picks another to read. Material that needs to be read aloud can be read chorally. Students can partner read, reading together, and then read individually, helping each other with difficult words, and then reading the same text together again. (use a stronger reader with a weaker). Cloze reading is a good choice. The teacher reads aloud and when he/she comes to a key vocabulary word, he/she stops and lets the students fill in the word chorally. This emphasizes key concepts plus helps keep the entire class engaged. The teacher reads a page orally, followed by the students reading the next page chorally. Have girls read, then boys. Read by rows; read by who is wearing a certain color, etc. Use an advanced organizer to have students read for specific information. Everyone hates to hear a poor reader stumble through difficult text. No one hates it as much as the poor reader himself.

Word searches: Dr. Miles said these are only appropriate for primary students, but he could have added and only then if your objective is something like improvement of visual discrimination of word families, sight words, etc. Instead of a word search on a random topic, give definitions of word stems (vocabulary development) in a column and have students find the word in a word search that fits the definition of that stem. For example, the definition is "carry" and the student looks for a word with the stem "port" in it. This gives practice in the vocabulary skill, not just in finding words. Use this as your weekly assessment. Another assessment along those lines is to write a list of words or phrases from a topic the class is studying and have students arrange the words under category titles. For the Civil War, for example, include causes of the war, southern and northern victories, battle strategies, etc. Higher level thinking will have the students create their own categories for a long list of words/phrases and have them explain their thinking in a SCR as to why they chose the topics they did. It's a great formative assessment in a different format.

....(To be continued next week)

- ◆ Congratulations to **Linda Lloyd**, health aide, on the arrival of her new grandson.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Evan Cummings**, teacher at Delta Middle School, and his wife, Diane, on the arrival of their new daughter, Lucy Mae.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Meghan Gallenbeck**, teacher at Garnet Mesa Elementary School, and her husband, Ty, on the arrival of their new daughter, Gabriella.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Deb Turner**, special education aide at Lincoln Elementary School. Her husband recently had surgery. We wish him a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Mike Chastain**, teacher at Lincoln Elementary. His wife, Gaylene, was recently hospitalized. We wish her a speedy recovery.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Amy Bohling**, teacher at Lincoln Elementary, and her husband, in the loss of his father.



“Bob! You fool! Don’t plug that thing in!”



Calendar

January 26	Budget Task Force Meeting @ D.O. at 5:30 p.m.
January 27	Classified Council Meeting @ D.O. at 12:30 p.m.
January 27	PERA Meeting @ Delta Center at 6:30 p.m.
February 2	District Accountability Mtg. @ D.O. at 6:30 p.m.
February 9	Principals’ Meeting @ D.O. at 8:00 a.m.
February 9	Coordinating Council Mtg. @ D.O. at 4:00 p.m.
February 14	Valentine’s Day
February 25	School Board Meeting @ Delta Center 6:00 p.m. Policy Review 7:00 p.m. Regular School Board Meeting.

ALL BUSINESS



CONNIE GALVIN, Business Program Coordinator for DMTC, points out formatting tips for MS Excel. Since 2007, Connie has helped reshape the business curricula that is aimed at serving both secondary and post-secondary students who are pursuing sound fundamental business training. And, just 6 months ago, the Business Lab was outfitted with all new computers to create a state-of-the-art training environment. Business Certificate offerings include Accounting Technician, Administrative Specialist, Banking Fundamentals, and Small Business Entrepreneur. Individual Certificates are available in many fields, from Advanced Presentation Graphics and Desktop Publishing, to Employment Skills, and Financial Mathematics.

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THINK SPRING!

Sheryl Williams, Horticulture & Landscape Coordinator, shows off the colors and exotic plants that are blooming in the DMTC Greenhouse in the middle of January. Sheryl's



classes have created many physical improvements to the campus over the years including landscaping, rockwork, irrigation systems, sitting areas, and are now working on beautifying the courtyard between the buildings. This semester, several gardening, landscaping, pruning, irrigation, and greenhouse design classes are offered through DMTC's Individual Certificate and Community Education programs. Spring IS just around the corner, you know.