Mondays with Mike

Delta County School District 50J

October 19, 2009

Welcome Back

Hope you are all rested and ready to go!

Delta-Montrose Technical College—EMS Heroes
AIR EVACUATION EXERCISE

Channing Clymer, Paramedic & DMTC EMS Coordinator, staged an air evacuation exercise for EMT students last week using St. Mary's CareFlight helicopter and crew. Knowing when and how to use air medical evacuation is an important piece of the Emergency Medical Technician certificate at DMTC. These future graduates will make valuable contributions to their communities and have opportunities for more advanced training and degrees. Thanks goes out to St. Mary's, who regularly participates with Western Slope training programs to elevate response teams for all of us.

School Board Meeting—Delta-Montrose Technical College-Paonia Campus
October 22, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. Policy Review and 7:00 p.m. Regular School Board Meeting

Items of Interest: Good News: We had four schools qualify for accreditation with distinction: Crawford, Montessori, Lincoln, and Delta Academy of Applied Learning.

Budget Task Force: The membership and timeline for the Budget Task Force will be recommended to the Board. Representative groups include Coordinating Council, Classified Council, Principals, District Accountability, and citizens. Meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday of each month through April in the early evening (5:30 p.m.). (December is not scheduled.) These are open meetings. …..(Continued on page 3)

Second Board Candidate Forum

The second Board candidate forum was held on October 6th at the Delta Center. A good sized crowd was in attendance to hear the candidates' answers on several questions. Congratulations to all the candidates on a meeting that went very well. The ballots are in the mail early this week. Be sure and return them to the County Clerk and Recorder before November 3rd. Exercising your right to vote is important.

Common Formative Assessments

As the end of quarter one approaches, so do the results of our district common assessments in the areas of reading, writing and math. The reading and writing window was September 17 through October 1. The window occurred about two-thirds of the way through the quarter rather than at the end to allow teachers to react to what the assessments were telling them about their students' progress and to allow them to reteach essentials that may not be solid. It also put the focus on what was not yet taught so the remainder of the quarter's instruction time can be well used for those essentials which are not mastered by the majority of the class. The math window comes at the very end of the quarter (October 19-30). If teachers are using the district test formatively, that is, **for learning**, those essentials, which are not yet mastered, will be retaught in quarter two. Teachers have been encouraged to use some type of assessment matrix, which will show at a glance which students have not yet mastered the essential learnings for each quarter so no essentials get left out as we move through the school year. The district assessments are written by our district PLC groups and are adjusted after testing when questions are found that are confusing or that aren't informing our instruction. Research from Marzano & Associates tells us that using a common formative assessment has an effect size of .82% on student performance. That translates into an average of 29% improvement for students whose teachers use formative assessment and compare the results with others. Administering, scoring, and reviewing the tests with students is very hard work, but well worth the effort! Great job to all teachers and students in this endeavor!

Never Say Anything—a Kid Can Say!

…..Steven C. Reinhart

Several weeks ago, Brent Curtice, Principal at Paonia Jr./Sr. High School, shared with me a very compelling article written by Steve Reinhart in *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*. The article is especially valuable to math teachers and it is an area that can and should be improved in the secondary schools in our District. I have abridged the article but it is available at www.nctm.org.

The article details events that unfold for Steve much like it has for many of us in the last few years. Steve planned extensively, presented what should have been a masterful lesson, only to discover the following day that the students were confused about the learning. You see, Steve was still in the format of teaching vs. student learning. He was very good at explaining math to his students, knew the content well, and was a dedicated and caring teacher, but something was wrong. The students were much more capable of learning than they demonstrated.

Lower levels of achievement caused Steve to search for better approaches. By doing research and talking to team members, he made a commitment to change 10% of his teaching each year. He began to collect ideas from teammates, workshops, professional journals, and university classes. Each year, he wanted to simply teach a topic a better way than the year prior. He shared his research with members of the math department.

Before long, Steve noticed that the familiar teacher-centered, direct-instruction model did not fit well with the more in depth problems he started using. *It was not enough to teach better math; he also had to teach math better.*

Making the change was not easy; he had to learn new ways. It was like student teaching again. The more he moved from traditional methods of lecture and teacher-centered to student-centered, problem-based approach, more of the students were engaged and enjoyed math classes to a greater degree. The small changes that he implemented each year began to show positive achievement results. In five years, he had almost completely changed both the *what* and *how* of his teaching.

He also discovered a fundamental flaw in his teaching methods. When he was in front of the class demonstrating and explaining, he was learning a great deal, but many of his students were not! He concluded that if *they* were to ever really learn math, *they* would have to do the explaining and he would need to do the listening.

His definition of a good teacher changed from "one who explained things so well that students understand" to " one who gets students to explain things so well they can be understood."

Steve found that getting students to explain their thinking and becoming actively involved in the classroom discussion can be a challenge. However, the selecting, practicing, and refining of one or two strategies before moving on to others resulted in continual, incremental growth in math achievement. He found that implementing one or two techniques at a time also made it easier for students to accept and adjust to the new expectations and standards being established. Steve advises the following changes:

…(Continued on page 4)

Here's to Us!!!

No matter what our kids and the new generation think about us, WE ARE AWESOME!!!!

Our Life is Living Proof!!!!

To those of us born 1930-1979

To all of the kids who survived the 1930s, 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s!!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

Then after that trauma, we were put to sleep on our tummies in baby cribs covered with bright colored lead-base paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, locks on doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had baseball caps not helmets on our heads.

As infants and children, we would ride in cars with no car seats, no booster seats, no seat belts, no air bags, bald tires and sometimes no brakes.

Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and no one actually died from this.

We ate cupcakes, white bread, real butter and bacon. We drank Kool-Aid made with real white sugar. And, we weren't overweight… WHY? Because we were always outside playing… that's why!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on..

No one was able to reach us all day. And, we were OKAY.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride them down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We did not have Play Stations, Nintendo's and X-boxes. There were no video games, no 150 channels on cable, no video movies or DVDs, no surround-sound or CDs, no cell phones, no personal computers, no Internet and no chat rooms.

WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We would get spankings with wooden spoons, switches, ping pong paddles, or just a bare hand and no one would call child services to report abuse.

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

We were given BB guns for our 10th birthdays, made up games with sticks and tennis balls and, although we were told it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just walked in and talked to them.

Little league had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!!

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

These generations have produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever.

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

If you are one of us, CONGRATULATIONS!

….Holtec International

School Board…(Continued from page 1)

October Enrollment: It appears the October enrollment count will be down by approximately 86 FTE. The state will allow us to average this loss with the previous four years. Even with this, the operating revenue for this funding year will be reduced about $275K.

Delta Opportunity School: Delaine Hudson will present an overview of DOS.

District-wide Curriculum "Connecting the Dots" - A PowerPoint will be reviewed by the Board demonstrating how the first strategic plan of Fall 2004 contains all of the ongoing initiatives including the current year's Indicators of Success—Curriculum of Alignment, PLC, Non-fiction Writing, and Feedback on Best Practices.

Other items include Coordinating Council report, Accountability activity, and Policy Review.

The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a **rightly timed pause.**

Thoughts and Concerns

- Our thoughts to out to **Alma Morales,** aide at Delta High School, as her son recently had brain surgery. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Never Say Anything….(Continued from page 2)

1. *Never say anything a kid can say!* This skill is hard to master but it can force a teacher to develop and improve their questioning skills.
2. *Ask good questions:* Good questions require more than recalling a fact, it encourages thinking, reflecting on the math they are learning. Quite simply, asking good questions helps get students to think and inform the teacher about what they know. Steve feels the best questions are open-ended, those for which more than one way to solve the problem, or more than one acceptable response may be possible. (Sounds like the constructed response on CSAP math.)
3. *Use more process questions than product questions:*

   Product questions—those that almost completely rely on memory—provide little information about what a student knows. To find out what a student understands, Steve asks process questions that require the student to reflect, analyze, and explain his or her thinking and reasoning. Process questions—require students to think at much higher levels. That is why there is a high correlation between writing and math.
4. *Replace lectures with sets of questions*: When tempted to present information in the form of a lecture, Steve is reminded of Harry Wong's definition of lecture*: The transfer of information from the notes of the teacher to the notes of the students without passing through the minds of either."*

   When tempted, Steve asks, "What percent of my students will be actually engaged in learning?"
5. *Be patient:* Wait time is very important. If you always call one of the first students who volunteers, you may be cheating those that need more time to think about, and process a response. Increasing wait time to <u>five seconds</u> or longer can result in more and better responses.
6. *Less is more:* There is always the urge to simply tell students the answer and move on for the sake of expedience. Steve now believes that all students learn more when he poses high quality problems and gives them the necessary time to investigate, process their thoughts, and reflect on and define their findings.

…(to be continued next week with: Math question template)

Calendar

October 21	**Classified Council Meeting** @ D.O. at 12:15 p.m.
October 22	**School Board Meeting** @ DMTC- Paonia Campus
	6:00 p.m. Policy Review
	7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
October 23	**Principal/Board Work Session** @ DMTC at 1:00 p.m.
October 24	**Principal/Board Work Session** @ DMTC at 8:00 a.m.
October 28	**Delayed Start Day**
November 10	**Principals' Meeting** @ D.O. at 8:00 a.m.
	Coordinating Council @ D.O. at 4:00 p.m.
November 10	**District Accountability Meeting** @ D.O. at 6:15 p.m.
November 11	**Delayed Start Date**
November 19	**School Board Meeting** @ HOT K8
	6:00 p.m. Policy Review
	7:00 p.m. Regular School Board meeting
November 25-27	**Thanksgiving Break**