PEP TALK

Supporting the education and well-being of gifted learners of Belmont, Carroll, Guernsey, Harrison, and Tuscarawas County

December 2020

Coordinator's Corner

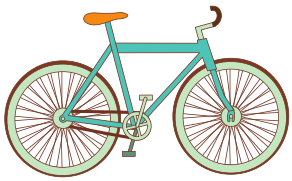
Lisa Burrell

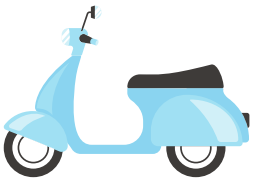
Which is Better, Being Right or Doing the Right Thing?

The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) recently held their annual convention. One of the featured speakers was Colin Seale, founder and CEO of Think Law (www.thinklaw.us). Think Law focuses on the Educational Equity Equation Conversation which promotes critical thinking. In listening to Colin Seale share, he made the statement: “Doing right is more important than being right.”

His example: a park with a sign similar to this:

Think about what this means. Does it refer to anything with wheels that can be driven? Does it apply to motorized vehicles? What about wheelchairs, childrens’ bikes, little Jeeps, scooters, mopeds, etc.?





Picture this scenario: a child falls off a swing and lands on his head. EMTs are called. If the EMTs follow the rule, they must park the ambulance in the parking lot and carry a stretcher to the scene. This could take several minutes for them to arrive to help the child. However, they could be there within seconds upon arriving at the park if they drove the ambulance directly to the scene. Which is better, being right and following the sign, or doing the right thing to help the child?

Now connect this to education. Is it more important being right or doing the right thing for our students? This can apply to a lot of areas including: in-person vs remote learning, differentiation, grouping - flexible, ability, small/large,etc, and priorities. As educators we claim our number one priority is our students and what is best for them. However, it is quite easy to get caught up in all the rules and requirements (standards, lesson plans, pacing guides, classroom management, etc.).and before we realize it, our focus has shifted from doing the right thing to being right. Being right is following all ‘signs’ (rule/requirements with no exceptions) and pushing through to make sure we can check them off and show we have accomplished everything we need to. When this shift subtly takes place, how are our students affected? If we use the ‘signs’ as guides or goals, we keep our students’ needs as priorities. We open our creativity to enhance lessons, differentiate instruction, incorporate students’ interests, ‘think outside the box’ to make learning fun and memorable. When we do this, we find we have met the requirements and students will demonstrate mastery because they enjoyed what they were learning.

Be flexible. Be willing to ‘think outside the box’ by not allowing the standards/pacing guides to put you in a box to begin with.

In speaking with a teacher recently, this very topic came up and I was asked, “Do I have to stay within the pacing guide and only use what it shows?” I sensed she was feeling a little guilt because she was not at the place the guide said she should be nor using exactly what was listed to be used for teaching the standards for this time of year. My response, “The pacing guide is just that, a guide. It is to encourage you to set a pace but not to the point of moving ahead without student mastery. The resources are there in case you cannot come up with anything else. As a teacher, you are the professional so feel free to create and use other resources and strategies that will benefit your students.” She seemed very relieved then proceeded to tell me how she uses the standards and pacing guide and incorporates her students’ interests, then creates cross-curricular lessons that include research, projects, and more. In doing this, she has been able to cover several standards which has enabled her class to move beyond where the pacing guide said they should be. Her lessons include whole-brain methods and strategies proven to enhance memory and retention of information. The students are completely engaged which has reduced disruptive behaviors. They demonstrate mastery of the standards being taught. In observing her class, I noticed she allows for the students to take ownership in learning. When one makes a connection, she is flexible enough to allow students to explain the connection and come up with more. She stays positive, treats each student as if he/she were the only one in the room, asks higher-order thinking questions to keep her students thinking, and gives time for group/buddy discussions especially with tougher topics. In this real-life example, this teacher is doing the right thing for her students instead of being right by following the pacing guide exactly as written.

Let’s go one step further. Remote learning, hybrid learning, in-person learning. Do not let any one of these situations put you in a box and hinder your creativity in teaching. Keep thinking ‘outside the box.’ Incorporate your students’ interests and connect them to standards that need taught. Allow them to research and make videos to share in Google Classroom or Zoom if and when remote learning is required. Encourage them to be creative and take ownership of their learning. You will be surprised at what all is accomplished and how much knowledge your students will gain and retain. Stay positive, make learning fun, use the ‘signs’ as guides, and do the right things for your class. The rewards are priceless!

As Colin Seale said, “Doing right is more important than being right.”

Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Knowledge Doubling Curve

Marina Colombo

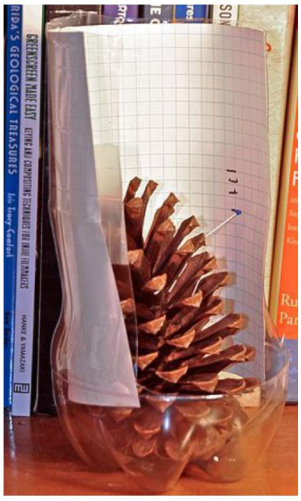
"Buckminister Fuller created the 'Knowledge Doubling Curve'; he noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. Nanotechnology is doubling every two years and clinical technology is doubling every 18 months. On average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the "internet of things" will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours. Read more here!

The winners of October's drawing for “Fold It” are **Kristina Williams** from Belmont-Harrison JVS, S**arah Schoeppner** from Tusky Valley, and **Morgan Haught** from Rolling Hills!

This month's game is Thinkfun's 15 Puzzle. This puzzle develops critical skills and builds logic and problem solving skills through fun gameplay! 15 Puzzle has stainless steel construction and comes with a leatherette travel case and 31 multi-level challenges.

Sign up for this month's game here! (https://forms.gle/LNEqLjpEra7usYfd8)

Winter Activity - Pinecone Hygrometer



A hygrometer is an instrument for measuring the humidity (water) in the air. Humidity in the air stabilizes our climate and prevents large extremes of temperature. It is important to know the humidity of the air for many reasons.

The growth of harmful bacteria, dust mites, molds and other irritants flourish in warm, humid areas. High humidity can make your home feel stuffy, causing hyperthermia (overheating) as a result of your body's inability to effectively let out heat. Humid air activates nerves in your lungs that narrow and tighten your airways increasing the opportunity for certain health issues.

According to the EPA, the ideal range of relative humidity for a home is between 30% and 50%.

A **Classroom Hygrometer** can easily be made to measure the humidity in your classroom. Follow this link for a simple way to create your own hygrometer from a pine cone and some simple supplies.

https://www.thehappyscientist.com/content/pine-cone-weather

After you have created your hygrometer, use the following guide questions to have the students discover some information about the humidity levels in your classroom.

1. Get a baseline of what the humidity level of your classroom is (the link tells you how to do this).
2. Chart the humidity for several days or weeks.
3. Do you notice any patterns? Does temperature, precipitation, etc. seem to affect humidity?
4. Introduce variables to try to change the humidity - i.e. a bowl of water, dehumidifier, fan, etc. (only introduce one variable at a time)
5. Did your humidity level change with the variables?

Use the following chart to help you gather & record your data. Once it is complete, based on your observations, what have you learned about humidity? After evaluating your data, what can you conclude about how to get ideal humidity?

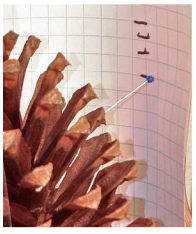


Chart Your Humidity

Date	**Humidity Level**	**Temperature** (outside)	**Temperature** (inside)	**Variable?** (fan, water, etc.)

Analyze the data in this chart, what have you learned and what can you conclude about getting ideal humidity in your classroom or home?

For the artists out there, when you are done why not **Crystallize your Pinecone?**

Materials you will need:

Pinecone
Ribbon, string, etc. (something to tie it with)
Borax (found in the laundry aisle)
Hot Water
Large Bowl
Chopstick or other stick
Decorative pieces like ribbons, bells, etc.

Directions:

1. Get your pinecone and tie it securely with some ribbon or string. This will be used to hold the ornament during the crystallization and for hanging your pinecone later on.
2. Tie or loop your ribbon around your stick and hang your pinecone into your container. If it touches any of the sides of your container, get a larger one. It's really important that it doesn't touch the sides of the bowl.
3. Prepare your crystallization solution. You'll use about 2 parts water to 1 part borax (e.g., 2 cups water and 1 cup borax). Mix until almost all of the Borax is dissolved. Some Borax will settle at the bottom of your bowl, this is okay.
4. Hang the pinecone into the liquid solution. If it floats, that is ok, it won't float for very long. Once it soaks up the liquid and starts growing crystals, it will sink.
5. Let the pinecone sit completely undisturbed for approximately 12 hours. Don't touch it, wiggle it, poke it, etc. Any movement could affect the crystal formations.
6. After 12 hours pull it out and place it on a towel to dry. Remove any excessive crystal formations by gently brushing them away.
7. Decorate or experiment with adding essential oils for a fragrant pinecone to hang in your home or classroom!

Holidays Around the World

December Pep Talk Activity

By: Amber Toriseva

<u>Challenge Question</u>: Can you create an object to represent another country during the holidays?

Step 1:	**Have your students brainstorm on the brainstorming sheet (attached). Students may research countries to activate their background knowledge.**
Step 2:	**Split your class into small groups or let your students work individually. Provide students with materials needed to create their object.**
Step 3:	**Allow the students to share/present their object and country.**
Step 4:	**Allow students time to write about their object.**

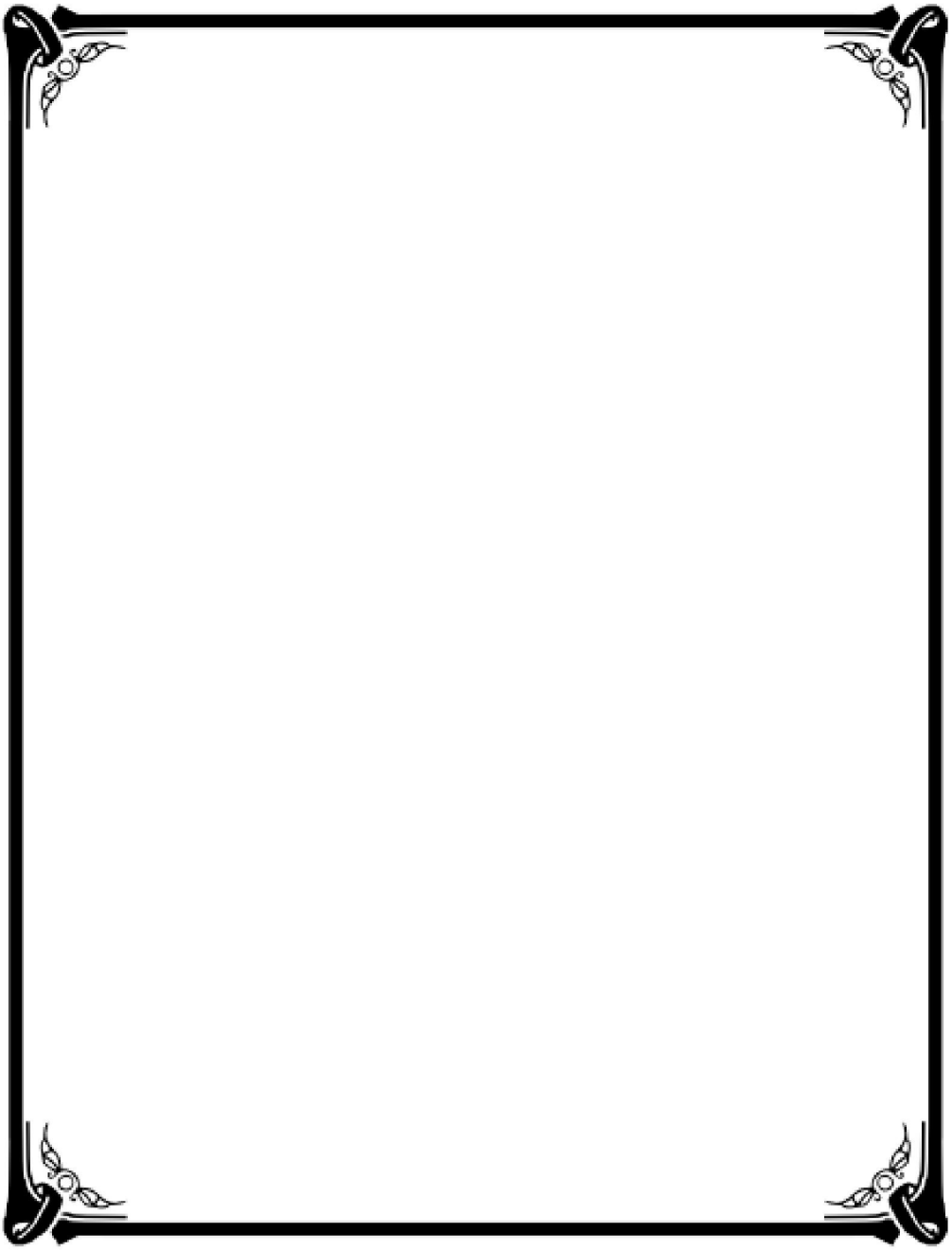
Materials Needed:

- **Cardboard tubes (toilet paper or paper towel)**
- **Scissors**
- **Tape**
- **Markers**
- **Aluminum Foil**
- **Construction Paper**
- **Ribbon**
- **Anything else you may choose to allow your students to use for this project**

Holidays Around the World

Name _____ Date _____

Plan out your object below:



What was the country you selected and what object did you create to represent that country?

Upcoming Events

December 4th
OAGC Coordinator Workshop - Virtual

December 8th, 4:00pm
Rest and Recharge: Managing and Preventing Burnout - virtual presentation

December 10
Hanukkah begins!

December 25th
Merry Christmas!!

December 26th
Kwanzaa begins!

Contact Us!

Lisa Burrell
330-308-9939 ext. 8216
lisa.burrell@ecoesc.org
Tuscarawas Valley, Carrollton

Marina Colombo
330-308-9939 ext. 8214
marina.colombo@ecoesc.org
Dover, Rolling Hills

Lori Robson
330-308-9939 ext. 8209
lori.robson@ecoesc.org
Executive Director, Educational Services

Sarah Spies
330-308-9939 ext. 8226
sarah.spies@ecoesc.org
Programming and Communications Coordinator

Lisa Stupak
740-695-9773 ext. 8403
lisa.stupak@ecoesc.org
Bellaire, Bridgeport, Martins Ferry, and Shadyside Schools

Amber Toriseva
740-695-9773 ext. 8409
amber.toriseva@ecoesc.org
Barnesville, St. Clairsville, and Union Local Schools

Rachel Winters
330-308-9939 ext. 8239
rachel.winters@ecoesc.org
East Guernsey