

Supporting the education and well-being of gifted learners of Carroll, Guernsey, and Tuscarawas Counties.

Inside this Issue:

- Coordinator's Corner
- Calendar
- Ready made Resource
- Fun Fact
- Game Giveaway
- Did You Know...

Congratulations!

To Our December Winner of the Distraction Card Game:

Amy Rossi

From:
Claymont Schools

Calendar of Events

Jan. 20 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Feb. 1 - Franklin B. Walter Nominations Due to ESC

Feb. 6 - Winter Law Day



Coordinator's Corner

Rachel Winters, Gifted Coordinator, ECOESC

My very best work friend recently became a superintendent for the first time. She's a fabulous superintendent already, I'm sure, because she is one of the most genuine, positive, and intelligent people I have ever had the pleasure to meet. She gets along with everyone--not an exaggeration!--and I have often wondered her secret to doing so. Last week, for example, she was telling me about how, at a meeting, she saw someone with whom we used to work. This former colleague wasn't always honest and genuine with us, and, if I myself am being completely honest here, I wouldn't necessarily want to help her if I were asked. My friend felt no such hesitation (or if she did, she didn't show it); this person asked her for assistance with an issue and my friend immediately stepped up to help. When I asked her how she could do it, she simply said, "It never hurts to just be nice. I always want to preserve someone's dignity."

What does this have to do with gifted, you ask? It may not come as a surprise to you that gifted kids--and parents--aren't always nice. Or gentle. Or patient. Or likeable. We might not, way down deep in our secret souls, want to help them. They may intimidate us, even when they're eight years old; because even eight-year-old gifted kids can be impatient, arrogant, and controlling.

So...they're human. So am I. So are you. We're all imperfect. We all have good days and bad days, especially in January, even when it's (so far) a snow-free January. It's completely acceptable to own our humanity, and to let our students see when we make a mistake so we can discuss that each mistake is an opportunity to learn and to do things better the next time. If we want our gifted students to be kind, patient, and loving toward other humans, we must try our best, one minute or hour at a time, to model this behavior. If we want them to "think outside the box," to be brave and intrepid and to embrace new situations in order to prepare them for a world that may not even exist yet, we must try our best to model that too. It IS possible to care deeply about our students and to also be imperfect. You are more important than you realize. I have faith in you.



Use Yer Noggin!

Students...
January is International
Brain Teaser Month!
Try these!

- 1. He Who...**
He who builds me doesn't want me,
He who buys me doesn't use me,
He that uses me doesn't know he's got me.
- 2. What are they?**
In the dark they are found without being fetched, in the light they are lost without being stolen.
- 3. When I'm...**
When I'm young I'm tall
When I'm old I'm short
When I'm alive I glow
Because of your breath I die
- 4. Here but not there**
I'm in you,
But not in him, I go up,
But not down,
I'm in the Colosseum,
But not a tower,
I'm in a puzzle,
But not a riddle.
- 5. from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* by J.K. Rowling**
"First think of the person who lives in disguise,
Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies,
Next tell me what's always the last thing to mend,
The middle of middle and end of the end?
And finally give me the sound often heard,
During the search for a hard-to-find word.
Now string them together, and answer me this,
Which creature would you be unwilling to kiss?"

Teacher Corner: Back to our Roots

Whether our gifted education training was just last week, last month, or ten years ago, it's always a good idea to revisit some of the basics of what we know to be good for our highly capable students. In this excerpt from the article, "Tips for Teachers: Successful Strategies for Teaching Gifted Learners," by the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, we find ideas for providing our gifted students what they need.

Some tips from the Davidson Institute:

1. "Familiarize yourself with the characteristics of intellectually gifted students."

Not all of the highly capable students in your class will be formally identified as gifted, and even all of the students who are identified may not always appear to be. Rather than believing false stereotypes about gifted students like, for example, "all gifted students get straight As," know that many gifted students regularly exhibit characteristics like: an ability to think abstractly that is beyond the ability of a typical peer, a need for ongoing mental challenges/stimulation; an ability to learn and process information very quickly; and a need to explore subjects in depth.

2. "Let go of 'normal.'"

The best thing we can do for our students is to offer them the opportunity to grow from where they are. Although our classrooms may be organized by age, all of our students have unique academic needs based on their own unique background knowledge and ability. Even giftedness "occurs along a continuum:" some identified gifted students may be highly gifted, some moderately gifted. Don't be afraid to encourage your students to stretch their "thinking wings," just as we would encourage a promising athlete.

3. "Involve parents as resource locators."

Parents of gifted students are often strong and active advocates for their children. Rather than being intimidated by their interest and involvement, offer to collaborate with them and work together to see their child's needs are met. Like all parents, gifted parents just want to be heard and to "encounter someone who is willing to think differently" in order to meet their child's needs.

4. "Learning from the experience of others."

"Many well-meaning teachers innocently commit the following blunders when they encounter gifted students. Don't feel bad if you have committed them. I know I have and I wish someone would have pointed them out to me before I had to learn about them the hard way."

"Blunder" #1: "asking your gifted students to serve as tutors for students who are struggling."

Gifted kids learn and think differently than other students; it is very likely they aren't going to be good at explaining their thought processes or being patient with someone who doesn't understand a concept the first time.

"Blunder" #2: "giving your gifted students more work when they finish early."

Rather than asking a student who has completed the work in an efficient manner to do more work, allow the student to explore subjects of interest to them.

"Blunder" #3: "only allowing gifted students to move ahead when they have completed the grade/age requirements/assignments with 100% accuracy."

Focus on students' strengths. Often, 80% accuracy is an acceptable alternative to "perfect" mastery, and it pays off in increased trust between you and the student later.

Did you know...

...National Public Radio has many podcasts appropriate for upper intermediate, middle, and high school students? Our current favorite is Radiolab. Check it out at www.npr.org/podcasts.

January Fun Fact

You might already know what an amazing historical resource exists in the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio...but did you know there is an Underground Railroad Museum right here in our region?

The Underground Railroad Museum in Flushing, Ohio, provides our students with an opportunity to learn more about the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley.

According to the Museum's website, "The Underground Railroad Museum is located in Flushing, Ohio. The Underground Railroad Museum features an extensive collection of publications, books, memorabilia and other articles. The museum was founded in 1993 by the late Dr. John Mattox and his late wife, Rosalind to preserve the past for future generations. The exhibits portray what is known about slavery and the Underground Railroad in Ohio, and presents an understanding of the culture in the 1800's. Much of the information and artifacts Mattox has gathered came from local sources. Mattox and the museum were accepted to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program."

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Register to Win!

the monthly game giveaway...
Email your name and school district
by
January 30
to:

lisa.burrell@ecoesc.org

Or

rachel.winters@ecoesc.org

Monthly Game Giveaway

CAT STAX

The Purrfect Puzzle



Help students tap into their feline senses and paw their way to victory with Cat Stax, The Purrfect Puzzle from Brainwright. This fun brainteaser game includes 12 cat pieces of various shapes and sizes which have to be put together to solve each of the 48 unique challenges — it's the purrfect logic game to foster creativity.

