



PEP TALK

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

January 2021

Coordinator's Corner

Creating Meaningful Connections that Support Student Learning

Amber Toriseva

As an educator, before anything else, I developed a connection with my students. Once I established that connection, an educational foundation could be built and learning could begin. Teaching has taught me the value of creating meaningful relationships. Those meaningful relationships exist within the confines of a classroom, but also extend so much further. It is so heart-warming to connect with students years later and keep some of those same connections alive as much as possible.

When thinking of ways to support your students in this uncertain time, think about those emotional connections you build with your students. How can those connections help your students learn? How can we continue to put forth our best efforts to teach in a time of uncertainty and how can we ensure that our students continue to learn most effectively? It all goes back to that connection we make with our students. A strong connection is necessary in creating positive social, emotional, behavioral, and educational outcomes. Student relationships are key to maintain, regardless of the learning environment, in an effort to encourage academic engagement, emotional stability, and help ensure student success.

In an effort to kick off the new year, focus on the good and what you can do to help your students. As both an educator and a mom, here are some tips I value from the staff and teachers I work with that have made this journey a little easier to navigate. There are teachers out there who are doing amazing things. Something as simple and grounded as making a connection with your students can go a long way.

1. Change is not necessarily bad. Encourage your learners to go with the flow and embrace whatever situation may arise. Be excited about in-person learning - be excited about remote-learning - be excited about school in general! Your students will feed off of your enthusiasm and will make the necessary adjustments to be successful.
2. Reflect on the notion of rigor and continue to challenge and support your students. As educators, we must toggle with the delicate balance of rigor and support. Given the circumstances, your students may be at a point where they need more support than rigor.
3. Remain flexible. Differentiate learning and allow for different expectations for your students, keeping in mind that each student may be in a different place with learning and that all learners may not be in alignment with each other. Know your students and know when and how to differentiate and push rigor.
4. Lead by example. Use hopeful language and encouraging words. Engage students to a world of learning in a way that you would have wished to be a part of when you were a student.
5. Practice mindfulness with your students, as it is beneficial to providing your students to be in touch with their thoughts and feelings. For more information on mindfulness, check out this [Mindfulness Toolkit](https://transformingeducation.org/resources/mindfulness-toolkit/) for classroom resources. (<https://transformingeducation.org/resources/mindfulness-toolkit/>)
6. Most importantly, reach out to your students - Each and every student. I know this may seem like a daunting task, but it is important to try to initiate that connection with every student you teach.

In times of uncertainty and the unknowing, I encourage you to create a space where students' voices and insights are at the forefront of your instruction. Make those connections. Talk with your students. Teach your students. This is a time to start fresh.....make those connections, and accomplish amazing things.

Wishing you an amazing start to a beautiful, new year!

The winners of December's drawing for "Fifteen Puzzle" are Jen Wooding of Union Local and Elise Lab of Tusky Valley!



This month's game is Kaleidoscope by ThinkFun!

Create vivid kaleidoscope patterns in this dazzling logic puzzle!

Twist and stack Kaleidoscope Tiles to match the patterns shown in the challenges. Pay attention – you may need to combine colors to perfectly match the cards! This game develops critical skills and strengthens visual perception and reasoning skills through fun gameplay.

Comes with multi-level challenges - Kaleidoscope comes with 40 beginner to expert challenges that become increasingly difficult as you play through them.

[Sign up for this month's game here! \(https://forms.gle/WysoxAnUrs8iyini3A\)](https://forms.gle/WysoxAnUrs8iyini3A)



Don't Miss Our EL Gifted Students

Many children in the U.S. live their lives in two or more languages: A child of Guatemalan descent may read bedtime stories in Spanish with their parents and learn in English at school—and perhaps speak K'iche' with their grandparents. Research has shown that these multilingual children may have strong math skills, conflict resolution skills, and executive function skills.



[Click here to read more!](#)

Baby New Year Activity

Marina Colombo

What is Baby New Year?

Baby New Year is a popular personification of the start of the new year, symbolizing the "rebirth" of the past year into the next. Usually a male infant wearing nothing else than a diaper, a top hat and a sash (which sometimes shows the year he is representing), Baby New Year is often paired with another mythical figure called "Father Time" — an elderly man carrying a scythe and hourglass who's depicted as the personification of passing time. As the story goes, Baby New Year will age and eventually grow into Father Time by the end of the year in December, at which time he will then turn over his timekeeping duties — and impart his aged wisdom — to the next Baby New Year born on January 1.



Baby New Year and the Diaper Dilemma

Each New Year many people decide to make a "New Year's Resolution." For 2021, a friend has made a resolution. Her resolution is to spend less money on disposable diapers. She has asked if all of you could assist in helping her do some comparison-shopping. We need to research a less expensive off brand of diapers and compare those to a more costly name brand--is the amount of absorption related to cost?

Sources:

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/a29849067/baby-new-year-trend-facts/>

<https://www.history.com/news/the-history-of-new-years-resolutions>

[Find the full worksheet here!](#)

States of Matter

Let's explore states of matter with a fun Ice Lantern Activity. The water molecule exists in three different physical states: liquid, solid, and gas. Water is one of the few materials that expands when it freezes. This expansion is due to the water molecules crystallizing into a rigid lattice structure. With this experiment, students will develop a hypothesis, use observation, measurement, investigative questions, and evaluation. Students should learn/know the definitions of:

Displacement - the measurement of the volume replaced by something else., the weight or the volume of fluid displaced by a floating or submerged body.

Expansion - the action of becoming larger or more extensive

Contraction - the process of becoming smaller.

Reversible change - water can change to ice and back again without the chemical composition being affected.

Following are the directions for making your Ice Lantern, then a worksheet for evaluating the learning.

To Make an Ice Lantern

You will need: A large cup (container), a smaller cup (container), decor, tape, water, marker, a way to freeze the device, and the following worksheet. The first step is the engineering part - decide on your physical configuration.

Experiment with pipe cleaners, glitter, pompoms, artificial flowers, food coloring, etc. It helps to twist pipe cleaners so they spiral up the inside of the large cup. They can then help to keep all your other engineered parts in place. They will move once you add water, so don't worry too much about your placement.



Once you are happy with your decorations, place the small cup inside the large cup. Tape it into place so the top of the cups are flush with each other. Four pieces of tape (or a cross tape) works well to keep it secure.

Carefully start to add water between the two cups so the water only goes into the larger cup. You may want to add some weight to the smaller cup to keep it in place and stop it from popping up.

Fill the larger cup until the water is only a couple of centimeters from the top. Mark the level on the cup. Add a few drops of food coloring to the water if you so choose.

Place in the freezer (or outdoors) for approximately 5 hours or until completely frozen.

Carefully remove the inside plastic cup, then the outer plastic cup. You may need to cut the cups to get them off.

Now, insert a battery operated candle into your ice lantern & enjoy!



[Find the full worksheet here!](#)

The Question:

“To Be Engaged, or Not to Be Engaged in a Virtual Learning Environment?”

Lisa Burrell

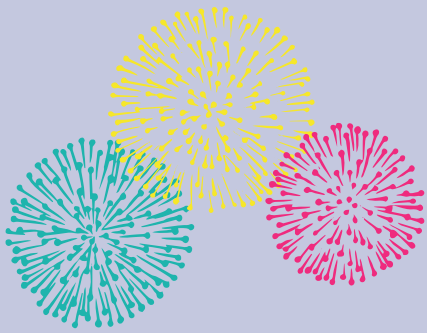
Keeping students, especially gifted students, engaged in learning in a remote/virtual setting can be a challenge. Below are two links that provide insight and resources to help educators get and keep their gifted students engaged in learning. The same strategies/resources can be used for all students.

National Association of Gifted Children: Guidelines for Virtual Instruction for Gifted Students

1. Enrich First, then Accelerate. In the beginning of distance learning, it is important to focus on enrichment over acceleration.
2. Organization is Key. In any classroom, staying organized will make learning more efficient and effective.
3. Communication, Communication, Communication
4. Use Tech Tools.

Todd Stanley, The Gifted Guy: How to Challenge Students in a Virtual Setting

- Use of PBL
- Giving students options
- Taking the ceiling off of learning
- Providing enrichment opportunities
- Challenging their thinking



Upcoming Events

January 15

3rd Spelling Bee Meeting

January 18

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day

January 22

Franklin B. Walter
Applications due

January 14th

Rest and Recharge:
Mindfulness in the
Classroom

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