



Teacher Tip of the Week

New Teacher Support Program 2009-2010

Terry Edwards, Program Coordinator

April 2010

Vol. 5 Issue 28

Teacher Tip of the Week
New Teacher Support
Program
Wilson County Schools
615-453-7282

Cyberbullying: An Electronic Threat to our students

Bullying via electronic devices like cellular phones and computers is relatively new - but it already has done plenty of damage to vulnerable children and teens.

or internet; and while there is little data yet available, it seems that many cyberbullies are bullying victims, seeking revenge.

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

Preliminary surveys show that up to twenty per cent of students experience some sort of electronic harassment. Girls are roughly twice as likely to bully or be bullied electronically as boys, and cyberbullying peaks in eighth grade. Roughly half of preteens tell their parents if they are victims, but reporting drops rapidly as children get older. Teens will tell a friend

rather than an adult. Many tell nobody at all.

Sometimes it seems difficult to distinguish genuine malice from typical, inappropriate adolescent humor; but when demeaning messages about an individual are sent to many different recipients, when they are frequent and escalate in

intensity, or when they clearly are intended to cause pain, that is abuse. When the victim *perceives* them as hurtful and abusive, that is abuse. *Anonymous* messages, automatically, are abusive.

Combating Electronic Bullying

Parents must be alert to the warning signs of bullying, and keep lines of communication with their children open. They should keep computers in the common areas of their homes, and not hesitate to invade a child's privacy if that is what is needed to preserve the child's safety. Schools should be informed when children are subjected to electronic attacks, so school servers can be secured and school officials can be alert for in-school problems. Increased awareness can prompt schools to institute anti-bullying programs which also address cyberbullying.

Continued on page 2 . . .

Twenty years ago, cyberbullying – also called electronic bullying or eBullying – did not exist. There were fewer home computers and cellular phones, and neither text messaging nor social networking websites existed. Today's children and teens are totally at home using the new technology, but plenty of parents are less adept, and may not understand how the new technology can be misused.

Cyberbullying may involve cruel, threatening, or obscene messages and images, sent by instant message or email, posted on web pages, or sent by cell phone. Personal information about the victim might be revealed (or fabricated), and rumors spread. Sometimes bullies impersonate the victims to cause them trouble.

Anonymous Bullies and Their Victims

Children can readily identify those who jam them into lockers or call them cruel names; traditional bullies may hide their actions from adults, but they *want* their victims to recognize their power. Most cyberbullies, however, remain *anonymous*. They can strike at any time of day or night, and cannot be avoided.

An anonymous enemy can be especially stressful for a victim, whose imagination may run wild. Conversely, cyberbullying offers an outlet to youngsters too weak or too low-status to win a face-to-face confrontation. The inordinate self-esteem displayed by "pure bullies" is unlikely to be present in those who practice anonymous harassment by cell phone



HOW TO DO IT— CHECKLIST



Maximize the First Five Minutes

Have students participate in an independent warm-up activity as you work through daily procedures. Generally the warm-up activity will involve journaling or solving a problem of the day. By engaging students in an independent activity, you are freeing yourself to take roll and deal with any tardy students. You can also have a student helper collect homework and record it in a record book.



Cyberbullying

(continued from page 1)



Try to identify anonymous cyberbullies. Harassment, inappropriate language, and pornography probably violate the terms of service agreements of the websites, email providers, ISPs, and telephone companies involved, so those providers may be helpful if contacted. Gather evidence, including copies of emails, instant messages, web postings, text and picture cellular messages, etc. Threats of violence, hate speech, extortion, and child pornography violate the law, and *should be reported to the police*.

Both in school and at home, children and teens must be motivated to report abuse of *others*, not just themselves, because the damage cyberbullying does to a young person may be very severe. They *must* learn that cyberbullying is *never* funny and *never* justified – it is just *wrong*.—Victor Gallis, Suite 101

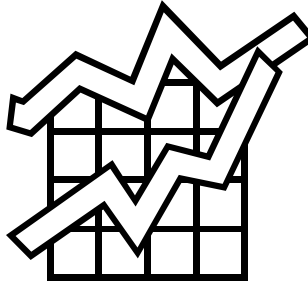
Engage students in tracking progress—NOT grades

People tend to lose motivation when they believe they are not as successful as they feel a need to be. For many students, grades can be highly demotivating. Therefore, it is important to develop ways for students to track their progress in acquisition of skills, knowledge, concepts, ability or their progress toward mastery.

Asking students to track their grades, though certainly a worthwhile task, is NOT tracking progress. In fact, it is the demotivating effect of the grades on many students that makes this strategy

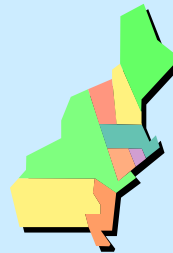
so important. The following are ways we can ask the students to track their progress:

- Keep a list of topics studies, concepts understood, or skills developed.
- Create and use a graph or icon (like The United Way's thermometer) to monitor growth in knowledge.
- Keep a growth portfolio including regularly updated letters to the reader identifying specific evidence of progress in knowledge, skills or abilities.



THE TOP FIVE BEST EDUCATED STATES:

- #1—VERMONT
 - #2 CONNECTICUT
 - #3 MASSACHUSETTS
 - #4 NEW JERSEY
 - #5 MAINE
- TENNESSEE IS #41



“I think I am like the average American. I’m in a community college classroom. I have students who are working and going to school and have children. I think I’m dealing with real life every single day.”

—Jill Biden

New Teacher Support Program year end evaluation and assessment meetings are scheduled for:

May 4, May 5, May 11 and May 13 *(please register with Mr. Edwards for one date)



A New Series: Testing Tips for Students #14

Now that standardized tests are drawing near, a new series to help students and teachers prepare for the months ahead:

If possible, set up your testing schedule so younger students are tested first thing in the morning -- before they get tired -- and upper- and middle-grade students are tested later in the morning -- when they’ve had time to wake up.

'09-'10

NEW TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTSCatherine Stewart

Wilson Central High School

Visual Arts & Art History

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher to fulfill my quest for knowledge, and to share some of the knowledge I have gained through my life. Now that I have my first classroom and I am finally a teacher, I realize that my students are teaching me far more than I ever thought imaginable. If I can share to my students that I deeply care for each one of them, for their progress, both in and out of school, I feel that my job as a teacher is successful."—Catherine Stewart

Tracey Cameli

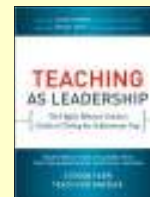
Elzie D. Patton Elementary

4th grade Interim Teacher

WHY DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?

"I became a teacher due to my love of children. Teaching gives me the opportunity to reach children through their education. My goal has always been that children deserve the best that we can provide."—Tracey Cameli

Off the shelf:



**Teaching As Leadership:
The Highly Effective
Teacher's Guide to Closing
the Achievement Gap**
by Steven Farr, *Teach for
America Staff*

A road map for teachers who strive to be highly effective leaders in our nation's classrooms.

Teach For America has fought the daunting battle of educational equity for the last twenty years. Based on evidence from classrooms across the country, they've discovered much about effective teaching practice, and distilled these findings into the six principles presented in this book. The Teaching As Leadership framework inspires teachers to: Set Big Goals; Invest Students and Their Families; Plan Purposefully; Execute Effectively; Continuously Increase Effectiveness; Work Relentlessly. The results are better educational outcomes for our nation's children, particularly those who live in low-income communities.

- Inspires educators to be leaders in their classrooms and schools
- Demystifies what it means to be an effective teacher, describes key elements of practice and provides a clear vision of success
- Addresses the challenges every teacher, in every classroom, faces on a daily basis

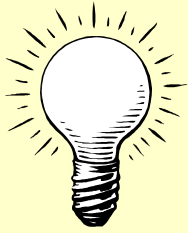
An accompanying website includes a wealth of tools, videos, sample lessons, discussion boards, and case studies.

TEACHER WEBSITE of THE WEEK:

<http://www.planetozkids.com/oban/>



Here is an interesting site designed for children 8 to 13 years old which presents myths and legends involving animals from all over the world. Children are invited to submit stories from their own country or region. Check in the Fun Stuff section for activities your students can use along with links to a few other sites with appropriate activities. The site has a simple structure with good materials and nice use of graphics. Part of the Planet Oz Kids site which features lots of activities for kids but from an Australian point of view.



Strategies for Teachers . . .

Joint Construction

What is it?

Joint construction is a collaborative writing process involving the students and the teacher in constructing a text, individually, in small groups, or as a whole class.

What is its purpose?

It is an effective tool in teaching students about;

- The process of writing
 - The forms of writing
- The conventions, skills and behaviors of writing

How do I do it?

- The teacher selects a particular genre/text type which she or he wishes to explore and demonstrate using the contributions of the class
- The teacher takes on the role as a guide asking questions, confirming responses and offering necessary explanations about the purpose of the text, the form of the texts and the writing conventions required from the text
- The teacher with input from students constructs an example of the text form or genre. During the process the teacher ‘thinks-aloud’ about the decisions and reasoning behind those decisions ,modeling and explaining the processes involved in researching the topic, sharing and putting ideas together, and scaffolding the students’ understanding of the structure of the genre or text type, whether it be for example, narrative, report, letters, or poems
- The joint construction is published and share with the students
It may then become a model for independent construction

How can I adapt it?

- use similar process for teaching specific learning strategies for revising and drafting, spelling or proofreading, beginning with an appropriately constructed text in progress
- an excellent strategy for teaching older students how to write literary essays and reviews of the type which might be expected in Year Twelve TCE courses

How can it be used to evaluate students’ language learning?

The joint construction process supports ongoing monitoring and assessment of students’ writing processes and use of specific strategies.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

GLOBAL CHILD NUTRITION MONTH

NATIONAL HUMOR MONTH

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

NATIONAL PARK WEEK
April 17-23

COIN WEEK April 18-24

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
April 18-24

ASTRONOMY WEEK
April 19-25

INCOME TAX DAY April 15

NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS DAY April 16

