

Gifted Update

ALPHA Math—Grades 3—6 Mrs. Marcia Armbruster

3rd Grade Alpha Math

The ALPHA math third graders have been busy tackling visual math problems from a book called *The Grapes of Math* by Greg Tang. These problems involve analyzing and evaluating clues in order to determine the most efficient math strategies to use when solving the math challenges presented in this book. Process over product was the key. These challenging problems could often be solved using several steps, but it was the students' job to determine how the problems could be solved by using just one step and one mathematical operation.

The class has also viewed and discussed the video "The Amazing Triple Domino Spiral." In this video, a teenage girl creates and executes a successful domino spiral with 15,000 dominoes while employing many of the same traits of mathematicians, including patience and persistence, that ALPHA math students are striving to incorporate into their math practice.

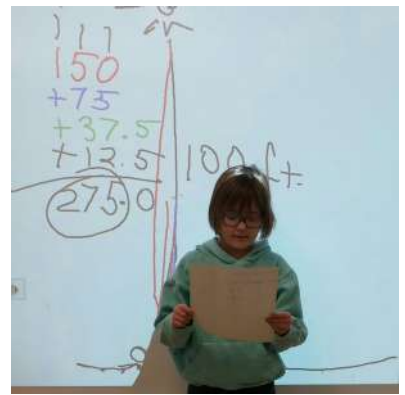
Currently, the ALPHA math third graders have begun incorporating algebraic equations to solve multistep / multi-operational situational math problems (or what we like to call SUPER Story problems!).

4th Grade ALPHA Math

Greenview 4th grade ALPHA math students have been working on a program for gifted learners called Hands-on-Equations. This program incorporates algebraic strategies through the use of manipulatives so the students grasp the concepts kinesthetically as well as visually. The students have worked at their own pace through beginning equations, more challenging equations and story problems.

Currently this ALPHA math class had begun a unit called Mental Mathletics in which they are learning about people who have come up with real strategies for mental math. The students have made group presentations to the class about the different people and their corresponding mental math situations. These students will be learning a large variety of mental math strategies in order to participate in a Mental Mathletics competition during class time in the weeks to come.

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Solving a SUPER story problem.



Third grade ALPHA students working together to solve a math challenge.



Solving Hands-on-Equations.





Eight Characteristics of Achievers

1. Achievers are goal-oriented
2. Achievers are positive thinkers
3. Achievers are confident
4. Achievers are resilient
5. Achievers have self-discipline
6. Achievers have pride
7. Achievers are proficient
8. Achievers are risk takers

Taken from: Heacox, D.

Up from Underachievement

ALPHA reading students in grades 4—6 have finished or are nearing the end of their novel studies. The main focus has been to utilize the guidelines of Shared Inquiry. Shared Inquiry is an active and collaborative search for answers to questions about the meaning of the text. It is a method of learning that promotes deeper thinking through reading, writing and discussion. The students are involved in rich discussions where they have the opportunity to clearly express their ideas, while building upon the ideas of others in the group. The sixth grade ALPHA students created their own questions to pose to their peers and have begun facilitating discussions. The

students have been doing an amazing job with this process. I love seeing the progress that the students make from year-to-year in ALPHA reading.

All ALPHA reading students also participated in their first of three WordMasters Challenges, a vocabulary competition based on completing word analogies. Analogies help improve vocabulary skills, develop verbal reasoning abilities, address higher order thinking skills and emphasize logic and reading comprehension. The second WordMasters Challenge is scheduled in February.

4th Grade ALPHA Reading

Masterpiece by Elise Broach

What happens when a boy and beetle become friends? When the boy is eleven-year old James and the bug is a beetle named Marvin, they solve an art museum heist! During this novel study we are exploring themes of friendship, family and values as we enter into an art mystery and the small world of a very clever beetle!

5th Grade ALPHA Reading

Counting by 7's by Holly Goldberg Sloan

This book is the story of Willow Chance, a twelve-year old girl who has been identified at an early age as “gifted.” Willow loses her parents in a car accident. What follows is Willow’s search to find a place where she belongs. In equal parts an exploration of the pain and loss and the triumph of moving forward, the novel looks at how one person can change the lives of many, often without trying.

6th Grade ALPHA Reading

Three Times Lucky by Sheila Turnage

2013 Newberry Honor book, Three Times Lucky, is about an eleven-year old girl, Moses LoBeau, who is in search of the real mom she has never known. When a murder happens in her tiny town, her detective skills kick in and she jumps right into the search for the killer. She learns her best friend is a suspect. Many clues lead to twists and turns that kept us hooked from beginning to end. This story is not just a great mystery, but it taught important lessons about family and friends.

Junior Great Books

Through the use of Junior Great Books, STEP UP students in grades 4—6 are introduced to stories, essays, speeches and poems that have been selected because they offer complexity and rich language, raise important questions and support extended interpretive higher level discussions. As the students read the selections, they identify parts of the text that they think are important, confusing or evoke strong emotion. Together, the students explore the text as they listen and respond to each other. Students also have the opportunity to explore ideas related to the story using a variety of creative writing forms.

5th Grade ALPHA Math

ALPHA Math 5th graders are continuing their studies of ancient mathematical number systems by learning how to use Roman Numerals through a million. They have been using what they've learned to play challenging Roman Numeral math games online. In addition to their written work, they will create their own Roman Numeral game projects. The students have also been solving higher level challenge problems called Crossmatics. These are problems that involve a variety of operations, higher level math skills, strategies and logic.

6th Grade ALPHA Math

Greenview 6th grade ALPHA math students continue to work on the website TedEd viewing, analyzing and solving videos that present complex math situational challenges. They are currently hard at work writing their own original complex situational math problems and are using the web-based program *Go Animate for School* to animate their original math creations. The students will be presenting their original animated math videos for their classmates to view and solve. The class will evaluate the videos and nominate them for possible publication to the TedEd website.



3rd Grade ALPHA Reading

The students at Adrian, Rowland and Sunview are immersed in their virtual classroom blogging experience using Kidblog, a private, secure site where teachers and students can share writing via blog discussions. The students are continuing their study of Aesop Fables taken from the gifted publication "Jacob's Ladder" from the College of William and Mary Center for Gifted Education. They have analyzed and shared in depth literature circle discussion questions and responses for "The Ant and the Dove" and "The Crow and the Pitcher." They have also created original extension projects for both stories. We will begin a novel study after the winter break.

Good luck to Skylar Carroscia!! This 3rd grade ALPHA reader has worked on a recipe for a contest at Stone Soup Magazine. She has submitted her recipe. Hope that you hear good news about your submission!!!!



Partnering with the ESC of Cuyahoga County

The Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County

offers workshops, seminars and contests throughout the year designed for students who are identified as gifted. Several school districts throughout the county participate in these offerings.

In November, the seventh and eighth grade gifted students attended a global positioning systems workshop at the Cleveland Metro Parks. After receiving instruction on the use of a GPS/compass, the students worked in small groups to locate and work on challenges in the Metro Park.

Also in November, students from Brush High School participated in "Arts, A Peaceful Solution" at the Beck Center for the Arts.

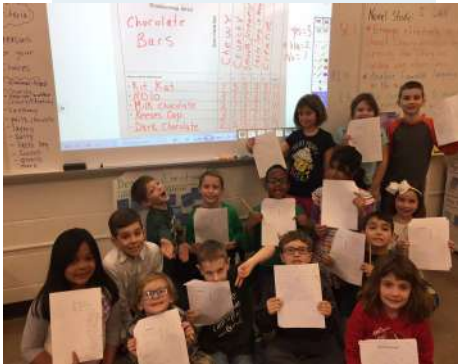


Busy blogging their "Create" activity: Write a conversation in play form between Archimedes and the Crow (from the Aesop fable "The Crow and the Pitcher) discussing their experiences with water displacement.

STEP UP: Grade 3 Mrs. Gina Arnold



Third Graders Evaluate
Chocolate Bars



The third grade STEP UP students completed the unit of study on Bloom's Taxonomy. The students learned all about Bloom's six levels of thinking: Remember, Understand, Analyze, Apply, Evaluate, and Create. They demonstrated their knowledge of Bloom's by applying it in a variety of creative ways. For example, while learning about criteria and how to use criteria to make a valid evaluation, the children used an evaluation grid to determine which chocolate bar was the best. They wrote criteria to use in the evaluation of Rolo, Dark Chocolate, Milk Chocolate, Reese's Cup and Kit Kat. After taste testing the chocolate bars and analyzing the results it was determined that the dark chocolate bar was the best as it received the highest score based on the criteria.

This was a fun and tasty way to learn about evaluating.

The students have also been working on problem solving challenges including SET game, Nim, Sudoku, and It All Adds Up. All of these challenges required the students to use logic, math and observation skills to complete.

Students are continuing to explore their affective development in a variety of ways. They had the opportunity to analyze their own traits and values and their likes and dislikes. After hearing the picture book *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown, the students followed the pattern of the book and created a page about themselves to put into a scrapbook that they are creating.

STEP UP: Grade 4 Mrs. Gina Arnold

The fourth grade students have been working very hard focusing on themselves to gain personal insights. Through art, writing and reading each student is producing a scrapbook full of meaningful discovery. The students learned about and created personal mission statements. They incorporated who they are, what they value and what they believe. Each student set academic, social and emotional goals to work towards this school year.

We are continuing to highlight students with our ME MUSEUM. This is a great opportunity for the students to learn more about each other, accentuate their gifts and talents, and make connections with their classmates. Everyone has been doing a fabulous job with their exhibits and presentations.

The students have also started a writing and speaking simulation. During this simulation, they will develop toys for the toddler and youth market segments. The students love the simulation! I am the snooty CEO of the company and the students are my employees. Each group has a Senior Editor, Public Relations Manager, Graphics Manager and Chairperson. To date, the students have worked together to create a company name, logo, motto and mission statement. They have done an amazing job cooperating, helping each other and problem solving. You will get to see all of their accomplishments at our "Regional Trade Show" in the spring.

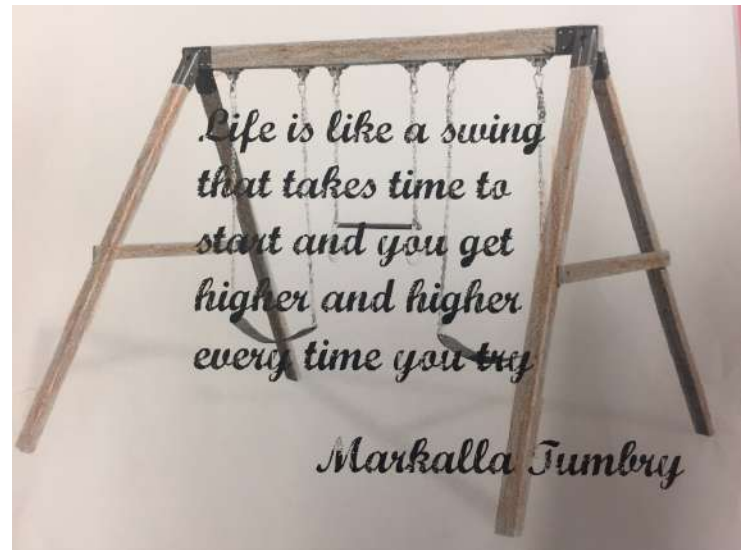


ME MUSEUM

STEP UP: Grade 5 Mrs. Gina Arnold

The fifth grade STEP UP students participated in a unit of study on quotations. Quotations inspire, encourage, and help develop higher level thinking skills. The students took part in a variety of activities that included analyzing quotations using critical thinking techniques, comparing and contrasting multiple quotations, and evaluating the validity of thought behind quotes. Students used picmonkey.com to write a metaphor for life with a visual to present to the class. They also did a quotation scavenger hunt, wrote their own quotation, and created an inspirational poster to go with it.

Students have been busy learning about Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory recognizes the multi-faceted profile of the human mind and explains that each person possesses several different intelligences in greater or lesser degrees. The students are enjoying the activities, self-assessments and articles as they continue to analyze and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.



Memorial students put the finishing touches on the robotics competition playing field. Others practice the Animal Allies presentation that accompany the robotics topic for this year.



Coordinator's Corner

As the first semester of this school year comes to an end, I would like to reflect on STEP UP programming in the district. The models that are employed in South Euclid Lyndhurst use the skills of classroom teachers and gifted intervention specialists as they combine their talents to address the needs of our high-end learners. Much of what is planned for these students is based on differentiation. An overview of this term reveals that differentiation involves:

- Desiring to serve all students well
- Including a variety of strategies
- Focusing on individual student needs
- Flexible grouping
- Extending / enriching classroom curriculum
- Recognizing students have a range of abilities
- Expecting the best from every student
- Needing to employ higher level thinking skills
- Testing to find out what students already know
- Individualizing goals for students
- Allowing students to experience academic challenge
- Treating all students fairly
- Incorporating teacher collaboration
- On-going assessment
- Nurturing all students

Differentiation to some degree occurs at all grade levels in South Euclid Lyndhurst. From Junior Great Books and Continental Math League options at the elementary and middle school levels, to a range of high school honors, Advanced Placement and College Credit Plus options, a variety of strategies are employed to challenge our most able learners. Although much is in place, the gifted staff is always looking for ways to improve programming for students who are gifted and are very open to your comments and suggestions. Even with a variety of options, the student him or her self must accept the challenges which are offered.

Why do some gifted students seem to just do what is necessary to get by, while others enthusiastically embrace new challenges? Most studies of motivation contrast intrinsic (or internal) motivation with extrinsic (or external) motivation. Intrinsic motivation is at work when students are engaged in something that interests them and challenges them. They enjoy the task so much that they lose track of time. Extrinsic motivation refers to work that is completed in order to gain something other than the pleasure of the task itself; for example, teacher approval, a high grade or a prize.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can lead to high achievement. However, students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to find learning meaningful, to prefer challenging tasks, to focus on the task rather than how well other students are doing and to feel satisfied with their performance. Students who are extrinsically motivated are more likely to work their hardest only when there is some incentive present, and are more likely to worry about their performance compared to other students.

STEP UP programming offers a variety of challenges. I hope that our students will embrace these challenges and really try to reap all of the academic benefits possible—and not just “go through the motions” of completing a task. I hope that students will recognize the effort that is put into differentiated tasks for their benefit.

I hope that our gifted students will continue to be motivated as they begin a new semester and to take advantage of all that is offered to them.

South Euclid Lyndhurst Schools

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