



# INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING MONTHLY

Wachusett Regional School District, 1745 North Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522

[www.wrsd.net/literacy](http://www.wrsd.net/literacy) 508.829.1670

## Publishing Personal Narratives: A Celebration Student Writing

By Rachel Kodra, Instructional Coach for Literacy and Limelight

In classrooms all around our district, students in grades 1-5 have begun Writers' Workshop by exploring personal narratives. In fact, in many classrooms students have already published their stories. For many children the art of publishing their story is the best part of the workshop. Anne Lamott, author of [Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life](#) says, "Publication is a BIG event for any writer, and it does bring a rush of emotions. On the plus side, there is satisfaction, accomplishment, pride, and joy. It feels wonderful. Then there's the dread. My work is out of my hands and in the hands of readers - will they love it as I have? Did I leave out something important? Could I have made it better if I had spent one more week with it? If people love it, will I ever be able to do anything to equal it? If people hate it, will anyone ever want to read my work again? Yikes! This publishing stuff is dicey. Once again, it's the writing that matters; it's the work itself that we thrive on. Let the publication be what it is - just one more part of the work of writers."

Katie Wood Ray, professor and co-author of several Writers' Workshop resources suggests

### Fall Assessment Dates

DRA (Grades 1-5) - complete and enter scores into PowerSchool by November 4

WRSD Math Assessment (Grades 3-5) - November 14 to January 6

that there are three essential parts in determining if a piece of writing is ready for publication. First, the writing you see was accepted for publication by the publisher. Second, the writing is in fact finished. And finally, it means that the writing is now ready for a public audience. When students have met these criteria, they are set for this final step of the writing process. As educators we encourage you to take time to celebrate your students' accomplishments and build on their excitement to read or hear their friend's stories.

The following are personal narrative stories or

Please see *Publishing* on page 2.

*A mentor text is a published piece of writing whose ideas, craft, or structure can be used to inspire and guide students when they write.*

*Check out [www.writingfix.com](http://www.writingfix.com) for mentor text suggestions for teaching idea development, organization, voice, sentence fluency, and more!*

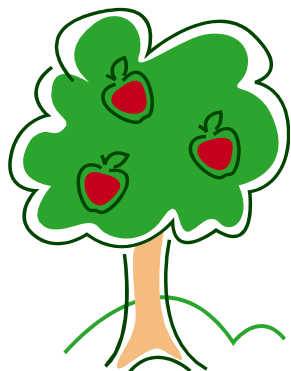
*Publishing* from page 1

excerpts of student writing from across our district at various grade levels. This undoubtedly will be another fabulous year of great writing!

### Red Apple Farm

By a Grade 1 Student

I went apple picking with my family at Red Apple Farm. We went pumpkin picking too. There were cider donuts. We bought some of them. They were good. There was lots of sugar on the donuts. It was fun. I love pumpkin picking and apple picking. I can't wait to go next year.



### Water Country

By a Grade 2 Student

Over the summer I went to Water Country. I went on Geronimo. Geronimo is a water slide. It goes more than straight down. My cousin Zack, who is ten, was scared but my uncle talked him into it. He actually went with me and my uncle. Then he wanted to go again but we were going on other water rides.



### Excerpt from At the Water Park By a Grade 3 Student

When my family and I were on vacation in Florida, we heard about a water park. It was supposed to be really fun. The map we had for Florida lead us to a beautiful garden with a beautiful view and flowers. The flowers were pink, white, and red. I could smell the scent of the sweet flowers. They smelled like candy.

Finally, we saw the entrance of the water park we were looking for. My mom had to pay the worker who was standing there. We got into the water park.

We took off our clothes, since our bathing suits were under our clothes, and we started splishing and splashing. We entered the pool area and tried to find the big water slide.

Please see *Publishing on page 3*.

*Publishing* from page 2

Excerpt from **My First Time Going Rock**

Climbing

By a Grade 4 Student

It was a lousy rainy day in May, and I was going to a birthday party at Central Rock Climbing Gym. My mom and I were driving to the gym and I was so anxious to get there I nearly bounced out of my seat.

When my mom pulled up the car, I flew out and ran to the door. I could feel the wet rain hitting my face. "Wait up!" my mom yelled, who was running to catch up with me. When I got to the door I grabbed the cold handle and help it open for my mom. When I opened the door the first thing I saw was all the different colored rocks and the enormous rock walls!

Excerpt from **The Orbiter**

By a Grade 5 Student

**It was a cool summer night and the rides lit up the sky like candles on a birthday cake.**

**We were walking around the Sterling Fair right after I got my shock pen. So I pulled it out and shocked my friend Anthony.**

**We just got our tickets and we were trying to figure out which ride to go on. We were walking around in the back and that's when we saw the Orbiter.**

**Nobody was in line so we went right on the ride. We got on and we picked our seat. The seat was blue and we put down the handle bar. We were holding on tight. It seemed real fun but boring...I thought to myself.**

## Integrating Science and Literacy: The Time is Now

By Deborah LaBombard, Instructional Coach for Science and CPS

Time, time, time. If there is one thing that teachers all need, it is more time. More time for reading. More time for math. More time for science. So what is a busy teacher to do when multiple curriculum demands are bearing down upon you? Curriculum integration may be the answer.

The possibilities for integrating literacy and science are limited only by our imaginations. Writing provides a natural connection between

science and literacy. Science notebooks are a powerful tool for integration because students at all grade levels can benefit from writing and drawing about their science learning. Science notebooks also provide a venue for students to analyze data, communicate that data with others, and collaborate

Please see *Science and Literacy* on page 4.

*Science and Literacy* from page 3

with other students to make sense of their scientific learning. In addition to science notebooks, students can be taught and expected to demonstrate their scientific learning through graphic organizers, science word banks, and written scientific analysis and conclusion. How about writing a letter to our congressman enacting stricter environmental laws? Writing an opinion piece on the state of global warming? The possibilities for higher level opportunities to integrate science and writing are remarkable.

Reading provides another relevant and important opportunity for curricular integration. Read aloud books, in both fiction and nonfiction genres, can focus on scientific topics. There are also opportunities to integrate science during small group reading times. Upper grade and middle school teachers can find current science-related articles in newspapers, magazines, and online to support scientific inquiry. In these high impact guided reading and literature circle opportunities, students can be taught the skills of how to navigate nonfiction science text whether through trade books, textbooks, or articles.

*The WRSD K-8 bookrooms are filled with high quality, nonfiction books many of which include science topics educators are already teaching to their students. Consider taking a trip to your school bookroom with an eye for science texts with topics that can be woven into your instruction.*



Example of science trade books by Seymour Simon.

The WRSD K-8 bookrooms are filled with high quality, nonfiction books many of which include science topics educators are already teaching to their students. Consider taking a trip to your school bookroom with an eye for science texts with topics that can be woven into your instruction.

There are also strong connections between science, the Common Core State Standards, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. The newly adopted Common Core State Standards explicitly includes college and career readiness as well standards for integrating literacy into science at pre-K through high school. As we think about 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill development, we need to think not just about technological gadgets, but also about the underlying skills of inquiry, innovation and collaboration - skills which we value and teach in our science instruction. Science is an important curricular area for today's students. Literacy is one vehicle we can use to get there.

## The Language of Mathematics

By Charlene Griffin, Instructional Coach for Mathematics and iPads

Mathematics is full of language, from the many complex and content-specific vocabulary words that must be learned and understood in a mathematical context to the numerous common words that must be used precisely and correctly in mathematical reasoning and arguments. Mathematical language must be an integral part of math instruction. Indeed, “in standards-based lessons, those that reflect the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) Teaching and Learning Principles, students... explore and understand new concepts. A standards-based approach to teaching and learning means an increased presence and use of language.” (Jennifer M. Bay-Williams and Stefanie Livers, “Supporting Math Vocabulary Acquisition,” *Teaching Children Mathematics*,

November, 2009).

As I have traveled around visiting classrooms throughout the district I have been struck with the many ways teachers are incorporating important language into their math classes. Teachers recognize and acknowledge the degree to which language is such a significant component of problem-based mathematical inquiry and communication of mathematical ideas. I’d like to mention a few examples here.

There is a great deal of direct instruction of new vocabulary and words that are specific to a unit of study. For example, many classrooms are investigating geometry.

Please see *Math Language* on page 5.

## Mathematics: Common Questions about The Common Core Standards

By Catherine Schofield, Curriculum Supervisor

This fall K-12 mathematics teachers in the Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) received the new *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics*. The *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics* incorporates the *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics* and includes some additional standards that are unique to Massachusetts. Standards unique to Massachusetts are preceded with the code MA. The *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics* is a sequential progression of standards designed to ensure that all students graduate from high school

with the mathematical understandings and skills necessary for success in college or a career. Answers to some common questions about these new mathematics standards follow.

**What are some of the differences between the previous mathematics standards and the new *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics*?**

Some significant differences include:

Please see *Mathematics Standards* page 10.

*Math Language* from page 4

Teachers are introducing new words such as angle, parallel and vertices in creative and interesting ways. I've seen kids physically acting out words, drawing and collecting examples that define new words in individual math dictionaries or other venues, and using manipulatives and other materials to model the definitions of these words. Teachers and kids are creating depictions of new words and hanging them on a math word wall or some other place around the room. Students are practicing the newly acquired vocabulary by playing games like Bingo and Pictionary. One great resource that some teachers have utilized in demonstrating math vocabulary is the Kids Maths (it's British) Dictionary, online at <http://www.amathsdictionaryforkids.com>. Most importantly, teachers are constantly bringing their students' focus back to using and understanding the words in the context of big mathematical concepts.

Not only are students learning and using new mathematical vocabulary, but they are also being taught the importance of using the words they already know in correct and precise ways. Again, to highlight a few examples, I have heard teachers and therefore their students being very careful in using terms such as "number," "numeral," and "digit." They understand the ways in which these terms imply subtle, but important, differences and are not exactly interchangeable. Students are being encouraged to pay close attention to even the smallest of words. In several classrooms I have heard teachers instructing and then reminding their children that large numbers are read without inserting the word "and" so that 143,983 is said "one hundred forty-three thousand, nine hundred eighty-three" and not "one hundred *and* forty-three thousand, one hundred *and* eighty-three." Likewise,

### Quick Tips for Teaching Math Vocabulary

- Create a math word wall in your classroom
- Have each student keep a personal math dictionary
- Teach new math vocabulary in a meaningful context
- Act out or draw the meaning of new math vocabulary
- Collect examples (and non-examples) of math vocabulary

students have been taught to read 6.1 as "six and one tenth" and not "six point one." Such attention to precise and correct usage of language might seem extreme at times, but it does build understanding of the mathematical principles that underlie the words.

Overall we can never forget the crucial role that language plays in developing and communicating mathematical understanding. Therefore we must continue to teach important math vocabulary and encourage correct and precise usage daily in our math classes. I would be happy to discuss these ideas further with anyone interested in doing so. Just email me and we can set up a time when I am next at your school.

## Walking For Fitness

By Bradley Clark, Instructional Coach for Physical Education, Health, and Wellness

All students within the Wachusett Regional School District will be participating in step-count activities using pedometers during the 2011-2012 school year.

This activity is part of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) grant that the district received last year. The purpose of this activity is to keep track of students' daily physical activity. Students in grades K-4 will record their steps for 4 days, and students in grades 5-12 will do the same for 7 days. The United States Department of Health and Human Services recommends that students, ages 6-17, exercise for 60 minutes a day. This time increment equates to *9,100 steps per day*.

The PEP grant requires students to report step-counts each academic quarter. P.E. classrooms have completed their first step-count on October 21.

The schedule for collecting other step-counts is:

- December 16, 2011 - Data Trial #2 due
- February 17, 2012 - Data Trial #3 due
- April 27, 2012 - Data Trial #4 due

There is an average of 35 school days between each data collection. P.E. teachers have chosen selected dates for students to track this data. Most MCAS

*The United States Department of Health and Human Services recommends that students, ages 6-17, exercise for 60 minutes a day. This time increment equates to 9,100 steps per day.*

testing will take place during the months of March and May, so there will be no data collection during that time. The district's official report for the grant is due by the end of May. All data needs to be completed well before this time.

The purpose of this pedometer task is to encourage lifelong physical activity and to show that exercise is fun, easy, and essential for health and well-being. Your help encouraging students to be responsible for their pedometers will be greatly appreciated. Please review the pedometer guidelines on the next page with students before each data collection period.



## Pedometer Guidelines

### Why Pedometers?

People often overestimate how much physical activity they get. A pedometer provides concrete information by tracking step count. Over 90% of activity is gathered each day by walking or running. Pedometers should be worn on a daily basis to accurately track physical activity patterns/habits. The government recommends 60 minutes of daily physical activity (this equals 9,100 steps per day).

### Where Do I Place My Pedometer for Accuracy?

- Starting point: on waist, in line with the middle of the kneecap- this location works for about 80% of people
- Must be parallel and snug to the body to minimize excessive movement
- The pedometer must move up and down in unison with the body
- Alternate locations: just in front of hip or on the flat part of back

### How Do I Check the Accuracy of My Pedometer?

- Clear the pedometer to zero steps
- Close the pedometer and walk 30 steps
- Stop, gently open the pedometer (attached at waist), and check how many steps are recorded
- If the count is within 3 steps of 30, it is accurate for daily movement
- If the count is not within 3 steps, try a different location



### Why Is My Pedometer Inaccurate?

- Non-accurate placement
- Loose clothing that can absorb small vertical movement
- Dragging feet while walking
- Some types of movement that can't be measured with a pedometer (i.e. bicycling, swimming, skateboarding, and other similar movements)

### How Do I Keep My Pedometer Safe?

- Keep pedometer safely fastened to clothing and away from water
- Pedometer should not be worn during contact sports
- Store pedometer in a safe spot when not wearing it
- Remember where pedometer is stored after wearing it

*For additional pedometer assistance, please contact Brad Clark, Instructional Coach for Physical Education, Health, and Wellness.*

## ***Focus on Technology***

### CPS Support in the Wachusett Regional School District

By Deborah LaBombard, Instructional Coach for Science and CPS

Many WRSD teachers in grades 2-12 are using a new piece of technology called CPS, which stands for Classroom Performance Systems. As more and more teachers are using student response systems to track student progress, I would like to make you aware of the support mechanisms that are in place for teachers using CPS.

**WEBINARS** - eInstruction offers a free webinar on most Mondays from 4:00-5:00 PM. These webinars can be viewed by anyone with access to the internet and a speaker. To attend an eInstruction webinar, you must register on their website prior to the event. For a list of upcoming webinars or to register, visit <http://www.einstruction.com/programs/product-training> or while in CPS go to HELP, SUPPORT, PRODUCT TRAINING, VIEW AVAILABLE WEBINARS.

Is the day or time inconvenient for you? All eInstruction webinars are archived and can be heard later by any CPS user, even if you have not registered. Each archived webinar runs for about 40 minutes and are on topics such as Mobi use, creating materials in ExamView, and making questions in CPS.

**ONLINE TUTORIALS** - Video and written online tutorials are available on a wide range of CPS topics including using CPS, Examview, and Mobi's. Each video tutorial runs for 2-5 minutes. Written instructions are also available next to most video links. These

tutorials can also be found at <http://www.einstruction.com/programs/professional-development>. They are also accessible in CPS by clicking HELP, SUPPORT, PRODUCT TRAINING.

**FIRST CLASS CPS USER ICON** - Teachers with access to CPS in their classrooms, now have an icon on their First Class (email) desktop called CPS USERS. Teachers can post questions in this forum for support from other WRSD teachers, instructional coaches, and technology staff.

**PHONE SUPPORT** - eInstruction offers phone support for any WRSD CPS user. They can be reached at 1-888-333-4988. This phone number is also located on the black CPS bag that holds the student responders.

**IN-CLASS CPS COACHING** - I am available to work with any CPS user to provide you with in class coaching and/or CPS support in your classroom. Our work together can include inputting class lists, troubleshooting, ExamView training, test or material creation, using CPS with students, and other CPS supports. Email me directly if you are interested in this CPS support option.



*Math Frameworks* from page 4

- A coherent, grade-specific progression of standards for grades PreK-8 that build a strong foundation for algebra
- Standards for Mathematical Practice that describe the processes and proficiencies that all students should develop
- A small number of “critical mathematical areas” that are the instructional focus of each grade level
- Grade-level content standards organized by *domain* (e.g., Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Ratios and Proportional Relationships) and *cluster* (e.g., “Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.”)
- A focus on college and career readiness

#### **When will WRSD teachers begin to implement the new mathematics standards?**

At both the elementary and middle school levels, we have begun the process of reviewing our mathematics curriculum to identify areas of strong alignment with the new standards and areas where curriculum revision and development will be necessary. The results of this curriculum review process will enable us to

begin to modify existing math pacing guides and assessments, and transition to the new standards over the next several years. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) has set the goal of “full implementation” of the new standards by the 2013-2014 school year.

#### **When will the new standards for mathematics be assessed by the MCAS?**

The MA DESE has outlined an MCAS Assessment Transition Plan. In the spring of 2012, standards from the former frameworks (2000/2004) will continue to be assessed. There will be a focus on the 2000/2004 standards that connect to the 2011 *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics*. Beginning in the spring of 2013, standards from the 2011 *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics* will be assessed. In 2013, there will be a focus on the 2011 standards that connect to the 2000/2004 MA Mathematics Curriculum Framework. More specific details about the MCAS transition plan, including the specific standards that will be assessed in 2012 and 2013 can be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/transition/?section=ela>.

Thank you for reading this edition of *Instructional Coaching Monthly*. If you have questions about this newsletter or the district’s instructional coaching program, please contact Catherine Schofield at [catherine\\_schofield@wrsd.net](mailto:catherine_schofield@wrsd.net). Previous issues of *Instructional Coaching Monthly* can be found at [www.wrsd.net/literacy](http://www.wrsd.net/literacy).