



Gifted Resource News

SALEM MIDDLE SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

21st Century Skills: Preparing our Students for the Future

- *Next opportunity for Gifted Testing: Tuesday, May 26, 2009*
- *March 9, 2009 Progress Reports issued*
- *March 4, 2009, 6:30 p.m. PTA Meeting and One Act Play*
- *March 13- 14, 2009 Middle School Band Festival and One Act Play Festival*
- **Mark your calendars: Spring Gifted Parent Workshop, Friday, April 3, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.**

The long range goal of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Strategic Plan is “ the successful preparation and graduation of every student, the near term goal is that by 2015, 95 percent or more of VBCPS students will graduate having mastered the skills that they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.”

21st Century Skills include: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across net-

works and leading by influence, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, assessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination. (Tony Wagner)

Throughout Salem Middle School you will find evidence of students actively engaged in these 21st Century Skills. Students use Blooms’ Taxonomy to think critically, Performance Based Tasks and Assessment create problem



solving scenarios, Socratic Seminars and self reflection create opportunities for students to communicate effectively through written and oral responses, and Paul’s Elements of Reasoning promotes analyzing and assessing issues and problems.

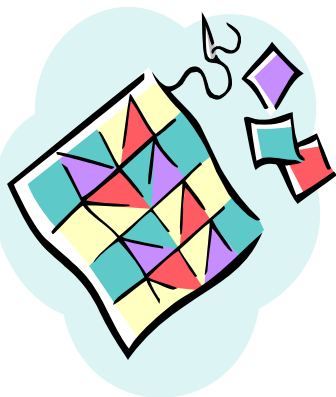
Math 6: Performance Based Assessment

In alignment with the VBCPS Compass to 2015: A Strategic Plan for Student Success, students in grade 6 Mathematics engaged in 21st century skills through performance based assessment.

What is Performance Based Assessment? (PBA) Performance-based assessment is characterized as assessing real life, with students assuming responsibility for self-evaluation. Tasks used in performance-based assessment include essays, oral presentations, open-ended problems, hands-on problems, real-world simulations and other authentic tasks.

Grade 6 Mathematics students created Quilt Squares. While students see the quilting PBA as an opportunity to create visual designs using scrap booking paper, it also affords them the opportunity to show

their depth and understanding of fractions, decimals and percents, how they are related to each other and how they are related to “the whole.” They show their understanding of these concepts by addressing all of the possible ways the pieces of their design add up to one whole, again using fractions, decimals and/or percents. They also took responsibility for self evaluation by explaining their reasoning and procedures to prove their design equaled one whole. Most importantly, they were given the opportunity to communicate their thought process and rationale for how they solved the problem using precise and appropriate mathematical terminology true to the discipline.



English 8 Study the Holocaust

Professor Benjamin Bloom, of Chicago University devised a stairway with six levels to learning. They are estimates and are not absolute. The six levels pertain to thinking, the so-called cognitive domain. The levels are Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

English 8 students used this “stairway” to design and investigate their

individually chosen topic on the holocaust.

Students were asked to use the question stems from Bloom’s Taxonomy levels and design 2 questions from each level for the subject matter they chose. They then spent research time in the Library Media Center to answer their own questions.

Students then gathered back in the classroom to

present their findings. They did not present a typical research paper, but, instead brought their questions and research with them to class and conducted a round table like discussion of the topics. The students did a wonderful job communicating, sharing knowledge, and providing personal insight.



*‘We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.’
John W. Gardner*



PAGE 2

Paul’s Reasoning Model

VBCPS Gifted Clusters are fortunate to have numerous resources from the William and Mary Center for Gifted Education. W&M develops exemplary curriculum frameworks and units of study for use in classrooms with high ability learners. Curriculum units have been developed in each of the major content areas and focus on strengthening students’ critical thinking skills. Within each unit there are different teaching models. One of those models is Paul’s Elements of Reasoning.

“Paul’s (1992) Elements of Reasoning is a model for critical thinking and emphasizes the following eight elements: issue, purpose, point of view, assumptions, concepts, evidence, inferences, and implications or consequences.” (W&M

CGEd.) Salem Middle School teachers have introduced these terms to students, using familiar issues being discussed in school or the community; teachers then encouraged the use of the terms and the model in approaching problems and issues.

Mr. Morrison’s eighth and sixth grade Physical Science classes took on the issue of “Is Pluto a Planet?” This is an issue that true disciplinarians in the field of Astronomy are battling with. Students engaged in scientific reasoning to discuss assumptions and inferences made by astronomers about the status of Pluto. Students were left with unanswered questions for further research and big ideas. One student responded,

“Will we ever know for sure?”

Mrs. Cooksey’s eighth grade Civics classes battled with issues surrounding first amendment rights and freedom of speech. The problem at hand was an article that students read about a man who was arrested for wearing an “inappropriate” T-shirt. Students battled with numerous points of view and the implications and consequences of his arrest. “The evidence was there but, the big idea was *is it fair?*” a student responded.





Promoting Resiliency by Managing Stress, Competitiveness, and Perfectionism

March 31, 2009

Advanced Technology Center

Research and practical experience have shown that it takes more than raw talent to become successful.

Resiliency is such a critical component of success that it can be more powerful than ability. This seminar will investigate how parents can best promote resiliency with their children.

The seminar will be facilitated by Kristina Groce, M.A., Mary Skokut, M.Ed., and Amanda Slonaker, M.A. These psychology residents have demonstrated a strong interest in gifted students and are prepared to lead the conversation about resiliency.

Pre-registration is not necessary, but to ensure that enough materials are prepared for the session, please contact Sandra Gizzi to confirm your attendance.

Email: Sagizzi@vbschools.com

Telephone: 757-263-1461

Read more about the seminar at: <http://vbparentgiftinst.wikispaces.com/>

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