



“Education is not the filling of a bucket,
but the lighting of a fire.”

What’s a Cluster Classroom?

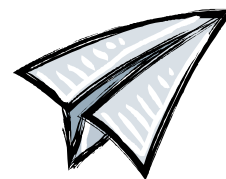
Many parents of first grade students identified as gifted are asking this question. At grades 2-5 identified gifted students are placed into classrooms where the gifted resource teacher collaborates with the classroom teacher to differentiate instruction as appropriate for the needs of gifted students. Generally there will be from 4-8 identified students in the classroom. Other students in a cluster classroom are on varied academic levels. The teacher is responsible for adjusting the content, process, and product in response to student readiness, interests, and learning styles. The goals of a cluster classroom are the same as other classrooms in so far as providing differentiation to maximize student growth and individual success. The gifted resource teacher supports the cluster teacher by modeling whole group lessons, team teaching and facilitating small flexible groups of learners in content-related activities when appropriate.



The city-wide theme for **Kindergarten** is Exploration. This includes the exploration of new concepts and patterns. Enrichment of math concepts and skills for these students are being developed using Math Exemplars. This problem-solving program challenges students to think like mathematicians as they use pictures, numbers and words to arrive at their solutions. The children are encouraged to think critically and evaluate their own work now and in the future. This type of logical and creative thinking leads to new discoveries for

First Grade is F...l...y...i...n...g Forward!

Students in some first grade classrooms were introduced to a simple Four Question Strategy which will help them design and conduct their own experiments. They generated ideas about how something acts (flips, glides, crashes, burns, floats) what materials are available to conduct experiments on it (paperclips, tape, paper), what one change they will make on the way it acts (change it’s mass or the type of paper used) and finally how they will measure that change (observation, distance flown). These first grade students took a lesson from the book The Berenstain Bears Fly It by Stan and Jan Berenstain and used paper airplanes to conduct their own experiment. Trantwood’s first grade students are ready to fly into second grade.



Mrs. Terri Hawley

Gifted Resource Teacher

“The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving.” ~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Who Killed SAV?”

This was a question that many of our third graders in Ms. Munari’s and Mrs. Mutsch’s classes were asking each other.



Students explore an ongoing situation in the Chesapeake Bay: the disappearance of large meadows of underwater

grasses, collectively known as SAV, or submerged aquatic vegetation. They form their own opinions as to why it's disappearing, research their opinions and were asked to present their case in a court of law. Now we ask you, Do you know who killed SAV? And what can you do to help prevent it from continuing to happen today.

Our 3rd Annual Coffee House Poetry Reading

A big thank you to all staff, faculty and parents that contributed and were present to make this a special day for the students.

This live performance provided an opportunity for the students to showcase their favorite poems they have collected in their writing portfolios throughout the school year.



Literature ~

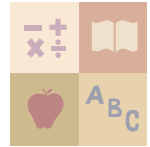
As we enter the final quarter of the school year, we led students in a discovery and review of the structure of cycles both human and those found in nature. We analyzed examples of each and shared about how each of them made us feel. Using this as a launch, we read a story in the Junior Great Book (JGB) series entitled *The Green Man* by Gail E. Haley. The story was used to help students think about the main character’s growing goodness as he assumes the role of the Green Man and to encourage the students to think about the importance of nature, community and the renewal of life in the story. We connected each of these to the overall theme of STRUCTURE that we want students to walk away with at the end of their third grade school year.

We used the ideas discussed to branch out and apply our thoughts of nature to the Haiku form of poetry. We learned about the history, terms like gigos and tanka, and the traditional vs. the modern version of Haiku. Please enjoy some of the students work examples to the right.

In **math classes**

we have wrapped up using *Hands-On*

Equations, a manipulative kinesthetic approach to teaching algebraic equations and proving statements as true or false and have moved on to reinforcing math skills demonstrated by past assessments that needed reinforcing within each of the classes. Using the data, we created a couple of Math Exemplars of our own to help us better specific skills like probability and geometry. To engage the students even further, we linked the problems to familiar literature.



Sight

What a gorgeous sight
Sitting with plants short and tall

Big leaves growing wide



This plant in spring time
One purple bud sprouting
up

Swaying in the air.

By Megan B.

A Dance

Blossoming flowers

They’re tangling together

Happy for Spring time.

By Max T.



Second graders in Mrs.

McCallum's class have been exploring the *use of technology* as another avenue for sharing information. With the science content material that we are learning about in class we have used Photostory to bring our ideas together in the computer lab with Ms. Teri and Mrs. Hawley.

Our second grade students are continuing to add to their technology projects for the school year. If you remember, in December Mrs. McCallum, Ms. Teri (the computer resource teacher) and myself spent a whole day developing a plan to infuse technology into our everyday learning. Our first project was the story of Dip-Dop the Raindrop in his travels through the water cycle in February. This was a huge success! This time in class, Mrs. McCallum had each student choose a life cycle of interest to them (for example— butterfly, deer, dragonfly...) to do research and complete a plan to present the information of the life cycle's stages in a short story. Each student chose to work on their project using their individual strengths of drawing, writing, and/or public speaking.

Our finished stories will be showcased in the near future...

Also look for them on at the link below.



<http://www.trantwoodes.vbschools.com/>

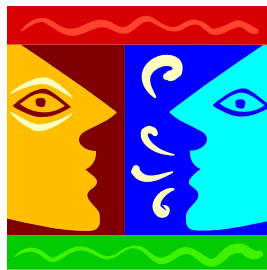
1. Click on the link or type it in Google
2. In the middle of the page there is a spot labeled Trantwood Elementary School Blog
3. Click on it; click okay.
4. This will take you to our school blog where you can view some of work from the whole school year.

The habits we form from childhood make no small difference, but rather they make all the difference. ~ Aristotle

Junior Great books ~ throughout the school year we have been reading rich literature stories that allow the students to come up with their own solutions to why the characters behave the way they do within the story. In the final weeks of the school year, we looked at one more story using student interest inventories to help choose our final story.

The students chose to read about *How the Elephant Became* written by Ted Hughes. Student questions about the story led to some great discussions that created opportunities to discuss why the author had written this story. This led to a discussion comparing and contrasting Junior Great book stories and those found in the third grade basal reader. We looked at similarities and differences between the two. We then looked for examples and non-examples of this in the stories that we have read in the classroom throughout the school year.

The depth the students took this discussion showed both the classroom teacher and myself just how much the students enjoy the Junior Great Book series and what they can learn from generating their own questions and leading a discussion.



~ Our own thoughts, in a respectful environment, will lead us in many new directions worth exploring with friends.

As you are planning your summer vacations, please keep in mind opportunities to build background knowledge of things that the students have learned or will be learning about in year ahead:

Looking Back:

- Egypt
- China
- Native Americans
- 3 states of Matter
- Measuring liquids and solids
- Seasonal changes for plants and animals
- Changes in weather and the water cycle
- Magnets
- Plants and their uses
- Plant and animal life cycles
- Connections to habitats and how changes affect others

Looking Ahead:

Ancient Civilizations

- Greece
- Rome
- The Empire of Mali

Famous Explorers and the countries they come from

American Government

Economics

Collecting and analyzing data

Simple machines

Literature Circles and Novel studies

Guest Writer: Sensitivity and Introversion in the Gifted Child

By Kim Biemann Cabotaje Landstown Elementary School's GRT



"She takes everything so personally!" "He cries about everything!" "All she ever wants to do is stay in her room." "He's very shy." Have you heard these statements made about your child or even uttered them yourself? If you're raising a gifted child, chances are this is normal behavior.

Though not all gifted children are highly sensitive and not all introverts are gifted, these traits do manifest in the gifted population more frequently than among non-gifted individuals. It is important for you and your child to understand these traits and to nurture them rather than see them as problems that need to be fixed.

People who are highly sensitive are believed to have a more highly developed central nervous system that leads to

being more attuned to changes in one's body, experiencing both pleasure and pain more intensely and having a greater capacity for empathy. These individuals reach overstimulation more quickly than most people meaning that the noisy crowds the non-sensitive person finds exciting may prove to be too much for the sensitive person after only a short while.

Introversion is the opposite of extraversion and can best be explained by talking about an individual's energy. The extravert gets energy by being around people, the introvert spends energy. This does not mean that introverts don't enjoy people or that they are socially inept. It simply means that they need quiet time to recharge. Introverts may only need one or two close friends and likely enjoy spending time alone. Though only 25% of the general population would be de-

fined as introverted, 50% of the gifted population are introverts.

While being gifted, sensitive and introverted can each present challenges, they also result in great joys such as the ability to find and appreciate beauty, to connect deeply with others, to carefully think through a situation and to have rich inner lives. Perhaps the most important thing to know is that these traits are inherited and, though less common, are completely normal.

For further reading:

- *The Highly Sensitive Child: Helping Our Children Thrive When the World Overwhelms Them* by Elaine N. Aron
- *The Hidden Gifts of the Introverted Child: Helping Your Child Thrive in an Extraverted World* by Marti Olsen Laney

4th Grade LA/SS Cluster Teacher ~ Mrs. Wright-Owens

What is the difference between a simile and a metaphor? How can they be used effectively in our own writing to engage the reader and give them a visual picture of what we want them to see in our writing. Are there other figurative writing techniques that we can use? These were beginning questions

that were used to spark a discussion about what good writing should look and sound like by the time the students leave fourth grade. We looked at examples of poetry, read aloud books, novels and analyzed what the authors had used and dis-

"Good writing is an ongoing process that does not stop with our first thoughts."

cussed why. We then practiced in small groups, different avenues to produce a variety of samples that we shared with our peers. Did they meet our criteria? Using this knowledge we wrote our final pieces to be shared with our next year's teachers. Look out 5th grade!!

Math/Science— Mrs. Birdwell

In an effort to help Ms. Gegner with her doggy problem, students in Mrs. Birdwell banded together to give her as many possible solutions as they could to help. The problem: Ms. Gegner now has two dogs and needed a bigger fenced play area for her dogs. Knowing that they had 50 feet of fencing generously donated from Mrs. Mello, the students were off

to figure out the many different perimeters and areas the fencing would allow them to create, they then had to evaluate which would prove to be the better solution for Ms. Gegner and her dogs using criteria generated to evaluate their final solutions. But the students weren't done yet.... Each student was then asked to write a letter to Ms. Gegner and justify why their chose for

the fencing plan was the best. Ms. Gegner was overrun with many possible solutions and loved how the students were able to provide a written valid argument in letter form for each of the possible choices presented to her. Problem solved!!



The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them. ~ Sir William Bragg (1862-1942)

Fifth graders spent these weeks involved with learning about the 21st Century and all that has happened and **Changed** over the course of their grandparents and their lifetimes. By looking at events over time, the students could see the trends and some of the ethical issues that have arisen just in recent years. We started with a simple image created by a famous artist and then moved from there into discussions of the Massive Resistance. The students discovered that this occurred even here in Hampton Roads (Norfolk area) and how people they may know today were apart of shaping history. Some of Sandra Kaplan's icons helped lead us in our discussions and were a way for the students to share their own thoughts about what they had learned.



Blending these icons together led each of us in our own direction of discovery of history, but connected our conversations with each other.



While in Science with Mrs. Dungan, the students were asked, "What makes an instrument an instrument?" We discussed examples and non-examples

of it. From there, the students were tasked to use their working definition of an instrument to create an instrument, explain how it was used, and using materials provided or brought from home. Each, then had to present their instrument to their peers for review.

At the beginning... of the school year, I stated that the students at Trantwood Elementary have and will continue to benefit greatly from our collaborative efforts to differentiate instruction according to students' readiness levels, interests, and learning styles.

At the close ...

I feel this year was a great success due to the continued support of the administration, the involvement of the parents and students, and the willingness of the cluster teachers to utilize what they have learned on a daily basis in their classrooms.

Thank you to all involved for what you have helped accomplish. I look forward to welcoming many of you back in the Fall.

Throughout the school year, one of the things that we have been trying to do is bring technology into our lessons and discoveries of learning. One avenue that we have used is Voicethreads. This is a way for our thoughts to have a world wide audience in a creative way.

We used our discussion of the Famous Americans at the fifth grade level and asked ourselves, "How are Christopher Columbus and George Washington alike? Or "If Nat Turner and John Brown had their own websites, what kind of things might you find on them?" *Join us and add your own comments to these questions and more.. Visit our very own Trantwood Elementary School Blog.*

Best Wishes to those students moving on to sixth grade. We are proud and excited to have so many attending Kems Landing (KLMS), Plaza Middle's Middle Years Program (MYP), Lynnhaven and Great Neck Middle Schools' advanced classes.



Parent Workshops

The schedule will be announced in the fall for upcoming topics. I look forward to seeing you in September.

**Trantwood
Elementary
Website Link**

Look for this newsletter on the Gifted Resource link of the Trantwood webpage:

www.trantwoodes.com

vbschools.com