



WAMILE Fall Newsletter

Tips from NMSA

Listen to an inspirational podcast by Jack Berckemeyer on the NMSA website at http://www.nmsa.org/portals/0/media/podcast/TMLE_ep22.mp3 It features Kathy Hunt Ullock, educational consultant and member of the National Middle School Association Site Based Services cadre, talking with Jack Berckemeyer, NMSA assistant executive director. Kathy and Jack offer advice to the

new teacher and discuss the importance of establishing a support system. The advice is so practical and useful, for example, stay away from the negative conversations because they can bring you down.

"Having Our Say" project addresses the question, "What do 4000 middle school kids say about school, technology

and what keeps them engaged?" <http://www.fi.ncsu.edu/initiatives/havingoursay/index.html>

They have both their final report with all their results on this page, but you have got to check out the 4 or 5 minute video that summarizes their results: <http://www.fi.ncsu.edu/initiatives/havingoursay/video.html>

Congratulations to Washington 2009 Teacher of the Year!

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson announced Washington's 2009 Teacher of the Year, Susan Johnson, at a news conference Wednesday, October 8. Nine candidates – each serving as the regional teacher of the year from his/her respective educational service district – were considered for the honor and were recognized at the news conference.

The new Teacher of the Year

will represent Washington in the national Teacher of the Year competition. The national honoree will be announced by the next U.S. president in the spring.

Dave Gamon, Mead School District, ESD 101, Northwood MS

Susan Johnson, Cle Elum-Roslyn School District, ESD 105

Katie Hebner, Vancouver School District, ESD 112

Alki MS
Heather Byington, Shelton School District, ESD 113
David Young, Central Kitsap School District, ESD 114
Kimmie Read, Puyallup School District, ESD 121
Toni Cuello, Pasco School District, ESD 123
Ted Mack, Moses Lake School District, ESD 171
LaLani Pitts, Mount Baker School District, ESD 189

Inside this issue:

Tips from the Past-President; Teacher of Year	1
Call for Proposals—March 7 conference	2
What Makes a Memorable Middle School Teacher	3
Free surprise!	4
Book Review; upcoming meetings	5
Membership Application	6
Mission; contact; board members	7

The 16 Habits of Mind by Arthur Costa

1. Persisting
2. Managing Impulsivity
3. Listening with Understanding and Empathy
4. Thinking Flexibly
5. Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition)
6. Striving for Accuracy
7. Questioning and Posing Problems
8. Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations
9. Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision
10. Gathering Data Through All Senses
11. Creating, Imagining, innovating
12. Responding with Wonderment and Awe
13. Taking Responsible Risks
14. Finding Humor
15. Thinking Interdependently
16. Remaining Open to Continuous Learning



Washington Association for Middle Level Education

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

CONFERENCE

Bellingham, Washington
March 7, 2009

The **Washington Association of Middle Level Education (WAMLE)** is sponsoring a middle level education conference in Bellingham, WA on March 7, 2009. Presenters are needed for sessions about classroom practices, current developmental and pedagogical research, and issues in middle level education.

If you would like to submit a proposal to share your professional expertise, please complete the application online at

<http://freeonlinesurveys.com/rendersurvey.asp?sid=v91taxlp7owb24q494153>

Proposals will be accepted through December 10, 2008 and applicants will be notified of the status of their proposal by December 20, 2008. Presenters are encouraged to relate their presentation to one of the following six strands: Assessment and Evaluation to Ensure Student Achievement, Classroom Management/ Student Motivation, Current Issues, Differentiated Instruction/Response to Intervention, Technology, Understanding Our Students and Ourselves. If you have any questions about the submission process, please contact Debbie Haskell (haskelld@cwu.edu).

The classrooms we will use for the presentation sessions will have document cameras, interactive white boards, laptop computers, LCD projectors, and overhead projectors. See the WAMLE website www.wamle.com for information about registration and housing.

For general questions about the conference contact Cathy Gersich (cgersich@bham.wednet.edu), Stephanie Strow (sstrow@bham.wednet.edu), or Connie Weiner (cweiner@fwps.org).

What makes a Memorable Middle School Teacher?

By middle school students of Stephanie Strow at Fairhaven Middle School, Bellingham

A good middle school teacher lets us be ourselves. She/he does not just say, "Do this the way I tell you to!", but instead says, "Do this how you feel it should be done." He/she is also funny, if not, class will be boring. She/he should have students work on fun projects. The teachers needs to be helpful and caring because if a teacher does not care for a student, chances are the student will not care for the teacher.

Claire

A memorable teacher has to make me feel important. Tell me I did well and why I did well. They need to be

fun, happy, and make their students feel welcome. I feel their classroom shows their personality. If a teacher has nothing but math posters in his/her room I don't really feel I know what they are like. If a teacher has



Students love giving teachers advice—it empowers them to know their teacher cares what they think.

posters, books, stuffed animals, plants, pictures, etc. that shows their personality and I feel I know them better. To make me look forward to going to their classroom, a teacher has to laugh when things are funny and not worry that students won't like them. Be outgoing and let students have a say in some of the things they do. Some teachers think, "They hate it when I talk too much" and most of the time we do, unless you make listening to what you have to say worthwhile. Most of all, to be a good teacher, make us proud when we have learned something.

Caitlin

A memorable middle school teacher is a teacher that is nice by making everyone feel special and pushes you to do the best you can do. A good teacher does not favor certain students when every student should be favored. The teacher should not choose the same people all the time.

A good teacher would also go around to everyone to ask if they need help or check in with everyone to see if they are on the right track. Someone that is also strict, but not too strict.

Memorable teachers also have to be funny at times when it is appropriate.

Memorable teachers also have to be funny at times when it is appropriate.

Gabbi

I think a great middle school teacher has to have a lot of "different" qualities besides being able to teach. The teacher has to talk from the student's point-of-view, with energy and humor. It is important for the teacher to sometimes do activities that will challenge the students as well. Good teachers have to be kind

of out there and different if they are going to inspire me. When I am learning I don't want to hear, "blah, blah, blah." I want to hear exciting facts that would actually stand out and stay with me. The teacher would also have to be forgiving. When I get in trouble I want to be able to do something about it, so when you are in

a situation in life you'll know what to do.

Nigel



Bookmarks to print and share with your friends!

Thanks to Cathy Gersich for the design!

WAMLE
Washington Association for Middle Level Education

Join us in Bellingham!

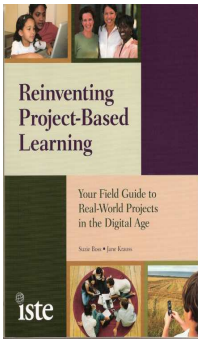
Spring Conference

March 7th, 2009

Fairhaven Middle School
Bellingham, Washington

wamle.com

Book Review



Boss, S., & Krauss, J. (2007). *Reinventing project-based learning: Your field guide to real-world projects in the digital age*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

“What has motivated you to consider new strategies for the classroom?” If your answer to the authors’ question is to create a meaningful, student-centered learning environment, you are ready to use this book. The authors guide you through the maze of wikis, blogs, and podcasts. Your journey will take you from traditional projects into 21st century projects that are embedded with the technology that our students use on a daily basis.

projects that bring people together and connect students to real-time data and primary sources not only provides students with meaningful learning opportunities but also develops the skills they will need in the 21st century. This book encourages you to log on and begin your journey into the digital world.

Debbie Haskell
haskelld@cwu.edu

This I Believe – I believe that every young adolescent must be engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.

These innovative projects were developed by classroom teachers. Boss and Krauss guide you in developing similar projects, explaining “pitfalls” and possibilities along the way. Facilitating

Upcoming board meetings for 2008-2009

- * Dec. 13th, St. Joseph Middle School, Seattle
 - * Feb. 7th
 - * (SPRING CONFERENCE March 7th)
 - * April 11th
 - * June 13th
- (unless noted) with a 9:30 AM start.

Executive board meetings will be every other month on the 2nd Saturday

If you are interested in joining our board, contact one of the current board members!

WAMLE Membership Benefits:

- Quarterly Newsletters
- Classroom Connections
- Annual State Conference Registration
- WAMLE Website
- Mini Grants
- Access to Middle Level Resources
- Resources for Professional Development Opportunities
- Dual Membership Available with the National Middle School Association
- Award Opportunities
- Travel and represent our organization at conferences
- Create opportunities for colleagues at the middle-level



I love the fall, it's leaves and all...

Teaching Online

By Dorothy Shireman

Former Totem Junior High School 8th grade English teacher/ Internet Academy 8th grade English teacher

The Internet Academy is Washington's first online school; it offers innovative and challenging K-12 academic experiences to part-time and to full-time students. In most cases, students residing in Washington State may attend IA for **free** depending on the total number of classes taken. With open enrollment design, and space available, students have the opportunity to enroll at any time prior to March 6, 2009. The principal and staff are outstanding, dedicated educators, who constantly assess what works best for students.

Why do I like to teach online for the Internet Academy?

Pro's:

Flexibility in when and where I teach. My portable laptop enables me to carry my "classroom" with me on vacations or long weekends at the beach. If a student is having a problem, I can telephone him or his parents, or even arrange for a meeting at the Internet Academy on two Saturdays per month at the lab located nearby in Federal Way.

Closer contact with students: You're teaching one-on-one, as each student works through the lessons at a different pace. Students usually voice their opinions, sometimes send notes to just say hi. They like having someone who listens to them.

Excellent curriculum, developed specifically for the age and technology. Students range from active athletes who must be ready to practice at their gym for five hours per day to home-schooled students whose parents have concerns about safety, health issues, or other reasons. There is no one "online" type of student. Every student is a unique individual and the curriculum is interesting to all types of kids.

Family involvement: Parents and/or guardians are able to have their own account where they can check their child's grades, communicate with the teacher, and see the curriculum. If a student doesn't submit work each week, they are marked absent and could be dropped from the program if it continues. The Becca Bill applies here, just as it does in a regular classroom. Some students have IEP's or 504 plans, which the virtual teacher can access. A liaison meets regularly with district Special Ed personnel to make sure they are making adequate progress. Teachers send weekly greetings to students and parents, communicate regularly.

No interruptions by misbehaving students. If the student is wasting time, is distracted, you won't receive as frequent work perhaps, but it doesn't interfere with other students in class.

Safe. No fire drills, bomb scares, earthquake drills.

Accountability. The work must meet standard, which is explained in the syllabus and is always a click away.

Relevant. Using the ever-changing Internet as a tool empowers our students, helps them use technology creatively, seamlessly, and effectively.

Ability to work at own rate. The research projects students choose and complete are testament to how powerful the program is. I have had an 8th grader taking her English course at the local high school because the family lived in a remote area. Her mentor, a teacher at the high school raved about how motivated the student was to do the curriculum. She had previously been a struggling student with low self-esteem, but during the course she was not self-conscious about her low skills, but developed them without fear of embarrassment or humiliation.

Cons:

Not every student does the same assignment at the same time. Since students can sign up at varying times, they work at different paces. Usually they are within a few assignments of each other.

Lack of face-to-face. Although the academy lab is open two Saturdays per month, some students are unable to come in. Observing a student, seeing his body language, and seeing how he relates to his peers is helpful. There are lessons in how to get along with other people you aren't related to or you didn't choose to be around, that one might miss. When you're correcting work for hours at a time, sometimes you become glued to the computer. Full-time teachers must come in for meetings weekly and office hours twice weekly, where they can see each other. Students also need to socialize, do team projects, work with groups. IA is working on resolving this.

Cheating. Teachers are concerned about cheating. I feel satisfied with the way the curriculum is written to discourage cheating. Keeping writing samples from the time a student writes his orientation essay through the course, helps notice the student's personal style. The use of reflection on a regular basis builds in authenticity. The curriculum is very well done, engaging and challenging.

Non-English speakers. Sometimes it is difficult to explain to a parent who doesn't speak English, but usually the students understand the work.

Heavy caseload. Full-time contracted teachers have about 120 students to teach/ monitor, and they may be teaching several classes. As a part-time consultant, I was spending 3-4 hours/day with only 34 students. You learn tricks to help work faster and better. There are weekly staff meetings that often involve tips and training that are useful and relevant.

Natural disasters, electrical or technical interruptions in the ability to work. If the power is out, your computer won't work. When there are snow days, we usually excuse students from some of the work, just as you would in a regular classroom.

Overall, teaching for the Internet Academy has been a very positive experience. The pro's far outweigh the cons, in my estimation. The people and the curriculum are outstanding, and it continues to intrigue and challenge me. If you're interested in learning more, go to <http://www.iacampus.org/>. For another list, visit <http://www.elearners.com/resources/elearning-faq5.asp>, <http://www.guidetoonlineschools.com/what-are-the-pros-cons-of-online-schools.html> or Google *pros and cons of online learning*.



Washington Association for Middle Level Educator

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

Individual Membership

U.S. \$35

College Student Membership*

U.S. \$25

Dual Membership w/ NMSA

U.S. \$85

**Student membership requires proof of enrollment*

Select Membership Status:

Renewing

New Member

* Membership runs from July to June of each year

CONTACT INFORMATION

LAST NAME : _____ FIRST NAME: _____

JOB TITLE (CHECK ONE):

TEACHER

PRINCIPAL

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

CENTRAL OFFICE

PROFESSOR

SUPERINTENDENT

CURRICULUM SPEC.

COUNSELOR

TECHNOLOGY

LIBRARY STAFF

STATE DEPARTMENT

STUDENT

OTHER: _____

GRADE Level: _____ SUBJECT(S): _____

SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME WORK

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP/POSTAL: _____

PHONE (W): _____ PHONE (H): _____

(FAX): _____ EMAIL: _____

HOME WORK

HOME WORK

DEMOGRAPHICS

How long have you been in the education field? 0-4 years 5-9 years 10-14 years 15-19 years

20-24 years 25-29 years 30 or more years

If you are a classroom teacher, please check contents that apply to your current teaching assignment.

Art

Math

Science

Technology

Foreign Language

Social Studies

Language Arts

Physical Education/Health

Special Needs

Music

Other: _____

PAYMENT METHODS

Please make checks payable to WAMLE & return completed form to:

WAMLE

Washington Association for Middle Level Education

P.O. Box 20631

Seattle, WA 98102

If you would like more information about WAMLE such as the board or how to volunteer, please note it here:



Washington Association for Middle Level Education
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION FOR MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

Washington Association for Middle Level Education
P.O. Box 20631
Seattle, WA 98102
Email: cweiner@fwps.org

Dedicated to serving the needs of middle-grade students and the people involved in their lives

Successful middle level schools include:

- * Meaningful relationships based on trust
- * Strong academic focus
- * A safe, stimulating, and supportive environment
- * High expectations
- * Continuous learning for students and adults

Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5

<http://www.wamle.com>

WAMLE Board

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