

GRADE 6 ELA UPDATE

"Today a reader; tomorrow a leader." - Margaret Fuller

May/June 2017

MAY AND JUNE CLASSROOM FOCUS

As our children depend more and more on screens for communication, they sometimes fail to recognize the important components of face-to-face communication. A study conducted over 45 years ago, but still relevant today, highlights those points of conversation that are imperative for people to understand the messages we send to one another:

- ◆ Words (the literal meaning) account

for 7% of our overall message

- ◆ Tone of voice accounts for 38% of the overall message
- ◆ Body Language accounts for 55% of the overall message

It is important that students learn the skills of communication and presentation, such as clarity, volume, and eye contact; but it is even more imperative that our students understand that word choice and how we deliver a

message on a daily basis is even more important.

All year long, we have been teaching our 6th graders how to partake in an academic discussion using our accountable talk charts and giving them "stems" to begin their conversations. During these last weeks of the schools year, students will be putting their speaking skills to work while debating and supporting claims with relevant evidence and explanations.

Reading Recommendations

<i>Fablehaven</i> by Brandon Mull	Gr 6
<i>The Breadwinner</i> by Deborah Ellis	Gr 7
<i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens</i> by Sean Covey	Gr 8

*May & June: MA ELA State Standards

- W.6.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- SL.6.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- SL.6.4. Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

*Other ELA/Reading standards are addressed during the month of May and June as well.

EXTENDING THE LEARNING AT HOME

You can make a difference in your child's speaking skills just by having conversations with him or her on a daily basis. Sometimes talking to our pre-teens can be like pulling teeth, so sometimes we need to go the extra mile to start the conversation.

One idea is to create a conversation jar by put-

ting random questions into a jar and pulling a different one out each evening at the dinner table or before your child goes to bed. There are hundreds of conversation starter questions for teens that can be found on the internet with a simple Google search.

Research also tells us

that it is more comfortable for teenage boys to speak with adults shoulder to shoulder rather than face-to-face. Waiting until bedtime when it is quiet and the lights are dim also promotes a more comfortable environment for kids to talk about issues that are important to them.

If you have any questions about WPS' ELA/Reading Curriculum, please contact Chris Tolpa, Supervisor of Humanities:

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