Volume 16 Issue IV **UETCTM NEWS** March 2016

Upper East Tennessee Council of Teachers of Mathematics

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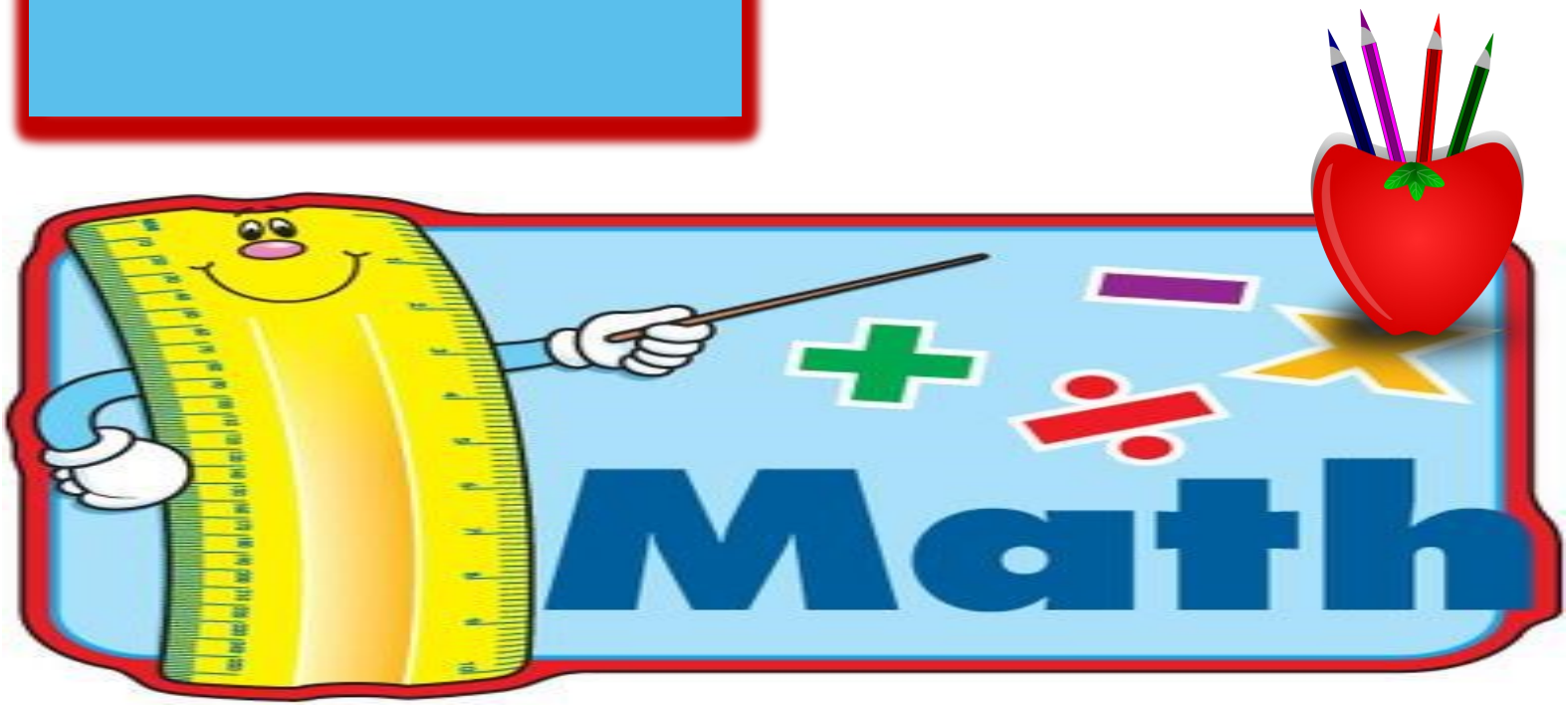
ANNOUNCEMENT!

Upcoming Pi Day Meeting

Date: Monday, March 14th.

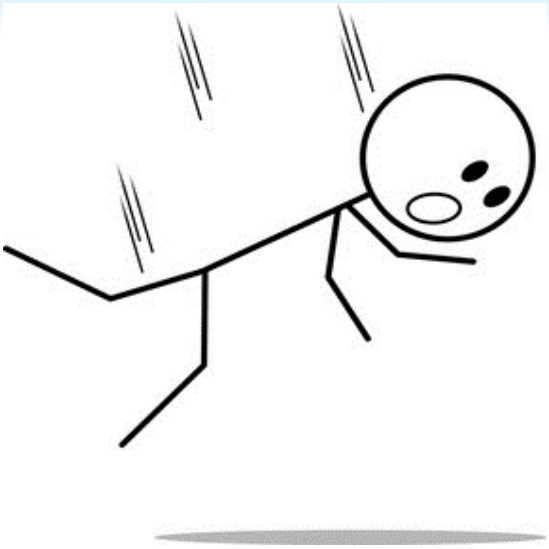
Venue: Sullivan South High School

More details on Page 5



Don't Trip Over the Bar

By Rachel Norris



There have been numerous changes in the realm of education over the past several decades. The implementation of testing for teacher accountability, the increase in the number of math classes required for graduation and now a shift in teaching strategies and standards. The common goal of these changes is an increase in rigor that produces more mathematically fluent students. Unfortunately, this increase in rigor has also resulted in skepticism among teachers.

I often hear teachers say, "I could never get my students to do that task" or "That's way too hard for my students." In reality, how does the teacher know this for sure? I agree, we all know our students and every class is different, but I also know that in my experience students will perform based on teacher expectations. I also know many teenagers will do the minimum required to get a grade. So, as teachers we must raise the minimum requirement.

By holding students to a higher standard of work, teachers are not only covering the curriculum at a deeper level, but also training students to produce work and projects that far outshines what has been acceptable in the past. As teachers, we want students to understand our subject matter, but the ultimate goal is to help foster skills in our students that will result in productivity and success in adulthood.

We all know that doing enough just to get by at work does not pay off.

Realistically, not all students will rise to the higher expectations, at least not at first. However, once they realize the expectations are not going to be lowered, most students will adjust and these will be the students that sincerely thank you for pushing them beyond their limits. For the few that do not adjust, they will still benefit from facing the adversity to their comfort zone. Unfortunately, the biggest adjustment is not for the students anyway, it is for their teachers. We cannot change the classroom expectations until we change ourselves.

I have always felt that I have done my best to set high expectations and create assignments with rigor above grade level, but I know there is room to improve every year. As the teacher, I have to be patient and positive for my students. If I do not believe they can accomplish what I ask of them, why would they? There is a happy medium between setting the bar so high it is out of reach and setting it so low it gets tripped over. As educators, we owe it to our students to find that level of rigor for each of our classes. If it is set too far out of reach, everyone will give up, including us. If it is set too low, we will trip over it and land on our faces.

"By holding students to a higher standard of work, teachers are not only covering the curriculum at a deeper level, but also training students to produce work and projects that far outshines what has been acceptable in the past."

It's About Time: Improving Time Management

By John A. Bell

Every second of instructional time is important and must be used wisely. Managing instructional time can help prevent the drifting away of valuable seconds and minutes. Managing instructional time can be accomplished by adding a time element to the instructional task portion of the lesson plan (i.e. creating a time pacing schedule for the lesson plan) and by utilizing a timer. Since 1995 the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has provided reliable comparative data on the mathematics of U.S. students and their counterparts in other countries. TIMSS has studied, documented, and videotaped the teaching practices in these various countries. In reviewing the TIMSS video, one enormous difference is evident when it comes to management of the instructional time between the United States of America and Japan. In the studies of U.S. classrooms, there is very little attempt to manage instructional time while in the Japanese classroom both the lesson plan itself and the execution of the lesson plan are closely time managed. A sample lesson plan from Japan has a table containing the pacing of a 50-minute instructional period http://www.timssvideo.com/67 (Last checked June 24, 2015.) is as follows:

3 ½ minutes for Public Class Work,
15 minutes for Private Class Work,
5 minutes for Public Class Work,
22 minutes for Private Class Work,
3 minutes for Public Class Work, and
1 ½ minutes for Public Class Work

A 51:00 minute video http://www.timssvideo.com/67 (Last checked June 24, 2015.) of the class with the Japanese teachers executing the lesson plan with timed instruction reveals critical and exacting time keeping by the instructor to manage every minute of instructional time. The video reveals that the primary instructor was almost always on track with the time management in accordance with the time indicated on his lesson plan.

On one of the timed instructional tasks, the instructor was only off by 3 seconds with his time management. What was not evident from watching the video is how he kept such a close watch on his time management. The instructor's lesson plan contained an estimate of time for each portion of the instruction and the instructor timely executed the lesson plan under those timed conditions. His time management of instructional time was nearly flawless.

Getting Started With Time Management

Continued on page 4

Virtually everything in the teaching profession is time driven. The bell rings to tell us when the day starts, when to go to the next class, when to go to lunch, when the time for taking the test or quiz is over, and even when the day is done. However, when it comes to the lesson plan there is no standardized requirement to do an approximation of the time to be utilized for each instructional task for the instructional period. I conducted a random search and review of 100 U.S. online lesson plan forms which revealed that there were only two lesson plans that had a place on the form for time management. Both lesson plans were for elementary school classes and were not for pacing for a period of instruction or instructional task but for pacing of the entire school day.

It's about time to amend the format of our lesson plans to provide for approximate times for each instructional task on the lesson plan. Providing approximate times for instructional tasks on the lesson plan can help the teacher focus on time management of instructional time. The teacher can also convey the approximate times to the students, as the Japanese instructor did, to help students become more time conscious of instructional tasks.

There is a plethora of time management tools that are available for the teacher to utilize. For those teachers who prefer a timer they can physical put their hands on, there are many options available. Online timers can be found in the form of apps, website, and downloadable crafts.

In the past, I have struggled with time management tools in the classroom, especially with open-ended problems. I have utilized many tools to try to keep track with time management that were unsuccessful. At the suggestion of my son, I tried an app called "Howler Timer". The students liked it. Howler Timer is easy to use and set to many different times. It displays both the time left and the time utilized. When 10 seconds are left the color of the timer changes to red and emits a bird chirping sound. When time is up it howls like a wolf. It keeps the students and me on track with time management.

A teacher can better manage their time if, and when, they prepare their lesson plan they also assign time approximations to each task within their lesson plan. It's about time that we follow the successful example set in the Japanese public schools and add approximations of time for each task as an essential part of the daily lesson plan and it's about time that we utilize a time management tool to track the key time of the instructional tasks during execution of the lesson plan.

"Providing approximate times for instructional tasks on the lesson plan can help the teacher focus on time management of instructional time."

Upper East Tennessee Council of Teachers of Mathematics

You are invited to attend the next meeting of
UETCTM
on
Monday, March 14, 2016
π **3.1416** π
4:00-6:00 P.M.
at
Sullivan South High School
1236 Moreland Drive
Kingsport, TN 37663

Schedule

4:00-4:30 Mix and Mingle
(Refreshments Provided!)

4:30-4:45 Business Meeting & Announcements

4:45-6:00 Session of Choice
See choices listed at the right →

UETCTM is the local affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The organization hosts meetings each school year allowing the opportunity for teachers to network, to share best practices, and to enhance their teaching of mathematics. You do not have to be a member to attend!

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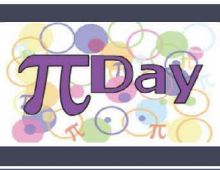

Celebrate Pi Day on March 14th!
π Day of the Century—Rounded Up!

The following sessions are scheduled for this meeting:

Exploring Geometry
(For Grades K-2)
Presented by Lora Vassallo and Carrie Griffith—Hawkins County Schools
Participants will explore activities and ideas to incorporate geometry into the K-2 classroom while meeting the standards of CCSS. Hands-on math activities that allow students to experiment and make observations about their learning will be shared.

Geometry in Motion
(For Grades 3-5)
Presented by Lisa Marcello and Cheree Osborne—Kingsport City Schools
Come explore abstract concepts in geometry from motion to hierarchy. You will investigate and manipulate common objects to be able to describe relationships of shapes in our multi-dimensional world. Geometry in Motion will motivate learners and bridge gaps between geometry terms and their meanings. It will also enhance the student's ability to think critically, create class discourse, and encourage higher level thinking.

Algebraic Thinking Models in Elementary Mathematics
(For Grades K-5)
Presented by Staci Knipp— Teacher Education at Tusculum College
Participants will explore the progression of algebra in grades K-5 and will discover how students illustrate their algebraic thinking.

Make Math Come to Life with Camera and Green Screen
(For Grades 6-8)
Presented by Tim Smith—Bristol City Schools
Educators will experience various uses of a green screen in their classroom. Participants will learn how to create a digital bulletin board using low cost materials.

Getting REAL with Mathematics
(For grades 6-12)
Presented by Megan Atkinson—Barter Theatre
Join Barter Theatre's creator and director of Project REAL (Reinforcing Education through Artistic Learning) in a hands-on workshop geared to provide theatre tools to help students comprehend math concepts through the lens of the student's own human experiences. Combining physical activities with the open expression of ideas and critical thinking, REAL promotes implicit learning, and differentiated thinking.

Teachers Pay Teachers
(For Grades K-12)
Presented by Brenda White—Johnson City Schools
Are you interested in setting up shop to give or sell materials you have created? Participants will look at how to set up an account, create materials, upload and start earning on TpT, Teachers Pay Teachers.

Seven-Twelve Math Certification: So Many Choices.

By Michele Cunningham

So there I was, all finished with my observations, courses, and certification tests and I still had more to do. I began the applications and interview process and I wasn't sure if I should apply for high school or middle school positions. I began thinking. Both teach math, both have students, how different can they be? A world apart is my experience and I'm fortunate to love both of those worlds equally.

Demographics have played a large role in my experience as a teacher as I expect that your location will likewise play a large role in yours. My experience began at a large New York high school in an affluent area. My first assignment was two different courses both of which were for freshmen students; one general and one honors. I remember worrying, "what will I do if a fight breaks out these students are so big how will I stop them?" It actually turned out to be a non-issue; there were so many teachers in the hallways that it prevented any nonsense. The freshmen were new to the high school and they came to class with so many worries. I couldn't believe I needed to reassure them that they could and would be successful, that they would not get lost between classes and that no one was going to stuff them into lockers.

I was amazed to find that many students came to class with the notion that they had a math-phobia or inability to do well. Most realized this would be the first year that their grades would go onto their college transcripts and for the most parts many were conscientious students who wanted to do well. They loved using technology, did the assignments and tried hard. They were so shy and I wanted them to volunteer but I had to resort to a reward system in order to encourage participation. I also wanted to acknowledge exemplary work so I used math money (paper dollars) in exchange for bonus points and homework passes. The students liked the homework passes a lot because many were on sports teams and in clubs but they hadn't learned how to juggle all the work. There were 26 other teachers in the math department and everyone was extremely helpful. The teachers who taught the same courses would each check on me to make sure we were on the same scope and sequence for the course. They did this here so that if a student had to have a schedule change they would not miss any topics regardless of the instructor. There was so much to do and I tried hard to do it all. I spent every free minute grading, checking homework and tweaking my lessons. I worked through most of my lunches that year and didn't get to socialize much not because I didn't want to but because I was making every lesson and I was new at it. Sometimes even between classes as I learned what didn't go well I would adjust it for the next class of students.

The next year I had the opportunity to teach three tenth grade courses. I was a bit nervous because the previous year I had two preps and this would be more than what was already taking up every waking moment of my life. My colleague, Kristen, explained to me how important it was to actually go to lunch, not just for the nutrition but because it was a mental break away from the classroom. That year, I learned that even though it was lunch many of the teachers discussed what was going on with the learning in their classrooms, it was warm and friendly. I was glad to learn that one of the three preps was very similar to the one I had taught to the honors ninth graders and I was able to reuse some of my previous lessons and build upon them to meet the needs of the new course. I was grateful for the teachers who went out of their way to collaborate with me on other new courses I was teaching.

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During our cooperative planning I learned more efficient ways to grade and complete the daily tasks that were eating up so much of my planning. I also learned about other classroom management strategies that worked, like student helpers and the use of stickers. I would have never thought that high school students liked stickers, but when I found out many teachers used them with success, I was in awe.

I taught another two years at high school and found each year I was able to reuse parts of what I had previously created and build upon the library of lessons I was creating for other courses. There was collaboration between teachers who taught the same courses, but I needed to seek it out. I would make lessons and sometimes worry if I was making them challenging enough for the students, only to find they were still struggling with some basic algebra in the complex topic I had just taught. My math lessons were more involved because there were so many different ways a student could approach a problem and still come up with the correct solution. Sometimes an approach would even be a way I didn't predict and I'd find myself working through the problem alongside the student just to verify that it wasn't coincidence. I was fortunate enough to sponsor a debate club at the high school and it was great to see that the students really wanted the opportunity to run the club and took pride in doing the planning and execution of the leadership roles.

Now I teach in a smaller Title 1 middle school in Tennessee. I have taught multiple courses in seventh grade math, and also have taught between two different grade levels for math. I couldn't believe how small the students were compared to the students at the high school. Unlike the shy ninth graders I taught in the high school, I have found that the seventh and eighth graders tended to be overly willing to volunteer. They actually loved to hear themselves talk and present problems at the front of the room with no worries. Like their high school peers, they also loved using technology but I had to use classroom management strategies like popsicle sticks to ensure that every student actually got a turn. However middle school students tend to forget to bring things to class; homework, pencils, etc. They also lose things everywhere; lunch boxes, text books, pocketbooks, and jackets. I find myself checking desks and reminding students multiple times in a class period about due dates, assignments and taking their belongings with them. I have to remind them to stay on task more often and realize that they will need to mature quite a bit before they get to high school.

I also sponsor two clubs for the students at the middle school. I have found that in both the bridge and chess clubs, students are not ready to take on the leadership roles of planning and implementing like their high school peers. They are only ready to be participants at this age and I am happy to provide them the opportunity to socialize outside of the academic area. For now, I am proud when they remember to attend the club regularly. I am collaborating way more than I did at the high school. There are only three seventh grade teachers and we plan together a tremendous amount. We also collaborate with the other two grades within our department and between departments for our grade level. It's warm and friendly and yes, lunch is still spent discussing the learning in our classrooms.

A Special Education Teacher's View of Math Tasks

Sandra Collins, M.Ed.

As educators and legislators began discussing Common Core Standards, more rigorous instruction, and task-related performance assessments, my anger and frustration slowly and surely began to rise. I feared the entire system might turn its back on students in special education by building a structure which jeopardizes their future success. Knowing the difficulties which many students in special education experience with reading, writing, and math, I wondered whether our students would be able to pass such a test. However, after having the privilege of attending several workshops and classes to improve my understanding of mathematical tasks, I am beginning to amend my view of their purpose and usefulness. I now believe the use of tasks can be advantageous for students enrolled in special education, as well as for their teachers.

Students enrolled in special education will discover advantages in task-based activities. Since tasks can be built around student interests, the students will find tasks to be personally meaningful and perhaps be more inclined to persevere to find a solution. The student in special (or regular) education will find relevancy in the material to be learned, making it easier for them to make connections to prior knowledge as well as construct new learning. Many students in special education tend to be social individuals, and working on a group task can incorporate their learning preferences. Students will experience lower levels of personal risk when answering questions in a small group setting than in front of a classroom of their peers and perhaps be more adventurous in voicing their thoughts and opinions. The students can learn from their peers as they share strategies. Students in special education are often visual learners with artistic abilities which are sometimes neglected. These students have opportunities to excel as they contribute their talents to the team solution through drawings and models. They will gain the respect and appreciation of their teammates and take pride in their work, knowing they have successfully completed a task alike or similar to their peers. This new-found respect and pride in their work will heighten the student's self-esteem while building his/her math skills.

Teachers of students enrolled in special education will find advantages in using tasks for classroom instruction. While construction of tasks can be time-consuming, teachers can redeem the construction time because of inherent features of a task, such as review of previously learned skills. While completing a task, students build upon what they already know and expand upon that knowledge to understand new ideas. Additional time can be saved in lesson development because task-based instruction incorporates many learning styles. Each student draws upon his/her learning modality while working with the team. Since many standards can be easily included within one task, more time can be spent on the implementation of one task than on the planning and grading of several problem sets. Tasks easily lend themselves to differentiation, so teachers save time by simply modifying the information and/or data to ensure solutions are within the achievement range of students in special education.

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Finally, because students involved in an interesting task are more motivated to learn and participate, teachers can reduce off-task time and other behavior issues. Besides redeeming time, teachers can enjoy a role change while engaging students in a task. The teacher becomes an observer and facilitator rather than the source of knowledge. As students work in collaborative groups to reach a solution, they share their ideas and skills with one another. Teachers who truly listen as students express their ideas may identify potential misunderstandings and scaffold the students' thinking to higher levels of understanding. Most importantly, when teachers listen, they discover how students think and reason—an essential part of building relationships and designing better tasks.

Instead of becoming the bane of an educator, task-based learning has advantages for both the student and teacher in special education. Tasks help students develop the executive functioning of their brains by requiring "critical analysis, induction, deduction, recognition of relationships (symbolism, conceptualization), prioritizing, risk assessment, organization, and creative problem-solving." Mathematical tasks help students build neural networks for problem-solving and reasoning when they must support their answers and when they realize there is more than one correct answer. (Willis, 2011) The creation and implementation of tasks can stretch educators as well. Instruction through well-built tasks can rejuvenate a teacher's appreciation of the learning process and allow rediscovery of the reasons for choosing the profession. Successful task-based activities result in growth for both the students and their teacher.

References

Willis, J. (2011, July 11). The Brain-Based Benefits of Writing for Math and Science Learning. Retrieved June 23, 2015, from www.edutopia.org

Willis, J. (2011, October 5). Three Brain-Based Teaching Strategies to Build Executive Function in Students. Retrieved June 24, 2015, from www.edutopia.org .

All About The iPad Conference

Call for Presenters!

...To share expertise in the following areas using the iPad:

- **Integrating Content for Instruction and/or Assessment**- specific subjects or across the curriculum
- **Innovative Creation** - used by teachers to create artifacts for instruction or used by students to showcase their learning
- **Instructional Strategies** - best practices for integrating the iPad
- **Management** - strategies for one iPad in the classroom; 1:1; classroom sets; carts

DATE: Saturday, April 23rd, 8:30am-3:30pm

VENUE: 701 Briarcliff Avenue, Oak Ridge, TN

For more information Click Here

3 of the Most Important Things I Learned as a First Year Teacher

By Chancli DeClercq

Tennessee High School

Going into my first year as a teacher, I had a lot of different emotions centered on what to expect. Mostly, I was very anxious and nervous about numerous things. Would I fit in? Would I be a good teacher? I began the school year asking a lot of questions of veteran teachers around me, because that's how I learn best. As the year went on, I kept a journal of things I thought I did good at and situations I needed to learn from or lessons I needed to tweak. Reflecting on this journal, here are the 3 most important things I learned.

The first thing I learned as a first year teacher is that it is okay to ask for help. I would encourage any first year teacher to utilize this advice. I was told this by one of my college professors and it is probably one of the most important things I did all year. I wouldn't limit yourself to just your mentor teacher either. Throughout this year, I sought advice from any teacher or administrator that I thought could help me learn and grow as a teacher. Whether it was getting help tweaking a lesson or advice on classroom management, I found someone to ask or sometimes multiple people. Because of this, I received a lot of great advice in terms of classroom management or implementing a great task in my classroom. Any advice that I was given I would try in my classroom at some point in the year. If it didn't work for me, that was okay. I moved on and tried something else.

The second thing I learned as a first year teacher is to keep persevering until you find what works for you. Classroom management was something that I struggled with early on. However, l tried out a ton of different things in my classroom until I found something that seemed to work for me. Did I ever perfect it? No, but it is something I am going to focus on to start out this fall and hopefully will find something that works for my new group of students. I found many ideas of what to do to improve on my classroom management, some from reading books, some from talking with other teachers, and some from watching veteran teachers. The most important thing I have learned from all three of these sources it that to be a great teacher and have great classroom management, you as a teacher have to realize that you are the variable in the classroom, not the student. I realized this and understood this towards the end of the spring. I tried to make that the focus of my classroom. Instead of focusing on the behavior of the students, I focused on my behavior as a teacher. It seemed to make a difference in how the students acted towards me. So this is where I will start this fall, focusing on what I can control: myself.

The third thing I learned as a first year teacher is that forming a teacher-student relationship with the students can make all the difference. This spring, I was faced with the challenge of teaching the students who had failed Algebra 1A in the fall. Normally, teachers think of this class as constant behavior issues. However, I made it a point to get to know every student in that class and really create a community within those students. I can say with confidence that I had much better success with these students because of that. Yes, I did have some discipline issues within the class. But, not nearly as many as expected. That class showed me the importance of forming relationships not only between myself and them but also between them. They didn't love math by the end of the semester like I had hoped, but they didn't hate it either.

In reflection of my first year as a teacher, it confirmed for me that teaching is what I am meant to do. Even on "bad" days, I still loved being at school and getting to know all of my students. Going into my second year, I am just as nervous. However, these are good nerves. I know exactly what is expected of me and that I can achieve that as long as I persevere each day to be better than I was yesterday.

Dr. Henry Frandsen Scholarship Opportunity for Teachers!

Criteria:

- applicants must be committed to teaching mathematics in Tennessee at either the secondary or elementary level.
- applicants must have declared an appropriate major at their institution

A completed application must include the following:

scholarship application form (PDF file)

- a brief statement of educational and career plans as they relate to teaching mathematics
- current official transcript
- two sealed letters of recommendation, at least one of which must be submitted by a faculty member of the mathematics department, and BOTH of which must address the applicant's commitment to teaching

Application Deadline:

Deadline for Application is normally JUNE 1 each year

Award Information:

1. $1000 scholarship

2. FREE TMTA Membership in Year 1

3. FREE TMTA CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE FOR the following year (includes banquet, conference, and membership)

Past Winners:

- 2000: Lisa Donegon (Austin Peay State University)
- 2001: John Robert Perrin
- 2002: Roger Taylor (Austin Peay State University)
- 2003: Roger Taylor (Austin Peay State University)
- 2004: Brandon Banes (Lipscomb University)
- 2005: No Award Given
- 2006: Kelly Barbra (Tennessee Wesleyan College)
- 2007: Chantelle Therrien (UT-Knoxville)
- 2008: Nicole Gary (UT-Martin)
- 2011: Amber Atkins (MTSU) and Emily McDonald (Tenn. Tech)
- 2012: Melinda Pierce (UT Knoxville) and Brandy Smith (Austin Peay State University)
- 2013: Taylor Satterfield (***)
- 2014: Leanna Ruth Murdoch (***)
- 2015: Elizabeth Barlow (UT Knoxville)

2016: Now taking applications

Important Information For You and Your Affiliate

NCTM Affiliate Leadership Circle

- Partner Affiliates are eligible for recognition in the NCTM Affiliate Leadership Circle program.
- Submit Affiliate's membership list to affiliates@nctm.org by the extended February 15, 2016, deadline. Membership lists will **only** be used for NCTM membership analysis.

Regional Caucuses and Delegate Assembly – San Francisco, California

- Register your Delegate and Alternate Delegate to participate in the Regional Caucuses and 67th Delegate Assembly activities held during the 2016 NCTM Annual Meeting and Exposition.
  - Regional Caucuses: April 13, 2:30-4:30 p.m.; Delegate Assembly: April **14**, 7:30-9:00 a.m.
- Register delegates by March 1, 2016.

2016–2017 Renewal of Affiliation and Payment of Dues

- Renewal of Affiliation dues for 2016–2017 is due June 1, 2016. The letter and form are attached.
- Submit payment by March 31, 2016, and take advantage of the early payment discount.

2016–2017 Affiliate Grant Information

- Plan an Affiliate project and apply for an NCTM Mathematics Education Trust (MET) exclusively for NCTM Affiliate. Grant guidelines, applications, and scoring rubric are available online.
- Submitgrant proposal posted marked no later than June 1, 2016.

Affiliate Services Guide

- The Affiliate Services Guide (PDF) outlines programs, services, and guidelines for NCTM Affiliates.

2016 Affiliate Leaders Conference

- Start planning now to join us for the NCTM 2016 Affiliate Leaders Conference.
  - The conference is scheduled for July 18-20, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Registration will open on February 12, 2016.

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Mail completed form to:

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Membership Fee $10
Payable to: UETCTM

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_____

Phone: ( )_____

School:_____

School Phone: ( )_____

School Address: _____

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Email Address:_____

The Upper East Tennessee Council for Teachers of Mathematics is an organization for anyone involved in mathematics education from pre-school through college in the greater Tri-Cities region. The purpose of UETCTM is to promote excellence in teaching mathematics and to share best practices among mathematics educators.