

11-13-06

The Cluttered Desk

Volume 4 Issue 6

*"You cannot teach people anything. You can only help them discover it within themselves."*

Galileo

---

Welcome to **"The Cluttered Desk"**, the semi-monthly newsletter of Just Us Teachers.

You are receiving this newsletter because you have requested a subscription. If you have received this e-mail in error or would like to discontinue your subscription, please see the instructions at the end of this newsletter.

## IN THIS ISSUE

=> FEATURE WEBSITE – MATH ARCHIVES – PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF N. CAROLINA

=> SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

=> FEATURE ARTICLE – IT HAPPENED ONE DAY...

=> THANKSGIVING MATH LINKS

=> RESEARCH LINKS – TEACHING KIDS TO BE NICE

---

## FEATURE WEBSITE

### MATH ARCHIVES – PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF N. CAROLINA

This page provides an extensive set of resources for all levels of mathematics, many in .pdf format. Be sure to check out the Resources link for your grade level for daily activities, newsletters, black-line masters and more!

<http://community.learnnc.org/dpi/math/archives.php>

---

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention all 1, 2, 3 Math Fonts Users! We are now having a monthly drawing for \$100.00 as part of the effort to build the User's Files section of our website. Details can be found at <http://www.justusteachers.com/mathfonts/userfiles.html>. Be sure to check out the FREE teacher-created documents while you are there!

Congratulations to Lesa H., our October winner! There is still time to enter for the November drawing!

---

## FEATURE ARTICLE

It Happened One Day...

By Chris Slaughter

It started like any other day. I woke up, got ready for school, and headed out the door. My students had been driving me crazy lately, always playing when they should be working, never serious, not even for a moment. I was sure that I was in for more of the same today.

The school seemed the same, nothing sinister going on, nothing unusual. It wasn't until the students and other teachers started arriving...

My first clue that something was amiss was when the teachers began pouring off the bus. Teachers on the bus? What in the world? They were running, shoving each other to be first in the breakfast line. And they were so loud! Why were they screaming at each other like that?

As the students walked in from the parking lot (huh?), they looked on the teachers with raised eyebrows, slowly shaking their heads in disapproval of the behavior they were witnessing. Most of the students stopped by the office and picked up a cup of coffee before walking down the hallway to the classrooms in slow, quiet groups.

I stopped one of the teachers, Mrs. Muller.

"Ann, what is going on?!"

"I dunno."

"But... the kids! They are already in the classroom, and all of the teachers are here in the cafeteria!"

"Yeah, we're having breakfast pizza, my favorite! Oooh, there's Sarah, I gotta go!"

She sped off to the rear of the cafeteria and jumped on the back of Sarah McDougal, our 62 year old librarian. Sarah collapsed under the weight, but jumped up laughing right away. "You brat!", she cried delightedly. "I'm gonna tell Johnny you like him!"

Johnny? John Parker, the bus driver? Something definitely isn't right here.

Barbara Walker, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, began to shuffle past me, her left hand balancing an enormous stack of breakfast pizza while she tried to tuck in her shirt with her right. I grabbed her arm to stop her.

"Barbara, something strange is happening here. Haven't you noticed anything unusual?"

"Yes", she said huffily.

"Well, what is it?"

Her head began to gyrate on her neck in a most unusual fashion.

"I saw YOU talking with Ann Muller, and you KNOW that she took MY best friend and told her NOT to be my friend anymore, and THEN she told that LOSER brother of hers that I LIKED him, even though I think he's GROSS, and besides, JOHNNY is my REAL boyfriend!"

"?? ... umm, what are..."

"Forget it. Don't even talk to me anymore, you're not my friend."

I stood there stunned as she stomped off to the hallway, her shirt still untucked, with strings of greasy cheese dripping from her left hand.

I made my way to my room, struggling to fathom this strange behavior. As I opened my classroom door, I received my next shock.

There they were. All of my students, sitting quietly in their desks. Many of them were sipping at steaming cups of coffee, a few were reading newspapers, and several were scratching away at organizers with ballpoint pens. And they all looked... tired.

Alice Villegas, who normally rushed up to tattle on ANY of her fellow students each morning, sat quietly at her desk, going through stacks of paper, occasionally marking on one with a red pen.

Bobby Grainger pored over the sports page, absently picking at a spot of toothpaste on his tie. His tie?

Carla Little and Diane Rogers were each cutting out laminated construction paper apples while engaged in a hushed conversation. There must have been something wrong with my hearing. I could have sworn I heard the words “hot flashes” and “Clairol” drifting from their direction.

“Good morning class”, I said as I took my usual position at the front of the room. “Boy, do I have a story for you today!”

Alice’s hand shot up.

“Yes Alice?”

“Do you really think that is the best use of your time?”

“What? But I thought..”

“Now, Mr. Slaughter. You know that you have very specific objectives that you are required to fulfill today, and story-telling may not be the wisest use of your time.” The heads of the students around her began to nod in agreement. “I am sure that what you have to say is important, but we really must begin our schoolwork”

“Now, wait just one minute!” I stammered. “This is my class, and I decide...”

“Do I need to notify the principal?” Alice interrupted. “Or perhaps telephone your mother?”

Her piercing eyes seemed to bore right through me. With one eyebrow arched, she awaited my response. My mother? Gathering myself, my mind whirling in an attempt to rationalize this bizarre turn of events, I spoke the only words I could summon.

“No ma’am.”

I began to teach. My students were... polite. There was little reaction, other than open disapproval if I deviated even slightly from the written lesson plan. Not a single laugh, chuckle or smile. As I hesitated over a particularly tricky part of the lesson, I glanced up at Ms. Villegas. I mean Alice.

“You’re doing fine, dear. And don’t slouch.”

Suddenly, the classroom began to turn to mist...

I shot up out of my bed, breathing heavily, my heart pounding hard in my chest. It had all been a dream! A nightmare!

I hurriedly dressed, looking forward to spending time with my REAL students. Let them be the kids, and let ME be the teacher, the way it should be! I was so relieved, I was even looking forward to Alice's tattling!

Before heading out the door, I bent over the bed to kiss my sleepy wife on the forehead.

"Bye sweetie, I love you..."

As I walked out the door, I heard her reply.

"Leave me alone. I like Johnny."

-----

Check out 1,2,3 Math Fonts at [http://www.justusteachers.com/Math\\_Fonts.html](http://www.justusteachers.com/Math_Fonts.html)  
Just TYPE these math symbols and images into your documents. NO CUTTING AND PASTING! View the entire User's Manual at <http://www.justusteachers.com/123MathFontsManual.pdf>.

-----

#### THANKSGIVING MATH LINKS

Measurement in Standard Units – There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie K-2  
<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/MathThanksgivingChoosingProperStandardMeasurementUnitsK2.htm>

Thanksgiving Ideas from Mrs. Stuart's Kindergarten Classroom – Scroll down for math activities.  
<http://comsewogue.k12.ny.us/~rstewart/k2001/Themes/Thanksgiving/Thanksgiving.htm>

Mathwire – Featured November activities for grade levels K-8  
<http://www.mathwire.com/archives/november05.html>

Coin-a-copia: A Thanksgiving Glyph Activity  
<http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=teachers/features/2001/11.cfm>

Holiday Festival Schedule - In this activity, students read a schedule related to the holidays and practice telling time.  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/reproducibles/festsched.htm>

Thanksgiving Themed Math Pages from KidZone  
<http://www.kidzone.ws/math/thanksgiving/index.htm>

Thanksgiving Word Problems  
[http://www.abcteach.com/free/t/thanksgiving\\_mathwordproblems.pdf](http://www.abcteach.com/free/t/thanksgiving_mathwordproblems.pdf)

Goodbye Pumpkin Pie – Just a funny little poem about a kid's misadventure at the Thanksgiving dinner table. Enjoy!

<http://www.dads.com/pumpkin.htm>

---

Get your free math screensavers at <http://www.justusteachers.com/screensavers.html>. No pop-ups, no advertising, just fun screensavers!

---

## RESEARCH LINKS – TEACHING KIDS TO BE NICE

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation – There are too many good things on this site to pick just one. Be sure to scroll down for practical lesson plans for teaching kindness to a variety of grade levels.

<http://www.actsofkindness.org/classroom/>

Working Together Skills T-Chart

<http://home.att.net/~clnetwork/co-op/socskill.pdf>

Are Girls Meaner than Boys?

<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/magazines/story/0,6277,233883,00.html>

How Cliques Make Kids Feel Left Out – information for kids.

<http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/school/cliique.html>

Cultivating Kindness in School – an excerpt.

<http://www.researchpress.com/pdf/5230.pdf>

---

Past Issues of “The Cluttered Desk” can be viewed at

[http://www.justusteachers.com/Ezine\\_Archives.html](http://www.justusteachers.com/Ezine_Archives.html)

---

To unsubscribe, simply reply to this email and write “Unsubscribe” in the Subject line. We are sorry to see you go. Please let us know how you think this e-zine can be improved. Thanks!

Just Us Teachers

[justusteachers@justusteachers.com](mailto:justusteachers@justusteachers.com)

[www.justusteachers.com](http://www.justusteachers.com)