

## Gifted Update – January 2012

The second quarter of the year has flown by! It is hard to believe that this school year is already halfway over – wow!! The students in the Gifted classrooms have really been excited about learning new concepts and applying what they have learned in real life. Our focus for the second nine weeks shifted to Math and Science.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade Math classes, we went on a “Math Quest”! This was a simulation in which students had to travel through a mythical land earning “travel dots” on their way to a treasure chest. Students learned about different problem-solving strategies, including Guess & Check, Draw a Picture, Work Backwards, Look for a Pattern, Make a Table/Chart, and Act it Out. We solved problems using each of these strategies in class together, then the students were challenged to write original problems using the designated strategy. These original problems were taken to students from the other schools where Mrs. Honaker works for them to try to solve. Students loved trying to “stump” their rivals with challenging math problems! Also making the simulation fun (!!!!) were Fate Cards that each team drew at the beginning of class. These cards determined whether your team advanced or lost travel dots depending on your strategy in purchasing supplies at the beginning of the journey.



The 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade Science classes explored Physical Science. We looked at physical characteristics of matter, and how they could be changed and classified. We also worked on 2 specific ways to classify objects: branching keys and dichotomous keys. Students were excited to learn that dichotomous keys were typically taught in middle school/high school science classes and were used by scientists in various fields, especially botany and biology. Yet we learned how and created our own dichotomous keys as 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders!!! Students created a “new” animal and used the dichotomous key to classify it based on physical characteristics. This activity was both challenging and exhilarating to the students – it remains one of the favorite activities we have done over the years.

If you peeked in during the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade Math classes, you would have seen students involved in strategic game play. Students took math skills to another level by using these skills, along with strategy, to defeat their opponents. Students played games involving division, transformations (such as rotations, slides, and flips) with shapes, and order of operations, to name a few. Students had to learn what strategies worked best when playing with different opponents. They also learned what a “factorial” is – do you know? *\*A factorial is represented as a number followed by an explanation mark – 5! To determine the value of 5!, one must multiply 5 times all the numbers preceding it, for example: 5! is  $5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ .*

Technology was the focus for our 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade Science classes. Students learned how technology has been used in the Science field to enhance human capabilities. Students researched how certain disabilities have been helped through technological advances. Students had to design a new invention that either made up for a disability or enhanced what humans were capable of doing. It was exciting to see their creative minds come up with some fantastic possibilities. Students worked on marketing plans for their inventions, and created power point presentations to showcase their products. It wouldn't surprise me one bit to see some of their products on the market in the future!

Great minds were definitely at work in the Gifted classrooms during the second nine weeks! It is inspiring to work with such a terrific group of students!!!