

TAKING HOME THE BEACON



Issue 1 January/February 2017

COACHES CORNER

BY AARON SHELBY

Greetings and Happy New Year! The Instructional Coaches and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking time to read the first issue of our monthly professional learning newsletter, *Taking Home the Beacon*. It is our hope that you are able to use the information as a beacon, or guiding light, in thinking about your instructional practice.

We will be publishing this newsletter monthly with input from various stakeholders in the BBS community, including you! We are looking forward to sharing this opportunity with you to contribute your knowledge with the community as well. As you browse the pages, you will notice the Big Four strategies, PD information, teacher stories, and curriculum highlights that have been curated from the great work happening across the school. Please contact any of the instructional coaches if you would like to contribute an article, video, or photographs to be included in upcoming issues.

Our hope is that *Taking Home the Beacon* will be another way for the community to communicate the good work that BBS is doing to support our students along their educational journeys.

Sincerely,

Aaron Shelby

THE BIG FOUR

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Community Building

Strategy: Student Response Cards

Strategy Descriptor: With your class it may be difficult to include many activities or detailed discussions that require EVERY student to participate, but this does not mean that class time cannot be an engaging experience. At the beginning of the term, give each student red, yellow, and green cards. During the class period when prompted, if students understand what is going on, they should display the green card based on student response card procedure. If they somewhat follow the material, but have many questions, they should use the yellow card. If students are completely lost, they should display the red card/ This activity puts more responsibility in the hands of the class to give accurate assessment of how well they follow the material being discussed. It is also an unobtrusive way to solicit instant feedback.

"TAPTalk: Encouraging Classroom Participation." TAPTalk: Encouraging Classroom Participation, The Newsletter of the Teaching Assistant Project Graduate School - New Brunswick, Feb. 2008, http://top.rutgers.edu/publications/taptalk/articles/encourage_participation.php3.

Instruction

Strategy: Tic-Tac-Toe

Strategy Descriptor: Tic-tac-toe, also known as a Choice Board, is a differentiation tool that offers a collection of activities from which students can choose from to demonstrate their understanding. It is presented in the form of a nine square grid similar to a tic-tac-toe board and students may be expected to complete from one to "three in a row". The activities vary in content, process, and product and can be tailored to address different levels of student readiness, interests, and learning styles. All students have to complete the task in the central cell. Tic-tac-toe activities may be given to every student in the class, higher ability students for extension activities, or lower students for review and practice.

Adapted from South Dakota's Education Service Agency

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Formative Assessment

Strategy: Exit Tickets

Strategy Descriptor: Exit tickets are short prompts that can provide instructors with a quick student diagnostic. These exercises can be collected on 3"x5" cards or small pieces of paper, or online through a survey or course management system.

Exit tickets collect feedback on students' understanding at the end of a class and provide the students with an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned. They can be helpful in prompting students to begin to synthesize and integrate the information gained during a class period.

Advantages of exit tickets include:

- participation of each student
- prompt for students to focus on key concepts and ideas
- a high return of information for the amount of time invested
- important feedback for the instructor that can be useful to guide teaching decisions

"Entrance & Exit Tickets." *Entrance & Exit Tickets*, The Sheridan Center for Teaching & Learning Brown University, <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/entrance-exit-tickets>.

Content

Math Common Core State Standards: CCSS

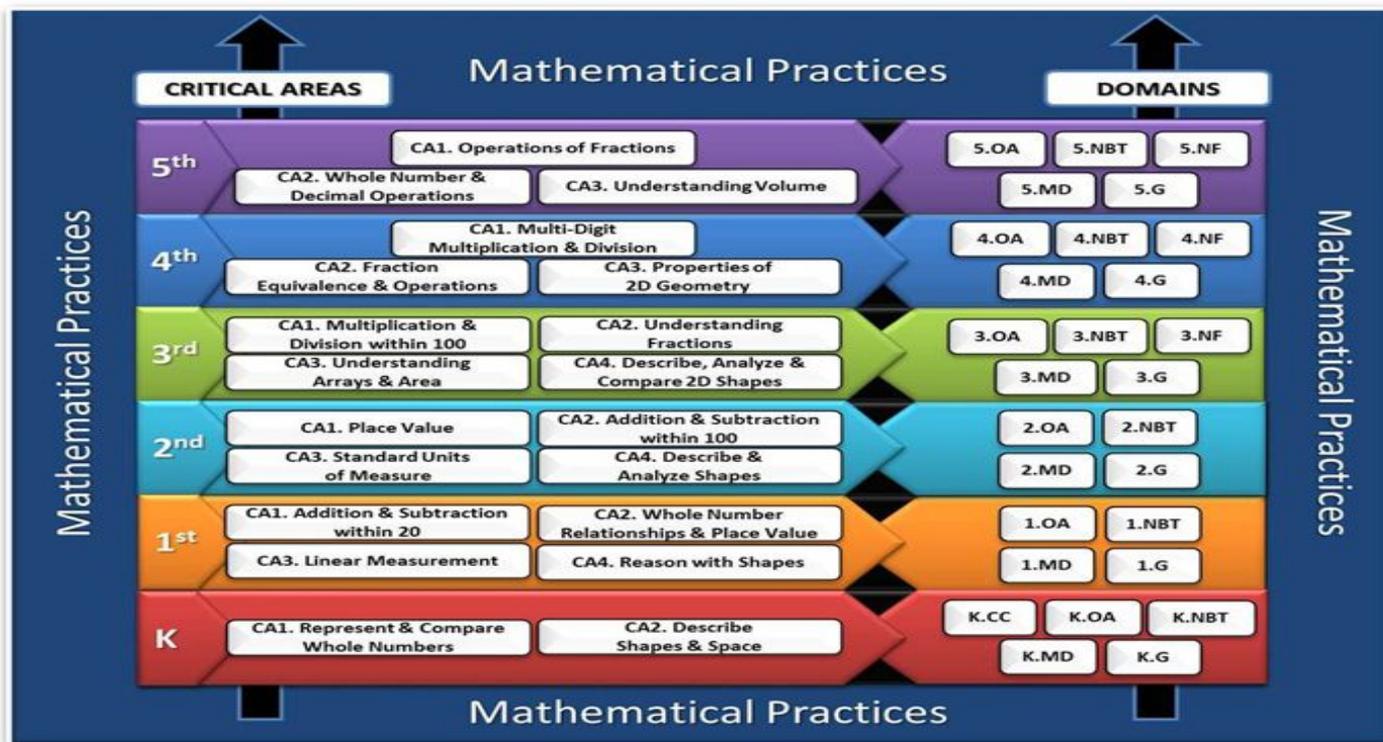
The CCSS for Mathematics identify "Critical Areas" for each grade level which describe two to four big ideas at that grade level. The Critical Areas help teachers make instructional decisions by providing a focus for the work to be done at each grade level. The Critical Areas are not in addition to the standards; rather, they help by grouping and summarizing the most critical skills at each grade level, those around which teachers should plan much of their instructional time throughout the year. Using these Critical Areas as a lens through which to view the Content Standards at a particular grade level is meant to help teachers plan meaningful learning opportunities for their students that connect throughout the school year and form a firm foundation on which to build concepts and procedures in later years.

Math CCSS by Kay Middleton <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/math-ccss-resources/7589>

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Math Critical Areas Diagram



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: JABER ALANZI

BY LORRAINE BURTON

What's Your Driving Force?

My name is Jaber Alanazi. I am from Ontario, Canada. I have been teaching for two years now, so I am considered to be a relatively, "new teacher." This is my second year here at BBS. I had always wanted to be a doctor; I was highly interested in anatomy and biology as a high school student. My first opportunity to teach in a classroom was when I was in grade 11, it was a chemistry class and I had to explain Stoichiometry to my peers. I still remember the feeling like it was yesterday, all of a sudden I felt stronger and taller. That incident was a turning point in my life and it made me channel all of my energy towards education. After earning my Master's degree in language arts, specializing in teaching English as a second language, I joined BBS school to start my career and develop my pedagogy.

This year I am starting a writing strategy called, "4 before me." As the name suggests, it means that every student must have four other students check his/her work before they get a chance to show it to me. Gradually, I hope that this will encourage students to become more responsible with their work; in addition to putting a much needed emphasis on the stages of editing and revising their writing.

As a teacher, nothing is more satisfying and rewarding than to see your hard work come to fruition. Last year, a student who had the lowest reading level in the class, spontaneously, walked up to me and said, "Thank you mister for making me love reading again." That statement alone was all the compensation I needed for the times I spent reading with him after school.

Teaching is not just a job or a career, it is a passion. It is definitely not a job that can be performed for the sake of a paycheck at the end of the month. Naturally, there are particular skills and strategies that every teacher needs to attain; however passion must be the driving force behind attaining them in order to excel at teaching. Here is a link that I would like to share with others about teaching with passion,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=by0WTD347D8>



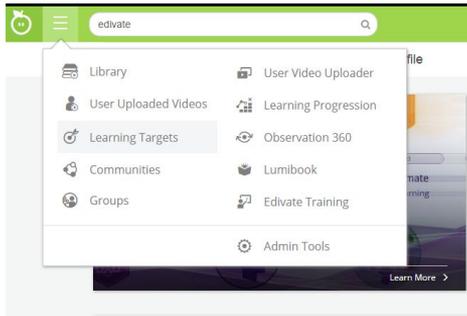
Check
this video
out

EDIVATE UPDATE: MICRO-CREDENTIALS

BY LANA HALLAL

Edivate Micro-Credentials are competency based, targeted professional learning opportunities designed to focus on specific knowledge areas or skills. Edivate Micro-credentials allow educators who have not already achieved mastery of a concept to participate in learning activities designed to advance their knowledge.

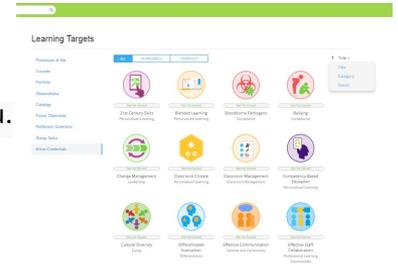
How to access Micro-Credentials?



Sign in to **edivate** and then click on the **menu bar** and then on **Learning Targets**.

Click on **Micro-Credentials**.

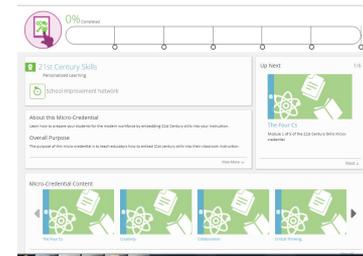
On this page, you will see a list of all micro-credentials available to you.



Click the **Micro-Credential badge** to show the details of the micro-credential.

In the **Micro-Credential Content** area, you'll find video and course resources to help you learn the micro skills you'll need to complete the micro-credential.

As you complete each learning activity, **the progress bar** will update to display your progress, and the **“Up Next”** card will guide you to your next activity.



CURRICULUM: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

BY CAROL ALAWADI

What is the Difference Between EQUAL and EQUITABLE?

We all need the same basic things to survive — but we might need slight variations in the conditions around us to truly thrive.

EQUAL			VS	EQUITABLE		

All students are equally deserving and capable of responding to educational experiences and opportunities that prepare them for success.

What do your students need to thrive?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY LYNDA ABDUL RAHEEM

Thank you for your feedback on our first two PD Days. We went from 51% feedback in October to almost 88% in November. That is great and will be very beneficial to presenters in their preparations for the future.

We only have our two-day PD Conference remaining this year which comes along in March. So what will we be doing? Well, BBS has a commitment to developing teacher leaders. I've always envisioned BBS as becoming like a "teaching hospital" where teachers come together and bring their skills to share with others. The end result is everyone continues to learn and grow and teacher capacity just skyrockets. I suppose it is like a huge PLC, where everyone can connect.

Remember last spring when you filled in a survey about what topics you could provide a workshop on to your colleagues? We haven't forgotten about this. We would like to offer you a chance to "show what you know." If you are new, you can send us your input too.

So here is "**The PD Challenge.**"

Prepare a workshop on one of the topics you said you would like to present. Send us the outline, your PowerPoint handouts, etc. We will schedule you a time to present. If selected, you may be asked to present at our March Conference.

What better way to show your leadership potential in education than to share your skills with others. And remember, you get 15 PD points for every workshop you present. The first round of presentations will begin the week of Jan. 22nd : however, feel free to send us proposals at any time.

Thank you and have a great 2017!

Lynda

BBS MEDIA CENTER

BY WILLIAM BOWLES

I created a no-frills website called “Best Collaborative Practices Between Media Specialists and Teachers” that I used in a presentation at the PEAK conference in December. It contains links to databases and “globally connected classroom models” that can be used by teachers and students in self-directed research. These databases have been designed for high school students, and include all types of tools to make researching fun: citation generators, audio and video files, and easy ways to save articles to your favorite social media application.

At the PEAK conference I showed teachers how easy it is to collaborate with the media specialist, and I listed some advantages - including reducing the workload by sharing it! Using Google Classroom is a very effective way to collaborate. Three teachers have added me to their Google Classrooms so that I can see exactly what their students are working on, and therefore better support them in their research.

Please check out the links below and have fun researching!

<http://westernmediacenter.educatorpages.com/pages/peak-december-2016-jahra>

Please contact William in the HSMC anytime for guidance and assistance.

AROUND BBS

BY LORRAINE BURTON

Elementary teachers enjoy collaborative learning opportunities during PD days



High School Physics students test force and motion using projectiles and a catapult.

AROUND BBS

BY LORRAINE BURTON

One of our Pre-Nursery classrooms was open for public viewing as part of the Italian Embassy's event to showcase the Reggio Emilia approach to learning.



The environment is the third teacher.

The environment is recognized for its potential to inspire children. Open spaces free from clutter, where every material is considered for its purpose, every corner is ever-evolving to encourage children to explore their interests. The space encourages collaboration, communication and exploration. The space respects children as capable by providing them with authentic materials & tools. The space is cared for by the children and the adults.

AROUND BBS

BY LORRAINE BURTON



New teachers begin their Tribes training with Deana Davis.