



## KINDERGARTEN

The theme for this issue is:

### ORGANIZING YOUR CLASSROOM

We hope you find the information helpful in preparing for a successful year!



**Back to School**

### Organizing Your Kindergarten Classroom



It's that time of year to get our classrooms ready for the new school year. I have two different types of materials that need to be organized: teacher instructional materials and items that my students will use.

Here are a few ideas to consider when organizing your math materials in your room.

- **Create a Monthly File**

The file should contain the student pages and/or homework pages that need to be copied, a copy of the Month planner page, transparencies, books or other materials that are needed for the monthly lessons.

Example: Month 1 File: Note Home Blackline masters (Exploring and Identifying Patters, Numbers Around Us), number cards 1-20, Observational Assessment Record sheet, counting book (*Feast for Ten*). If you already use monthly files, check to see that you have everything you need back in the file.

- **Student Materials**

Store manipulatives like unifix cubes, pattern blocks, geoboards, linker cubes, wooden cubes, number cubes (dice) so they are easily accessible for students to use. Students really enjoy using the math materials any time of the year.

- **Reading/Library Center**

Include number books, books about patterns, shapes, and spatial concepts for your students to read. Look in the Teacher Implementation Guide for literature connections. It is helpful to organize your personal copies of books by math content (pattern, counting, geometry, measurement).

- **Counter Containers**

Keep small items such as 1-inch tiles or blocks, lima beans, caps, pennies, buttons, etc. in shoebox-sized containers or baskets near the calendar and teacher work space. When a situation arises and you need counters you can quickly grab the container for the students to use.

I hope everyone gets off to a great start this new school year.

Sue Thaut  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Horizons Elementary School  
North Thurston School District  
Lacey, Washington



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# GRADE ONE

## Organizing Your Classroom



Well, it's that time of year again. It's time to put those flip-flops back into the closet, the beach umbrellas into storage, and close those graduate level textbooks (temporarily anyway). It's a brand new school year, and this one is going to be even better than the year before. That's my mentality. I self-evaluate my instruction and classroom management from the previous year and figure out what I can do better. What will make my instruction better so that my students' performance and understanding will reach higher levels? How can I organize my classroom in a way that materials are easily accessible?

Before school starts, what I like to do is reacquaint myself with standards and performance objectives for my state and school district. This gives me a rich sense of what I have to accomplish this year. Then I look at the curriculum. In *Math Trailblazers*, an important resource is the Teacher Implementation Guide. Refreshing my understanding of the guiding principles and objectives in this program helps my mind to make the correlation between what skills I have to teach and how I will present them. The Teacher Implementation Guide offers many useful suggestions and is a source I consult throughout the year.

When I finally am able to get into my classroom after summer school and cleaning, it's time to unpack. An important thing to do is to take inventory of your math manipulatives. Sometimes during the summer, things are moved or borrowed and never find their way back into your room. I always let me principal know what my team needs before the year starts. This way the order can be placed before we need to use those materials. Also, it always seems that my principal has more money in the beginning of the year and is usually feeling generous.

Organization of the math manipulatives is always crucial. I want them to be accessible whenever my students or I need to use them. I display them on a small shelf in plastic bins. This works well because students can see them from the first day of school. We may not have to use the manipulatives on the first day of school, but they become accustomed to seeing them and begin to understand their use. They often will ask if they can "play with them" during recess. I always agree but say, "Yes, you may *explore* the math materials." This way when it is time to incorporate the materials into a lesson, less time is focused on handling the materials. There are many ways to organize your materials—bins, boxes, or bags. The important things to remember are to:

- Have them accessible.
- Keep them organized (makes an excellent classroom job for a student).
- Use them often.

Each year that I teach *Math Trailblazers*, I try to become more organized with assessments. I enjoy the portfolio system and believe that it really shows the growth that an individual student makes throughout the course of the year. The portfolio is also a great way to showcase work samples to parents during conferences. The school that I teach in has seven first grade classrooms. We meet once a week during a common planning time to discuss curriculum concerns. To make our assignments more consistent, we have identified the activities that will go into the portfolios and

*continued...*



## Mr. Origin's Adventures



While attending the Summer Institute in Mahwah, New Jersey, I was able to sneak away to New York and visit West Point Military Academy. Here I am in front of a large tank and at the West Point Museum.

Best regards,  
**Mr. Origin**



If Mr. Origin goes anywhere interesting with you, take a picture and send it to us!

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## GRADE ONE *continued...*

score them using the same rubric. Consistency is the key. Observational records are also very important. Inside the Teacher Implementation Guide there is an individual assessment record that can be kept for each student. I use the assessment records in the beginning of each unit, then I transfer them onto the individual record so that the observational notes are organized and accessible whenever I need to locate them. This is a great tool and resource when making inferences about students' knowledge. I put the unit assessment record on a clipboard and always have it near when teaching math lessons. The important things to remember about the assessment piece are:

- Consistency across your grade level
- Observational record sheets
- Up-to-date portfolios

Organization is a teacher's best friend. It takes time (something that we don't have a lot of) to follow through with new classroom initiatives that you create, but it always pays off in the end. I love having things "in their place" so I can grab them at a moment's notice. Enjoy this school year and have fun!

*Norm Kennedy*  
1st Grade Teacher  
*William B. Keene Elementary*  
Newark, Delaware

## GRADE TWO

### Math Enthusiasm



If you are like me, you can not believe that school is about ready to start, or by the time this *Voice* is published, school will have started. I hope that you had a great summer, and were able to find some time to relax. I know that you probably spent some time preparing your classroom and furthering your professional development. I wanted to just share a tip for how I get going in my classroom to start the year.

As I begin my fourth year teaching second grade, I have learned some helpful hints. I usually buy a three-ring binder for each of my students (I got them for \$0.56 at Wal-Mart this year). I tear out and three hole punch the first unit for my students. Throughout the year I have either a high school aid or a parent volunteer tear out and three hole punch the units as we go. The first day I give my students their three-ring binder and their first unit. Gone are the days of the students ripping their pages and then having to tape them back together, and then having to punch them after that. As we come to the end of the first unit, I have the second unit ready, and the students just add this new unit into their binder.

Someone asked me once why not just tear the pages out, and give them the pages they need for the day. You can, I have just found the three-ring binder a cheap and efficient way to help the students develop organizational skills.

*continued...*



## MTB Summer Institutes

Kendall/Hunt held nine staff development institutes for *Math Trailblazers* this summer in four states with approximately 250 attendees and 14 trainers.

Locations included Seattle, Washington; Chicago, Illinois; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Mahwah, New Jersey.



Workshops included Assessment, 2 and 4 day Initial Trainings, as well as three specialized one-day workshops for Special Education Teachers, Lead Teachers and Administrators.

Thanks to all of the participants for their dedication to the program. We would also like to send a special thank you to all of this year's trainers for their continued support!

Miss out on a Summer Institute this year? Check our website [www.kendallhunt.com/staffdevelopment](http://www.kendallhunt.com/staffdevelopment) for the latest Professional Development events coming this fall.

## GRADE TWO *continued...*

I wanted to share with you a quick quote from one of my students a couple years ago. After math class we were to go to P.E. This little guy is one of the most athletic students I have ever had. We did not get our math done and he said, "Can you just tell our P.E. teacher that we were bad so we can keep doing math?" I don't know about you, but I was never that enthused about doing math when I was in grade school. *Math Trailblazers* is awesome to teach and the kids absolutely love it. Have a great year.

*Tony Urwiller  
2nd Grade Teacher  
Inman Elementary School  
Inman, Kansas*

## GRADE THREE

### At Your Fingertips



Ahhh.....August--The sun and fun of summer begin to fade as the teachers' thoughts turn back to the classroom. The anticipation of a new class and the promise of a new year march in concert with the pedestrian details such as the bulletin boards, book orders, policies, procedures and of course, the "stuff" of teaching. I don't claim to have all the answers but have come upon some good strategies to manage the materials I use. My friends at Kendall/Hunt have asked me to share them with you.

First of all, I have taken an entire drawer in my file cabinet just for *Math Trailblazers*. I have a file for each unit with 2 (sometimes more) folders in it. One file folder holds my URG and any trade books, poems, or the like I use with that unit. In a "PeeChee" type folder or two I have a master set of DPPs on transparencies that I use daily in the classroom. I have 2 or 3 on each transparency depending on how many I plan on using for the corresponding lesson. After teaching *Math Trailblazers* for 7 years, I know which ones I can put together and the few that take extended time and need to stand alone. I also have copies of the blacklines from my URG and any other information or materials that I integrate into the unit tucked in there as well. An example of materials I might use is a class set of centimeter grid on transparencies that my students use in our study of Area in Unit 5. I keep my Teacher Implementation Guide, a student Discovery Assignment Book, and a Student Guide by my desk for easy reference. This system has served me well and allows me to have what I need at my fingertips when I need it to teach a unit.

A second area to organize is student materials. I have students keep their Discovery Assignment Books at their tables (we don't have desks) in a magazine folder box. The Student Guides are kept together in the bookcase. The tables are organized into A, B, C, D quadrants and corresponding students will be called upon to get the SGs for the table when needed. Each student has a spiral notebook that they keep at their spot to use for a math journal. This is where they do their DPPs and the daily work that isn't in their Discovery Assignment Books.

*continued...*



## Math Trailblazers Listserv

The *Math Trailblazers* Listserv is an electronic discussion list/bulletin board. It is intended to connect teachers who are using *Math Trailblazers* in schools throughout the country.

Here is how to sign up for the listserv:

1. Send an e-mail to [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)
2. For the message, key in: sub Trailblazers(your name)
3. Within a day or two, you will receive two important messages. One will request you to confirm your e-mail address. The other message you should save for future reference. It will tell you that you are subscribed and provide directions for posting, unsubscribing, etc.

The TIMS Project Staff will add their perspectives, answer queries, and post information about *Math Trailblazers* on the listserv.

## GRADE THREE *continued...*

Third, I keep the manipulatives in clear tubs that are on open shelves. Students are encouraged to access any of them whenever they want or need to use them. When I predetermine a manipulative to pass out, I put them into clear plastic shoeboxes—one per table—or on a plastic tray. If I am using a small number of small manipulatives, beans for instance, I utilize paper cups which I reuse over and over. (Reduce, reuse, recycle!) I keep math games and flash cards available on the shelves for student to use during free time.

In the past few years, I've started collecting more math, number, brain teaser, and puzzle books. They are in the classroom library. Students are welcome and encouraged to read them when they finish work or during free reading time. With these I keep the class made books relating to math. All of these I keep available to the students to help them see Math is all around them and very enjoyable.

Those are some of the ideas that have worked for me. I know many of you have other great ways to manage materials. It's August so my thoughts have turned to the new school year, and I'm looking for more ideas to organize my "stuff." I hope you will share yours. Have a great year Blazing Math Trails!

*Kathy Beach*  
3rd Grade Teacher  
Horizons Elementary School  
North Thurston School District  
Lacey, Washington

## New 2nd Edition TERMS!



### Set 1: Introductory TERMS (0-7575-1569-X)

- *Why Reform?*
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### Set 2: First Units TERMS (0-7575-1575-4)

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- *Grade 1 First Units*
- *Grade 2 First Units*
- *Grade 3 First Units*
- *Grade 4 First Units*
- *Grade 5 First Units*
- *Assessment K-2: Philosophy and Components*
- *Assessment 3-5: Philosophy and Components*
- *Operations: Meaning, Invention, Efficiency, Power*

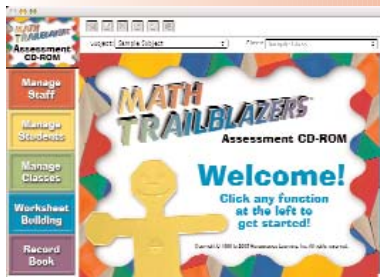
### Set 3: Math Concepts TERMS (0-7575-1576-2)

- *Length: A Look at the TIMS Laboratory Method*
- *Mass and Volume: Mathematics through Measurement*
- *Fractions: Developing Concepts and Skills*
- *Decimals: Developing Concepts and Skills*
- *Place Value in Grades K-5*



**New!**

**Assessment  
CD-ROM**



**for Grades 3, 4 & 5**

The *Math Trailblazers* Assessment CD-ROM will complement, not replace, the multiple assessment indicators found in *Math Trailblazers*.

- Assessment can be easily generated for each lesson and unit or for a specific skill set tied to the NCTM's *Principles and Standards for Mathematics*.
- Fully customizable, teachers can choose from a broad selection of problem types, or add their own problems.

The CD-ROM reinforces the concepts developed in *Math Trailblazers* in order for the student to prepare for standardized testing beginning in grades 3, 4 and 5. The customized assessments enrich the child's learning experience and validate the concepts learned and developed in *Math Trailblazers*.

**GRADE FOUR**

**Tips for a Successful Year**



The summer has almost passed.

**R-U** wanting some tips for a *Trailblazers* classroom?

**A**lways read ahead. I like to be prepared a week ahead.

**I** use whiteboards daily. This makes students responsible for showing their thoughts and I am able to observe their process.

**L**earning for some is visual. I use a math word wall so students see definitions daily. Prizes are given for the student who correctly defines the math word of the week.

**B**uy a manipulative organizer. *Trailblazers* uses many small manipulatives that can easily make a room a disaster.

**L**ots of floor time is beneficial. Have students sit and use manipulatives such as blocks to solve critical thinking problems from the Discovery Assignment Book.

**A**lways teach the optional lesson. In my opinion it is not optional.

**Z**ero days will pass without you teaching a *Trailblazers* lesson.

**E**arn the parents' respect by being knowledgeable and self-assured that *Trailblazers* is the best math for their children.

**R**eadng strategies will be used frequently. Students read a section silently, with a partner and as a group. We want to make sure students comprehend what they are reading.

**S**tart your year!

*Justin Clark  
4th Grade Teacher  
Inman Elementary School  
Inman, Kansas*

**GRADE FIVE**

**Ready, Set, Go in Grade Five**



When the year begins there are a few things to do or think about that will make your math lessons go more smoothly. The organization and planning for those first four units will be crucial for future success.

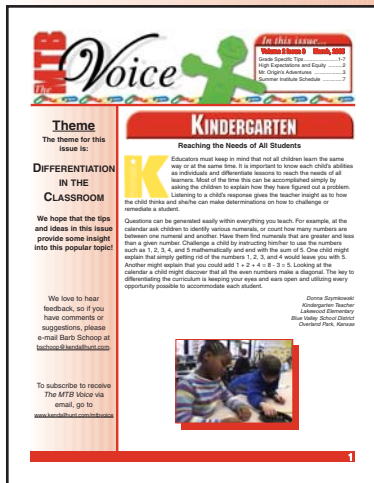
**F**irst, think about the room arrangement to make space for large and small group work. Create storage space for manipulatives. Consider those that are used regularly and should always be available to students

*continued...*



# Want to Share Your Ideas?

Then volunteer to write an article or submit tips for **The MTB Voice!**



The next issue will kick off the new 05-06 school year and we are looking for volunteers to submit ideas and write articles.

If you would be interested in sharing anything for the next issue or for future issues, please email:

**Barb Schoop at**  
**bschoop@kendallhunt.com**

or

submit any stories, quotes or tips at:

[www.kendallhunt.com/mtbvoicesubmit](http://www.kendallhunt.com/mtbvoicesubmit)

# GRADE FIVE *continued...*

like connecting cubes, base ten blocks for place value, pattern blocks for fraction study, tiles, and calculators. Storage for geoboards, scales, and other items that are not used as frequently might be in other locations. There are also some collectible items used in the first few months of fifth grade like brown lunch bags, envelopes, playing cards, rulers, scissors, tape, pennies, meter sticks, glue, and paper towels. Two big events to plan for in the first four units are the construction of the abacus and the spreading out lab in Unit 4. It's very helpful to do those yourself ahead of time if they are new to you.

It's good to look ahead in the overviews (Teacher Implementation Guide) or at the beginning of each URG to see what you need and what copying might be needed. You will also want to make up blank graph paper (both vertical and horizontal). If any of your students are new to *Math Trailblazers*, the blackline masters that include the broken lines are very helpful to new graphers. It reminds them to record their data on the line, not between the lines. You can get these from your second or third grade colleagues.

Another consideration for fifth grade students who have not been using *Math Trailblazers* in earlier years is to carefully consider expectations for the use of manipulatives. Help students understand that for math time they are special equipment, similar to what a scientist might use in a laboratory and need to be used as tools. Some teachers have students create a list of how that would look and then practice on the first unit. Others create a contract for manipulative use.

Be sure to consider where in the room you will store Student Guides, Discovery Assignment Books, and Adventure Books. Think about how you will do your DPPs. I preferred to put them on transparencies, but some of my colleagues have copied them and made booklets for students.

And, don't forget to think about how you will begin assessing and documenting student progress. The Teacher Implementation Guide section on assessment has lots of good ideas. One great idea for recording observational data is to create one sheet for a specific indicator, divide it in thirds, label the thirds (successful, getting there, needs more help) and then jot down names or initials of students in appropriate boxes as you observe. Over time, as you observe different lessons you will create an observational profile of you class.

Finally, think about the questions that you will use to press for learning, getting students to really think about their mathematical ideas.

Thinking ahead, using the Teacher Implementation Guide and the Unit Resource Guides, and preparing the environment will lead to a great math year for you and your students!

*Terry Hodge  
 Retired Teacher  
 Olympia School District  
 Olympia, Washington*