



The theme for this issue is:

KEEPING THE PACE



See You at NCTM!

Heading to NCTM in St. Louis on April 27-29? Stop by Booth #2119 and say hello!

You're also invited to our reception on Thursday evening, April 27 from 6:30-8 p.m. Please contact Chris Riedl at 563-589-1171 or email criedl@kendallhunt.com to RSVP.

Awarding Gold To Every Student

As I watched the speed skaters race during the Winter Olympics, I was in awe as they kept a close, tight pace with each other until, at just the right moment, they each made their move. Some skated forward, some slipped behind, others fell...and only one was awarded the gold medal.

Completing the Trailblazers program for kindergarten students parallels the speed skater's race. Each lap the kindergartners skate is filled with challenges...problem solving, data collecting, counting, patterning, measuring, geometry, and so much more.

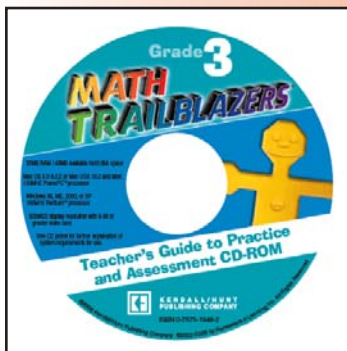
As kindergartners begin the first lap, they begin the race together but soon the close, tight pace disappears as some make their move forward, while others slip behind and others fall. But those that slipped behind and those that fell are encouraged by their coach to not give up and get ready for the next lap.

Kindergarten students may not master the challenges on the first or the second or the third lap, but as each lap is completed, a few more students are able to "skate" to the front.

The race continues, old skills re-visited, new ones introduced until finally, at just the right moment, the move is made, the skill is mastered and the gold is awarded--not to just one racer, but to many!



*Evie McCready
Kindergarten
John F. Kennedy
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Working Smarter to Keep the Pace

Keeping the pace is a challenge for me even as a third year *Math Trailblazers* teacher. Teachers by nature, tend to have been trained to teach to accommodate all students. From a developmentally appropriate standpoint, we know that all students are able to acquire new skills in their own time and in their own way. This is truly the great thing about Trailblazers. By participating in a curriculum which spirals, skills are revisited throughout the school year, allowing students to hit a skill when it is most appropriate for their own developmental levels. This definitely relieves the pressure of knowing that some of your students may not have mastered a skill...this time! There is always another opportunity to revisit the skill down the road.

Teacher's Guide to Practice and Assessment CD-ROM

(Third Grade Available
May 1, 2006)

The *Teacher's Guide to Practice and Assessment CD-ROM* will help identify the assessment opportunities within the *Math Trailblazers*® curriculum and give you the ability to choose supplemental items for practice, homework, quizzes, challenges, or test preparation that reflect the important skills and concepts in *Math Trailblazers*®.

There is one CD each for grades 3, 4, and 5.

With this CD you can:

- view or print existing assessments from *Math Trailblazers*® curriculum organized by unit and assessment indicator
- find new Daily Practice and Problems categorized by benchmark, challenge, or practice.
- find new Home Practice items for each unit

I have noted a few things while teaching Trailblazers which have assisted me in accommodating those individual needs even more. First, it is crucial to schedule math time so that it happens daily and for the full amount of time. It is truly easy to get sidetracked when doing those "old favorites" that you have taught for years. It's okay to let those go! Second, it is important not to get discouraged. I have gone further in the program each year, and am on target to teach lessons this year I haven't reached yet in my previous two years of teaching MTB. Third, trust your own instincts based on your students needs to know what is appropriate to your classroom. Do not feel badly if you aren't as far as a colleague with whom you teach. Every class of students has different needs, and only you know what is best for your students. While attending a recent MTB training, another teacher I spoke with said that the gym teacher taught all the Mr. Origin lessons in the building, and the art teacher taught all the lessons on Symmetry. This was a definite "Ah hah!" moment, reminding me that there are ways to think outside the box in order to get through more lessons than you might think possible, which is my fourth suggestion. Brainstorming ways to think outside the box with colleagues could definitely lighten your load!

I think that one of the best things you can do for your students as a MTB teacher is to maximize the math opportunities within your day. By this, I mean any time that you can "borrow" time allotted for another subject area for your students to practice their math skills, will assist students in having more opportunities to acquire new math skills and knowledge. I have time during my day when I am teaching reading groups, and students are rotating through various centers during what might be considered a language arts block. Math centers are available for students at this time as well. I turn MTB activities/games/extensions into centers to use. This gives those students who have mastered a skill the opportunity to be the "expert" and teach a student that may not have acquired that skill. Working smarter and not harder is the true key to being a successful *Math Trailblazers* teacher.

*Taryn Grinker
1st Grade Teacher
Blue Ash Elementary School
Cincinnati, Ohio*



- see correlation to national standards for new items and existing assessments

- create various versions of extra practice, homework, challenges, and quizzes

- modify practice questions or create your own

- search for items by the national standards or keywords

**Ask About
the Demo CD!**

The Teacher's Guide to Practice and Assessment Demo CD contains practice and assessments for Units 2, 3, and 4 of the Grade 3 *Math Trailblazers*® curriculum. The CD is a fully functioning sample of 3 units from the full grade level and is similar in structure and functionality to all 3 individual CDs for Grades 3, 4, and 5.

The Spiral and Real Life Problems-- We Love It!

I have been teaching with *Math Trailblazers* for at least seven years. I love the program and our school does a team approach to teaching in the fifth grade. So one of my duties is to teach two math groups. One group is the second best in the fifth grade. The other group is much lower, both groups have an excellent work ethic. Pacing for us can be a problem, because we must finish through Unit 7 before we have the DSTP which is the Delaware State Testing Program. This year the math part of the test starts on March 16th. The other math teachers and I set our goals weekly. We are fortunate to have a Planned Learning Community Meeting every week. We always discuss where we are and we set our goals for the next few weeks. This year we are a little pressed for time, but we are sure that we will definitely meet our goal of completing Unit 7 before the test. By teaching through Unit 7 we are completing everything that is needed to cover the Delaware State Standards. What we are thrilled about with *Math Trailblazers* is that little time has to be spent on review because the spiraling program with DPPs and DAB books always keeps the skills fresh.

Now how do I handle two different leveled groups? Actually, it is very easy. I give less direct instruction and more independent work to the group that has more math ability. I approach this group with more partner group work, and discussions which sometimes takes a little longer for them. On the other hand, with the lower ability group I do more direct instruction and whole class instruction. Even though it may take them longer to grab a certain concept, they do eventually understand what we are doing. We are approximately in the same place, and it seems to work well in both cases.

Math Trailblazers makes it possible to move along at a fine clip because of the spiraling effect and the whole focus on everyday life problems. We all love it! Our test scores also show how successful we have been.

*Joan Blaback
5th Grade Teacher
East Millsboro Elementary
Millsboro, Delaware*





Mr. Origin's Adventures



Here I am on my last visit to Wrigley Field. Baseball season is nearly here, and I'm excited!

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

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Math Trailblazers and State Assessment

In this day and age of standardized testing, it can be challenging to achieve all standards in all subject areas. The great thing about Math Trailblazers is that it is a program based on national standards, often providing the basis for individual state standards. With that being said, how do we keep the pace with our Math Trailblazers while preparing for state assessments?

As a fourth grade teacher in New York State, the stakes are always high when it comes to state assessments. Fourth grade is a benchmark year, and students in New York State take three state assessments in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. Math Trailblazers provides opportunities to integrate much of the content across other subject areas. Here are some helpful hints in keeping the pace while teaching Math Trailblazers:

- Read the Adventure Book and hold discussions during literacy time. The Adventure Book is a great way to not only assess your students' mathematical thinking through class discourse, but a valuable tool for reinforcing reading strategies.
- Encourage students to keep Math Journals. This is another useful tool to reinforce writing strategies, as well as develop meaning across the curriculum. The Letter to Myrna in Unit 2 is good practice for an English/Language Arts assessment.
- Collect data for labs during Science time. The labs often provide ample opportunities to integrate mathematics and teach Science Process Skills. Also, Unit 8 was taught exclusively during Science time. While learning about plants, students investigated plant growth using the Math Trailblazers activities in Units 13 and 15.
- Have students play games in learning centers. This will take some preparation and planning on your part to have materials and instructions ready and organized in a center. However, you will enjoy the results and so will your students!
- Have students explore and "play" with manipulatives prior to using them as teaching tools, perhaps during indoor recess time. This will decrease the time needed to prevent children from playing during math time.
- Refer to your district or school timeline. If you have a Math Coach or Specialist, see him/her for further assistance in keeping up with the timeline.

Remember to use your professional judgement when it comes to optional lessons. If it is possible to revisit those lessons at a later time, do so without compromising the integrity of the program. The last thing we want to do is confuse our students.

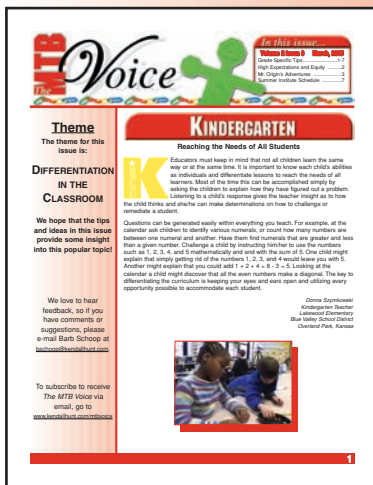
Our reality today is standardized testing, and it is our professional responsibility to prepare students to achieve all standards. It may seem easier to skip lessons or cut lessons out altogether. However, maintain the integrity of the Math Trailblazers program so that you continue to build your students' mathematical proficiency.

*Natalie Armstrong
Math Specialist
West Haverstraw Elementary
West Haverstraw, NY*



Want to Share Your Ideas?

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



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

Delaware Users Conference



DELAWARE's MTB 2nd Annual Users Conference was held from noon on December 2nd to noon on December 3rd at the University of Delaware. The theme for this year's conference was

"A Trailblazers' Cattle Round-up, A Study of NCTM Principles of School Mathematics"

When we were planning this conference we knew we wanted teachers to look closely at the Principles: Curriculum, Assessment, Teaching, Technology, Learning and Equity. Then a member of our community of learners saw that those principles spelled out CATTLE! So on with bandannas and cowboy hats as we 'jumped' into the CATTLE Round-up!

We invited presenters from around the state as well as Cathy Kelso from the TIMS Project and Carol Inzerillo from Kendall/Hunt to talk about the Principles. Each workshop session offered six different presentations, one from each of the principles.

Each participant could attend four different presentations during this packed two days. There was also a poster session where teachers representing each grade level showed student work and informed all of us what good communication looks like at each grade level. Participants who visited all of the grade levels during the poster session went home with great door prizes.

The highlight of the conference had to be our keynote address given by John van de Walle. After dinner, John talked to us about "Rethinking the Teaching of Whole-number Computation Algorithms." His presentation made us think about what we value and how children learn to compute.

Please contact Dr. Kathy Hollowell from the Mathematics and Science Resource Center at the University of Delaware for more information about this conference and to get on a mailing list for NEXT year's conference. kathyh@UDel.edu

*Jan Parsons
 Math Specialist*