

MoCo Monday Minute

Monday, February 26, 2018

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Quote of the Week – “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” – Malala Yousafzai



National Guard Received Letters – Recently, Spc. Levi Burgin, a member of the Kentucky Army National Guard 178th Engineer Firefighting Team reached out to the district with gratitude for the handwritten letters his unit received over the holidays from MSE students. His unit is based out of Greenville, KY and currently deployed to Iraq.

Celebrating Success – (1) FFA chapters around the country celebrated National FFA Week this past week. National FFA Week is an opportunity for FFA members, alumni, and sponsors to advocate for agricultural education and FFA. We recognize the impact the program has on its members every day and we are proud of our local chapter; (2) The McNabb Middle School production of The Lion King JR. was a big success; (3) Senior, Jackson Campbell received the President’s Volunteer Service Award. The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to service their communities and their country, was granted by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program; (4) The MCHS Mock Trial



team held a public scrimmage in preparation for state tournament competition; (5) Thirteen students advanced to state swim competition this past weekend. Samantha Coffey finished 13th in the 500 Freestyle and is the first girl to ever score at the state meet for MCHS. The girls' 400 Free Relay set a new team record of 4:00.14. Relay members were Samantha Coffey, Sarah Coffey, Ashleigh Richardson and Alexis Trent.

Create an Ad for School Breakfast – The Kentucky School Nutrition Association is pleased to announce the “Create an Ad for School Breakfast!” art contest. This contest gives students in grades 1 through 12 the opportunity to design their own school breakfast artwork. Entries will be judged and local winners will be recognized at the Montgomery County Board of Education meeting. School winners will be then entered into the state contest. Students’ artwork must be hand-drawn or sketched on an 8 ½ X 11 sheet of paper. The design can be in color or black and white. For the entry to be valid, students must complete the contest [entry form](#) in full. All entries need to be submitted to [Julie Metcalf](#) at the School Nutrition Office no later than Monday, March 13th at 4 p.m.



Student Attendance – McNabb earned the highest one-day student attendance and weekly student attendance, with 95.15% and 94.6% respectively. Congratulations!

Dates:

- Feb. 26-Mar 2 – Read Across America Week
- Feb. 26-Mar. 2 – Mapleton Spring Book Fair
- Feb. 27 – Grandparents as Guardians Informational Meeting, 8:00 a.m., MSE
- Feb. 27 – Board of Education Meeting, 5:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Mar. 1 – Mapleton Family Math Night, 5:00-6:30 p.m.
- Mar. 1 – Charlotte’s Web, 6:00 p.m., Camargo
- Mar. 1 – Freshman Orientation/Parent Meeting, 6:00 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Mar. 2 – MSE Muffins with Mom
- Mar. 3 – Local Spelling Bee
- Mar. 5-16 – March of Dimes Coin Drive
- Mar. 8 – Camargo Reading Night, Wax Museum, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- Mar. 8 – ELC Family Reading Night
- Mar. 9 – Mapleton reality Store
- Mar. 10 – ACT Test Prep Session, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Mar. 12 – Camargo PTO Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Mar. 13 – Mapleton Blood Drive



A group of MCHS students recently visited Windsor Care Center. Students passed out cards they had made for patients and played a couple rounds of BINGO.

- Mar. 13 – Mapleton SBDM Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- Mar. 14 – Camargo SBDM Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- Mar. 14 – MSE SBDM Meeting, 3:30 p.m.
- Mar. 15 – Round 1 Elementary District Academic Team Tournament
- Mar. 15 – MCHS SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Mar. 15 – MSE Family Appreciation Night, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- **Mar. 16 – No School – KEA Day**
- Mar. 17 – McNabb Academic Team Governor’s Cup State Competition, Louisville, KY
- Mar. 19 – McNabb SBDM Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
- Mar. 20 – District High Attendance Day
- Mar. 20 – MSE Blood Drive, 2:00-6:00 p.m.
- Mar. 20 – Mickey Mouse Play 2nd Grade Performance
- Mar. 20 – Camargo Blood Drive, 2:00-6:30 p.m.
- Mar. 21 – Mapleton PTO Meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- Mar. 22 – Mapleton Science Fair Event
- Mar. 22 – Beta Club Blood Drive, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., MCHS JROTC Room
- Mar. 22 - Round 2 Elementary District Academic Team Tournament
- Mar. 24 – Alive at 25 Driving Course, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., MCHS Room 153
- Mar. 26 – Born Learning Session, Early Learning Center
- Mar. 27 - Board of Education Meeting, 5:30 p.m., MCHS Cafeteria
- Mar. 29 – State STLP Competition

Continuous Learning through Professional Literature

A Teacher Finds a Better, Faster Way to Comment on Student Writing

In this article in *English Journal*, teacher/author David Narter (Leyden Schools, Illinois) recalls that ten years ago, a student in his AP Language and Composition class asked him for more feedback on a draft essay he’d already marked up with a great deal of red ink. “My first inclination,” says Narter, “was to simply direct her attention to the copious notes I’d already left her – the circled misspelled words, the calls for stronger verbs – but she clearly wanted something more.” After they talked, the girl seemed satisfied, which puzzled Narter; what had he added? “I don’t know,” she said. “When I see the writing all over the paper, it just sounds like you’re saying ‘you’re a bad writer.’ But now, I feel like I can actually write this.”

Huh? “All I’d done was read the comments back to her,” he says, “but somehow, getting the face-to-face affirmation, along with the informal affirmations that are part of casual conversation, completely transformed my message for her.” This made Narter reflect on the wisdom of a sentence from an article by Frank Pejeres et al.: “It has now been well established that the beliefs

that students hold about their writing capabilities powerfully influence their writing performance.”

The obvious takeaway from this experience was that Narter needed to do more one-to-one conferencing with students – but he knew that just wasn’t going to happen: “150 students x 15 minutes per essay conference = no life and a sore hand.”

After several more years unhappily wrestling with this dilemma, Narter finally found a solution: giving screencast video feedback on students’ writing. Here’s how it works. Students submit their writing electronically (in-class essays are scanned); Narter pulls up each student’s work on his computer screen, reads it quickly, and then uses an app (Movenote, Screencastify, or Snagit) to record his comments; students can use their devices to view their writing and hear his commentary. In this way, says Narter, “I am able to suggest changes, compliment their strengths, present habits of writing in need of improvement in this particular assignment, and contextualize these comments within an understanding of their work overall and the esteem with which I hold them as human beings.” And there’s more:

- He can change a simple mistake in their writing (they can see this happening), change it back, and note its appearances later in the same piece of writing.
- He can open several of the student’s documents at once to compare features and note progress.
- He can refer back to rubrics and exemplar essays to suggest where things might have gone awry and provide clearer pathways to improvement.

He reports that he’s able to do all of this much faster than he could with a stack of papers and a pen – about five minutes per student essay.

But it isn’t just saving time that makes video feedback better: Narter has found that the quality and tone of his comments are much improved. Video comments have helped him more closely follow these criteria for responding to student writing (authored by Richard Straub):

- Give priority to global concerns of content, organization, and purpose before getting overly involved with style and correctness.
- Limit the scope and number of comments.
- Do not take control of a student’s text.
- Make frequent use of praise.
- Select your focus according to the stage in the writing process.
- Gear comments to individual students.
- Turn comments into a conversation.

Narter did a side-by-side comparison of conventional red-pen grading with video feedback on the same student essay. Not only did the traditional grading take him three times longer (15 minutes versus five), but he could see that his red-pen comments were “vague, diagnostic, mechanistic, and... convince kids that they are ‘bad writers.’ More importantly, they emphasize the notion that writing is about the objective notion of *getting it correct*.”

After several years successfully giving video feedback, Narter realized he was providing only one side of what could be a dialogue: “Here I was talking about their writing when *their* perceptions are just as, if not more, valuable.” So he began asking students to submit brief video portfolios of their written work three times a year. Here’s the format students follow:

- Review at least two different assignments.
- Begin with an outline previewing the foci of the screencast, with two strengths and two weaknesses you'll be identifying.
- Choose from a list of foci, such as syntax, handling of source material, and paragraph unit.
- Focus on one complex item (e.g., cohesion) that we've been studying in class.
- Don't simply summarize my video comments.

Narter says these portfolios are the highlight of his year: "I can't wait to hear the students' voices over their videos of their essays as they laugh about this or that stupid mistake they made over and over again on some essays they barely recognize as their own, or proudly present their best sentences, *explaining to me* why they're good."

This year, Narter added a third innovation: he e-mails incoming students and asks them to submit a brief video introducing themselves and their writing. "I ask them to identify what they feel they do well, what they feel they need to work on, and what they want to learn about in the coming year," he says. "The videos are creative and hilarious, and they remind me, as the school year begins, that the students sitting before me are on a path upon which they have had many successes and many failures, but they are anxious about this next oasis of knowledge and the skills they will acquire. Most importantly, their first communication with me is one in which they fully control the message."

"The First Essay I'd Like to Show You...': 1:1 Digital Video for Writing Assessment and Reflection" by David Narter in *English Journal*, January 2018 (Vol. 107, #3, p. 106-109), <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/1073-jan2018/EJ1073essay.pdf>; Narter can be reached at dnarter@leyden212.org.

Be sure to notify the designated person at your school if you have calendar information that should be added to your website calendar.

Thank you so much for your effort and commitment to children. If you have questions about any of the information contained in this issue of The MoCo Monday Minute, please contact me at matthew.thompson@montgomery.kyschools.us.