



CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 26131 Kuykendahl, The Woodlands, TX 77375 | 832-474-8214



Important Dates

October 5 - CTL Math Workshop for parents with Claire Want. Please join us from 12:00-1:00 p.m. for an afternoon of math fun!

October 8 - Columbus Day Holiday - No School.

October 16 - CTL School Photos with Julie Johnson. Please visit <https://juliejohnson.shootproof.com> for more information about photo package options for purchase. More information to come.

October 12 - CTL Science Workshop for parents with Laura Wellbrock. Please join us from 12:00-1:00 p.m. for an afternoon of science fun and exploration.

October 19 - CTL Spanish Workshop for parents with Bethy Meixeiro who will be offering a Spanish After-School Program for Trimester 2 (the week after Thanksgiving break) 4-5 afternoons a week based on parent interest. Details to follow.



Lessons from Dandelions

As a small child I would lay on a blanket under a shade tree while my mom and dad plowed the fields, chopped and pulled cotton, or worked in the vegetable garden. The breeze blew gently under an old oak tree. With much reflection time, I was close to nature and would take in everything around me, especially the ants or the pill bugs as they crawled by or a dandelion growing from the ground close to my blanket. I closed my eyes, pursed my lips, blew small puffs and then watched as the tiny seedlings drifted into the breeze and blew out of sight, hoping my wish would come true. I don't remember what I wished for on those days, but the thought of the seedlings have recurred throughout the years as I related them to the children I taught.

Teaching was a catalyst to put my wheels into motion to learn more. Like the seedlings of the dandelions, I went out searching for fertile grounds--ways to help the students I was entrusted with. I found experts, research, and strategies that worked to not only move their



Important Dates

October 26 - CTL Annual Halloween Carnival. Please join us from 1:00-3:00 p.m. for an afternoon of family fun. More information to come.

Save the Date

November 13 - CTL Drama and Music Presentation for parents with James Milner and Sommer Trebilco Please join us from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the CTL Outdoor Amphitheater for an afternoon of a music and drama celebration! Food will be served from 4:00-4:30 p.m.

Important Reminders

*Please have your child at school by 7:55 a.m. every morning so he/she does not miss our Morning Meeting that begins at 8 a.m.

*Please make sure your child has a snack, lunch, and water bottle every day, a jacket on cold days, and tennis shoes on PE days.

*Invite your child to show CTL school spirit by wearing his/her orange CTL t-shirt on Fridays.



learning forward but to cause them, like me, to love learning. My students became my curriculum, not some textbook or curriculum guide. And that made all the difference. I learned that all learners are different, and none (like the dandelion seeds) get to the exact same place at the same time. I



I learned to respect the uniqueness of each child and that every child is gifted. The more I learned and the more enthusiastic I became about teaching and learning, the more excited my students became as learners, the more they blossomed, and the more confidence they gained. I learned that *Success Breeds Success*. My learning journey revolutionized my classroom, my teaching, my students, and my future as an educator. I could not stop learning, and I yearned to help every student succeed.

Unlike the traditional classroom where all children are "taught" the exact same thing, at CTL our students are taught based on where they are and where they need to go next. CTL teachers are engaged in conferences with students every day in every subject. Yes, we have standards and curriculum and passionate teachers who know their content. They also know their students, and they know what their students need to know and they know how to individualize to meet the needs of each and every one. They care about students and their successes, *igniting and growing a love of learning in every child*. That's our vision, that's our goal, and it permeates everything we do at CTL.

One of my students my first year to teach brought me a quote that read *To teach is to touch a life forever*. I have kept that plaque close to me wherever I have gone in my teaching career. That's what we do as teachers--touch lives. That's why building relationships is an integral part of CTL's commitment to teaching and learning. Through and with the power of relationships is where we can truly and authentically celebrate the uniqueness in every child. Conferencing is at the heart of building those relationships and all teaching and learning at CTL. It is through our conferences that we learn to teach to the uniqueness of every student. It's where we build relationships where students trust us and want to learn from and with us, a time for reflection with both teacher and student--a teachable moment. It is the springboard for learning.

There is nothing like reflection time under an old oak tree with nothing but dandelions, pill bugs, and ants to keep one company. Trust us here at CTL to create those environments for your children--where we slow things down, give students plenty of time to get lost in books and in their writing, to reflect, to engage in rich discussions, to make mistakes, to take risks, to think outside the box, to problem pose, and to problem solve. Here at CTL we stand on fifty plus years of proven research. We stand on the shoulders of the giants in the field who have pioneered best practices that we use and incorporate daily in our classrooms. And we stand in the name of love.



We are here to make sure your child has the best experiences and love learning for the sake of learning because that is what learning and life is all about. They have an opportunity here to have learning experiences that will enrich their lives. That is what we are committed to do. Every teacher has hand picked this school, and every teacher has been hand picked for this school just like I picked those dandelions years ago under the old oak tree. Your children are those seedlings, and at CTL as they take flight we guide them with protection, with love, and with a passion for teaching and learning. As we embark on an extended journey next year with CTL High on the horizon, our journey will continue.

Last spring Beatrix, a first grader, came to shadow for a day at CTL. Here mom asked her at the end of the day what she thought about CTL. After stating that she needed a while to think about it, she returned and replied, "Love is the true spirit of hope. That is what CTL is. I think it might be the only school in the world that has this kind of love. And hope." I was reminded of this profound statement last week when Ridley, a second grader, came to shadow for a day. When his mom asked him what he thought of his day at CTL, he said, "Mama, this school has a heart...no, not just a heart, but a loving and kind heart. They aren't a beehive school that sucks all of the nectar out of beautiful flowers. No! They are a beautiful flower school with a loving and kind heart. I'm going there!"

This is what sets CTL apart! The children feel it. We feel it. Parents and grandparents feel it. What better gift can we give our children? It takes a village of teachers, students, parents, and an entire school community who share this vision. As you browse this newsletter, feel the excitement as our knowledgeable, committed, passionate, dedicated and loving teachers take you on a journey with your children into their classrooms. We hope you feel the love, the passion, and the excitement we feel as we are in and out of classrooms on a daily basis--where the love of teaching and learning and each other permeates the air. Enjoy your journey!

Linda Ellis

A Glimpse Into My Journey That Led Me to CTL

One of the most eye opening, magical and transforming experiences of my life was the day I decided to become a teacher. As I was preparing to take the first round of LSAT testing for entrance into law school, I had an epiphany. Do I really want to spend my entire life and career in a courtroom trying to convince a jury that my client is not guilty? Or, as an alternative, could I just listen to my mother who always told me I would make a fabulous teacher? She always said, "Ryan, you have the personality and charm to accomplish anything you set your mind to. Why not teach and touch your students' lives while using your natural gifts and talents?"

My mother's message continued to resonate with me as I contemplated changing career paths and becoming a teacher. I began to reflect on who and what a teacher truly is. A teacher is someone who understands people, is a good listener and is someone who can give great advice on anything at any time during the day. A teacher



is a role model. A teacher is a mentor. Most importantly, a good teacher is a superhero ready to lead by example and continue to learn alongside students. This is what I wanted for my life.

My first teaching job was in one of the toughest neighborhoods in all of Houston, and let me tell you, it was such a blessing in disguise. The school had faced a lot of turmoil prior to my hire, and to make a long story short, the entire staff and future of the school was in trouble and faced an urgent need to rehire and revamp. It was there that I welcomed my first class of 38 tenth graders. However, reading and writing was the last thing that any of these students wanted to do. I was to accomplish the overwhelming task of teaching each of these students and didn't even have enough desks, but what I did have was determination and passion for teaching and learning.

During my first year, I experienced more lockdowns than I can count, lack of any real classroom supplies, resistance to change and a host of other challenges. I immediately questioned my decision of why on earth I was putting myself through it. Then, halfway through the school year, the evidence of positive change started to spring forth. One of my students, labeled with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, was able to read! Through the power of the Reading-Writing Workshop, I was not only able to help each of my students learn to read, but I was able to create the environment in which they felt empowered, and they were encouraged to become lifelong learners.

My students love for learning began that day, and I have believed and practiced the same workshop teaching philosophy ever since. Along the way, I met my mentor, Dr. Linda Ellis. She came into our high school as a consultant from the state to help bring us out of low performing and in an effort by the school district I worked for to help salvage our school. As we stood, we would be reconstituted the next year if our STAAR scores didn't reach the recommended level for the state of Texas. The moment I met Linda, I knew it was destiny's intervention—just meant to be. Through her coaching, professional development workshops, and model teaching, the following year our scores came back, we were out of low performance and we had accomplished our goals!

Beyond this experience in my journey, a lifelong relationship was built. Linda and I are absolutely philosophically aligned, and both of us believe in best practices. As Linda has always said, "If you really want students to read and write, they need to have a choice in what they read and write. Along with choice, they also need individual conferencing, and need to be read to as often as possible." I not only agree with this, but I have witnessed the power of what she said, first-hand, with my own students.

My entire career I've been constantly searching for a place where everyone on the team (leaders, teachers, and students) all share and practice the same philosophy. I'm happy to say,



CTL is that place. CTL is the proof that the myth actually exists. Through reading-writing workshop, project-based and inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning, hands-on activities, and individual conferencing, the dream is alive and well here at CTL.

We truly believe that this school builds the whole child, not only through the content areas, but also as part of a family. Our culture is positively amazing, and our students truly enjoy learning in an environment that cultivates a love of learning in every child. We also celebrate diversity, compassion, and confidence in each student. CTL works in tandem with parents, families, and community members to ensure that each child receives the tools and the nurturing needed to become his or her own unique self. We have certified, experienced, and passionate educators who are experts in their fields and child development and who love children, teaching and learning. These are all qualities that we so happily share and promote. I am proud to be a member of the CTL family!

Ryan DuFour

Pre-K Class

We have completed our first month of Pre-Kindergarten! It has been a busy month as we continue to adjust and learn classroom routines. Our September focus included how we interact with others, why we have rules, our feelings, and learning strategies to find solutions to our problems.

Writing Workshop has been introduced and Pre-K authors have been composing and sharing their creative books. In Reading Workshop, we have several favorite books—*The Orange Book*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *The Dot*, and *Johnny Appleseed* to name a few.

In Math Workshop, we use number sense daily. Numbers are everywhere...in the house, on the way to school, in the grocery store, and in outdoor activities. We are learning how to compare numbers, discuss which is more/less, and making estimations. One of their favorite games is *Pop the Pig*. You feed the pig numbers and watch him get bigger and bigger until he pops his belt. Another fun one-to-one correspondence math activity we experienced was matching the number mouse with the correct number of cookies.

Our Science Workshop unit started with apple investigation where apples were examined, measured, and weighed. After all that fun, we tasted different kinds of apples, found our favorite, then took the leftover apples and turned them into applesauce. We also conducted a *Sink or Float* coconut experiment and made lava lamps bubble. Our next Science Workshop unit was exploring our five senses (smelling, tasting, touching, hearing, and seeing). In this unit we made string paper cup phones, played a sound shakers guessing game, explored the sensory touch board, smelled some smelling jars, and experimented with a taste investigation. To conclude, we made



popcorn and used all five of our senses.

International Day was a huge hit with the Pre-K as we had four of our parents represent five countries. Thank all of you for your time and the wonderful, interesting information you shared! In October we will begin investigating bats, spiders, owls and pumpkin explorations.

Becky Billings

Kindergarten Class

September was a busy month in Kindergarten. First and foremost, we invested time into cultivating our classroom community. We worked together to determine our classroom norms and signed them into practice. We have been building friendships, modeling integrity, and practicing kindness and compassion. In Kindergarten at CTL, we recognize that who we are is a priority over what we know.

In Reading Workshop, we are learning how to choose "just right" books for ourselves. We are bringing home our personal book bags each Friday to share with our parents. It is heartwarming to see the love for reading my students share. They genuinely enjoy curling up with a good book.

In Writing Workshop, we are exploring topic generation from connections to books, looking at photographs, and sharing memories with one another. We are honing our skills at telling our stories through our illustrations and including labels to help the reader. We have already started adding words and sentences to add voice to our writing. We proudly display some of our writing pieces in the hall for others to enjoy.



In Math Workshop, we are becoming experts at subitizing, or our ability to recognize how many items are in a small group without counting. We are digging deeply into the numbers up to ten as we compose and decompose each number in many ways. We are beginning to realize that math is all around us. We don't have to call it *math time* to sharpen our skills as efficient mathematicians. Numbers and patterns organize the world we live in. It is indeed the universal language.

In Science Workshop, we have spent time discovering the difference



between living and non living things. Our main focus has been directed toward understanding the basic needs of animals, humans and plants as living things. We enjoy out-of-the-box science projects such as designing proper shelter for a squirrel using only lego blocks then defending our design to our classmates. This process has helped us grasp the concept of revising our thinking after discussing the thinking of our peers. We have also learned that making mistakes is a vital part of the learning process.

In Social Studies Workshop, we are building strong character skills as we work through each day as good citizens at school. We are learning to take excellent care of our classroom and materials so we can take pride in our community at CTL. We are taking an in-depth look at ourselves and our families as we branch out later to our neighborhood and community around us. Every Friday we end our week with a class council meeting where we reflect on the practices that help our classroom community thrive.

It is an honor to spend my days teaching and learning with such a curious and compassionate group of students. I am looking forward to the excitement October will bring for kindergarten. Our Halloween Carnival is on the horizon, and just like that the holidays are sneaking up on us! Keep your eyes peeled for weekly snapshots of our days in kindergarten on our CTL Parent Facebook page.

In closing, I want to personally thank you for your support and sincere condolences following the loss of my beloved mother on September 14, 2018. I could not have made it through such a difficult time without your empathy and generosity.

Annie Manning

1-2 Class

September seems like a blur. The class was so busy getting into their groove and working hard. This month was full of fun learning experiences and creating new friendships. It was also a time for practicing jobs and organizational skills within the classroom. It was exciting to see the kids engaged and inquisitive which creates a great teaching and learning experience for our Explorer class.

In Reading Workshop, we continued the study of Kevin Henkes and added Robert Munsch to our Author Study. The kids really enjoyed the humor and voice that Mr. Munsch incorporates in his writing. I take delight in the questions and connections shared during book talks and read-alouds. The class is doing a great job choosing just right books for independent reading during Reading Workshop as well as selecting books for their Book Buddy bags. I have been so impressed with their reading accomplishments at home. Thank you for supporting your child through his/her reading development. This will benefit them beyond measure. I can already see growth in their reading.

Writing Workshop is taking off and many of the Explorers have completed two to three stories already. I have noticed the strategies I teach during our mini lessons and shared writing experiences are



being incorporated in many of the students' writings. This is fabulous to see. The class is utilizing the pre-writing strategies to help them get thoughts and ideas down for their stories. They are learning that all writers struggle with their thoughts as they help me with mine during shared model writing time. I have noticed great excitement to share their pieces in the Author's Chair. Sharing gives them a great way to feel confident about their work and to offer encouragement to others as well. We will continue to work on writing strategies and incorporating details with our writing.



Number Talks during Math Workshop are proving to be a great way to observe skills and understanding of strategies needed to strengthen math efficiency. We completed our unit on sorting, organizing and grouping items into tens, fives and "loose" ones. We also learned how to create pictographs and bar graphs and analyze the data from each. Moving forward, we will continue to practice the very important task of decomposing numbers within 10, 20, and beyond. We will also work on unitizing the number 10 in order to build a deep conceptual understanding of our place value system. We will also focus on addition and subtraction and operating with larger numbers like sums of 120.

We had some stimulating science experiences in Science Workshop this month as we explored the parts of a plant. We began with a look at the way plants survive and the things needed to do so. We also observed various types of plants and the food we eat. In honor of Johnny Appleseed's birthday, we completed an apple tasting activity. They class tasted 3 types of apples and recorded the class favorites as they learned about various ways to graph the results in math. The class investigated human inventions that were inspired by plants. We completed experiments to show how a plant absorbs water with our flower and celery stalk labs as well. Our next experiment will include taking a closer look at pumpkins as we continue our study of plants. The class will also study plant adaptations and compare them to those of animals. I am very impressed with everyone's ability to stay engaged and work cooperatively during our labs.

The city models we worked on in Social Studies Workshop were a huge hit! The class has spent a great deal of time as they designed, mapped and built their cities with their groups. They discussed what a city needs in order to be safe and provide the necessary resources needed in order for people to survive. They brainstormed what they thought should be incorporated in their model city—police station, fire station, hospital, grocery store, houses, etc. They were required to include places for people to live, work, and play. It was an enriching experience for the kids as they not only learned about what constitutes a city/community but also the thought that goes into



planning a city. They looked at the land development and the importance of providing ways for people to travel from one place to another like roads, sidewalks, and bike paths. So much teamwork was required and they really stepped up for the task. We are finishing these up by adding details to the community such as landscaping, street signs, etc. and will have our projects on display in the library this week. Please stop by to view them. They are all very proud of their work!

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all of the Explorers this past week. We had a prospective student come to our class for a day to shadow. I have never been more impressed with a group of children as I was that day. From the moment the boy walked into our classroom, the kids were welcoming, caring, and kind. They presented him with a welcome poster they all signed and then gave him a tour of the classroom. On the playground they invited him to play with them. The kids talked to him, encouraged him, and assisted him when needed. In all my years of teaching, this will stand out as a day I will never forget. We all know our children go to school to learn academically and to grow socially. This was truly a landmark day for social growth as they supported him with kindness, empathy, and love—exactly what CTL wants to instill in every child we have the privilege of teaching! THANK YOU, parents, for the awesome social values you have fostered in your children! That is the best trait they will ever have as they journey through life.

Lisa Lipar

3-4 Class

Our class is growing and learning every day! We have been branching out in Writing Workshop this month. Each student is expected to publish a personal narrative piece of their choice. Once the personal narrative is published, students will be able to write fiction and informational writing pieces. I love listening to their amazing stories as they are such great writers. In Reading Workshop, students are connecting what they are reading to their writing. Reading and writing go hand-in-hand. As we read we are learning about how different authors *show not tell*. We are using our books as mentor texts to improve our own writing.

In Social Studies Workshop, students recently created a town model using recycled items. Students used learned





information to create a town with specific details including a compass rose, named roads, a school, grocery store, fire station, etc. Moving forward, we will be exploring our nation's symbols and holidays/celebrations.

In Math Workshop, we are continuing our investigation of multiplication. By using realistic contexts, students find ways to mathematize their lived worlds with grouping structures. The mathematical concept of efficient grouping, repeated addition, skip counting, unitizing, and partial products determine totals. As we near the end of this *Context for Learning*, we will formally discuss and explore multiplication notation, continuing to find the product in efficient ways. Students are encouraged daily to think, problem-solve, and talk like a mathematician.

In Science Workshop, we have been learning about animal behavior and characteristics. We have learned about environmental and inherited traits in plants and animals. Moving forward in Science Workshop, we will explore animal adaptations and environmental changes and effects. We LOVE learning!

Corrie Sheldon

5-8 Reading Writing Workshop

It has been an extremely busy time in English Language Arts grades 5-8. As we have reached our first six-week marker, all students have been finishing up their first pieces of writing for their portfolios, printing them out, and attaching their many drafts in order to show all of their writing process, writer's thinking, revisions, and editing work. We have focused on creating a strong *hook* or starting point to our writing. With Dr. Ellis's help, we have also improved our writing by identifying *to be verbs* (i.e. is, am, are, was, were, be, being and been) and using them as clues for finding possible places that need revision, a tool called *ratiocination*. We have learned a number of strategies like strengthening our verbs and showing not telling through appealing to the senses.

In addition to our written pieces, we have also created and presented our Book Projects. I have been impressed by the variety of visual representations the students have come up with. Book Projects are a great way for students to reflect on their own reading and to recommend books to others. Through this process we are developing our community of readers and book lovers.

We are now halfway through the 5th and 6th grades' read-aloud, *The Northern Lights*, by Philip Pullman (aka *The Golden Compass*). Everyone is engrossed in the book and enchanted with Lyra's spirit *Pantalaïmon*! I have just finished reading Michael Morpurgo's *War Horse* to the 7th and 8th grade class. The students absolutely loved this book! I am so pleased we are now watching the movie together. We have noted and discussed 10 major deviations from the book in the first 30 minutes of the movie alone!

It has been a tremendously productive first few weeks of school. I have been really enjoying spending time with my students. I can't



wait for the next six weeks in order to see what we create together next!

Caroline Harrison

5-8 Math Workshop

Our fifth through eighth grade Math Workshop classrooms are filled with student investigation, collaborative learning groups, and enrichment opportunities. All students are continuing to expand their number sense with five minutes of mental math each day. The students are becoming more efficient with their strategies and more confident with their math.

The fifth graders are investigating “the weird dials” outside our homes that read electricity. Through their investigation, students have discovered that the relationship between the dials corresponds to decimal place value. These mathematicians are examining the world of decimals through rich, context-based problem solving.

Our sixth grade mathematicians recently created their own scale drawings of bike courses for a sixty-kilometer bike race. The criterion for the bike courses included water stations every $\frac{1}{6}$ of the course, rest stations every $\frac{1}{8}$ of the course, and juice/snack stations every $\frac{1}{5}$ of the course. Students had to develop methods for marking their courses at the appropriate positions. Kilometer signs had to be posted every $\frac{1}{20}$, $\frac{1}{15}$, and $\frac{1}{10}$ of the course. This led to some fascinating student discoveries about fraction equivalence, and students were constructing meaning behind their learning.

In seventh grade, the mathematicians are exploring fractions, decimals, percents, and how these numbers are connected. Beginning with hands-on modeling of fraction operations, students then began creating their own rules for fraction multiplication and division. Rather than memorizing a procedure, these students are responsible for their own math thinking. After creating various methods for fraction operations, the students are experimenting to determine validity and efficiency.

Eighth grade mathematicians completed several explorations involving proportionality and how linear equations are constructed. The students investigated data from two cross-country hikers in various situations. Students analyzed the hikers’ speeds and starting





points to draw conclusions about their corresponding equations and graphs. This preliminary study has laid the groundwork for our next big unit of solving equations.

Claire Want

5-8 Science Workshop

In 5th grade Science Workshop, students are investigating matter and the changing states of matter. They measure and graph the given quantities using standard units including the following: the weight of substances before they are heated, cooled, or mixed and the weight of substances including any new substances produced by a reaction after they are heated, cooled, or mixed. The students are wrapping this unit up by creating a wonderful lab that demonstrates the conservation of mass when changing from solid to liquid. We plan to then share this lab with another class and teach them about the conservation of mass.

Next, students will continue their exploration of matter by studying the properties of matter. Students will use given investigation plans to describe how the data will be collected. Examples could include quantitative measures of properties in standard units (e.g. grams, liters, etc.). They will also conduct observations of properties such as color, conductivity, and reflectivity. The students will make a determination of conductors vs. nonconductors and magnetic vs. nonmagnetic materials. Our 5th grade scientists will also describe how the observations and measurements they make will allow them to identify materials based on their properties.

In 6th grade Science Workshop, students are exploring matter's chemical and physical properties as well as chemical and physical interactions of matter. Students must analyze and interpret data on the properties of substances before and after chemical interaction to determine if a chemical change has taken place. Students must determine physical and chemical properties of matter such as density, melting point, boiling point, flammability, odor, elasticity, and viscosity. CTL 6th grade scientists will understand that pure substances are made from a single type of atom or molecule. Pure substances have characteristic physical and chemical properties for any bulk quantity (e.g. volume, mass) under a given set of conditions (e.g. chemical composition, temperature, and pressure). Properties of matter can be used to identify the substance. When properties of substances change and are different before and after they interact, a chemical reaction occurred. Natural resources undergo a chemical process to form synthetic materials like new medicines, food, and alternative fuels. Different materials with different properties are suited to different uses. All 6th grade CTL scientists have enjoyed exploring flammability, density, and researching synthetic materials the most.

In 7th and 8th grade Science Workshop, student scientists have been investigating the anatomy of a cell. They have been exploring models to describe a causal account for the phenomenon including how different parts of a cell contribute to how the cell functions as a whole both separately and together with other structures. Students



include how components, separately and together, contribute to the following: (1) Maintaining a cell's internal processes for which it needs energy; (2) Maintaining the structure of the cell and controlling what enters and leaves the cell; (3) Functioning together as parts of a system that determines cellular function.

The 7th and 8th grade scientists are also studying plant cells vs. animal cells. Plant cells have a cell wall in addition to a cell membrane whereas animal cells have only a cell membrane. Plants use cell walls to provide structure to the plant. Plant cells have a cell wall in addition to a cell membrane whereas animal cells have only a cell membrane. Plants use cell walls to provide structure to the plant. Plant cells contain organelles called chloroplasts, while animal cells do not. Chloroplasts allow plants to make the food they need to live using photosynthesis.

The students worked very hard on creating real life systems that have jobs or positions relatable to the most important parts of the cell. More great lab experiments and scientific research opportunities to come!

Laura Wellbrock

5-6 Social Studies Workshop

Our grades 5-6 Social Studies Workshop is making great progress. One of the big adjustments for students arriving in a new school or classroom environment is the teacher setting a learning culture and expectations. These are often referred to as the hidden curriculum in teaching.

A hidden curriculum is the informal, and some say unintentional, lessons students learn at school. They are probably better described as the unique norms, values, and expectations a teacher sets for their classroom—things like how to behave while the teacher is talking or while another student is sharing an idea or posing a question.

This class is thriving in a dynamic, engaging and vibrant environment. What has been created by all the teachers of 5-6 is powerful. We have a wonderfully diverse group of students who have made amazing progress in just a few short weeks. What I have seen has made me reflect on how important and powerful well-trained, credentialed, and experienced teachers can be and the impact they have on an individual.

If you want to know specifically what is happening in my classroom, it is not just Native American history, the first explorers, or the first settlers. I am teaching the students to dig deeper, have pride in their work, contribute and explore. I am doing this by celebrating their work and offering individualized feedback regularly for them to implement immediately and therefore improve. I am encouraging them to pose questions that may arise as they investigate or research a topic. I am getting them to work together with different people so they have to take what they know and explain it in a different way, reinforcing key ideas and concepts while hearing a different perspective and addressing questions that



may arise. I am trying to reinforce the safe environment where it is okay to be wrong and learn from mistakes. As a teacher-learner, I am instilling a value in what they produce, telling them their work and ideas are theirs and are unique and are therefore special and something they should be proud of. I want them to put their hands up and share what they know with confidence, and I want them to explore what interests them when we start a topic. More so, I am teaching them to understand and think, make connections and problem solve, not to recall times, dates and capitals.

Every student has amazed me at some point so far, and I am proud of the skills and ideas they are demonstrating. Long may it continue! Next up is a two-week investigation of Native Americans. This is our first project based assignment for the year. Project-based learning is a core component of my teaching style and a part of CTL's philosophy. It encourages the students to dig deeper to look for answers and lets them pursue areas of interest to them. As they become intrigued by a fact or a story, they become more inquisitive and start to access higher-order thinking skills as they search for and answer key questions relevant to their area of study. This first task they're doing is in pairs, but as we progress through the year they'll move to more independent learning tasks.

Socially, our new students have settled in well and I like the way they sit next to different people all the time. They are all engaged and working hard.

James Milner

7-8 Social Studies Workshop

In 7th and 8th Grade Social Studies Workshop, we have finished our family tree project for this year. Once again, I have been so impressed by the creative ways students decided to display their trees. I feel that the children have been really engaged and interested in this topic and have heard with delight how it has opened up conversations at home about relatives and family stories. By working on their own family history, students now have a firm starting place for our main topic this year of *The United States through Industrialism*. So far we have examined the Native American Tribes, discovering how numerous they are, how culturally rich they are, and how far back their history goes in terms of being tied to the land that we now called the continent of North America. We have now begun to look at the early European explorers, and how the work that they were involved in has not only impacted the history of the U.S.A, but also the history of the Native American people as well.

Caroline Harrison

PK-8 Art Workshop

Leonardo da Vinci once said, "To develop a complete mind, study the science of art. Study the art of science. Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else." What an exciting concept, one that continues to excite and challenge educators,



regardless of discipline.

I am thrilled to introduce art projects that bridge with subjects introduced by lead teachers. The Pre-K study of apples aligned wonderfully with our study of Kandinsky's use of circles. The students got a kick out of using apples as stamps, which also introduced color theory by mixing primary colors creating secondary and tertiary colors.

In Grades 1-3 Art Workshop, in support of studies on animals, I introduced the students to a camouflage project which challenged them to design masks influenced by the color and patterns of a backdrop. Grades 4-8 Art Workshop student artists wrapped up their study of Wassily Kandinsky with a mixed media work reflecting the influence of music through line, shape and color as well as a geometric watercolor. Be sure to check out our school-wide collaborative piece, CTL's *Tribute to Kandinsky* hanging by the bulletin board outside the Enrichment classroom.

For Grades Pre-K through 3, October will be a month of welcoming fall as we use leaves to illustrate the changing of the seasons (also a color theory study of warm and cool colors). Senses will also come alive as they creatively explore the texture and color of spices. Grades 5-8 will explore how artists, past and present, make use of the Elements of Art in their artwork—landscapes and portraits.

School wide we will work on self-portraits for personal 2018-2019 portfolios.

Abby Salazar

5-8 Drama Workshop

Drama has been rehearsals, rehearsals and more rehearsals. We are currently working in three groups rehearsing *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Princess and the Dragon*, and *Aladdin*. The students have been using their imagination and problem-solving skills to help stage and produce their plays. I have been impressed with their enthusiasm and team-working as they work with different people with different ways of thinking.

For a short period in October, they will create their own short plays and stage them for our other students and then work will begin on our first showcase to parents and the whole school in for November 13, 2018 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

We really need some help from parents to stage our first major performance in November so if you are able to help create props, donate costumes, or have some ideas please email me or tell Mrs. Maia and she'll pass on the message.

My September Oscar Award is to be shared by Vivienne and Jaye. Jaye for rewriting a play that her group didn't like, she turned a pumpkin into a chariot. Vivienne has made amazing improvement in projecting her voice! A couple of stars in the making!

James Milner



PK-8 Music Workshop

In Music Workshop, we have used percussion band instruments to represent the book and song *The Cat Goes Fiddle-I-Fee*, watched the classic musical *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, explored the music of composer John Williams, and continued to practice the skills of pulse, beat, and rhythm. Studies in body percussion, improvisation in beat studies, and exploring the four voices are upcoming!

Sommer Trebilco

PK-4 Physical Education Workshop

September has come and gone and the kids had a ball playing soccer. Students learned how to properly kick and dribble a soccer ball. Drills and games gave students the opportunity to understand how to control, pass, stop and kick the ball to their classmates. First through fourth graders were anxious to play soccer and showed off their skills after practicing their techniques prior to game. We have quite a few soccer stars in the group. As we know, soccer involves a lot of running so they also had to warm up prior to drills and games by running laps to build up their endurance as well as properly stretching their muscles before and after class.

Pre-K and Kindergarten classes are learning personal space using hula hoops for them to stand in while doing their daily warm up exercises. Afterwards, they love to show off their hula hoop skills. They also enjoyed running smaller laps and learned how to throw a ball into a small basketball hoop.

When the rain or mud forces us inside, we practice breathing and yoga poses. I was quite impressed with their ability to do basic yoga poses such as Downward Dog, Cobra, Cat, Tree, and Mountain poses to name a few. We are learning and understanding the importance of stretching, exercise, breathing, and relaxing the mind for our bodies.

Overall, I believe the kids enjoyed September's activities and more great PE learning opportunities are on the horizon for October!

Sarina Eckhardt

5-8 Physical Education Workshop

Grades 5-6 have been working hard on their soccer skills. With their continued practice with dribbling, positions, and communication they are already seeing great improvement on the field. They are enjoying our fun drills and games that incorporate these skills. Learning comes easy when you're having fun!

Grades 7-8 have begun their kickball unit. We are quickly learning strategies, positions, adjustments, and the teamwork needed for kickball. We will then focus on team building skills in *Capture the Flag*.

Laura Wellbrock