



This special issue includes our Annual Report of Giving
Media-Providence Friends School
Dragon Tales

Fall 2011

Narratives of the Magic of MPFS

The Interplay Between Learning and Play

Children at play are not playing about. Their games should be seen as their most serious minded activity.

– Michel de Montaigne,
French essayist

Play, whether solitary or in groups, physical, social, invented or constructive, is a powerful tool for learning. It produces feelings that are rewards in and of themselves and which build in intensity with continued play. Beginning with anticipation, play feeds curiosity. Next follows excitement and discovery which trigger joy, the sustainer of play. Extended engagement produces understanding and mastery. These in turn lead to passion and creativity which ultimately impart the poise and contentment that readies children for more play. Talk about the ultimate positive feedback loop!

Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.

– Albert Einstein,
Theoretical Physicist

In the landscape created by the No Child Left Behind Act, however, “what is measured is treasured”. Accordingly, in over 70% of public schools around the country, time for play, recess, creative arts, and physical education has been reduced. Why? The mandate that students’ standardized tests scores improve so that schools achieve “Adequate Yearly Progress” means more time is needed for test-preparation, often in the form of rote learning. Worse, says Yale psychological researcher Dorothy Singer, “Because of [high stakes] testing, teachers are starting *earlier and earlier* to drill the kids in their basic fundamentals.” So ironically, “Blue Ribbon Schools” who shortchange students on play may be compromising activities essential to children’s development.”



Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning.

– Dr. Fred Rogers,
PBS television personality

According to The Strong, an institution devoted to the study of play, play at school is crucial in guiding children’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. It builds the ability to solve problems and negotiate; develops confidence, flexibility and openness; cultivates creativity, resilience and leadership; and helps reduce stress and grow healthy bodies.

But let’s be clear that we’re not talking about a self-directed, whim-following, free-for-all... it’s vitally important that play at school be facilitated. When teachers embed play in curriculum with intention, connecting it to children’s mastery of skills and concepts, not only does learning happen, it goes deeper and lasts longer. That’s because play captivates the mind. Whether it’s vocabulary practice that takes the form of

a “Jeopardy” quiz in 3rd grade, a physics lesson that has teams of 7th graders constructing vehicles from found objects to demonstrate Newton’s third law, Preschoolers pretending to echolocate like bats in a darkened classroom, or Kindergarteners using shaving cream, sand and play dough to practice number formation, when teachers are there posing questions, encouraging students’ ideas and scaffolding their development, learning ensues.

In our play we reveal what kind of people we are.

– Ovid, Roman poet

Play provides opportunities to try on new behaviors and feel what it’s like to be ‘another’. Taking this risk can help children become more of the person they want to be. Oft-cited Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky described this aspect of play as “allowing a child to stand a head taller than himself.” What’s more, children who play become more successful adults. Their play ethic grows into their work ethic: they find joy in their endeavors, seek humor in their workplace, innovate and build on others’ ideas.

At MPFS, we believe that our students will grow up to make the world a better place. To do this, they need the capacity to imagine that better world for themselves... and absolutely nothing breeds imagination better than play.

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Grey, A. “No Child Left Behind in Art Education Policy: A Review of Key Recommendations for Arts Language Revisions.” Arts Education Policy Review, 111-1 (2010): 8–15.

Pederson, P. “What Is Measured Is Treasured: The Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on Nonassessed Subjects.” ERIC Clearing House, 80-6 (2007): 287–291.



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This Newsletter is a publication of MPFS. If you have moved recently or are planning to move, be sure to give us your new address so that you can continue to receive uninterrupted mailings.

Media-Providence Friends School is a PreK-8 Quaker day school which provides a rich educational experience where academic challenge is combined with the teaching of values.

Printed on recycled paper.

Putting Research Into Action

Last winter, we reported on Powerful Learning Practice (PLP), the year-long professional development program that had six MPFS faculty members exploring social media technologies and their implications for teaching and learning. The team shared their culminating research project during June's faculty in-service, articulating a vision for adapting to and implementing Web 2.0 technologies at MPFS.

To assuage any tentativeness on the part of their colleagues, the team first shared a humorous video about their own "rocky encounters" with Web 2.0 technologies during their PLP apprenticeship. Then, setting the context for the work ahead, they shared stories of how their successful encounters had enriched their practice as teachers, and in several cases, their personal lives as well.

With the stage set, the team presented a plan to support their colleagues in enhancing their technology skill banks. In perfect alignment with MPFS' own philosophy of education, the plan sought to develop teachers' learning through playful, interest-driven exploration combined with opportunities for reflection.



To accommodate schedules, the team proposed that 20 minutes of each biweekly faculty meeting and two half-days during in-service days be dedicated to play. Within the play time, each teacher would explore Web 2.0 resources related to their own areas of interest, alone or with others, with support from PLP team members. The team then handed out copies of *A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the Imagination for a World of Constant Change* by Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown (see page 9), the faculty's summer reading, and demonstrated how to use the wiki space they'd created to foster conversations about the book over the summer.

Fast forward to a Wednesday afternoon in October. It's 3:15 and 18 teachers are sitting at workstations in the computer lab. Having logged into the faculty wiki, they're checking out the new "virtual playground" PLP team members set up. It's a catalog of links to Web 2.0 tools the team thought their colleagues would appreciate. Clearly they do. Teachers are trying utilities for their classrooms, reading and contributing to blogs, occasionally being frustrated by how something works (or doesn't!), and checking with neighbors to see what they're finding. Demonstrating the power of play (see cover story!), they're overwhelmingly enjoying their 20 minutes of Web 2.0 Recess.

In investing this time, our faculty is modeling the very enthusiasm for learning they seek to instill in their students. Play on, teachers!

Web 2.0: Refers to the second generation of the Web which includes user interaction features that make websites more dynamic and interconnected, and enable "online communities" where it is easy to share information.

Wiki: A wiki is a Web site that allows users to collaborate to add to and update content on the site using their own Web browser. The term "wiki" comes from the Hawaiian phrase, "wiki wiki," which means "super fast."

Blog: Short for "Web Log," this term refers to a list of journal entries posted on a Web page, typically via a simple publishing interface. Blogs permit people to share their thoughts and experiences with people around the world.

Annual Giving Report



Media Friends School 1st Grade Math circa 1952

*D*ear Friends of MPFS,

Media-Providence Friends School is all about developing academically strong students. Of equal import to us, however, is developing responsible citizens who will use their intellects and hearts to do good in the world.

That's why what happens in our classrooms is different from what happens in other schools. We want students to go beyond the surface, beyond the test, and develop a deeper understanding and ownership of their learning and themselves. We expect them to see themselves as writers, and writing as a way to express their ideas and communicate creatively. We expect our students to think critically and to connect what they see, read, and hear with their own lives. We expect them to apply mathematical understanding to solving real problems and puzzles and to bring their creativity to bear in all facets of their lives. We expect them to be open to others' ideas, support one another, and actively collaborate in ways that make our learning community a kind and vibrant place.

Educating children the way we do is hard work, both for us and for them. But it's the right way to do it so that they learn and can be successful in school and in life. The research supports us. What we do is best teaching practice.



Our approach is corroborated by the reports of our graduates. They let us know that they have been well prepared to face the challenges high school has presented. More importantly, they've told us that they've sought out those challenges themselves. They aren't waiting for education to come to them – they are making of their education what they want it to be. They are active and engaged learners who are motivated to learn and invested in learning.

Each donor on the list that follows has chosen to be our partner in this important endeavor of transforming young people's lives. This generosity gives the students in our care a truly unique educational opportunity that prepares them to make a difference in the world. For this, I am most grateful. On behalf of all of us here, I thank you for your stewardship.

In Peace,

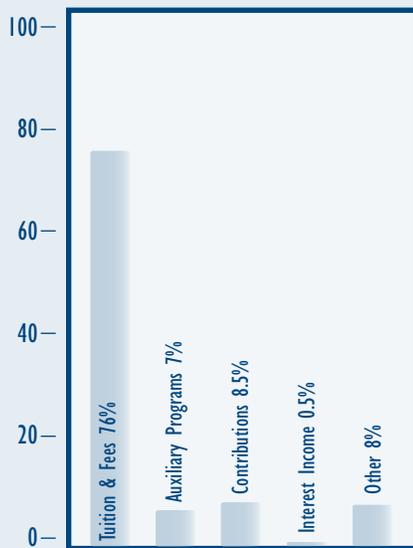
W. Earl Sissell
Head of School

2011 Annual Fund By the Numbers

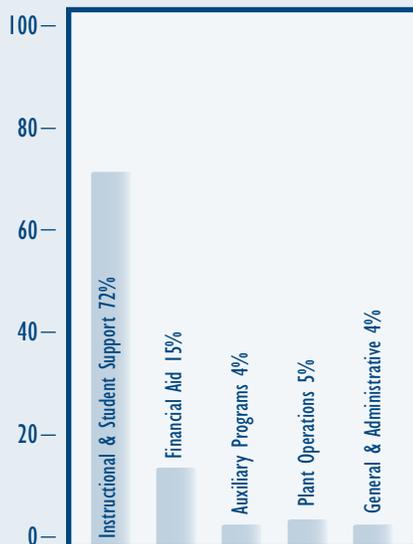
Total Funds Raised: \$74,478

- Number of Donors: 299
- Gift Range: \$1 - \$5,000
- Participation:
 - Trustees: 100%
 - Faculty/Staff: 100%
 - Parents: 49%
 - Alumni: 10%
 - Class of 2011: 100%

Income



Expenses



Board Welcomes New Trustees



Kind and soft-spoken, **Holly Hoffmann** says she’s “Thrilled to share her enthusiasm for and with the MPFS community and to provide support for the school in fulfilling its important mission” as a new Trustee. It’s a mission she knows well, having taught in MPFS’ Lower School, and which she appreciates as a current parent (Casper ‘17, Sylvie ‘20... Lucas, aged 2, will join them next year!). She also brings considerable perspective on the outcomes of an MPFS education, having maintained connections with many alumni, some of whom were featured in the “Alumni Voices” video shorts and “Lives That Speak” admissions video that her filmmaker husband, Rich, created for the school. We are grateful that Holly, someone whose own life speaks – and sometimes even sings (a passion in her spare time) – volumes, will be lending her voice to our Board.



Eight years ago when Michael and **Susan Rhile** enrolled their two eldest children, Michaela ‘11 and Matthew ‘14, they were drawn to MPFS’ size, diverse community and Spanish program. Now, halfway through her stint as a parent here (her youngest, Grace ‘19, will graduate in another 8 years), she’s accepted the Board’s invitation to serve as a Trustee because, having witnessed the over \$2 million capital improvements that have transformed the campus since 2005, she says “The notion that I could participate in and contribute to a vital group that was getting things done was compelling.” With a background that includes carpentry and general contracting – and a degree in Finance and Real Estate – Susan has much to offer the Property and Finance Committees, but, true to her inquisitive nature, she’s interested in all of the Board’s standing committees and plans to sit in on meetings of each to get a sense of how they function. She’s also a locavore and culinary enthusiast, so the Board’s annual potluck dinner has just gotten that much more appetizing with Susan “on board”!



A member of Providence Meeting and the Corporation of Haverford College, **Debra Will** is a career educator who’s been involved in Friends education for 30 years, working for the past 17 at Friends’ Central. She’s actually returning for a second term on the Board after a 10+ year hiatus which saw her children with husband and FC Science teacher Dave Thomas – Amy, Becca and David – grow up and “leave the nest.” We are so glad to have her back. Deb’s prior service, experience as a teacher, and understanding of both the day to day functions of a school and the framework for governance of Friends schools are a great boon to the Board. She’s equally glad to be back, commenting, “MPFS is a truly special place...for me its wonderfully diverse student body and high proportion of Quaker faculty evoke a richly patterned quilt with sturdy, colorful stitching.” (Did we mention Deb enjoys quilting?) Quite a lovely image indeed!

Profiles in Philanthropy

MPFS lost a dear friend when **Mary Ann Restall** passed away earlier this year. A philanthropist who cared deeply for her community, she and her husband Paul, who preceded her in death, were tremendously kind to this little school for nearly five decades.

They came to the school by way of much-loved former Head Murry Engle Lauser, a neighbor with whom they developed a life-long friendship through a Friday night card-playing group, ‘the 5:45 Club’, that came into being in the 50’s and was to continue on in various permutations for the next 60 years. Murry’s boundless commitment to MPFS and its unique mission – seeing and nurturing ‘the light’ within children from all walks of life – made a profound impact on the couple who were in turn to play their own significant role in MPFS’ future...

On July 15, 1963, Garrett Forsythe, Media Meeting Member and Media Friends alum, phoned Paul and Mary Ann, asking would their construction company come to board up the Meetinghouse building because it had been severely damaged by fire? Paul replied, “No! School must open in September!” He gathered all of his workers, pulling them off of other jobs, and began rebuilding. School reopened in September, just one week late!

A graduate of Swarthmore College, Mary Ann told Teacher Earl with typical frankness when they met for lunch last winter that, although not a Quaker herself, she’d been “surrounded by Quakers for years.” Feeling that Quaker schools were a “class act and no one did it [education] better than they,” in addition to MPFS, she generously supported both her alma mater and Williamson Free Trade School over many years.



Ginny Christensen, Mary Ann Restall, Earl Sissell and Cynthia McGoff

In her long relationship with the school, Mary Ann had occasion to meet many Heads of School. Former Head Ginny Christensen has this to say about her: “I adored Mary Ann. She had a marvelous sense of fun, but you could tell she had a rock-solid core, deep clarity about her values, about what mattered in life, and a quiet determination to steadily add her part.” Ginny’s successor, Lynn Oberfield, echoed her sentiments, “That Mary Ann drove a cool sports car into her 80’s was telling about her zest for life. Although well off, she was dismissive of ‘high society folk’, and had an open-mindedness that perhaps enabled her to appreciate the distinct challenges of MPFS’ existence.”

Even in passing, Mary Ann found a way to support MPFS. Through a \$50,000 bequest to the school’s endowment, she will provide for generations of deserving students. In doing so, she has joined the stalwart cadre of stewards who ensure that MPFS continues to shine in a world that very much needs it: the 1876 Society.

The 1876 Society

The 1876 Society (named for the year that Media Friends School was established) was created to honor those who have provided long-term gift planning in order to support future generations of MPFS students.

Alice Pennell Allen*
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**deceased*

If you have not arranged a planned gift, one sentence in your will can help promote MPFS’ mission: *I give to Media-Providence Friends School, 125 West Third Street, Media, PA 19063 \$_____ (or ___% of the rest of my estate) to be used for its general purposes.* If you have already named MPFS beneficiary of a deferred gift but your name is not listed above, we welcome you to the 1876 Society and urge you to contact us so that you can be recognized.

We thank the following donors for their contributions — unrestricted, restricted and gifts-in-kind — received between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011.

While every effort was made to include all donors, please contact us if we have omitted your name so that we can make corrections in the next issue.

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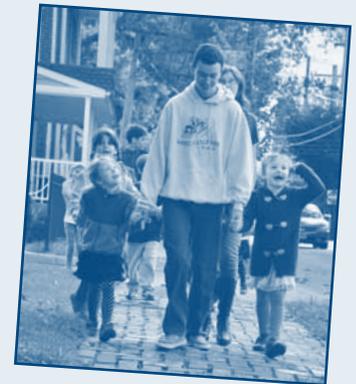
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Michael and Joyce Spellman

Francy and Fred Strathmann

Gopal Subramanian

and Raelyn Harman

Laura and Ken Taylor

In Memory of Rick Fine

Doris Tirado and Marna Barret

Anne and Richard Umbrecht

Yuri Veklich and Irina Lozinskaya

Sandra and Bruce Vermeychuk

Arthur Weisfeld and Virginia Brabender

Paul and Rhoda Weisz

Pat Whitaker

In Memory of H. Craig Whitaker

Dr. Pratap and Rekha Yagnik

Charles and Diane Zack

In Honor of Aaron Zack

MONTHLY MEETINGS AND QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

Chester Monthly Meeting

Kennett Monthly Meeting

Media Monthly Meeting

Moorestown Monthly Meeting

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

Providence Monthly Meeting

Swarthmore Monthly Meeting

The Thomas H. and

Mary W. Shoemaker Fund

Wyatt Wistar Brown Fund

TRUSTEES

Donna Noonan Allen

Michael J.J. Campbell

Nancy Fitts Donaldson

Jessica Eldredge

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Cheryl Harner

Brian R. Harris

Susannah Henderson

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Eugene F. Jarrell

Ann Murray

Kia E. Newman

Ken Park

Kenneth Scott

Harry Shreckengast

Lisa Slager

Parker Snowe

Doris Tirado

Arthur Weisfeld



TEACHER/STAFF

Nancy Allison

Erica L. Baechtold

Daryl Ballough

David Camp

Karen Carbutt

Lisa Dainton

Angela DiMaria

Merril Dutton

Stefanie Ernst

Vickie Fedele

Harry Gambrell

Jennifer Gregory

Olga Greto

James L. Hardy, Jr.

Christine Howells

Shirley Wright Kamara

C. Frederick Keffer

Grace F. King

Christa Krumbhaar

Patricia Lambert

Becky Martin-Scull

Cynthia McGoff

Heather McLoughlin

Jean Menaldino

Phyllis Mincer

Lisa Morales

Deb Oller

Joe Payne

Betty Peditto

Janice Peterson

Emily Richardson

Calperta Scott

Earl Sissell

Michael Spellman

Roger A. Sternfeld

Francy Strathmann

Laura Taylor

Cheryl West

Claire Wilson

* deceased

Alumni News

We are proud to welcome the newest members of the Media-Providence Friends School Alumni Association: the Class of 2011, MPFS' 135th graduating class! Pictured are...

(front l-r) Haley Peterson, Melissa Mejia, Margaux Bigelow, Michaela Rhile, Caroline Lentz, Olivia Jarrell and Arbour Guthrie (back l-r) Alejandro Flores-Brown, Sam Dahlke, Peter Kashatus, Elijah Linvill, Noah Howells, Darell Jackson, Chris Levy, Sam Dainton, Evan Palmieri and Noah Marcolongo.

Graduates chose from acceptances at area independent schools including Agnes Irwin, Archmere Academy, Friends Central, Friends Select, Olney Friends, Shipley School, Westtown School and Wilmington Friends. Others are attending local parochial and public high schools.

We're pleased to report that, as these grads wrapped up their time at MFPS, each 'gave back' to this little school which provided the pivotal experiences that 'informed their formative years.' Every member of the Class of 2011 made a \$1 donation to the 2011 Annual Fund! Thanks '11-ers!



Rebecca Marcus '06, visited Teacher Angela's 5th Grade class last spring after a gap year of travel. She shared experiences from her time in Guatemala volunteering with Carpe Diem Education, taking Spanish classes and participating in 4 different homestays, including one with a family in a remote Mayan village. The students had been reading several books about native peoples from South America, so Rebecca's visit gave them an opportunity to ask questions stemming from that learning.

Rebecca 'stuck around' to intern in the Advancement Office for a bit during the summer, helping Director of Development Cynthia McGoff locate 'lost alumni' and update records. Rebecca's now off being a Freshman at Kenyon College.



Asha Deane '07 spent several weeks on campus this spring in conjunction with her senior project at Springside School shadowing Maestra Lisa, 3rd-8th Grade Spanish Teacher and even teaching several classes. Asha, a Stepping Stones Scholar who was chosen to speak at the organization's Spring Gala (where she had a chance to meet humanitarian and Grammy-winning singer-songwriter John Legend!), is now a freshman at Emory University. She hopes to open a bilingual school.

A very special thank you to MPFS parent and filmmaker Rich Hoffmann for helping us to create the new series of 'Alumni Voices' video shorts for our website AND to the alums who shared their time, memories and perspectives: Alex Mull Dreyer '10, Peter Subramanian '10, Rebecca Marcus '06, Shelbi Hall '06, Austin Shoenkopf '07, Marcus Bonner '07, Julia Shreckengast '07, Paige Frey '05, Corine Gaston '06 And Maija Taylor '03. You can see what they have to say about Teachers, Learning, Community and Growing Up at MPFS by visiting www.mpfs.org/about-mpfs/alumni-voices.

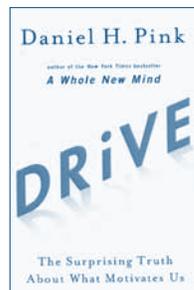
What We're Reading



A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the Imagination for a World of Constant Change

Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown

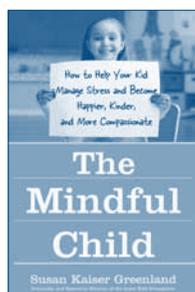
This summer's faculty reading was born out of the Powerful Learning Practice team's exploration of Web 2.0 technologies. Thomas and Brown vividly portray the new culture of learning that takes place everywhere and continuously, and which draws its energy from global information networks, play as a strategy for embracing change, and active engagement in inquiry within online collectives.



Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

Daniel Pink

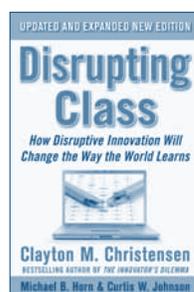
Several years ago, faculty were inspired by Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule The Future*, their summer reading. Now, drawing on four decades of research on human motivation, Pink's newest book, *Drive*, examines the elements of true motivation and finds that the secret to high performance and satisfaction – at work, at school, and at home – is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.



The Mindful Child

Susan Kaiser Greenland

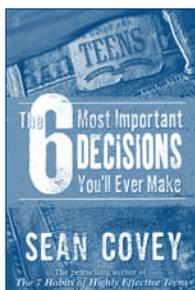
Mindful awareness techniques have helped millions of adults reduce stress in their lives. Weaving contemplative practice with contemporary neuroscience, *The Mindful Child* demonstrates how to teach children – who are under more pressure now than ever before – thoughtfulness, coping skills and a more relaxed self-awareness that will enable them to effectively handle difficult situations throughout life.



Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns

Clayton M. Christensen

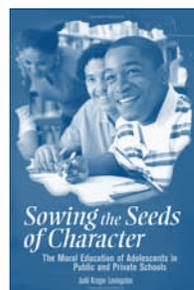
A 21st Century skill building book written by a Harvard Business School professor, *Disrupting Class* explores how the one-size-fits-all/standardized structure of public schools might be changed through technology to better serve kids' different learning styles.



The 6 Most Important Decisions You Will Make

Sean Covey

This year's Middle School Advisory sessions utilize this book to launch discussions about making informed decisions in the areas of getting a good education, choosing true friends, getting along with parents, dating and relationships, avoiding addictions and establishing a healthy sense of self-worth.



Sowing the Seeds of Character; The Moral Education of Adolescents in Public and Private Schools

Judd Levingston

Levingston describes and categorizes the lessons and examples of moral education styles he witnessed from his extensive research and teaching experience in Muslim, Jewish, Roman Catholic, public, Quaker, and Chinese schools.

What We're Publishing

“Another Sputnik Moment? A Roundtable Discussion on the Role of Progressive Education in Pivotal Times”; Independent School, Fall 2011, pages 72-78.

Head of School Earl Sissell and fellow Philadelphia-area educators consider progressive education's role in the 21st century educational landscape.

“Empty Rooms, Magic Oysters and Talking Pencils”, a chapter in Friends Council on Education's 2010 book *Tuning In: Mindfulness in Teaching and Learning*. MPFS Librarian, Quakerism and Study Skills Teacher, Becky Martin-Scull, contributed an essay describing practices she uses in class to help strengthen the skills underlying all learning: concentration, observation, relaxation, and open, receptive awareness with a positive, curious attitude.

Singing the Praises of Singapore Math in Middle School

For half a century, U.S. schools have embraced one math program after another only to abandon each and move on to something purportedly better. The 1960s saw the “new math,” whose focus on abstract theories fell out of favor and spurred a back-to-basics, “rote learning” movement. Then came “reform math,” aka the “new new math,” which focused on problem solving and conceptual understanding.

As an independent school, MPFS has the ability to choose the best parts of different math programs to teach and support students as they move from applying basic operations to increasingly complex problem solving. In 6th, 7th and 8th grade math, Teacher Roger uses an eclectic mix of curricula, including Making Math Real, Visual Math, Connected Math, Holt’s Algebra 1, Math Counts competition materials and others, to give kids a comprehensive, 360 degree view of math, saying, “If you teach math in any one specific way, about a third of the kids will get it, no matter what. Another third will get it just enough to get them through the test but won’t retain it, while the remaining third will probably struggle. The reality is, though, that everybody can learn to think mathematically and do complex problem solving on whatever level. It’s about Math literacy.”

That aim of literacy – students constructing understanding, grasping what’s being asked in a problem, being able to solve it, “sight testing” along the way for “does it make sense?”, just like a good reader would go back and re-read a section that she didn’t understand – is why he teaches a variety of methods. “Whether they’re the students for whom it ‘comes easily’ or the ones who have to work at it, I want help kids to develop their brains to become more organized problem solvers so that when they’re challenged with a complex problem, they know how to think about it and they know they can solve it.”

Apropos of looking at things from different directions, an analogy explains his approach another way: think about being stuck in traffic on a highway due to an accident. If you’re a local, you know several ways to get anywhere and so you can get out of the jam at the next exit and take another route to your destination without much grief. If you’re a tourist from out of town without a map though, you’re stuck. All you know is one route. T. Roger develops “locals” in the land of math, trying to ensure that all kids “get it”, it’s interesting for everyone, nobody’s bored, and nobody’s overwhelmed.

Two summers ago, T. Roger attended a week-long workshop to add another tool to his Middle School math teaching kit: Singapore Math (SM). A curriculum to which the small island nation has largely attributed its top rankings on international math exams for nearly two decades, SM provides a visual way



Media’s Rotary Club members were treated to a lesson in Singapore Math last year from our 8th graders.

of demonstrating what pre-algebraic math is *really* doing. In mainstream vernacular, SM might be described as “old math”, as it employs a visual bar-model device described in Book V of *Euclid’s Elements*, written in the 4th century BC. Today in the U.S., SM is used by home schoolers, a smattering of public schools, as well as elite schools, like Hunter College, a public school for gifted children in Manhattan, Sidwell Friends, and now MPFS.

SM’s power is best illustrated through word problems which appear difficult – those involving fractions, percentages or ratios. In fact, its models can make solutions downright obvious. Take this one for example, which you can’t solve easily without a considerable knowledge of algebra, unless of course, you know SM:

Mathilda went shopping and spent 20 percent of her money on a pair of boots. She spent $\frac{2}{5}$ of the remainder on a book. She had \$72 left. How much money did she have at first?

As you’ll see on the next page, a bar model enables students to get past the words and solve such problems with basic arithmetic and simple diagrams. Indeed, according to Singapore’s Handbook for Mathematics Teachers, this model drawing approach is helpful specifically because it “transforms words into recognizable pictures.”

T. Roger affirms, “There’s this myth of math ability. Many people think ‘I wasn’t good at math (or art or sports) so it’s okay that my kid can’t do math (or art or sports)’. Almost nobody would accept that premise when it comes to reading! When you ask someone to visualize a horse, they describe it, they don’t visualize the letters ‘H.O.R.S.E.’ When we ask kids to visualize ‘32’, it’s not about the digits, it’s the meaning.”

Proof of concept: last year, our 8th grade students, the first cohort to learn Singapore Math, reported using SM in solving problems they hadn't yet encountered in Algebra 1 coursework on SSAT exams required for entrance into many independent high schools.

As is the case throughout MPFS, in 6th, 7th and 8th grades, one of the goals is 'concept-procedure integration'... the

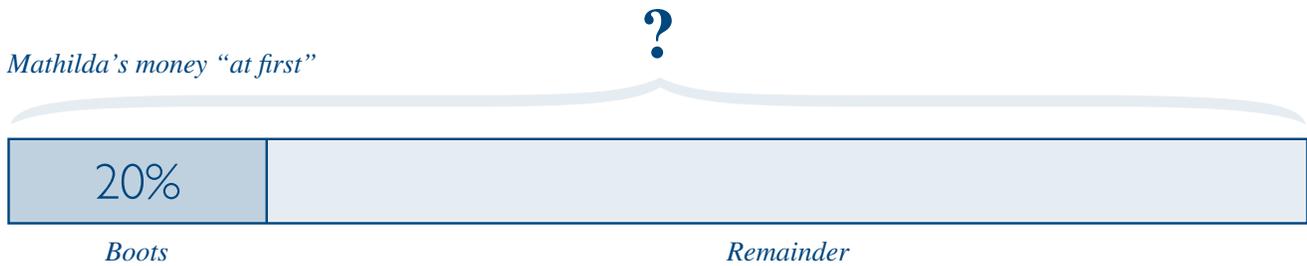
ability to understand the larger concept behind what one is doing at the same time you are performing a procedure in solving a problem. It's this mathematical capacity – being able to perceive the “forest and the trees” at the same moment – that what we seek to develop in our students. As a result, when our kids graduate, they're prepared for whatever track they're in, be it Algebra 1, along with the majority of 9th graders, or Geometry.

. . .

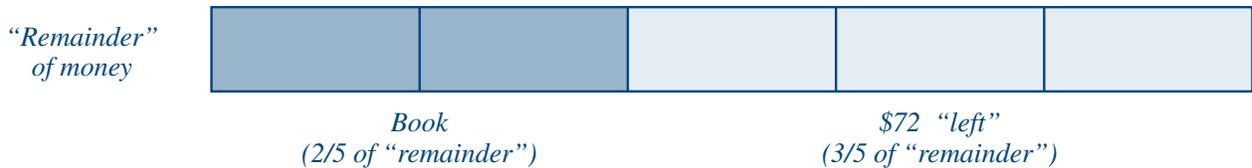
Let's revisit the Mathilda problem using a “bar model,” the most common pictorial model used in Singapore Math textbooks, to better understand the problem.

Mathilda spent 20 percent of her money on a pair of boots. She spent $\frac{2}{5}$ of the remainder on a book. She had \$72 left. How much money did she have at first?

To illustrate and understand the problem, we draw a bar to represent what we know, dividing the bars into useful-size “unit” pieces. The “?” indicates what we are trying to find out.



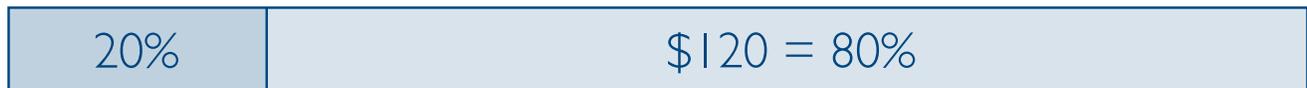
Next, we divide the remainder bar into fifths, or five units, since the book cost $\frac{2}{5}$ of the remainder.



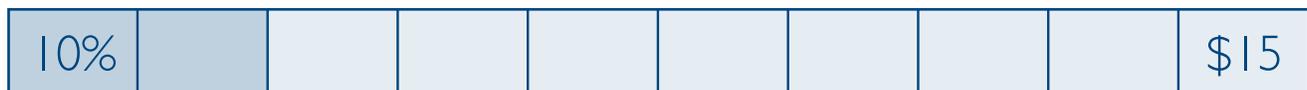
Because we know that 3 units = \$72, we can divide \$72 by 3 to determine the value of each unit.



So, if the entire remainder bar = \$120 ($\24×5), and that's the same as all but 20% of Mathilda's money at first, then $\$120 = 80\%$ of her original money.



We re-divide the entire bar into 10 units. If 80% (8 units) = \$120, then 10% (1 unit) = $\$120/8 = \15 .



Since 10% (1 unit) = \$15, then 100% (10 units) = \$150, which is Mathilda's original money and the answer to the question.



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Meet Teacher Roger, Middle School Math Teacher, 8th Grade Advisor

*If Media Friends alum Roger Sternfeld graduated in 6th grade after matriculating 5 years and returned to teach 3rd Grade in 1998 at age 43, as of 2011, what percentage of his life has been spent at 'the Miracle between 3rd and 4th Streets'??**

That's just the type of puzzle T. Roger, who's always loved math, might ask his middle school math students to solve. For him, math is "playing" with problems and developing within students an interest in, excitement for, and confidence in their abilities.

He didn't start out as a teacher, however. Roger obtained his BS in Social Work/Counseling Management and MS in Educational Psychology from Temple, and worked as a counselor, case manager and program director in clinics, hospitals, and residential facilities for nearly 20 years before deciding that he wanted to get back to working directly with children.

Luckily for us, his alma mater was hiring! About returning to MPFS after three decades he says, "The energy was the same... it remained a place that was about the appreciation of the individual, openness to experience, and learning as a process not an end."

In the considered vein of a counselor, he remarks on the parallels between counseling and teaching, "They both involve helping people get from one place to another... you're building the scaffolding, motivating and getting them through the hard parts." He finds particular joy in working with middle schoolers, saying, "I get to see them every day for 3 years and it's interesting to watch them grow. They're balancing autonomy and being part of a group, they're constantly questioning... every day is different."

Teaching math is just one of Roger's many MPFS hats. He's the 8th Grade Advisor, and has coordinated 5 culminating trips and readied 5 classes for graduation. He initiated the middle school Math Club which provides additional challenge and offers opportunities to participate in math competitions. As Math Coordinator, he works to ensure consistency and best practice in MPFS' mathematics curriculum, and thus regularly takes part in professional development workshops on math topics and, most recently, Powerful Learning Practice.

Roger's a member of Gwynned Meeting where he serves on the Care & Counsel and Nominating Committees and where, together with T. Laura, he founded the Meeting's summer Peace Camp. He also sits on the Board of United Friends School in Quakertown, clerking the Education Committee. In his "free" time, he enjoys a good game of softball!

Roger... a man more than the sum of his parts! *Answer 32%

IMPORTANT DATES: PreK Sing: December 6 • K-1st Winter Concert: December 7
2nd-5th Winter Concert: December 8 • Family Skating Party: January 8