

Title of Session: Math Transformers

Moderator: Patricia Chen

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BjB pictures teachers across America buried behind mountains of papers

PatriciaCh: Thanks

PatriciaCh: by a retired teacher no less

BjB : wellllll...I can still empathize

PatriciaCh: we are in the process of allowing students to make up missing work so they can pass

PatriciaCh: yes you can

BjB : if the only reason the student isn't passing is missing work...do you think that is right to pass them?

PatriciaCh: I am not sure how these constant third and four chances really help the child to learn how to be responsible ...:(

BjB nods...just what I was thinking!

PatriciaCh: no ... to your question ...but we are pressure by Admin if they don't do the work ... they do not know the material

PatriciaCh: we will not have summer school ..due to the budget ..some of these kids counted on easy summer school ...

BjB : poor babies....so if they don't pass the get held back?

PatriciaCh: yes ... and we don't have the room ..especially the current 8th graders

PatriciaCh: it is a mess

BjB : a whole ripple effect

PatriciaCh: like dominoes

BjB : do parents get involved?

BjB . o O (like if they got involved, the problem wouldn't exist in the first place!)

PatriciaCh: to call and complain

PatriciaCh: some are good ... and supportive ..but the majority are not

PatriciaCh: these are the types we see in the news ..complaining that we do not educate the child

BjB : you almost have to feel sorry for the kids

BjB . o O (where were the parents when the child first started to get poor grades for not doing work?)

PatriciaCh: I do ... in the most part ... the kids have learned well ... do nothing and they will pass ...if mom calls and complain enough or to the right people

BjB sighs sadly

PatriciaCh: it was in elementary school ...parents do the work... or find the excuses ...

BjB : we had Grandparents day at my grandson's school last week...it was precious

PatriciaCh: it is a sad state I tried to get the kids to do the homework in class ... and finish a few problems at home ...if necessary ...

BjB : first grade

PatriciaCh: wow

PatriciaCh: so you were the show and tell

BjB chuckles...there were quite a few grandparents there.

BjB : the funny part was that our daughter was the sub for our grandson's teacher who had to go on a field trip with her daughter

BjB : so it was a real family affair ;-)

PatriciaCh: he must have been thrilled

BjB : but the point I was trying to make is that the school really makes an effort to involve families...

BjB : I know it's hard when parents work, but it's important for the kids

BjB : at the elementary level the students did student led portfolio discussions on parent/teacher night

BjB : it was so cute...you can tell Han is the product of two teachers....

PatriciaCh: in this school ...parent involvement is limited ...

BjB : the kids were practicing showing their portfolios...one kid was the parent and one the student

PatriciaCh: in my old school ..it was a different story ...too much

BjB : Han was the parent and he apparently put his hand on the other kids shoulder and told him, "Good job!"

PatriciaCh: that is cool

PatriciaCh: product of educators

BjB . o O (his teacher had to go tell his mom...she was ready to split a gut!)

BjB : yes, he is the product of educators. Sometimes he can be a real pain!

PatriciaCh: enjoy him

BjB : during the math station during grandparents day he was making up his own math problems...the kids were rolling die to get two numbers to add or subtract...

BjB : he wrote down $12 + 12$ and the correct answer.

PatriciaCh: well ... he is off to a good start

BjB : then he started doing a string of numbers adding and subtracting....unbelievable!

BjB : he does math in his head...just has an incredible number sense

PatriciaCh: he has good basic skills

BjB : yes, I hope he keeps them.

PatriciaCh: some of my students cannot do that ...

BjB : I can't do that! I have to picture the numbers

PatriciaCh: if you encourage him ..he will

PatriciaCh: some kids are mathematically gifted that well ...

BjB: I've recently started doing Kenken...are you familiar with that?

PatriciaCh: it is a gift ...but it has to be nurtured

PatriciaCh: no

BjB: . o O (Han takes after his daddy)

BjB: it's like sudoku but with simple math

PatriciaCh: ok ...

BjB: you fill in the rows 1-6 horizontally and vertically

PatriciaCh: I guess I can do that then ... I read too much into things

BjB: I can do the easy ones ;-) Figure it will keep me from getting Alzheimer's

BjB: <http://www.kenken.com/playnow.html>

BjB: oh, yikes, they have bigger grids. I think I'll stick to the 6x6

PatriciaCh: I am looking at the 4 x 4

BjB: smiles...maybe I should too!

BjB: I've never done one online. I like the sudoku online.

PatriciaCh: if the grid is yellow ... is it wrong

BjB: no

BjB: just means that is the cage you are working on

PatriciaCh: well I am trying to understand what I should do

BjB: if your grid is 4x4...

BjB: then you have to have 1, 2, 3, 4 in each row across and down without repeating a number in that row.

BjB: the heavy outlines are called cages...that's where you do the multiple number addition/subtraction/division

PatriciaCh: the first one says 12 x

BjB : the cages with a single digit contain that digit

BjB : how many spaces in the cage?

PatriciaCh: I have to work this out

BjB . o O (could be 3 and 4)

BjB . o O (3x4=12)

PatriciaCh: so I can put the factors in

BjB : right

BarbSh joined the room.

BjB : Hi, Barb!

PatriciaCh: hello

BjB : Glad you could join us. Are you here for the Rubrics discussion?

BarbSh: Hi

BarbSh: I'm here to listen mostly

BjB . o O (rubrics are pretty cross curricular, although Pat teaches Math)

PatriciaCh: what do you teach

BjB . o O (Pat is the leader of this discussion)

PatriciaCh: tonight is a quiet one

BarbSh: I do not teach math but

PatriciaCh: rubrics is across the curriculum

PatriciaCh: rubrics makes it easier to grade ... and when you involve the students ..they take ownership

BarbSh: It actually helps in justifying grades with parents

PatriciaCh: yes ... it does ...projects are hard to grade ...it is subjective ... but rubrics bridge that gap

BarbSh: I use them in my 5th grade writing essays

PatriciaCh: do you use a program?

BarbSh: I try to keep the rubric simple so parents and students can understand how they got the grade they received

BarbSh: no I don't I use 6+Traits for Writing Rubrics (simplified)

PatriciaCh: have you tried to involve the students in developing the rubric

PatriciaCh: Rubistar is a simple program that is recommended by many teachers

BarbSh: Yes, but it's hard to hold their attention to get through a lesson on rubrics

BarbSh: I've heard of them

BarbSh: not used before

PatriciaCh: I teach 7th grade ... I tried to involve them ..in the middle of the school year

BarbSh: how'd that go?

PatriciaCh: the first time ...keep it simple the basics ...

PatriciaCh: with the more motivated students ...it is easier ...but with the unmotivated ones you do want to do it yourself

PatriciaCh: the hard part is ... explaining why simplicity is good

BarbSh: I go over examples of each, they don't seem to care. I even make of a game of it to see if they can match a bit of writing to the right score using a rubric. It does not improve their writing. Their writing becomes commendable only on state mandated tests.

PatriciaCh: That does make it tough ... they sound like some of my students ..I have 2 classes like that ...

BarbSh: These tests turn the students into performers on command, but unmotivated in the classroom. I need ideas to help me motivate them.

PatriciaCh: how are they in the other content areas

PatriciaCh: do they like science ... geography? or they are taught by other teachers

BarbSh: Pretty much the same. In math one student has a 43% average for the year, but missed zero questions on the TAKS test

BarbSh: They have 2 teachers - rdg/la/ss and math/sci

PatriciaCh: do you have parental support

BarbSh: not with that student and he is a GT student

PatriciaCh: gifted?

BarbSh: yes

BarbSh: If it's not what he wants to do he just doesn't do it and he influences many students

PatriciaCh: that is tough in Florida ..gifted is under the Exceptional student services because a child like that can fail

BarbSh: he will do Summer School due to this grade

PatriciaCh: does he understand that?

BarbSh: yes I discussed his progress report yesterday with him and why he can get 100% in every class, but fail a math class

PatriciaCh: some of my gifted students have had a rude awakening this year ... they are in my algebra 1 class ... they thought it was going to be an easy A ...

BarbSh: and

PatriciaCh: they are mad at me and I have spoken to them ... showed them the careless mistakes ... and not to do homework by committee

PatriciaCh: we have finals next week ... I gave them the study guide ...for once ..they did not moan and groan ... it may be the road to the A

BarbSh: He didn't know what to do I suggested he make an appt with her and work something out

BarbSh: to make up for the quality of work or lack of work turned in this year

PatriciaCh: that is a good advice I know that some gifted kids think that they cannot get anything less than an A

PatriciaCh: and it is a rude awakening I have a few ... and they are disruptive in their own way ... we were in a parent conference ... a mom told the art teacher that her son doesn't like art so he will not behave in his class

BarbSh: he was instrumental in a pencil war in her class - everyone sharpened their pencil to 2" when she was writing, they all threw their pencils at each other - I thought she would have a nervous breakdown - but she may have given up on those kids - doesn't care if they pass or not.

PatriciaCh: is he like that with you?

BarbSh: Some parents want to make excuses for these kids to justify their behavior

BarbSh: no he is not I have a very structured classroom and she is much younger, but she has taught for ten years

PatriciaCh: that is quite true ... I have a few students like him ...we have buddy teachers to send kids to .

BarbSh: me too Love and Logic

PatriciaCh: well ..if she has ten years experience ...she should have learned how to divide and conquer

BarbSh: some days I have up to 6 of his students on my floor working (not enough seats)

PatriciaCh: if it works ... and the kids cannot complain either

BarbSh: she is a screamer has not mastered control yet remember she is a math teacher like everything in order

PatriciaCh: screaming doesn't work ...

PatriciaCh: low voices work wonders

PatriciaCh: and silence is golden

BarbSh: I hate it - you can get better results with a quiet voice makes them listen closer

BarbSh: and they police each other for you

PatriciaCh: if the student keeps yelling ... I don't say anything until he or she stops

PatriciaCh: yes they do

BarbSh: most students hate the trouble makers and work against them (subtle)

PatriciaCh: I am not sure if you can motivate this student in math ... he knows how to push her "buttons" ..just to annoy her

BarbSh: right now he has 11 days to fix things with her - don't know how it will turn out

PatriciaCh: my trouble makers hate it when I am polite and civil

PatriciaCh: well he better eat some crow

BarbSh: we have a recess we can take - he has not had one in 12 weeks

BarbSh: make up work and behavior has kept him inside

PatriciaCh: that is pretty bad ... all kids love recess and will behave

BarbSh: doesn't touch him

PatriciaCh: he is a sad child

PatriciaCh: how long is your summer school

BjB : sometimes you take away so much that the child doesn't care any more...he'll just drop out of school as soon as he can

BarbSh: I know and I wish everyone could see he needs more than we give

BarbSh: summer school is June 9-July 11 or next TAKS test

BjB : did you mention if the child was from an intact home?

PatriciaCh: that is the hard part for all the troublemakers I have they are not really bad kids ...but no real parental guidance ..

BjB . o O (sorry...been lurking)

BarbSh: 4 days a week half days

PatriciaCh: we don't have summer school this year ...otherwise .. it is 14 days ... so some of our kids ...think that it is no big deal

PatriciaCh: it is negative learned behavior

BjB : summer school may be an escape for that child...from a home situation perhaps?

BarbSh: he has a step-dad who has made it known to child he hates him

PatriciaCh: well summer school is an escape ...

PatriciaCh: what does mom say to all of this

BarbSh: he will miss his CA trip to real dad's - step-dad wants this to happen

PatriciaCh: no ... this should not happen

BarbSh: Mom wants real consequences

PatriciaCh: you would think that step dad wants him to go to CA

BarbSh: to teach him he will not control

PatriciaCh: the school is in the middle of this unfortunate situation ...but the loser will be the child ...

BarbSh: I wish I could help him I may offer to help him catch up after school

PatriciaCh: I wish I can help him too

PatriciaCh: an act of kindness is what he needs

BarbSh: He and I do get along well and he does not have this behavior in my class - but my heart breaks for him

BarbSh: We met once with mom at the beginning of school and she won't come again told the principal to spank him every time he messes up and he knows it

PatriciaCh: well ... maybe if he talks to the math teacher in your presence ...he may be nicer and she would allow him to make up work

BjB: Pat, I know you have a lot of work to do...and I hate to interrupt the discussion...if you want to continue, please do

PatriciaCh: I do have a little extra time ... if we can help this child ... it will be a good thing

BarbSh: It's been great and I have lots of ideas to help thank you so much

BarbSh: you have been very kind and I will do what I can - there are many children out there with the same issues or worse. Thanks again and good night

PatriciaCh: best of luck ...

PatriciaCh: please let me now how it turns out ...

PatriciaCh: good night everyone

BjB : Thanks, Pat. That's the kind of stuff that burns teachers out if they aren't able to talk about it

PatriciaCh: venting is good

BjB agrees.

PatriciaCh: by talking we can arrive at solutions to help these kids

PatriciaCh: it is matter of control between parents and child ... how a teacher is affected is a by product of the conflict

PatriciaCh: unfortunately the parties involved do not see it

PatriciaCh: I will talk to you in July

BjB nods sadly

BjB : sounds good. Have a nice restful vacation!

PatriciaCh: I am looking forward to my trip

PatriciaCh: thanks ..

BjB : sounds like you need it!

PatriciaCh: good night ...

BjB hugs. Take care.