

ISS Curriculum Leaders

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*Communication leads
to community, that is,
to understanding,
intimacy and mutual
valuing.*

Rollo May

Welcome to Our Curriculum Think Tank!

I think of you all often and seek to strengthen our connections with one another. This newsletter is offered to help us collaborate and communicate with one another. This is an invitation – If you have a quote, resource, curriculum idea, or essay/article to share with us, please do! I hope to be able to send you a



newsletter each month to support your work and to give all of us curriculum partners to lighten and uplift our collective efforts. Thank you for always growing my thinking and for being such kind, generous, and wise friends!

CURRICULUM MAPPING INSPIRATION AND SUPPORT

With a lovely nod to the mixed tapes or CD's of our youth and with the inspiration of music, here is a fun take on curriculum mapping from Rubicon Atlas. As the author advocates in the following piece, I use Atlas curriculum maps to develop professional learning plans myself and find it a great way to think efforts through. Hope you find Dr. Boyes' ideas helpful!

Curriculum Mapping Song Inspirations for Admins

Sandra Boyes, Crescent School

Whenever you do something new – from singing a song to leading a curriculum process – you want to get insights from others who have already done it. For many years **Sandra Boyes**, the Head of the Lower School at **Crescent School** in

Toronto, Ontario, has been **leading the curriculum mapping process using Atlas with incredible success and buy in from her team** (let's just say she's an honorary Rubicon Atlas Consultant team member!). This summer she spoke at our **Rubicon Institute** on her successes, and we wanted her to share them directly with you!

1. "DON'T WORRY...BE HAPPY"

Have you ever noticed the energy level of your staff at the start of a staff meeting? Everyone comes into the meeting room with paperwork and coffee; while they are compliant to be there, there is a "to do" list running through their minds, even as you call the meeting to order.

When I introduced mapping years ago, it was at its own, dedicated meeting. We held the meeting in a different space (the library), and I provided snacks (cheese and crackers, fruit, and bowls of candies). **Changing the setting helps to change the tone and the energy in the room.**

2. "WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"

Sometimes, as administrators, we feel we need to have all the answers. At the back of our minds, if we are bringing in something new, the optics of not having everything perfectly "mapped" out could present as a lack of planning.

Consider breaking your staff or core team into small groups, with timetables and schedules in hand. Task them with looking at their own lives and seeing where mapping, meeting, and planning time could occur. This shows that you value their time, and removes a level of "top down" management for this important work.

Sample solutions: have grade teachers share map data entry, dedicate staff meetings to mapping, hire coverage teachers to free teacher time, dedicate one teacher planning period to mapping, have an early dismissal day...

3. "YOU'LL NEVER MAP ALONE"

If you have dedicated mapping time, it is incredibly powerful to do your mapping at the same time and in the same place as other teachers. When you're in the same room you can coach each other, and the number of "oh by the way..." conversations will make it all worth while. Talk about a value-added proposition! Map your personal goals against the school's strategic plan, organize your development time month by month, teacher classroom visits, etc.

4. "IT AIN'T OVER TILL ITS OVER"

We all have deadlines. As an administrator, you "live" in many different places in your school's culture. How do you keep track of it all?

Map it by month, or by theme! Have all of your speeches and full school addresses organized in Atlas: Curriculum Night, First Day of School, Yearbook Messages, Prize Day speech, newsletter blogs, etc.

5. "CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES, COME ON!"

Never underestimate the importance feeling valued.

If a teacher does not feel valued, or does not have a clear understanding of how the work she is doing adds value to the school (or to his or her work in the school), quality work and positive relationships will not flourish. How do you

show you care?

- ◆ Celebrate often with Friday muffin mornings or afternoon snacks. Give out raffle tickets for a draw for meeting mapping, “early bird” deadlines (prize – you dismiss their class at the end of the day, or teach a class for them!)
- ◆ Personal Thank You notes left in a mailbox add a personal touch.
- ◆ Read teacher’s maps. Leave them a word of encouragement. Celebrate their work. Can you imagine a teacher never marking a student’s assignments?

A Review of Tips to Make Your Staff Meetings Successful

- 1 Move your **dedicated curriculum meeting** to its own dedicated location
- 2 **Provide snacks** (it’s not bribery, it’s positive reinforcement)
- 3 **Break it down...** small groups, realistic time frames, dedicated mapping times
- 4 Map in the same room as other teachers... **conversations and company**
- 5 **Map your own personal goals** alongside school objectives/standards
- 6 Don’t just map curriculum, **map your school’s PD/parent events** to better help you prepare for the year.

*Here is a sage video from Sandra Boyes sharing her curriculum mapping practices: <https://www.rubicon.com/5-songs-inspirations-for-administrators-on-curriculum-mapping/>

*Pull up a chair.
Take a taste.
Come join us.
Life is so
endlessly
delicious.
Ruth Reichl*

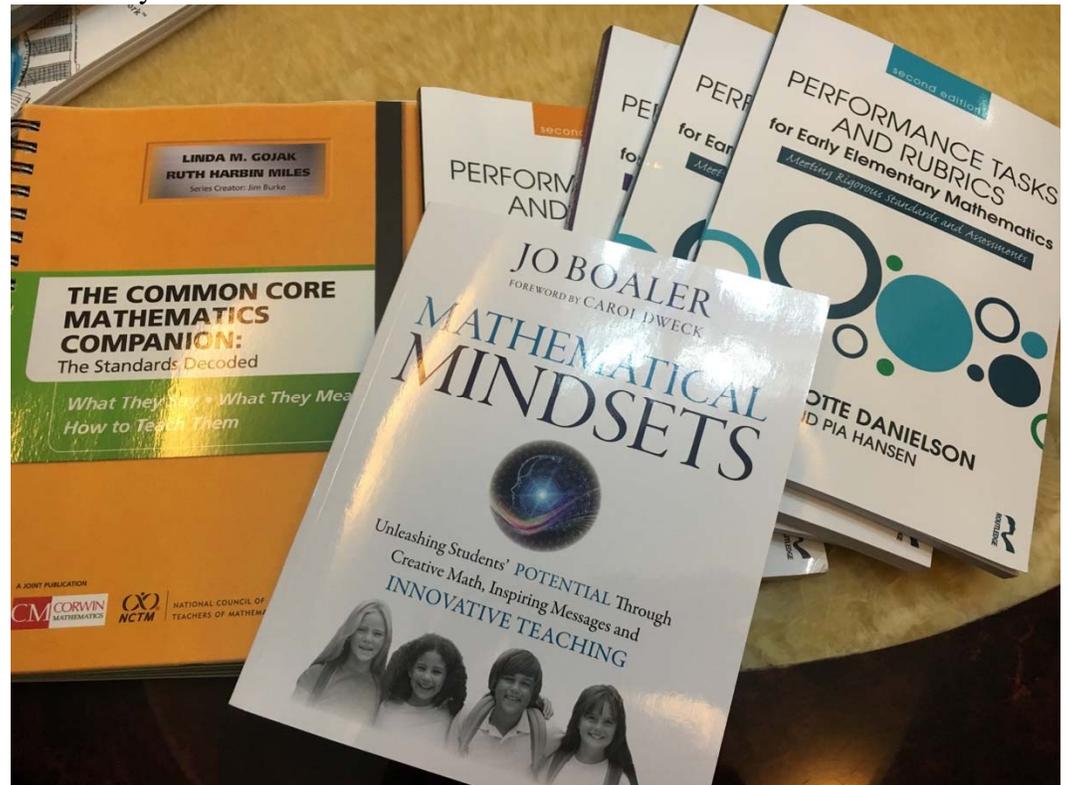
What are you reading?

Here are a few professional titles which I am currently reading:

The Culture Map by Erin Meyer (Recommended by Liz Duffy)

Grading Smarter, Not Harder: Assessment Strategies That Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn by Myron Dueck

Math study focus texts:



[Please share your “best books” with all of us!](#)

Curriculum Resources and Links

Brain Blast: Summarizing strategies

<http://www.todd-finley.com/2016/07/20/brain-blast-3-great-summarizing-strategies/>

Carol's Corner: Excellent source for books, wise mentor for teaching and learning wisdom.

<http://carolwscorner.blogspot.com.au>

Edutopia: *Planning the Best Curriculum Unit Ever*

<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/planning-best-curriculum-unit-ever-todd-finley>

*Attached is a Unit Planning tool from this article/web page.

ISS Open Book: An online think tank and well of resources for international educators <http://lauraopenbook.strikingly.com>

Listenwise: Podcasts and public radio across the curriculum. Lessons that support *all* learners.

<https://listenwise.com>

Reading and Writing Go Hand-in-Hand: Teacher-authored site for literacy and tech resources. <https://sites.google.com/site/highfill2013/home>

Rubicon Atlas: Design Thinking Meets Curriculum Development

<https://www.rubicon.com/design-thinking-curriculum-development/>

International Schools Services

Laura Benson, Curriculum and Professional Development Director
Shenzhen, The People's Republic of China and Princeton, New Jersey USA

To: ISS Curriculum Leaders...around the Globe!

I know there is strength in the differences between us.

I know there is comfort, where we overlap.

Ani DiFranco