
Room Nineteen Wartik Tribune

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First Week

Even though this wasn't the first week of the school year, it felt like the first week of *school*. We have pretty much finished up the start-of-year community building activities (and diagnostic work) and have jumped into parts of the curriculum.

In math, three different pieces were all unveiled this week. First was the independent morning work component, in which each student is working at his/her own pace on something. It might be review, extra practice or challenge work, depending on their needs. This is a very fluid system and I constantly assess and adjust what they're doing. For our in-class lessons, we're beginning slowly with a review of the multiplication fact families. We got through the 0's, 1's and 10's this week, and will continue next week. We also played a few games – including a card game resembling “War” that helps kids practice their multiplication facts.

Finally, we started doing Mad Minute Math (MMM), which is also an individualized program for kids to practice their fact automaticity in one-minute increments. I believe in the important of fact automaticity, as it helps them out in general, as well as when we delve into more complex concepts in multiplication and division this year.

In reading, we began our first class book, *Because of Winn-Dixie*. I read the first chapter aloud on Tuesday, and then the class has continued the reading independently. We read two chapters at a time and then come back together as a group to discuss what we've read. Wednesday's discussion was wonderful, as the students picked up on all sorts of important details. In addition to approaching the novel as a reader, I'm also training the class to approach their reading as a *writer*. Great writers are also great readers. I pointed out some things (word usage, characterization, sentence structure) that added to the depth of the writing. Hopefully, they'll begin noticing those things on their own!

What Else?

Our social studies unit on the Maya has begun. We started the *Voyage of the Mimi* video series on Tuesday. This series has two parts to every episode: a narrative, fictionalized story featuring a Maya-based storyline; and a (usually) science-based second half that explores a topic that came up in the first half. As well, I'm sharing a book with the class about the Maya civilization to help give them added information about this culture that we're just starting to explore.

We began the writer's workshop process this week, and it's off to a decent start. We try to begin each session with a mini-lesson. Sometimes it's on grammar, sometimes it's on process, and sometimes it's about thinking as a writer. Then we write for about thirty or thirty-five minutes. We end the session with about ten to fifteen minutes of sharing.

The assignment notebook is a very important piece of daily communication between you and your child. When you sign it, you are NOT verifying the work has been done. That is your child's job. When you sign, you ARE attesting that you and your child have had a conversation about what the night's work is.

Go-to-School-Night is still nearly two weeks away, so I'll go into more depth then. But if you have questions before then, feel free to shoot me an email.

Things are going well overall, and it's been great to have Ms. Connell in the room frequently. She's a big help and is becoming more comfortable working with the students.

Looking Ahead

- FALL STUDENT INFORMATION – See reverse side and attached sheet.
- Have a great weekend!

My child, _____, and I have read this week's newsletter.

Signature

Date