

PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

A Message from Dr. Terri H. Mazingo, Chief Academic Officer

Welcome to the twenty-first edition of the *Pursuit of Excellence Newsletter* for 2018. This version will update you on the latest developments in a variety of key areas including: (1) trends, focus areas, and high-priority projects involving the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; (2) reviving re-teaching; (3) calling all artists to the upcoming Earth Day contest; (4) information on quarter one benchmark analysis reports; and (5) coping with holiday stress.

Thank you for your continued support! Have a wonderful weekend!

Art and Science of Teaching: Reviving Re-Teaching

Educators have used the term **re-teaching** informally for decades. **Madeline Hunter is credited** with introducing the term in the 1980s within her framework for mastery teaching. Although the term lives on in many district curriculum guides, professional literature rarely addresses it.

It's time to revive awareness of this powerful instructional tool. Many of the positive effects reported in the research literature on **formative assessment** are connected to re-teaching.

At a basic level, **re-teaching means "teaching again" content that students failed to learn.** Some form of assessment always accompanies re-teaching; such **assessments reveal student misconceptions or errors in understanding**, which clarify which content the teacher must reteach. In working with teachers across the United States, we have found that **effective teachers intuitively employ the basic principles of re-teaching** even though they might not use the term to describe what they're doing.

For re-teaching to be effective, however, **teachers must use a different approach from the one they initially used**, one that **builds on previous activities** but that **focuses on the omissions or errors in student thinking** that resulted from these activities.

Re-teaching typically occurs in two situations:

#1: Introducing New Content

When introducing new content, the teacher should **continually monitor students' levels of understanding** to determine whether immediate re-teaching is necessary. Teachers can also use **student response or voting technologies** (commonly referred to as *clickers*) to determine students' perceived understanding. Students rate how well they understand specific content; these ratings are transmitted electronically to a PowerPoint slide or an interactive whiteboard. Teachers should **design questions that address key aspects of the new content**; an incorrect response would indicate severe misunderstanding.

#2: Reviewing Previously Taught Content

In this second circumstance, the teacher has already taught the content; he or she now assumes that students understand it. Again, verifying this assumption requires assessing students. This commonly takes place when the teacher reviews information or skills that students need before they can learn upcoming content. The teacher might use a **brief quiz or simply ask a series of questions.** If these disclose errors or misconceptions, re-teaching is warranted.

In this situation, re-teaching is not as straightforward as in the first case, simply because the teacher may not have been **planning to address previously taught content.** He or she could either ignore any plans to address new content and **focus instead on student misunderstandings or group students temporarily on the basis of their needs.** Teachers can also create **small tutorial groups** in which students who have demonstrated understanding help those who require re-teaching. Another option is to develop what elementary teachers refer to as **centers.** Centers are **self-paced instructional packets or learning stations** featuring **planned activities set up around the classroom** that students can work their way through to better understand specific content.

In conclusion, teachers will find re-teaching an effective tool to use in their classrooms.

**Educational Leadership (October 2010 Volume 68 Number 2) Interventions That Work by Robert J. Marzano*

ACPS 2020
Strategic
Plan Goals

1. **Academic Excellence and Educational Equity:** Every child will be academically successful and prepared for college, work and life.
2. **Family and Community Engagement:** ACPS will partner with families and the community in the education of Alexandria's youth.
3. **An Exemplary Staff:** ACPS will recruit, develop, support, and retain a staff that is best for Alexandria's students.
4. **Facilities and the Learning Environment:** ACPS will provide optimal and equitable learning environments.
5. **Health and Wellness:** ACPS will provide access and support that enables students to be healthy and ready to learn.
6. **Effective and Efficient Operations:** ACPS will be efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations.

Calling All Artists to the Annual Earth Day Contest

Young artists are encouraged to submit original works of art in the City of Alexandria's *annual Earth Day artwork contest*. The selected work of art will be used to help publicize the City's Earth Day celebration **on Saturday, April 27, 2019 (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) at the Lenny Harris Memorial Fields** at Braddock Park, adjacent to George Washington Middle School.

All ACPS students are invited to submit original, two-dimensional, wordless artwork based on their interpretation of the theme "***Climate Change – Take Action.***" The selected artwork will be printed on all Earth Day t-shirts, posters, fliers, and will be featured on the City of Alexandria Earth Day website. The artist will be recognized in the Earth Day program and invited to the Earth Day Proclamation reading at a City Council Meeting. A collection of submitted artwork will be on display at the Earth Day celebration and in Alexandria's City Hall the week prior to the celebration.

The Earth Day Planning Committee will select the winning artwork based on creativity, content, composition, and relationship to the theme. **Deadline to submit all artwork is 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19, 2018, and should be submitted to your school's art teacher.**

See [flyer](#) for more details about the artwork deadlines and on how to submit your artwork. For more information, please contact [Jennifer Lay](#) at 703-619-8121.

Data to Action: Quarter One Benchmark Reports

[Quarter one benchmark analysis reports](#) are available on the *Curriculum and Instruction Canvas* page under the Benchmark tab. Reports from each test include an item-analysis approach to identify by grade level three to five areas for re-teaching. Each report identifies specific grade-level test items and associated standard(s) where students under-performed. Resources and strategies for revisiting the identified standards are included, along with specific strategies and ideas for specialized instruction and teaching English Learners.

The Benchmark page in Canvas also provides guidance on accessing data in SchoolNet, as well as analysis protocols for collaborative review of data among teams of teachers. These tools, along with the benchmark reports, can be used as part of ongoing professional learning, Vertical Teams, and Professional Learning Community discussions.

For more information, please contact our Team Coordinators. Please see table below for their contact information.

Humanities Team	Tanja Mayer-Harding	703-619-8020
Literacy Team	Cynthia McDougal	703-619-8037
STEM Team	Julia Neufer	703-619-8020

Coping with Holiday Stress

The holiday season can be stressful with all the parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, and entertaining. You can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays with the practical tips listed below.

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently passed or you cannot be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out a friend and attend a social event. Activities such as this can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is an excellent way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships during the holiday season.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.

Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress too.

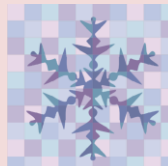
Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. As an alternative buy homemade gifts or start a family gift exchange.

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.

Practice healthy habits. Don't overindulge during the holidays that will only add to your stress and guilt. Remember to get plenty of sleep and incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Remember, don't let the holidays become something you dread. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.



**Submitted by Arnecia Moody, Lead Social Worker and Adapted from the Mayo Clinic Healthy Lifestyle Stress Management*

Your Feedback is Valued!

Do you have any topics of interest that you want featured in the *Pursuit of Excellence*? If so, please email [Sahar Wiltshire](#).

*Please note: all *Pursuit of Excellence* newsletters are posted on [Canvas](#). Log in with your ACPS Google ID to access these newsletters.