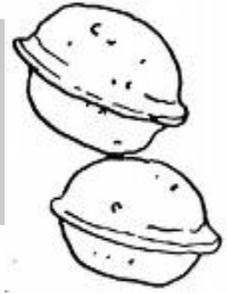




# Math In a Nutshell

Quick Tips For the Hurried Teacher



April, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 5

## RPDP Elementary Math Team:

## Make Writing a Part of your Math Instruction

### Kathy Dees

*“Communication in mathematics has become important as we move into an era of a “thinking” curriculum. Students are urged to discuss ideas with each other, to ask questions, to diagram and graph problem situations for clarity. Writing in mathematics classes, once rare, will now be vital.”*

East Region

855-7770 x. 5333

Stenmark

### Dorothea Hepworth

Lincoln County

775-728-4658

### Nicole (White) Melton

Southwest Region

799-3835 x. 260

### Brenda Pearson

Northwest Region

799-4558 x. 5345

### Jackie Peterson

Nye County

775-727-7767

### Kristin Petrony

Northeast Region

799-1719 x.5340

### Kristian Ryerson

Southeast Region

799-1380 x.4034

The introduction of notebooks in math class begins by establishing a purpose for keeping a notebook and showing the students how writing can support learning mathematics. Writing helps the student think more deeply about what they are learning and provides a way for students and teachers to see if they have an understanding or misconception about the mathematics. Student writing can also provide a useful tool to reference, in chronological order, the concepts the students have learned about in class. Promoting communication between the teacher and student is an additional benefit of the math notebook.

### Ways to Successfully Implement Math Notebooks in the Classroom:

- Write a prompt to get students started.
- Chart with students and post useful vocabulary for the class to reference for their writing.
- Students write about one strategy they used or something they found confusing.
- Discussing their strategies before writing helps students to formulate ideas.
- Share their writing in pairs or small groups to hear other points of view and see different ways students record words, numbers, and pictures.

### Types of writing in Math Class:

Student writing will be in different forms depending on the purpose. It can be a general review of the events of the day or an explanation of a particular topic. Students may also express their feelings about mathematics or ask the teacher a question through their writing. Writing could be a way to explain their problem solving process and discuss the strategies used. Occasionally, writing in math may be private, for the creator only, and used as a way to help the student solve a problem or clarify their own thinking. The more students write, the more they will begin to see that writing in math is an integral part of their math instruction.



# Math In a Nutshell

Continued...

www.rpd.net



Continued from pg. 1

## Ideas to help your students write in the classroom:

Explain what is most important to understand about \_\_\_\_\_.

Please draw a picture or build a model to illustrate \_\_\_\_\_.

How would you explain \_\_\_\_\_ to a student who doesn't understand?

How do you know your solution is correct?

Describe any patterns or parts that are alike in this investigation.

What I like most (or least) about math is...

Describe any places you became stuck and how you became unstuck when solving the problem.

Write a letter to a classmate who could not attend class today so that she will understand what we did and learn as much as you did. Be as complete as possible.

What was the most difficult (or easiest) part of \_\_\_\_\_?

Explain in your own words the meaning of \_\_\_\_\_.

Something I would really like to know about mathematics is...

The most important thing I learned about math this week is...

What are you unsure about, confused by, or wondering about?

## Registration for RPDP Classes

The new registration process for RPDP classes has changed. You will now register at UNLV's website. Get more information and the link to UNLV at [www.rpd.net](http://www.rpd.net)!

## www.rpd.net Spotlight of the Month:

How do I find additional resources for helping students with math notebooks?

1. Go to the *www.rpd.net* website
2. Click on the red "Math" tab
3. Select the Elementary Resources from the drop down menu
4. Select Writing About Math