



Just for the ASKing!



by Bruce Oliver

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Education by the Numbers: Options Galore



Bruce Oliver, the author of *Just for the ASKing!*, lives in Burke, Virginia. He uses the knowledge, skills, and experience he acquired as a teacher, professional developer, mentor, and middle school principal as he works with school districts in across the nation. He has written more than 150 issues of *Just for the ASKing!* He is also a co-author of *Creating a Culture for Learning* published by Just ASK.

Articles, posts, and blogs that refer to a specific number or have a number in the title tend to attract a reader's attention and peak curiosity. Whenever I see such an item, I typically open it to see if there might be new ideas I had not considered, or a validation of something I already believe. In recent weeks, I created a folder of such articles to share with *Just for the ASKing!* readers. The content does not follow a predetermined pattern; therefore, as you peruse the titles and content samples, select links to access articles of interest. Whatever you select to investigate, my goal is to enhance your thinking and to provide insights that will enrich your professional perspective.

“Ten Habits Of Incredibly Happy People”

The article from *Forbes* begins by noting that many people believe that true happiness comes from something significant such as a job promotion, a new car or finding the right life partner. Author Travis Bradberry writes “The mistaken notion that major life events dictate your happiness or sadness is so prevalent that psychologists have a name for it: impact bias. The reality is that event-based happiness is fleeting.” The author believes that true happiness that lasts is derived from life habits. Click below to learn more details of Mr. Bradberry's thesis.

www.forbes.com/sites/travisbradberry/2017/02/14/ten-habits-of-incredibly-happy-people/



“7 Strategies to Save Struggling Teachers”

Author John Wink surmises that many teachers struggle, often at the beginning of their careers. It is important to note that when teachers struggle, their students suffer as well. Among Mr. Wink's suggestions is support from a mentor as well as time set aside to work with an administrator. Read on to learn more about his additional insights.

<http://leadlearner2012.blogspot.com/2015/09/7-strategies-to-save-struggling-teachers.html>



“7 Must-Knows from Blended Learning’s Early Adopters”

Blended learning combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods. At a 2017 conference on blended and personalized learning, participants focused on the practical elements of the topics by learning about the tactics that practitioners were using around the country. Their combined best “takeaways” are contained in the article below from *eSchool News*.

www.eschoolnews.com/2017/10/27/blended-learning-early-adopters/



“50 Writing Prompts for All Grade Levels”

Author Todd Finley presents a collection of prompts that will help writers of all ages “think through real or imagined events, their emotions, and a few wacky scenarios.” Two examples of high school prompts are “What’s the worst thing about the internet?” and “Do Americans have it too easy? What do you think?” Middle schoolers could respond to prompts such as “Should we fear failure?” or “What three features should your future house have?” Younger students can respond to “What are examples of things you want versus things you need?” or “What is your first memory? Describe it.” For 44 additional ideas, click on the link below.

www.edutopia.org/article/50-writing-prompts-all-grade-levels-todd-finley



“Why Students Forget – and What You Can Do About It” – Five Research-Based strategies

“Our brains are wired to forget, but there are research-based strategies you can use to make your teaching stick” is the tag line accompanying the article cited above. Author Youki Terada presents research-based learning strategies based on the work of neurologists Blake Richards and Paul Frankland. Their research concludes that forgetting is not necessarily a failure of memory and the application of such strategies as the spacing effect and peer-to-peer explanations can result in improved remembering. Read on.

www.edutopia.org/article/why-students-forget-and-what-you-can-do-about-it



“15 Characteristics of a 21st Century Teacher”

Edutopia writer Tsisana Palmer writes, “Obviously, teaching in the 21st century is an altogether different phenomenon; never before could learning be happening the way it is now – everywhere, all the time, on any possible topic, supporting any possible learning style or preference. But what does being a 21st century teacher really mean?” If the topic piques your curiosity, check out the article to see how it compares with your personal experience.

www.edutopia.org/discussion/15-characteristics-21st-century-teacher



“Just ASK’s Non-Negotiables for Creating a Culture for Learning” – Nine Variables

This *Just for the ASKing!* newsletter states, “In high achieving environments, there exists a unified belief system that has been carefully crafted after extensive discussion and input from all stakeholders. There is no need to debate or argue about whether or not to act on these beliefs; put succinctly, all stakeholders listed are represented in your culture. The non-negotiables, along with extensive examples of schools that have successfully created such environments are detailed in the Just ASK book, *Creating a Culture for Learning*.

www.justaskpublications.com/just-ask-resource-center/e-newsletters/just-for-the-asking/non-negotiables-for-creating-a-culture-for-learning/



“10 Innovative Ways to Bring STEM to Schools”

Schools are always looking for innovative way to incorporate STEM learning into their instructional programs and to make STEM a lasting part of the school’s culture. This **Mind/Shift** article provides suggestions that can make STEM more permanent including devoting faculty meeting time to hear how teams have made STEM work, and inviting parents who work in STEM-related careers share their thinking to make the school’s STEM initiative more practical and realistic. Click below to learn about author Matt Levinson’s eight additional ideas.

ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2014/01/09/10-innovative-ways-to-bring-stem-to-schools/



“10 Practical Ideas for Better Project-Based Learning in Your Classroom”

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is omnipresent in our schools and continuing to grow. Whether you are at the beginning stages of implementing PBL or immersed in its use with students, it is always beneficial to pause and reflect about the PBL components being used. Jennifer Rita Nichols provides timely reminders such as encouraging creativity as students work, evaluating projects based on targeted skills and concepts, and helping students build connections to the world outside the classroom as they complete their work.

<https://teachthought.com/project-based-learning/10-practicalideas-for-better-project-based-learning-in-your-classroom/>



“Top Ten Reasons Students Plagiarize and What Teachers Can Do About It”

In this December 2017 *Kappan* article, author Michelle Navarre Cleary writes, “Students may plagiarize for many reasons, ranging from laziness to sloppiness to a lack of understanding about the reason for citations, but teachers can employ a series of strategies to prevent problems while also teaching students good scholarly practices.” What is especially helpful is that Cleary includes a section entitled “What You Can Do” at the conclusion of her reasoning.

www.kappanonline.org/cleary-top-10-reasons-students-plagiarize/



“10 Ways to Get Your Mojo Back”

Editor of *Education Update* Sarah McKibben writes, “Even after 20 years of teaching, I feel I just can’t face one more paper or teach that lesson on fractions one more time. I turn to a trusted colleague for ideas and inspiration.” What Sarah addresses is a common problem that most educators have faced. She affirms that you are not alone in your feelings. Her article includes insights from state and national Teachers of the Year.

www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/oct17/vol59/num10/10-Ways-to-Get-Your-Mojo-Back.aspx



As indicated by the subtitle of this newsletter (“Options Galore”), my goal was to provide a vast array of ideas on diverse topics. As I wrote the newsletter, I envisioned it being used in a variety of ways. If you are an administrator or school leader, you may select one or more of the topics for meeting discussions. Team leaders or department chairs may find that a particular item can provide new ways of thinking about teaching strategies that the group may be working on at the present time. A third option is to use one of the topics to compare its content with one’s own practice.

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