

Poolville Elementary School *The Monarch Metropolitan*

February 16, 2020: Edition VI, *SUPER STAAR STRATEGIES...That Your Momma Approves!!!!*

Today's edition of *The Monarch Metropolitan* offers a unique glimpse at four distinctively different professionals. **The first** possesses a pre-millennial dating. In 1989, *Milli Vanilli* lip synced a tale of heartache after a girl left her man. The song had a lighthearted approach, saying to just: "*Blame It on the Rain.*"



The second, In 2008, cinema icon and singer *Jamie Fox* teamed up with *T-Pain* to tell us to "*Blame It on the Alcohol.*"



The third, since the beginning of time, *countless country music artists* have told us to blame it on the weather, my truck, my exes, or the rodeo.



The forth, and perhaps most telling, came from my **elementary school nurse** when I was 10 years-old. and she told me:

“Jason, you should probably blame your personality, view of the world, and actions on your mother. I mean, I wonder what she ate when she was pregnant with you?”



Nurse Dunn’s unique insight fueled a family debate with my wife Lori and boys this weekend.

Lori, my forever better half, hypothesized my mother ate the following when she was carrying me:

***Diet Dr. Pepper
Ghost Peppers, and
Red Cabbage (I think she was implying I have a big head)***

I disagreed and offered:

***Elmer’s Glue
Toothpaste, and
Gravel***

My boys (Michael, Griffin, and Dawson) decided we were both wrong and pieced together:

***Lead based paint chips
Dirt, and
Sugar***



Truth be told....I guess we will never know. However, what we can take away from this exercise is that it is often difficult to find answers when we become locked in the act of identifying "**blame**". **Blame is associated with a punitive mindset.**

Perhaps taking a solutions / problem-solving mindset will help me....and our amazing **MONARCH STUDENTS grow!** Sound solutioning requires sound problem-solving. "**Problem-solving**" is an abstract concept to many. By helping students understand the art of problem-solving, the techniques of learning, as well as the different strategies, they will be empowered by the process. This empowerment and confidence will then translate to **increased STAAR SUCCESS!**

This new found empowerment and success produces successful Monarchs. I hope you will find some (or all) of the problem-solving strategies below helpful this week in your classrooms as we take yet another step closer to the STAAR Tests.

'Mother' Approved Strategies:

Practice testing has been proven to be one of the most effective learning techniques. In fact, the cognitive psychology term "**testing effect**" was coined several decades ago to refer to the finding that taking practice tests on studied material promotes greater subsequent learning and retention on a final test as compared to relying on more common study strategies. Because of the effectiveness of this learning technique, many educators are incorporating more practice testing into their instruction. However, since the term "practice testing" refers to various retrieval-based learning activities that occur under various conditions, it can be hard to know how to put this technique to use most effectively.

Which practice test formats work best?

Mixed format practice tests (which incorporate more than one question type) proved to be the most effective, even if the practice test and the final test only had one question type in common. The researchers postulated that this was likely due to the use of interleaving, which requires students to load different cognitive processes and resolve the interference between them, leading to better long-term retention and transfer.

Multiple-choice practice tests emerged as the most effective single format. The researchers discuss that this may be because multiple-choice questions are less cognitively demanding, and research suggests that less demanding retrieval practice activities promote stronger retention because they allow students to focus all of their cognitive energy on a simple task.

The benefits of practice testing were greater when the practice test and the final test formats were identical rather than dissimilar. This is due to a phenomenon known as Transfer-Appropriate Processing which suggests that memories are easier to retrieve when the retrieval process is similar to how they were encoded during an initial learning activity.

How many practice tests should students take, and how much time should pass between the practice



test and the real test for maximum effect?

Conducting several short practice sessions distributed over time enables long-term storage. This method utilizes distributed practice, a high-utility learning technique. One full-length practice test was proven more effective than taking two or more full-length practice tests within a short timeframe. For maximum effect on the final test, the full-length practice test should be taken between one and six days before the final test.

Is feedback helpful?

Based on the research, a practice test followed by feedback did not yield significantly higher testing effects than practice tests without feedback. Assessments must drive future instructional efforts. Let's not lose precious learning time. This does not necessarily mean that receiving feedback does not aid students in retention, because there are several individual studies that show that practice testing plus feedback is more beneficial than practice testing alone. But, there is not enough research that examines the different types of feedback and how that feedback is given to determine the true effectiveness of feedback. Therefore, students can be encouraged to use practice testing as a learning technique whether they will receive feedback or not.

CONCLUSION - How can this information be applied in the classroom?

Increase the number of low-stakes quizzes on material students need to retain.
Incorporate more formative assessment questions into lectures.
Increase wait time after asking the class a practice question. Instead of calling on the first student as soon as their hand is raised, wait long enough to allow all students to process the questions and come up with a response so that all gain the cognitive benefit of the retrieval practice.

Let's change our practices. Out with the old, in with the NEW!

Let's use RESEARCH to Make Meaningful Monarch LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES!

Regardless of your approach, let's learn and take advantage from the learning of others. This week, let's listen. Let's take targeted action, and let's ***help more MONARCHS SUCCEED ON TEST DAY!***

Good luck!

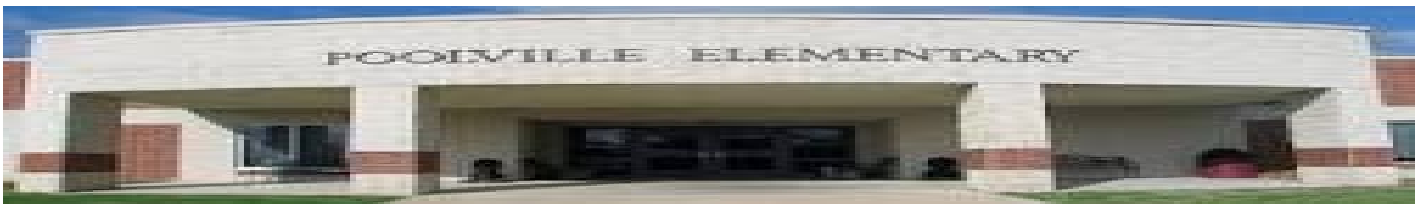
Without further ado, ***"LET'S HAVE SOME PERFECT STAAR TESTING PRACTICE!"***

#TestLikeAChampion

#PracticeMakesPerfect

#Teach,Test,ModifyInstruction,Repeat

A Summary of Our Learnings:



- Edition I: ***Early, Deliberate, and Purposeful Interventions That Work!***
- Edition II: ***Using Your Two Ears Before Your One MOUTH!***
- Edition III: ***The Zombies Are Coming! Prepare Your Classrooms!***
- Edition IV: ***Feed Me Seymour! Taming Educational Hunger!***
- Edition V: ***Calling Worksheet World! Attention....This is Earth Calling Worksheet World!***
- Edition VI: ***Super STAAR Strategies That Work!***