The Handouts

*Single-Page Reading and Writing Lessons
You Can Use in Any Subejct*

by
Steve Peha

ttms
teaching that makes sense
www.ttms.org

Please Use This Stuff

Just follow the rules. Thanks!

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

What is TTMS?

A Brief Explanation of Teaching That Makes Sense

Teaching That Makes Sense® works with people who are passionate about learning. We provide the following services:

- Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Workshops

- Summer Professional Development Institutes

- In-Classroom Model Teaching, Co-Teaching, Observation, and Planning

- Curriculum Design and Program Evaluation

- Instructional and Administrative Coaching

- Educational Leadership Training and School Improvement Strategy

We work at all grade levels, K-12, and across the curriculum, in all kinds of schools. We specialize in the implementation of research-based practices that can be scaled easily from a single classroom to an entire district.

Since 1995, we have worked with over 20,000 people in over 500 schools and other learning organizations throughout the United States and Canada.

We provide support to teachers and learners using the most sensible methods and materials available. Our goal is to increase academic achievement by making teaching easier for teachers and learning more meaningful for kids.

You can learn more about *Teaching That Makes Sense* by visiting our website at *www.ttms.org*.

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Featured Downloads
The Best of Teaching That Makes Sense

To view our entire library of free teaching materials click here.

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Featured Workshops
The Best of Teaching That Makes Sense

Writing Strategies For Every Classroom. In this highly interactive workshop, you'll be introduced to an innovative set of writing strategies that will help your students make dramatic improvements almost instantly.

Helping Writers Master Mechanics. Got problems with punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure? Kids don't like to edit? Get proven tools based on what writing conventions really are and how real writers really learn them.

Read Non-Fiction Now! Non-fiction texts make up most of the reading we pursue in our daily lives but fiction dominates in school. Give your students the skills they need to succeed across the curriculum and out in the world.

Comprehensive Comprehension. Explore techniques that dramatically improve reading comprehension without traditional tests, tedious questions, dreary worksheets, and other inauthentic unmotivating methods.

Mastering Basic Math Facts. How is it that so many kids sneak into 5th or 6th grade without mastering their basic math facts? With a set of innovative activities, kids can master basic facts quicker than you ever thought possible.

Math Problem-Solving Power. Serious math involves serious math problem-solving. And that means students need serious problem-solving strategies. Teach math the way mathematicians teach it and give kids an edge.

Grading That Works For Everyone. Stop spending hours grading papers. Use a research-based approach to grading that's fair, fast, accurate, highly motivating for kids, and—this is the best part—much easier for you.

Assessment That Makes Sense. Learn how to use the key principles of effective assessment to gather information that guides instruction in less time and with fewer interruptions in your everyday teaching.

To schedule a workshop for your school or district click here.

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The best way to teach
is the way that makes sense
to you, your kids,
and your community.

www.ttms.org

Good Writing

Has all of these qualities...

✓ **Ideas** that are interesting and important.
✓Main Idea ✓Details ✓"Showing" ✓Purpose ✓Surprises

✓ **Organization** that is logical and effective.
✓Leads ✓Endings ✓Sequencing ✓Pacing ✓Transitions

✓ **Voice** that is individual and appropriate.
✓Topic ✓Feelings ✓Individuality ✓Personality ✓Appropriateness
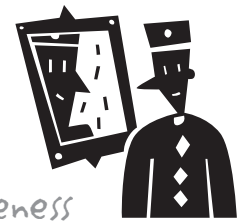
✓ **Word Choice** that is specific and memorable.
✓Verbs ✓Modifiers ✓Memorable ✓Accurate ✓Appropriate

✓ **Sentence Fluency** that is smooth and expressive.
✓Beginnings ✓Length ✓Expression ✓Effects ✓Structure

✓ **Conventions** that are correct and communicative.
✓Punctuation ✓Capitalization ✓Paragraphing ✓Spelling ✓Grammar

Good Writing

Has all of these qualities...

Interesting **IDEAS** readers want to know about.

ORGANIZATION readers can follow easily.

My own personal **VOICE** that sounds just like me.

WORD CHOICE that says what I mean.

SENTENCE FLUENCY that makes it fun to read out loud.

Correct **CONVENTIONS** everyone can read.

Ideas
Interesting & Important
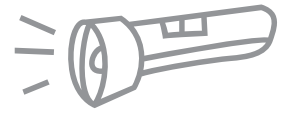
An important **main idea.**

What's the one most important thing the author wants the audience to know? Why is it important to the author? Why is it important to the audience?

Interesting **details.**

Which details are the most interesting? How do they help the audience understand the main idea?

"Showing," not just telling.

Where does the author use "showing" details? How does the "showing" help to improve the audience's understanding?

A **clear** and meaningful **purpose.**

Why did the writer write this? Why is this a good reason to write something? What does the author want the audience to think and/or do?

Something **unusual** or **surprising** that **works.**

What is surprising or unusual about the writing? How does this differ from other things you've read?

Ideas
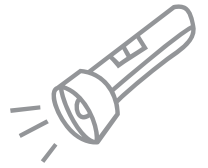
My piece has an **important message.**

The one most important thing I want my audience to know is...

I included lots of **interesting details.**

The most interesting thing about my topic is...

I wrote this **for a good reason.**

I wrote this because...
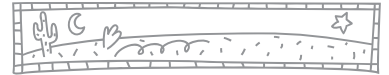
Logical & Effective Organization

☑ Catches the **audience's attention** at the start.

How does the beginning catch the audience's attention? Why would the audience want to read more?

☑ Feels **finished** at the end; makes the audience **think.**

How does the ending make the piece feel finished? What does it make the audience think about?

☑ Arranged in the **best order.**

Can you easily identify the different parts of the piece? Does each part follow logically from the next? Is the sequencing effective and entertaining?

☑ Spends the **right amount of time** on each part.

Why does the author spend more time in some parts than in others? Are there places where the author moves ahead too quickly or hangs on too long?

☑ **Easy to follow** from part to part.

How does the author move from part to part? How do these transitions work?
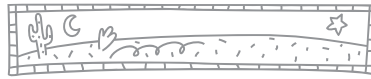
Organization

My beginning will make you want to **read more.**

You'll be interested
in my piece because...

My ending will make you think about **something important.**

You will remember
my piece because...

I put everything in the **best order.**

The most important
part of my piece is...

Voice

Individual & Appropriate

The author cares about the topic.

How can you tell that the author cares about the topic? Where can you find evidence of strong opinions?

Strong feelings; honest statements.

Where are the author's strongest statements? How can you tell that the author is saying what he or she really thinks?

Individual, authentic, and original.

Does this writing feel as though it could only have been written by one person? Does the writing sound like it was written by a real person? How original is it?

Displays a definite and well developed personality.

How would you describe the author's personality in this writing? What examples from the text tell you you're right?

Appropriate tone for purpose and audience.

Is the writer using an appropriate tone for this situation? How can you tell? Which parts, if any, seem inappropriate?

Voice

I **like** this piece, and **my audience will like it,** too!

I like this piece because...

I **really care** about my topic.

I wanted to write about this topic because...

You can tell **exactly** how I **feel.**

The feelings I have about this topic are...

Specific & Memorable

Word Choice

Strong verbs that tell how actions are performed.

Where has the author used strong verbs? What makes them effective?

Adjectives and **adverbs** that make things **specific.**

Where has the author used adjectives and adverbs to make the writing more specific? How does this improve the reader's understanding?

Words and **phrases** you can **remember.**

Which words and phrases do you remember? Why are they so memorable?

Words and **phrases** used **accurately** and **effectively.**

Is the writer's usage accurate? Where has the author used unusual words effectively? Where has the author used common words in new ways?

Appropriate language for **purpose** and **audience.**

Is the language appropriate? Are there any words or phrases that are too casual, too formal, too hard to understand, or possibly offensive?

Word Choice

I used words that **I know and understand.**

The best words in my piece are...

I used interesting **words that you'll remember.**

You'll remember these words because...

I used **just the right words** to say exactly what I wanted to say.

I chose these words because...

Smooth and Expressive
Musical
Sentence Fluency

♫ ## Variety in sentence **beginnings.**

What are some of the different ways the author begins sentences? Do you notice any patterns? Does the author ever begin two or three consecutive sentences in the same way?

♫ ## Variety in sentence **length** and **structure.**

Does the author vary the length and structure of his or her sentences? Do you notice any patterns? Does the author use the same length or structure in two or three consecutive sentences? What sentence structures does the author use most often?

♫ ## Easy to read **expressively;** sounds great read **aloud.**

What are the most expressive parts? What is it about how they sound that makes them so much fun to read out loud?

♫ ## Rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and other **"sound" effects.**

Where has the author used rhythm, rhyme, alliteration or other effects? How does this improve the piece?

♫ ## Sentences **structured** so they are **easy** to understand.

How does the author use connecting words and punctuation marks to make sentences easy to understand? How does the order of sentence parts make the writing easy to understand?

Sentence Fluency
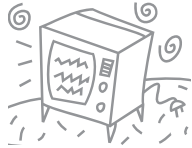
fun to read out loud!

♪ I wrote my piece in **sentences**.

The best sounding sentence in my piece is...

♪ I used **words that sound cool** when you read them together.

The coolest sounding words in my piece are...

♪ My writing **sounds good** when I read it **out loud**.

My piece is fun to read because...

Correct & Communicative
Conventions

"Outside" punctuation.

Has the author used periods, question marks, and exclamation marks in ways that make sense to the audience? Is it easy to tell where ideas end and begin?

"Inside" punctuation.

Does the author's use of commas, colons, dashes, parentheses, and semicolons make sense to the audience? How does the author's use of these marks help make sentences with many parts easier to understand?

Capitalization.

Has the author used capital letters in ways that make sense to the audience? Is it easy to tell where new ideas begin? Has the author capitalized the word "I", as well as names, places, and things that are one of a kind?

Paragraphing.

Has the author grouped related sentences into paragraphs in ways that make sense to the audience? Has the author started a new paragraph each time a new person starts speaking? Has the author indented or skipped a line to show where new paragraphs start?

Spelling.

If the writing has spelling mistakes, do these errors make the piece difficult to read and understand? How does the author's spelling affect the way the audience feels about the writing and the person who wrote it?

Conventions

I **started** my sentences **with capitals** and put **periods at the end.**

The conventions I know are...

I used capitals for the word **"I"** and the names of **people** and **places.**

The conventions I am learning are...

I did my best to **spell** each word **correctly.**

You can tell I edited my piece because...

The 5 Big Questions

① What makes this writing **good?**

Which parts do you like? Why do you like those parts? Are parts of this writing better than other writing you've read? How do you know? Use the language of your classroom criteria to explain how you feel.

② What would make this writing **better?**

Which parts are not as good as they could be? Why don't you like them? What changes could the author make that would help you understand and enjoy the writing more? How would those changes make the writing better? Use the language of your classroom criteria to explain how you feel.

③ What's the **one** most important **thing** the writer wants you to know?

Is there one clear message the writer wants you to remember? What is it? How do you know? What details tell you you're right? This "one most important thing" is the writer's main idea. Sometimes, it often feels like a moral or a lesson the writer wants you to learn.

④ **Why** did the writer write **this piece?**

What was the author's purpose in writing this piece? Writers write for a reason. Writing to entertain or to inform is great; all good writing must be entertaining and informative. But there has to be a deeper purpose. What does the writer want you to think and/or do after you've finished the piece? Why would it be valuable or meaningful for someone to read this?

⑤ What does the **audience** need to know?

Who is this writer writing for? What information does the audience need to enjoy and understand this piece? What questions do they have? What would they like to know more about? How does the author's voice, and the details the author decides to include, show that he or she is thinking about the audience?

The 5 Facts of Fiction

A fun way to write great fiction, and a great way to have fun reading it!

① Fiction is all about **character.**

Who is your main character? What does your character look like? Can you describe your character's personality? How did your character get to be this way? The more you know about your character, the better your story will be.

② Fiction is all about what your character **wants.**

What does your character want more than anything else? Why does your character want it? Some characters want a lot, some want a little. It doesn't really matter as long as it's VERY IMPORTANT to your character. The more important it is, the more your character will do to get it.

③ Fiction is all about how your character **gets or does not get** what he or she **wants.**

Is your character successful? Or does your character's quest end in failure? Either way, you can have a great story. The trick is to describe HOW your character succeeds or fails. What obstacles does your character encounter? What solutions can your character craft to meet the challenges of your story?

④ Fiction is all about **how your character changes** as a result of getting or not getting what he or she wants.

How does your character change as a result of what has happened? What was your character like at the beginning? What is your character like at the end? What has your character learned? What will the audience learn from reading the story?

⑤ Fiction is all about **a world** you create.

How do you create a world? What kinds of people, places, and things does a world need? What successes, disasters, and conflicts does a world have? What are the good things in a world? What are the bad things? Remember: your story can be made up, but it must BE TRUE TO YOUR WORLD!

What's a Good Idea?
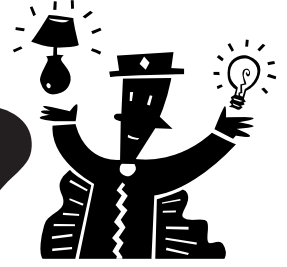
Something you have strong feelings about.

What are those feelings? How will you communicate those feelings to your reader? Is there a key moment or a particularly important detail you want to emphasize so your reader will understand EXACTLY how you feel?
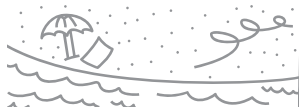
Something you know a lot about.

What are the main things you want to cover? What's the most important part of your piece? What's the one thing you want your audience to know about your topic?

Something you can describe in great detail.

What are some of the details of your topic? Why are these details important? How do these details help the reader understand your message?

Something your audience will be interested in.

Who is your audience? Why will they be interested in your topic? What will interest them most?

Something your audience will feel was worth reading.

What will your audience get from reading your piece? Will your audience learn something new? What will make your audience want to follow your piece all the way to the end?

Don't Correct...

Inspect the writing closely.

Read thoughtfully and thoroughly. Don't rush.

Detect those parts that work and those that don't.

What do you like? What do you think could be improved? Use the language of your classroom criteria to explain how you feel.

Reflect on why some parts work and others don't.

Why do you like certain parts? How would improving other parts make the writing better? Use the language of your classroom criteria to explain how you feel.

Connect your reactions to the writer's intent.

What is the writer's purpose? Why did the writer write thi? What's the ONE MOST IMPORTANT THING the writer wants you to know?

Inject your own opinions.

Be honest. Communicate using the language of your classroom criteria so that everyone can understand you. REMEMBER: This is just YOUR OPINION.

Respect the writer's reactions.

Listen closely to what the writer has to say about your comments. The writer does NOT have to make the changes you suggest.

Perfect communication between reader and writer.

Do you really understand each other? Make sure you're both using the language of your classroom criteria. Review the writer's purpose, audience, and message.

Expect to repeat the process...

...as long as the WRITER wants to continue. OR...
...until the reader UNDERSTANDS the writer's message.

Sound it Out

A Great Way to Spell Words You Don't Know!

Say it **slowly.**

Say it out loud.
Listen carefully in the middle of the word.
Really stretch the word out.

Hold the **sound.**

Hold out the next sound.
Try to hear the sound all by itself.

Find the **letter.**
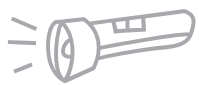
Think of the letter or
letters that make that sound.

Write it down.

Write the letters as soon as you guess them.
Don't try to spell the whole word in your head!

If you're not 100% sure it's right, and you don't know how to fix it, draw a line under it and JIUST GO ON WRITING. After your piece is finished, you can correct your spelling during the EDITING STAGE of the WRITING PROCESS.

Topic T-Chart #1

Perfect topics every time!

Like	Hate
Pizza	Homework
Baseball	Vegetables
Cats	Rainy Days
Writing	Chores
Movies	Being Sick

Typical-Unusual
Typical life experiences and unusual life experiences.

Fun-Have To
Things you do for fun and things you do because you have to.

Regret-Proud Of
Things you regret and things you're proud of.

What-Why-How #2

Great support for your opinions!

What	Why	How
(Opinion)	**(Reasons)**	**(Evidence)**
My dog is the most amazing pet in the whole world.	He does my algebra homework for me.	He's great in math but sometimes he needs help holding the pencil.
	He's helping me pay my way to college.	He just signed a deal with CNN for his own talk show: "A Dog's Eye View."

What do you think?
This is your opinion. Make a it a complete sentence.

Why do you think it?
These are the reasons for your opinion. Have at least 4 of 5.

How do you know?
These are your pieces of evidence, your examples, your proof.

Idea-Details #3
Add details to your writing instantly!

Idea	Details
At the park we play frisbee. He catches it in his mouth and brings it back.	He runs really fast.
	He jumps up in the air.
	He never misses.
	People can't believe how good he is.
	He can jump about five feet high.
	He'll only catch it if I throw it.

Make a Paragraph

"Sometimes, my dog and I go up to the park to play frisbee. As soon as I throw it, he runs as fast as he can to catch it. He jumps high in the air and catches it in his teeth. He can jump about five feet high. People can't believe how good he is because he almost never misses. But he'll only catch it if I throw it."

Tell-Show #4

Add descriptive detail to your writing!

Tell	Show
My dog runs as fast as he can and jumps in the air.	As I take out the Frisbee, he starts to wag his tail. As soon as I let it fly, he tears after it as fast as he can. Just when I think he's not going to get it, he leaps into the air, stretches out his neck, and snags it between his teeth like an animal capturing its prey.

Think about your telling details.
Focus and concentrate on this one image.

Picture the scene in your mind.
Notice the attributes of each thing you see.

Describe what you see in the picture.
Treat each thing like a character in the story.

Transition-Action-Details #5

Put anything into a logical sequence.

Transition	Action	Details
About a month ago,	My dog and I went to Andrews Park to play frisbee.	The wind was really blowing.
I ran him around for a while, and then	I took out the frisbee, threw it hard, and it took off over the trees.	I tried to stop my dog from going after it, but it was too late.
	The frisbee went over the trees and down a steep hill.	I was worried my dog might get hurt.
A few minutes later,	My dog came running back with the frisbee.	He was really dirty. It looked like he'd been in the mud.

Draw-Label-Caption

Capture a scene with many details!

Big trees   Birds   It's windy

Wagging tail

He's excited   My dog   Me
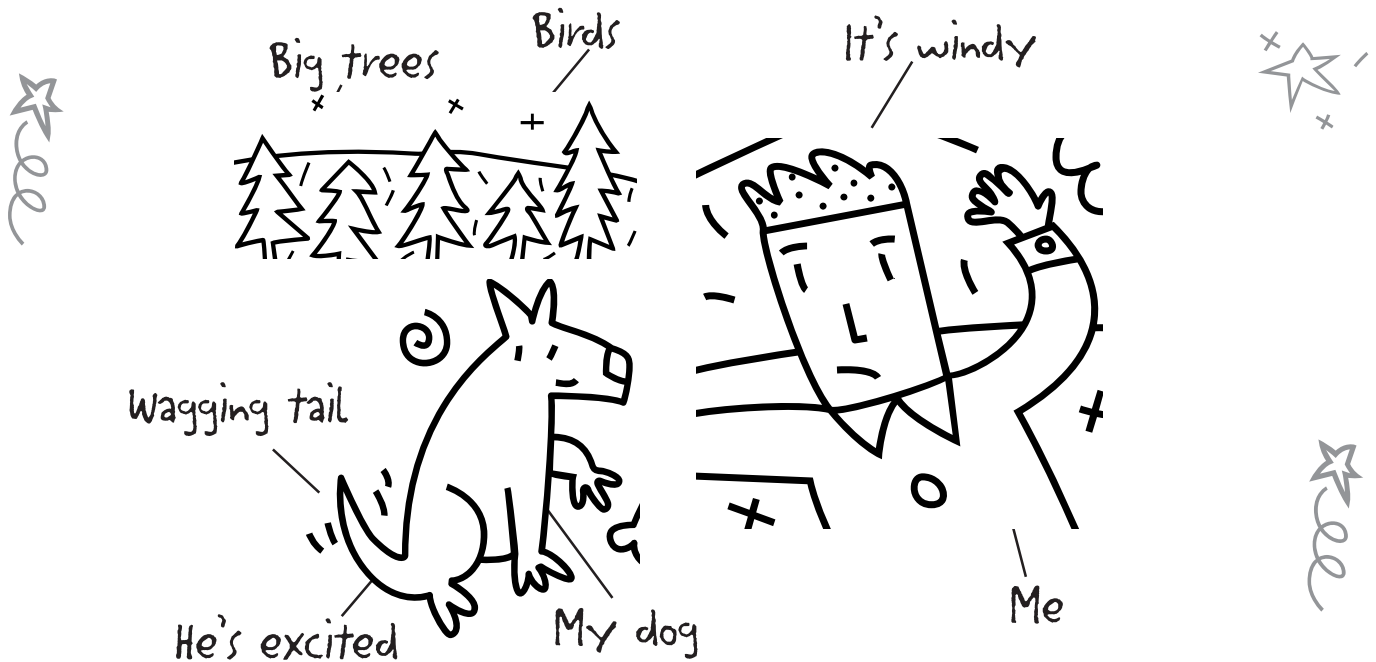
I'm playing frisbee with my dog at Andrews Park.

This is a **sketch, not finished** artwork.
Work quickly. Include as many details as you can.

Label everything you can think of.
Use a single word or a short phrase. Identify everything.

Each **label** is a **detail** you can write about.
The more details you have, the better your piece will be.

Action-Feelings-Setting #7

Create an effective description of any scene!

Action: I've just thrown the frisbee, and my dog is chasing after it.

Feelings: I'm excited but also scared. He's going to run off into the trees where he might get hurt.

Setting: We're up at Andrews Park. It's really windy and cold. There aren't many people around.

"It was cold and windy that day at Andrews Park, and there weren't very many people around. I threw the frisbee hard into the wind and it just took off like I'd never seen before. Immediately, my dog started chasing after it. And as I saw it sail off over the trees, I started to get worried that he might get hurt if he tried to catch it."

Content-Purpose-Audience #8

One strategy for all kinds of writing!

Main Idea

What's the one most important thing you want you audience to know?

Key Details

What does your audience need to know to understand your main idea?

Think

What do you want your audience to think after they're finished?

Do

What do you want your audience to do after they're finished?

People

What specific person or group of people are you writing this for?

Questions

What does your audience want to know about your topic?
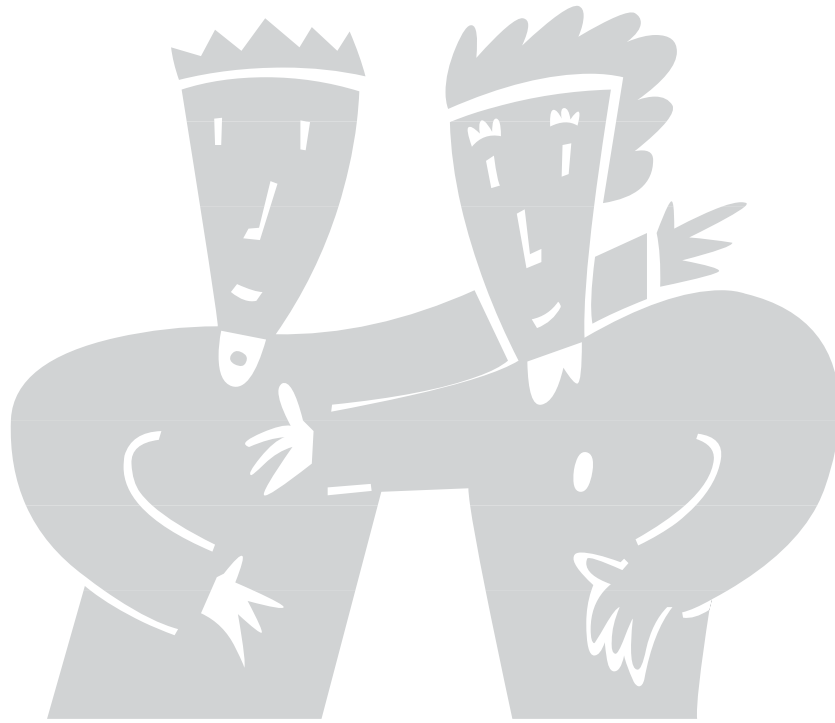
Let's work together to make your teaching the best it can be.

Please contact me any time!

Even the best workshops and teaching materials can't meet the needs of every teacher all the time. That's why we need to stay in touch. Send me an e-mail any time you have a question. I'll do my best to get back to you quickly with answers, additional teaching materials, or other resources.

Please send suggestions, questions, and corrections to:
stevepeha@ttms.org

Learning Patterns
Teach Smarter Not Harder

Imagine a structure 13 years tall, 180 days wide, and five subjects deep. This is a K-12 education. Each cell in this structure represents a single class period in a single subject for a total of 11,700 educational opportunities.

By using *Teaching That Makes Sense® Learning Patterns™* we can reduce this academic load for students, simplify planning and instruction for teachers, and help more kids learn more things in less time and with less teacher effort.

Learning Patterns are cross-curricular tools optimized for successful teaching in any subject or grade. They are designed to be used, re-used, and shared across classrooms without requiring extensive training or preparation.

By analyzing standards documents and the methods of effective teachers, *Teaching That Makes Sense* has identified underlying commonalities in learning targets across the curriculum. These commonalities represent dozens of potential assignments that can be taught and learned through a small set of foundational skills.

Consider exposition. Students consume and create expository information in many ways: they read expository texts, write expository essays, create reports, answer test questions, etc. As varied as expository expression is, it has a simple underlying structure that can be explained by a single *Learning Pattern*.

Some *Learning Patterns* cover skills like narration, exposition, and persuasion. Others help teachers and students with things like assessment, reading comprehension, and memorization. The same patterns can be used across grade levels and subject areas as well, so kids take their learning with them as they grow.

For more information about Learning Patterns click here.

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Agile Transformation
Building Collective Capacity for School-Wide Change

We are discovering better ways of improving schools by doing it and by helping others do it. Through this work, we have come to value:

- **People.** *Individuals and interactions* over policy and politics;

- **Achievement.** *Maximum potential* over minimum competence;

- **Courage.** *Fierce collaboration* over comfortable compromise;

- **Agility.** *Responding to change* over following a plan.

The items on the right are important, but we value the items on the left more.

Agile Transformation is grounded in two principles: **(1)** People are more successful when they enjoy their work; and **(2)** Schools are more successful when they support people in developing the autonomy, competence, and relatedness that makes their work more enjoyable. Features of *Agile Transformation* include:

- **Paired Practice.** Nobody works alone. Everyone has a team and a teammate.

- **Rapid Iteration.** Sprint through big problems one small problem at a time.

- **Making Sense.** What do we do? Why do we do it? How do we know it works?

- **"Stand Up" Sessions.** What did you do yesterday? What are you doing today? What do you need to be successful? Agile leaders remove impediments.

- **Successful Failure.** Fail fast, fail smart. No blame games. Apply what you learn as you move closer to your goal with each iteration.

- **Souls and Roles.** Aligning what we do with who we are.

- **"Just in Time" Solutions.** Handle problems as they arise. Respond as needed.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

Essential Elements of Agile Schools

The Qualities of Effective Educational Communities

1. **Agile schools work because people choose to make them work.** We believe in freedom of choice, and that making the choice to participate fully in teaching, learning, and leading is the most important choice we can make.

2. **Agile schools love to learn.** We believe that learning is inherently enjoyable and that giving learners a responsible degree of autonomy in their individual pursuit of knowledge and skill makes it even more so. Agile educators are learners, too.

3. **Agile schools take a constructive approach to failure.** We believe failure is a normal part of success. Kids struggle to learn. Teachers struggle to teach. Administrators struggle to lead. We all experience failure on the way to solving new problems. The faster we fail, the more solutions we try. The smarter we fail, the more knowledge we bring to the next iteration. Instead of looking back at problems, Agile schools look forward to solving them.

4. **Agile schools are always getting better.** We believe there's almost always a better way of doing something, and that it's almost always worthwhile trying to figure out what that better way is. Agile schools value progress, and the appropriate measurement thereof, because progress is the true indicator of learning.

5. **Agile schools empower people to empower others.** We believe that individuals—not systems or policies—are the true sources of power in our schools. Our responsibility is to use our power in service of the greater good, and to teach students how to use their power that way, too.

6. **Agile schools achieve extraordinary results.** We believe in transformative learning that goes far beyond incremental improvements in test scores. Adults in Agile schools also strive for extraordinary achievement in their profession as well.

"Learning begins with teaching that makes sense."

Essential Elements
continued...

7. **Agile schools are based on deeply-held beliefs, clearly-articulated values, and a firmly-rooted sense of commitment.** We believe that the most successful schools are those run by people who know what matters most to them and who possess an unshakable determination to get it.

8. **Agile schools are communities where people make a difference and connect with something greater than themselves.** We believe that the drive to contribute is part of human nature. Our role is to guide people in directing their contribution toward its highest and best use.

9. **Agile schools value ownership, positive attitudes, high expectations, and unwavering optimism.** We believe that making a good life is about making good choices, that the pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right, and that self-mastery is the key to its rightful exercise.

10. **Agile schools embrace the risk inherent in the achievement of great things.** We educate for maximum potential not minimum competence. We believe that all learners have within them extraordinary strengths and untapped resources, and that learning is only limited by our willingness to attempt what has never before been attempted. We welcome change, we innovate, and we seek out challenges that organize and measure the best of our energies and skills.

11. **Agile schools affirm self-knowledge as the most valuable knowledge and self-determination as the most basic right.** We believe that introspection, self-disclosure, and intellectual honesty are essential to personal transformation. We seek to support young people in becoming the adults they want to be.

12. **Agile schools are communities where no one is above the rules, everyone has a voice, freedom is sacred, equity and excellence are not mutually exclusive, and the highest goal of education is contributing to the present and future well-being of individuals who can thrive independently in a modern democracy.** Agile schools value college preparation, career fulfillment, and engaged citizenship, but we value something else even more. Collegiate, career, and civic achievement are important, but they are means to ends, not ends in themselves. Human happiness, meaningful contribution, and sustained well-being of self and community are the ultimate ends to which Agile schools aspire on behalf of the children and families we serve.

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