



Garden School Newsletter



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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“Cultivating Success in Every Child”

Friday, October 25, 2019

Thoughts for the Week

By: [Richard Marotta, Ph.D.](#),
Headmaster



The October 2018 issue of PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America), devoted itself to the idea of « Cultures of Reading, » which the editors used to explore many aspects of the role that reading plays in a culture, in schools and universities and in the lives of individuals. Some of the articles in this issue clearly appeal to scholars and the more esoteric concept of reading and literary criticism. However there were a core of these essays that touched upon some of the important elements that we, as a school, recognize and implement on a daily basis.

Some forms of reading have diverged from the traditional sitting with a book in private and encountering the world within that text. The editors of this conviction Lynch and Ender, make it clear that

the conditions of reading have changed with the ‘migration of text—from books stored on library shelves to computer screens... » Yet this migration doesn’t alter the essential fact of the encounter between a reader and a text. It is much the same as transportation—we fly from one place to another instead of sailing on a boat. Yet the fact of moving from one place to another hasn’t changed. The speed of the journey has been shortened, but the journey itself remains the central fact.

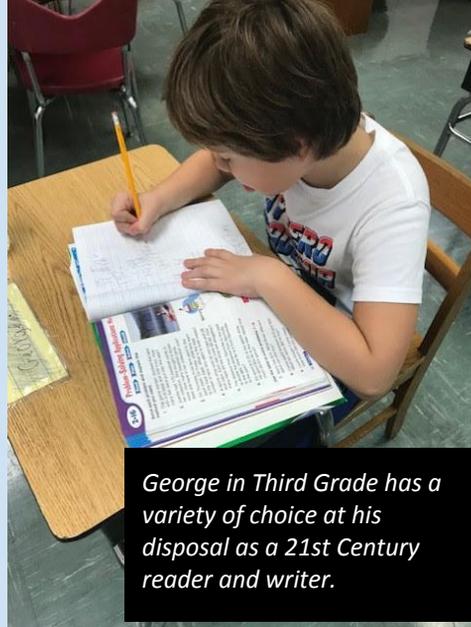
Readers today have a variety of choices about how to encounter a text. We can use books, computers, phones to provide us with the experience. I have often written about the downsides of social media and technology; however in the case of reading, I think that there has been some options created that really didn’t exist in these forms in the past. Clearly the accessibility of text has been enhanced by our ability to access books from the
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Students in ELA read in pairs. Dr. Marotta reports that students in Nursery through Twelfth Grade will have read over three hundred specific book titles this year.

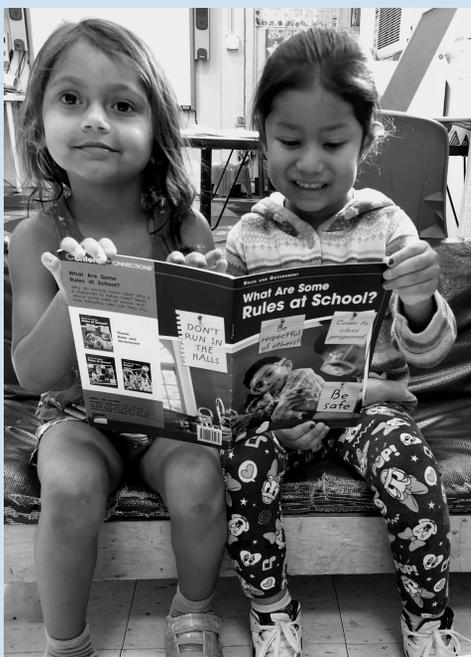
internet. Many of my students will seek out a text online and read from there. The availability of research material has been greatly enhanced by using such services as JSTOR to read scholarly articles. Yet despite the technology, the fundamental act of reading as a private or collective activity remains fairly untouched.

Our students read books, articles and material online, but they are still reading. Each year Garden students from Nursery to twelfth grade encounter over 300 texts, pieces of literature as part of their learning environment.

This does not include text books, history



George in Third Grade has a variety of choice at his disposal as a 21st Century reader and writer.



books, science books; this 300 number simply refers to literary works—stories, novels, poems and plays. These experiences enrich the student’s mind through the encounter with fictional environments that mirror the human environments in which they find themselves. The power of fiction to illuminate the human condition is clear; however, the dynamic act of reading engagement to seek out that illumination raises other issues. Reading is not a passive activity; it is a dynamic one in which the mind of the reader encounters the representational mind of the writer and together, reader and writer, explore aspects of human life, feelings and thought. This mutual process links together the private act with the more collective act of understanding. This is what we call education.



Dates to Remember



- Monday, October 18th - Senior Photos
- Wednesday, October 30th - ELA Trip to the Tenement Museum
- Thursday, October 31st - Halloween
 - Alley Pond Trip (2nd and Third Grade)
 - Jackson Heights Halloween Parade on 37th Avenue

A Penny Earned is a Penny Cleaned by [John Hale](#) (Science Teacher)

The Physical Science students are in the middle of researching the periodic table, chemical reactions and solution chemistry. The students used the patterns in the periodic table to help understand how the oxidation numbers and valence number work with chemical reactions. They will work on chemical reactions and the different types and factors that affect the rate of reaction. Helping to solidify their understanding of chemical reactions they will conduct chemical experiments with Acids and Bases and will conduct an experiment on how to best clean money with household chemicals.

Soon we will start a joint venture with the music class. In science the students will be building their own musical instrument and then they will analyze this instrument in music class.



Ariadne and Theodora work as a pair on their lab assignment.

Newcomb-style Volleyball with our 1st 2nd and 3rd Grades by [Flande Dervishi](#) (Physical Education Teacher)

Newcomb is a simplified version of volleyball and we use it to teach the fundamentals of Volleyball with our younger classes. The main difference between Newcomb and Volleyball is that the ball can be caught before passing to a team-mate or thrown over the net to the other team. 2nd and 3rd Graders learn to bump the ball the correct way to their friends. We are adding new skills. We have also included elimination Newcomb. Elimination is simple but exciting. Kids love the game as everyone has the chance to eliminate the other team one by one by throwing the ball over the net and if a person on the other team doesn't catch it they will be eliminated for that round. We are looking forward to the improvement of their skills for the next week

A Smattering of Histories by [Richard Kruczek](#) (History Teacher)

Grade 9: Ancient and Medieval History *Exploring the Fertile Crescent*

We have just finished our study of the ancient Fertile Crescent - the land encompassing today's Egypt, Western Turkey and Middle East. It was here that human progress truly took shape in the form of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians and Phoenicians. So much of what we see today - 60-minute hours, our calendar, coins, and much more - come from this region from roughly 5,000 years ago to roughly 2,500 years ago. We owe them our gratitude. Next up on the Magical History Tour: Ancient Greece.

Grade 10: Modern European History *You Can't Spell Reformation without Reform*

We have just finished our study of the Protestant Reformation. The kids were spellbound by the fact that one man - Martin Luther - could have such an impact on world history. Even more powerful is the fact that he did it merely by standing by his convictions. It's a lesson that everyone should learn, early and often.

Pre-K For All –The five Senses By: [Karina Mendoza](#) (PKFA Teacher)

As we started our unit this month, students learned about and discussed The Five Senses. In week three, PKFA Room 1 students began a discussion on the sense of touch. Students participated in various activities involving the use and sense of touch. In one task we carved and observed the inside of a pumpkin. Students helped carve and clean out the pumpkin using their hands. Students and parents also had a Family Involvement activity where they decorated their own individual pumpkins pictures with their families, using various materials.

Our class also read books focusing on our Five Senses, such as *Touching* by Robin Nelson. As students reviewed our readings, they discussed the nerves that are found in our skin and how nerves send messages to the brain!

Goals, Hopes, and Dreams in our English Language Academy for International Students

by [Greig Roselli](#) (ELA Teacher)

Did you know that Garden school hosts more than a dozen students who hail from different countries? Yes! Every year we accept kids from different places. These kids leave their home countries to learn in an American independent school - our school! This year our international student cohort hails from three different countries: China, Korea, Brazil and we speak Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and so on.



"I really like Science and Math ... my goal is to be more familiar with English and to read scholarly articles in that language." - Juky Chen, 9th Grade



TASTE



HEARING



SMELL



TOUCH



VISION

United Nations Week

Go
Griffins!



Who Are We? by [Joanne Vogel](#) (Nursery Teacher)

What is a community? A community can be defined as a place where people live, work, and play together. Our family is our first community. In Nursery our students are learning how to be part of another community, our classroom. Students are familiar with the one-to-one care of a parent or a caregiver, and now are transitioning into a classroom setting. They are experiencing being part of “something larger” through daily routines and activities. The children learn to share both materials and attention.

So, most of what is done in Nursery is “social” studies. The students are learning to be a part of the classroom community, and a slightly larger community, Garden School. Many people visit the Nursery room each day, and the nursery children recognize each, learn their names, and discuss the jobs of each. Who makes and delivers our food? Who helps take care of the classroom? Who takes care of children who have an accident or who are sick?

International Night and UN Week

If you were fortunate to join us for International Night, it was another opportunity to be part of the larger Garden Community! So many examples were evident of people together, sharing food and interacting with each other, playing games, talking, seeing other cultures represented, and tasting foods! Here, too, children begin to see our expanding community, the world.

UN week was a great opportunity to discuss the world community. And it was celebrated in the Nursery along with the rest of the school. Take a look at all the pictures depicting us in native attire, UN jerseys, and the UN colors! So our focus and goal in Nursery is to help foster both independence and how to be a good citizen in our larger world



Un Week - Nursery Edition

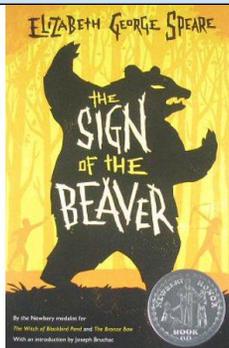
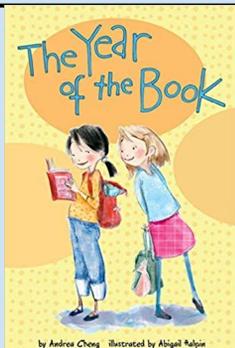
English Language Arts! Go Griffins!



The Year of the Book - Fourth Grade by Phil D'Anna

Fourth Graders have finished their first novel, *The Year of the Book*. This wonderful story has encouraged many discussions about empathy for others and what it takes to be a good friend. Anna, the main character of the story, teaches us that, even though she and her friend Laura grew apart, everyone deserves a second chance. In the upcoming weeks we will be starting a mystery novel called *Room One*, by Andrew Clements. During this unit the students will refine their predicting skills and their ability to draw conclusions from text evidence.

As we continue on through the first marking period, students will focus their efforts by honing in on their writing mechanics and grammar. We will soon begin learning skills like common and proper nouns, proper spelling of singular and plural nouns, and the ability to correct run-on and fragmented sentences. As writers, the students have been diligent in developing strong paragraphs. We highlight the need for a strong topic sentence, supporting details, and closing sentences to finalize a piece. So far the class has loved engaging with their reading and writing, and I anticipate further excitement as we look to start another novel soon!



The Sign of the Beaver - Fifth Grade by Phil D'Anna

The novel *The Sign of the Beaver* is the first novel that the fifth grade is reading as a class. Paralleling the social studies curriculum with an investigation of colonialism, the fifth grade is discovering that even people from vastly different backgrounds can bond over commonalities. As they watch Matt and Attean's relationship develop, the class has discussed the importance of respect, the ways by which we benefit from our friendships, and the necessity for responsibility in our everyday lives. With character building and critical thinking at the forefront of our curriculum, the students have already begun to take note of key elements to Matt and Attean's friendship. Throughout the year the students can apply these praiseworthy behaviors to their own interpersonal dealings.

In addition to the social aspect of this novel, the class is also zeroing on its application of reading comprehension, informational writing, and the intricacies therein. We have spent numerous class periods studying different aspects of grammar, i.e writing complex and compound sentences as well as proper execution of capitalization and punctuation. These basic fundamentals of writing will help the students to express their learning as we continue to read *The Sign of the Beaver* and many other texts this year.

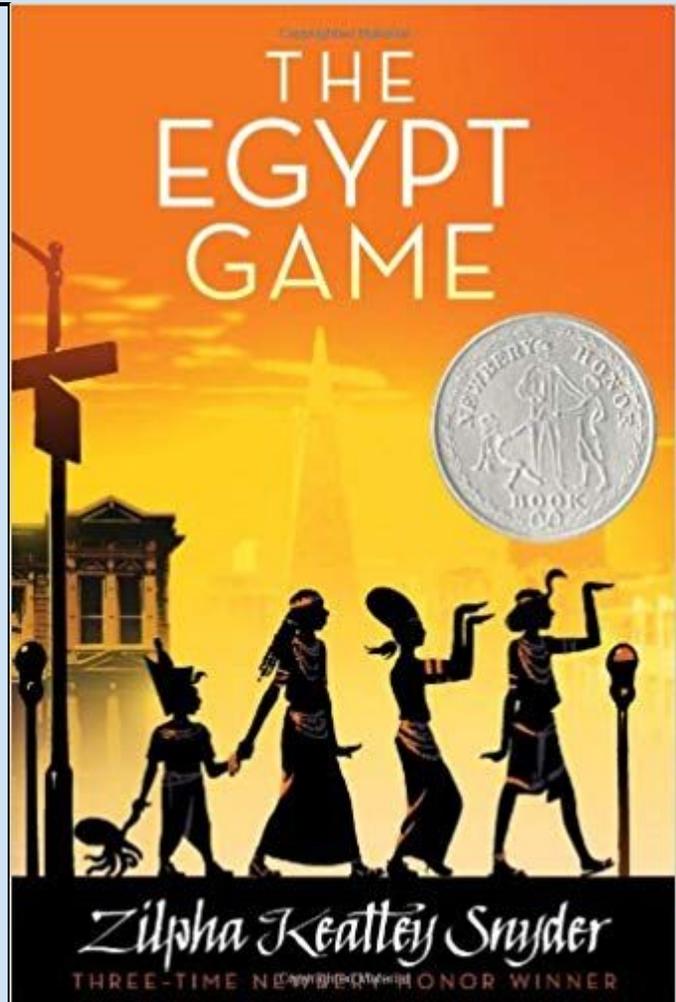
English Language Arts! **Go Griffins!**



The Egypt Game - Sixth Grade by Phil D'Anna

The sixth grade has just completed its first novel, *The Egypt Game*, by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. While reading this novel as a class, the students were also charged with the responsibility of choosing a second novel by Snyder to read on their own. Many students raved about how intriguing their chosen novel was or asked me if there were more books connected to their story. By the end of the unit, all of the students had found a book that they could appreciate reading because it was a book they chose on their own. As we read across the genres, my hope this year is that the sixth graders will find their own passion for reading. It may be mysteries, science fiction, realistic fiction, or even graphic novels. Regardless of the genre, I simply hope that they'll connect with reading.

In conjunction with read such a variety of literature, the sixth graders and I have also been talking about how we communicate our ideas thoughtfully and intelligibly. This may be done on homework assignments, in-class responses, or more extensive essays. All the same, it is essential that effective communication takes place through writing. This year, students are going to develop strong writing habits so that they can masterfully convey their own thoughts. In doing so, I hope that they will each find their own voice as writers, too.



**Mrs. A.'s Class
Makes Math Visual
With Pumpkins!**

**By Kristen Ahfeld
(First Grade Teacher)**

Our class enjoyed picking apples and finding their own perfect pumpkin last a few weeks ago. This week in first grade we used our class pumpkin to capitalize on our pickings in our maths lessons. We read 'The Biggest Pumpkin Ever' by Stephen Kroll to introduce our estimation and measurement activity. We brought our large class pumpkin outside to examine it. The students needed to imagine how long a string belt would have to be to fit around the widest part of the pumpkin. Without measuring, the students cut a string that they thought would be big enough to fit around the pumpkin. After the students wrapped the string, we recorded on a class graph if it was too long to short are just right. We also estimated the amount of seeds inside our pumpkin and recorded and compared the actual amount. The students have been very excited to participate in pumpkin math games.

Putting Literary Characters on the Couch by [Amira Esposito](#) (English Teacher)

The juniors and seniors have taken on their Literature through Psychology English Elective with characteristic aplomb. Since the beginning of the course, we have learned and about and reviewed Freud's theories of id, ego, and superego, learned about Freud's theory of defense mechanisms (regression, repression, projection, etc.) and learned about Carl Jung and his theory of the unconscious and subconscious as well as Jung's theory of "the shadow" inherent in everyone's subconscious. Students have explored these theories by finding examples of them in various episodes of the TV show "The Simpsons" and then writing psycho-analyses of these episodes. Students then viewed the film "Inception," about the interplay between one's dreams, reality, and one's subconsciousness, and wrote a short analysis in response. Students have since begun to delve into the epic novel "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides. "Middlesex" is a sweeping narrative that covers stories of immigration, family ties, community, urban life, the Great Depression, and gender, and many other subjects, all while delving into a number of psychological issues. I look forward to continuing to hear and read these strong students innovative ideas as the year continues.

In the 12th grade elective "20th Century Literature," the engaged and involved students have read (or are currently reading) "Death of A Salesman," "The Crucible," and "The Outsiders." The senior students who are effective "graduates" of Garden's English Language Academy have been looking for examples of character descriptions and plot developments as we delve both into our reading of "The Outsiders" and continue to learn more college-level English vocabulary. In the other section of this class, students have explored Arthur Miller's complex portrayals of class, mob mentality, conflict on provincial and global scales, and family through writing and intense class discussion. I look forward to seeing all of these students' continued development in writing and literary analysis as the year continues.

[Mr. Melara's](#) Spanish Class Learns about Ancient Cultures

Our Spanish students are learning about Mayan, Inca, and Aztec cultures as part of an intensive World Language curriculum at Garden School.

Did you know that the Aztec built a great city that is today Mexico City? That the Inca had the most developed society in the America before the arrival of Columbus and that the Mayans built pyramids that still to this day being discovered.

Want to know more about these amazing civilizations? Swing by the Spanish room and have a chat. We will teach you something new!



The Inca Empire Flag and Symbol

Making Good Guesses (not second guesses) in Math Class by [Paula James](#) (Second Grade Lead Teacher)

“Estimating is like calculating with a good guess”, explained Raia H. to her second-grade classmates. We are learning how to estimate and practice our estimation skills with everyday objects in the classroom. It is important for children to learn to estimate and be able to assess if their answer is within a reasonable range.

The children participated in several activities where they were asked to estimate the quantity of objects in a jar. They enjoyed the challenge of making a sensible guess and finding out the exact amount. We will continue with these hands-on activities to help the students increase accuracy and understanding with their estimating skills.

The second graders also have been building technology skills in the computer lab. This week students were introduced to our classroom Gmail account. Each student was given the task of creating their own folder and document in Google Drive. When the task was completed, they were able to practice keyboarding skills and type a creative story from their journals. Their goal is to become familiar with Google Docs, and to create and format documents. As the year progresses, they will learn to use Google Slides to create a presentation on data gathered from research in math and social studies. Second grade is an exciting place to be!

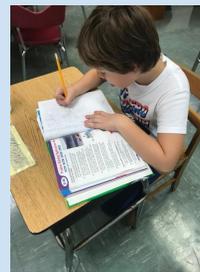
Sleuthing the Word Problems in Ms. Vidal's Math Class

In math, the third graders have been working on word problems. They are learning different strategies to help decode the problem to successfully find the solution. They are learning to identify the important facts of the problem and which strategy would be most useful to solve the problem. They are being encouraged to visualize the problem and ask themselves, “What is the problem really asking?” Children can feel intimidated by word problems, but by pulling out the useful facts and choosing a method to find the solution, word problems become less daunting.

Word problems teach a student to use both logic and creativity to solve real life challenges. It teaches how to apply the basic mathematical operations like adding, subtraction, multiplication, division, etc. into real life problems. When a student visualizes the word problem he/she will be able to get to the solution quicker. Solving word problems can develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts, which is valuable in teaching children to solve problems in their everyday lives. I try to instill in them that solving word problems are like solving a puzzle. The challenge to decode and find the solution is fun!



Ellie in Second Grade makes some good guess to estimate how many blocks are in the jar.



George uses his sleuthing skills to solve math word problems.
#math

Fine Arts at Garden

Go
Griffins!



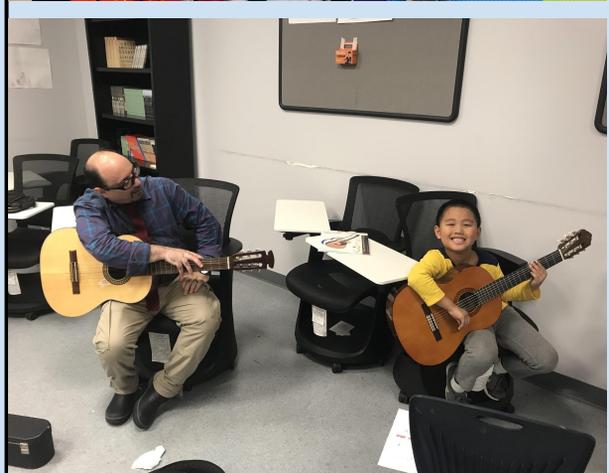
Early Childhood Students Sing Along to Wagner (as well as some classic Sesame Street songs)

by [Tom Heineman](#) (Music Teacher and Fine Arts Chair)

Of the recent songs introduced in the Nursery classroom, the Sesame Street theme may be the biggest hit. Many students recognize the melody when its played, but the titles they give the song when trying to name it vary from “Sunny Day” (the first lyric), to “Elmo,” to “Sesame Place.”

To celebrate Halloween, Nursery sang many songs of which they are familiar with slightly altered words. These included ‘One Skeleton’ (‘One Elephant’), ‘The Goblin in the Dell,’ ‘Five Little Owls,’ ‘One Two Three Four Five’ (“once I caught a Witch alive”), and ‘This Old Bat.’ They also recited the poem ‘5 Little Goblins’ (based on ‘Five Little Monkeys’) and sang a completely teacher-revamped ‘Mary Had a Little Bat.’ If that weren’t spooky enough, Old MacDonald’s Farm became a ranch haunted by a ghost, cat, owl, and bat. All early childhood students moved to music as ghosts, owls, skeletons, bats, black cats, and other Halloween creatures.

Pre-K and Kindergarten started learning the song ‘I Don’t Want to Live on the Moon’ this week, another Sesame Street gem. They will continue their Halloween festivities by learning a Halloween song, ‘5 Little Pumpkins, which is a favorite of students; they often request it years later. Additionally, Pre-K and Kindergarten students will fashion ghosts using scarves and move them to Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries and Mussorgsky’s Night on Bald Mountain. With the scarves the students will demonstrate the up and down motion of the melodies in the former, and the rhythm and volume of the main melody in the latter.



It's Music to Our Ears!



This picture is lit!
Noah and Orpheus
visit the firehouse -
together with the
Pre-K and
Kindergarten class.
We thought we
would add it to this
week's newsletter.
Thanks for reading!