

## **Everett Enrichment – September 2009**

**Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Whole Class Lessons:** The beginning of the school year is an important time for the children to consider themselves as thinkers and students. In each classroom, at the appropriate level, I talked with the children about how our brains function and grow strong connections. We discussed how thinking carefully, welcoming challenges, and understanding each other are important when we work and play at home, in sports, with friends, and in everything the children do in school. The children discussed how calm, reflective, deep thinking is satisfying and how to keep their mental and physical balance.

The students in every class worked with logical thinking to demonstrate critical thinking, analyzing and evaluating. Kindergartners and 1st graders drew and wrote about what they like to do with their special minds and they continued complex patterns. Second and 3rd graders analyzed new vocabulary words and math problems, making connections to information they already knew. We also discussed locations in the brain where scientists believe certain functions occur, and we made thinking caps to emphasize those areas and that the brain is the control center for our bodies, our thoughts, emotions, senses, and movements.

**Kindergarten Groups:** We have begun language arts groups in kindergarten and will soon rotate to math enrichment groups. Some children are reading together and others are listening and responding to vocabulary-rich rhyming stories. All are searching for rhyming “word families” as a basis for finding patterns in language and expanding their vocabulary. The children have examined animal and motion words and grouped them according to changing rules. We are working hard to read carefully and closely observe words and pictures. We focus on achieving excellent comprehension -- factual, inferential, and evaluative.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Language Arts Groups:** First graders are examining the idea of self-acceptance and acceptance of others, reading slowly and carefully for meaning, as we begin the school year. The children have reflected on themselves as students by thinking about what good students do, such as listen and share ideas, try hard to understand, take risks, think deeply, make mistakes and learn from them. They are reading and reflecting on the story, *Leo the Late Bloomer*, as a means to discuss strengths and weaknesses, that no one is perfect, and that adults appreciate them for themselves and do not want to rush them.

**1st Grade Math Groups:** First graders are demonstrating their logical thinking skills by applying math skills to word problems. The word problems show that the children understand math at a deep level. The students will continue working with understanding numbers as a system with symbols to develop a strong understanding of place value and number operations. They will work with all operations, making sure they can explain patterns, concepts, and methods.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Language Arts Groups:** Second graders in groups brainstormed about possible jobs that people have now and they could have in the future. They then connected the idea of jobs to their own - - being a student. They generated ideas about how good students approach their work and keep a healthy balance. The students are reading realistic fiction by James Stevenson to analyze the story's structure and make connections between characters and their own lives. Our first story, *What's Under My Bed*, is fun to read during Halloween season and also helps in learning to evaluate and summarize important events in pictures and words.

**2nd Grade Math Groups:** The students are learning about symbols and systems and how number operations represent complex transactions. To understand our number system better, we are examining how ancient number systems represent place value. This study deepens the students' understanding of our base-ten system, how numbers are expressed, and how regrouping works. They are learning systematic approaches to working with multi-step, logical word problems, with increasing complexity.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Language Arts Groups:** Third graders are beginning the school year using critical thinking to evaluate clues in a mystery. The students need to analyze carefully as they use a logic matrix to solve the mystery. Students will study fiction by Patricia Polacco as a means for reading deeply, formulating questions, and for analyzing vocabulary. Central to understanding the books is inferring characters' complicated emotions and character traits.

**3rd Grade Math Groups:** The students have been working on pre-algebra concepts, including representation, variable, and balancing equations. They are enjoying analyzing algebraic expressions to represent known and unknown quantities, finding solutions through their number sense and knowledge of all math operations. They are also working on simplifying complicated word problems, communicating their thinking, and working systematically to find solutions.

My work with 4<sup>th</sup> grade is as a “behind-the-scenes” resource for the teachers as they work with the students in differentiated groups.