

Spartan Spotlight

BT Spotlight: Ms. Brewer's Spooky Writing Assignment

In this month's BT Spotlight, Meagan Brewer (BT3) shares a Halloween-themed writing assignment she designed for her third-grade students at Pinebrook Elementary. What a fun way to engage students while teaching the skills of persuasion, creativity, and even punctuation!

How would you describe the activity?

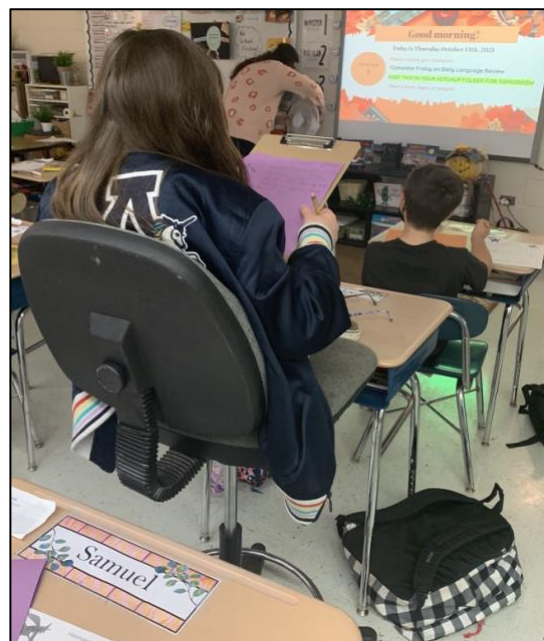
This activity was a Halloween themed writing project. My students have been sharing all of their Halloween plans, things they love about fall, and activities they look forward to so I thought why not bring that into our classroom! So we created Halloween Party/Event Invitations!

What skills did it build?

This activity was centered around persuasive writing. Students had to brainstorm how they could get someone to attend their party, what activities their party may offer and how they were going to persuade their audience to attend their party over everyone else's. We discussed different ways to convince someone of something (using students wanting the latest toy or video game as examples) and who their audience was/how to address them. These are all skills that can transfer to different writings throughout the rest of the year.

Were there any surprises?

I was surprised at how much my students enjoyed this activity. I always strive to bring student interest and enjoyment into instruction but this seemed to be one of their favorite writing activities this year! Students were eager to share them with classmates, and take them home to their families.



Above: one of Ms. Brewer's students begins to plan her Halloween Party invitation.



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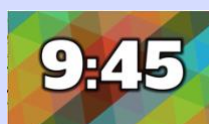
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Tech Tip: Online Timer



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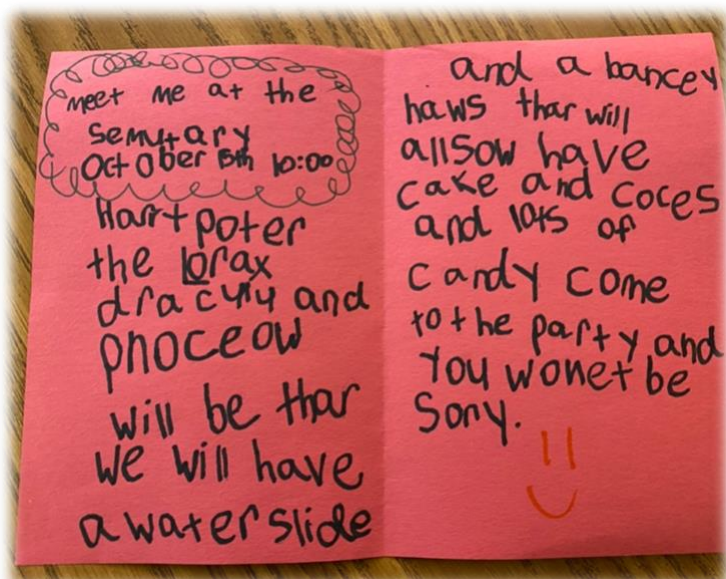
Pause Clear

What: [Digital countdown timers](#) are simple online tools teachers use to pace classroom activities. Most are free and easy to use.

Why: Students often struggle with managing their time during a given learning segment. A timer can help them pace their work appropriately. For some students, timers are particularly helpful in that they work best with very specific and clear timeframes.

When: Use the timer when students are engaged in work that is student-centered and may, depending on the needs of the class, benefit from timed independent work segments. This can include individual work, paired work, or group projects/discussions.

Below: Boo-tiful Halloween Invitations From Ms. Brewer's Third Graders



The Reimagined Classroom: Critical Reflection in Daily Lesson Planning

Do you pay attention to how your students experience learning on a daily basis? Asking some or all of the following questions after each lesson may help you reflect on your teaching practice and improve in ways that will support all students.

- Who was successfully engaged in learning during the lesson? How do I know?
- Who was not successfully engaged in learning during the lesson? How do I know? What might have blocked the engagement of these students?
- How could the lesson structure be altered to engage more students?
- What different instructional strategies could have worked better?
- Should the content be altered or enhanced to promote student learning?

Adopted from H.R. Milner IV (2019). "These kids are out of control.": Why we must reimagine "Classroom Management" for equity.

Be sure to let your NC NTSP coach know if you would like support in incorporating any of these reflective practices into your daily routine.

Check out the **NC NTSP podcast** for short and engaging discussions about teaching and learning

Self-Care Corner: Secondary Trauma Stress

On a daily basis, many teachers work with students who experience trauma in their daily lives.

As a result, they often experience Secondary Traumatic Stress, or STS. According to the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#), STS is "emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another." As we continue to feel the effects of the Coronavirus, it is important to understand the signs of STS and ways we can reduce the affects it may have on us. Check out these resources from the NCTSN:

- A [Fact Sheet](#) for Child-Serving Professionals – this is brief overview of STS, including who is at risk, how to identify STS, and strategies for prevention and intervention.
- [Pause-Reset-Renourish \(PRN\)](#) – provides information on how to implement the PRN strategy for self-care
- [Taking Care of Yourself](#) – list of ideas for self-care to use after a challenging event.

Image source: Source: [EpicTop10.com](#) via Flickr



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<https://ncntsp.org/>

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