

# Table of Contents

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	4
<b>STRUCTURING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>TO ACCOMMODATE DIVERSITY AND COMMONALITIES</b> .....	5
<b>USING A VARIETY OF STRATEGIES TO DIFFERENTIATE INSTRUCTION</b> .....	48
<b>ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THINKING SKILLS</b>	
<b>ACROSS THE CURRICULUM</b> .....	97
<b>MAKING SURE THEY ARE TAUGHT—NOT CAUGHT—IN THE MIDDLE</b> .....	161
<b>ASSESSING STUDENT INTERESTS, ABILITIES, AND GROWTH</b> .....	223
<b>ANSWER KEY</b> .....	272
<b>INDEX</b> .....	274

# PREFACE

Life in the middle level classroom is becoming more complicated each day. The growing emphasis on student-centred education has been embraced by dedicated middle grades educators who are working hard to implement new instructional strategies and organisational procedures to build a positive community for learning. Adding to the complexity are changing curricular and evaluation requirements of state and national legislation, which require a focus on a common set of student performance and assessment outcomes. To meet this challenge, educators are seeking not only a greater understanding of middle grades philosophy and research, but actual, usable, hands-on materials and methods that can help them to be effective in the middle years classroom.

*Tools, Treasures, & Measures*, created as a practical companion to the comprehensive handbook *The Definitive Middle School Guide*, is a hands-on resource for busy teachers who want easy access to high-quality materials to help them improve classroom delivery systems. Containing effective teaching strategies and organisational techniques, dynamic activities and assignments, valuable assessment instruments and reporting systems, and lists, lesson plans, and inventories (plus an answer key and all-inclusive index), this book is a *living* source book, offering the teacher everything needed to capitalise on the middle school organisational pattern. Its five modules are related in content, but are organised so that each may be used independently for training purposes.

Module I, **Structuring the School Community To Accommodate Diversity and Commonalities**, offers materials to help with the exploration of issues such as cultural diversity, individual learning styles, student empowerment, parent involvement, and varied ability levels. Module II, **Encouraging the Development of Thinking Skills Across the Curriculum**, focuses on creative and critical thinking skills and presents models for “stretching the minds and teasing the imaginations” of students and teachers. Module III, **Using a Variety of Strategies To Differentiate Instruction**, introduces prototypes of a variety of ways to individualise classroom instruction—so that all students can learn. Module IV, **Making Sure They Are Taught—Not Caught— In the Middle**, provides teachers with multiple ways to modify and enrich the curriculum so that desired student outcomes can be achieved in all subject areas. Module V, **Assessing Student Interests, Abilities, and Growth**, outlines alternative ways for schools to measure student achievement, including product, performance, and portfolio assessment.

Each page is designated as a tool, a treasure, or a measure:

## **Tools**

- Student activities
- Student assignments

## **Treasures**

- Teacher information sheets
- Lesson plans

## **Measures**

- Assessment instruments
- Assessment techniques

All are gathered into a dynamic presentation of topics and highly practical pages that teachers will use and cherish for years to come. Because of the increasing complexity of life in the middle level classroom; because of the changing demands of state and national legislation; because of the challenges of new evaluation methods; because of your desire for the most effective classroom delivery system; and, most of all, because of the diverse and changing needs of today’s middle grades students: this book is your lifesaver!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## A "Quick Thinking" Self-Inventory

Without thinking for very long about the open-ended statements below, complete each one with the first thought that comes into your head:

1. **Adults are usually** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. **Most of the time I think teachers are** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. **The biggest problem I have with people of my own age is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **My classmates are more impressed by** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. **I think my classmates see me as** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. **The thing I like most about school is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. **One thing I would like to change about the world today is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. **Things that cause prejudice and misunderstandings are** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. **One thing I really like about my community is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. **One thing I would like to change is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. **I would like to be more** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. **Someone I really admire is** \_\_\_\_\_  
**because** \_\_\_\_\_
13. **I think writing answers to questions like this is** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After you have finished writing answers to all the questions, go back to question number one and read all your answers. Is there something you could learn about yourself by pondering your answers? If you like, add the completed work to your journal or portfolio for later reflection and discuss your feelings about the activity with the teacher.

# Observation Orientation

People-watching is a fascinating hobby! It can help us develop a keener awareness of the marvellous sense of diversity within the human race and at the same time deepen our appreciation of the commonalities shared by all.

To help you develop your observation skills and to become better acquainted with your classmates, complete each of the sentences below. Try not to use any person's name more than once.

1. The name of the person who appears to be the tallest boy in our class is \_\_\_\_\_.  
The name of the boy who appears to be the next tallest is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The girl who is sitting nearest to the classroom door is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The name of a girl who has blue eyes is \_\_\_\_\_.  
Speaking of eyes, the name of a boy with brown eyes is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The full name of one person who wears glasses is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The names of two people who are wearing shoes of the same colour are \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_ other people in the room are wearing shoes of this colour.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is wearing a shirt with buttons.
7. A person I admire a lot is wearing \_\_\_\_\_.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ impresses me as being a very hard worker.
9. The person wearing an article of clothing I would like to own is \_\_\_\_\_.  
The article of clothing is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The name of the person who appears to have the longest hair is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who impresses me as being very cheerful and outgoing and very well adjusted to school.
12. Since I have been observing my classmates in order to complete this activity, the name of the person I have seen smile the most is \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## **Consensual Conclusions:**

# **Using Cooperative Learning Groups To Aid in Reaching Consensual Conclusions**

## **The Jury Is Out!**

Ask students to work in cooperative learning groups to find consensual conclusions for the following situations. Each group will need to consider the situations and determine its own approach to reaching a consensual conclusion. Strategies to consider might include:

- **discussion**
- **questioning**
- **debate**
- **deliberation**
- **surveying**
- **polling**
- **petitioning**
- **argument**
- *and*
- **persuasion.**

The object of the activity is to reach some conclusion upon which each group member can agree. In the event that this objective becomes impossible to achieve, the group should compromise by cooperating to write a brief summary of the group's efforts, including an analysis of the points of disagreement and suggestions for new approaches to reaching consensus, even if it involves some degree of compromise.

# Consensual Conclusions:

## Situation 1

A school sports team is found guilty of breaking game rules and cheating during a round robin tournament. After careful investigation, it is determined that the captain and several other team members were opposed to the decision to cheat and tried to convince the team to observe the rules of the game. When outvoted by a majority of the team members, they elected to allow the “majority to rule” and support the cheating. A proposal to disqualify team members from participation in school a round robin for the remainder of the school year has been placed before the school administrators. The sports committee has proposed three alternative plans for consideration.

Determine the fairest and most fitting conclusion (reach group consensus on one of the following conclusions).

### CONCLUSIONS

- \_\_\_ 1. Disqualify all members of the team from participation in sports activities for the remainder of the school year.
- \_\_\_ 2. Disqualify only the members of the team who supported the cheating. Allow the members who voted against cheating to join other teams and resume playing.
- \_\_\_ 3. Ask each member of the team to do three hours of school community service, to write an essay on the value of honesty and fair play, and to meet with a teacher, coach, or school counsellor to discuss team responsibility. Then allow all to participate fully in all sporting activities.

Group \_\_\_\_\_