

BEST DAN L. MILLER QUOTES

Quotations yield the greatest insight from the fewest words.

—Dan L. Miller

A teacher's most important role is that of 'creator.' To create something is to produce something new, unique, original, or nonexistent. Every time a student sees a new concept or says, 'Hey, that's right!' about a point being discussed in class, I as a teacher feel as though I've created something, in that the student now understands something that for the student did not exist before that moment.

—Dan L. Miller

Teaching children is an honor. Learning from them is a blessing.

—Dan L. Miller

The smallest kindness is often long-remembered.

—Dan L. Miller

Your choice of friends reflects your character.

—Dan L. Miller

Most people are nondescript. A few are stunningly attractive. But look closely, look deep and you'll find singular beauty in everyone.

—Dan L. Miller

All students take tests, but the most difficult challenge of all may be the test of one's will, one's courage, and one's self-esteem when confronted by a bully.

—Dan L. Miller

You've achieved first place; now aim for perfection.

—Dan L. Miller

Anyone can put words on paper, but until one receives the approbation of publication, one is not an author.

—Dan L. Miller

Those who can, teach; those who can't teach do something less significant.

—Dan L. Miller

I have read a lot and written a lot, and, although I would not plagiarize the writing of others, if I unintentionally insert in my writing a phrase or unique word I'd absorbed in my reading, I call it not plagiarism but inadvertent inclusion.

—Dan L. Miller

The theater experience, the performance, elicits laughter, tears, the full range of emotions. It validates that I empathize, I relate, I feel, I live.

—Dan L. Miller

Once a youth has success in a major theatrical production, that child has contracted theater fever and is wedded to the theater until beaten down by theatrical life or until death.

—Dan L. Miller

In many cases, unfortunately, a school building can run itself quite nicely without the supervision or interference of the principal.

—Dan L. Miller

School principals don't make friends; they accumulate enemies.

—Dan L. Miller

No easy problems ever come to the school principal. If they are easy to solve, they've already been taken care of by somebody else.

—Dan L. Miller

The school principal is one who spends his career urging people to do things they don't want to do.

—Dan L. Miller

The school principal is a master juggler twirling as many as twenty daggers at any one time.

—Dan L. Miller

The day you take complete responsibility for yourself, the day you stop making excuses and stop blaming others, is the day you start on the road to accomplishment and success.

—Dan L. Miller

The curse of parenthood is the constant worry over one's children—even when they are adults.

—Dan L. Miller

Even if you don't recognize or don't admit to your faults and weaknesses, they will some day be dramatically displayed in your children.

—Dan L. Miller

Children turn talented, accomplished men into fathers and talented, independent women into mothers.

—Dan L. Miller

The craziest, most out-of-control creature on the face of the earth is a two-year-old.

—Dan L. Miller

Concert Hall: A temple where the dead will never die.

—Dan L. Miller

Music is audio massage.

—Dan L. Miller

Don't react; attack!

—Dan L. Miller

Love has the power to reduce powerful, influential men to quivering chattel and brilliant, dynamic women to babbling, baby-talking simpletons.

—Dan L. Miller

Sittin'. People sit. Life's so short. To only sit is to waste that precious time, that precious life. Better to read, to write, to compute, to converse, to live.

—Dan L. Miller

Life is a struggle from beginning to end. During the first half of life we battle the anxieties and emotional crises that accompany growth to emotional maturity. Once we reach emotional and fiscal stability and achieve our professional and physical peak at mid-life, we then spend the last half of our lives in physical discomfort and a general state of atrophy.

—Dan L. Miller

In life it is not necessarily where you are going that counts; it's what you leave behind.

—Dan L. Miller

To write a book is to open one's mind for all to see, judge, and criticize.

—Dan L. Miller

The library is the epitome of organization with each of the thousands of tomes standing tall like sentinels guarding their dewey decimal-assigned slot on the shelves.

—Dan L. Miller

Library: A resting place where the dead never die.

—Dan L. Miller

One of my fondest childhood memories is of walking that mile to the library in my small, rural community, passing through the door of the venerable, clapboard, one-room building with its pine-plank floors warped with age and its comfortable, ubiquitous, musty smell to discover the most fantastic of unknown and fascinating worlds in the wonderful, worn books of its collection.

—Dan L. Miller

Be honest! Always tell a straight story and always treat employees in an honest manner. Don't be false or insincere.

—Dan L. Miller

Dishonesty is a part of human nature. The only difference among individuals is the degree to which one is dishonest.

—Dan L. Miller

One can be sad, alone, detached from family and friends, and the movies can fill a void. Film can provide one for a short period of time with an intimate relationship with characters who fully participate in all aspects of life. One becomes absorbed in a film and vicariously experiences life through characters created by gifted artists.

—Dan L. Miller

Driving is the epitome of egotism, since all drivers behave as if they were the only ones on the road.

—Dan L. Miller

Behind the steering wheel everyone is of equal status.

—Dan L. Miller

The great equalizer of all men is the art of driving. Behind the wheel of a car on the open road, all men are equal. No difference exists and no preference is given to the 16-year-old, the octogenarian, man, woman, teetotaler, drunk, pagan, professor...All drivers have equal rights, equal privileges, and equal power.

—Dan L. Miller

When one misbehaves with impunity, one continues to misbehave.

—Dan L. Miller

The most difficult students for school personnel to deal with are those students who truly do not care. As the old saying goes, 'You can't push a rope.'

—Dan L. Miller

Life's a struggle, and throughout our journey, in various ways, Life batters us all. In the end, we can only hope for happiness, a sense of fulfillment, and serenity.

—Dan L. Miller

As we bustle, bumble and elbow our way through life, we inevitably but unintentionally mangle the lives of others. Reflecting, I regret the damage but acknowledge that I've been injured also at the hands of others. I only hope those I've bruised have been as resilient as I and have survived as I have survived.

—Dan L. Miller

I've dated a lot, and reflecting on my life, I've kissed a lot of frogs, dodged a lot of bullets, been sucker-punched, and missed out on a few, true gems. Dating can be arduous and disheartening, but in the end, all turned out well. I beat the odds.

—Dan L. Miller

What does it tell you about the intensity of admiration for the opposite sex when boys are called 'girl watchers' and girls are called 'boy crazy?'

—Dan L. Miller

It is natural to revive fond memories, but one can't dwell in the past and stay whole. Seek to keep the past in its place, and strive to make the present more pleasant.

—Dan L. Miller

When your business displaces your family, it's time to find a new business.

—Dan L. Miller

A word processor is only a fancy combination of a pencil, an eraser, and a scissors with a pot of paste; it's the mind with its creativity that does the real work.

—Dan L. Miller

While you do occasionally have differences, you ought to have a process where you can sit down and talk about things. How else do you solve problems?

—Dan L. Miller

More often than not, those left behind at work rarely revere retirees but breathe a sigh of relief at their departure. Some actually revel at the prospect of their own promotion to fill the gap.

—Dan L. Miller

Book: A place where the dead will never die.

—Dan L. Miller

The experience of reading a fine, old book cannot be duplicated by any electronic media today. A fine, old book appeals to all the senses as one carefully turns and fingers the fragile, yellowed pages; as one unites with the distant past with each whiff of the musty tome; and as the book virtually whispers to the reader with each stiff, crinkly turn of the delicate page.

—Dan L. Miller

IMAGINATION—the seed of all genius.

—Dan L. Miller

Art Gallery: A place where the dead will never die.

—Dan L. Miller

Inscrutable poetry. I majored in English. I taught high school English. I have a doctorate degree. And yet, I read poems I can't understand. What does the poet communicate if the reader can't interpret the poem or derive any appreciation or beauty from the experience? So many readers who might appreciate poetry won't go near the genre because of the inscrutability factor. When I write a poem, I want a literate 8th grader to understand it.

—Dan L. Miller

Socrates questioning an individual, Socrates expounding to an admiring circle of adolescents, and Socrates walking through the streets discussing with a friend such topics as the perfection of the soul may, in each situation, be referred to as schools in that learning is taking place, and yet the location is not firmly established or static.

—Dan L. Miller

Walden Pond was a school for Thoreau. At that period in his life he needed Walden Pond in order to, as he expressed it, ‘live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.’ Solitude was Thoreau’s teacher, and the pond was his school.

—Dan L. Miller

Helen Keller’s school was her home where she learned what was essential for her to know in order to develop as she did. Anne Sullivan helped Helen cross over from her third world of darkness, silence, and utter oblivion to one of understanding, feeling, and communication. School to Helen was her modest home and loving teacher.

—Dan L. Miller

Everyone’s needs or requirements for a school will differ. Socrates in solitude would have dried up and remained unproductive. He needed the dialogue with people and the opportunity to teach and learn through questioning. Thoreau would have been stifled in the teeming city of Athens. His education would have been hampered for lack of a place to think and the absolute freedom he needed to contemplate. Helen Keller would not have profited from life in the city and surely would have perished if left to herself. She needed a close and patient relationship in a familiar location in order to make progress. In order to make the learning process function effectively, these individuals had to define for themselves what a school was and work within their own established definition of a ‘school.’

—Dan L. Miller

A school is both a location and a process. Ideally, it should be and could be imagined as being any activity, at any location, at any time in which learning takes place.

—Dan L. Miller

THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S ROLE IN PROMOTING READING

Strategies to promote reading within the building, attract students to the library, and help students appreciate the library through the initiative of the library staff:

- Book of the day—Each day school announcements will ‘advertise’ a book. The announcement reader can summarize the description on the book jacket to interest students in the book. The library staff will display the book in the library for a day and then check it out.
- Extended library hours —8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with students using the library before school with a pass.
- Racks of paperback books—Create high interest, attractive, and easy-access book displays for students.
- Spontaneous rewarding of students for carrying a leisure-reading book with them during the school day. The principal could ask to see students’ library books at any time and reward them with certificates or other incentives.
- Sponsor reading competitions such as Battle of the Books among homerooms or between schools.
- Conduct research scavenger hunts.
- Hold a luncheon for select students and give them the first opportunity to preview new books.
- Encourage teachers to hold events and activities in the library so that students come to view the library as an interesting and popular school destination.
- Sponsor a paperback book exchange.
- Create bibliographies for different interests and also for various problems students face.
- Promote the library and library activities in the school newspaper and parent newsletter.
- Award certificates or other incentives after a student reads and completes a librarian-created survey/questionnaire.
- Prepare a brochure or other handout for students and parents explaining library services and policies.
- Deliver book talks or talks on topics that students can later explore in specific books.
- Create a bulletin board or display case where students can post their reviews of favorite books they have read. Encourage them, also, to post their reviews on such websites as Amazon.

—Dan L. Miller

Now that summer vacation is coming, what do we do with our time? Summer is traditionally the time for young people to play, and play should certainly be a part of any vacation. But now that you as young people are becoming more mature and are being held accountable for increasingly more responsibilities, you should also be preparing yourself for the coming school year. If there is a summer job or odd jobs you can get to earn extra money, that will certainly be a productive way to spend the summer. In addition, you also should be continuing your academics throughout the summer. Make use of the library and the bookmobile to read as many novels as you can during the summer. Reading is a pleasurable way to pass the summer and at the same time you will be dramatically increasing your reading skills. Choose a few non-fiction books also that deal with areas in which you have an interest—space, science, exploring, computers, animals, biographies, for instance. It would also be helpful to buy or lend from a library a book on study skills. Something with a title like ‘How to do Better in School’ or ‘How to Improve Your Study Habits’ would be most beneficial.

Whatever you do this summer, try to help yourself get a head start on the next school year. Read up while you rest up!

—Dan L. Miller

This graduation ceremony marks a significant moment in the lives of these young people. It is the end of their elementary education and the beginning of a higher level of education at the high school—an education that will prepare them for life after school. This occasion marks the end of childhood for these students. Moms—when these student leave this room tonight, they will no longer be children—they will no longer be your babies—they will be young adults. This ceremony is a rite of passage for these students—passage into a more difficult, more challenging, more rewarding phase of their lives.

—Dan L. Miller

As students walk across the stage tonight to receive their diplomas, we are offering them about five seconds of individual glory. It would be best if each student’s five seconds were dignified. This is a ceremony honoring our students, and rather than applauding or cheering each student as they cross the stage, it would be best to save the applause for the conclusion of the ceremony. Believe it or not, most of these students are easily embarrassed, and I’d like not to detract from their appearance on the stage.

—Dan L. Miller

We're here tonight to honor these young people for what they've accomplished in elementary school, and particularly what they've accomplished in middle school. This exercise marks a milestone in their lives. They can no longer be considered children; they are young adults. They are no longer students in elementary school, but will now be high school students. And, for you loving and caring parents, your children will more and more be moving from the protective influence of the home into the sometimes harsh realities of the world.

Tonight, you as graduates, will receive a document—a diploma. And that diploma represents all of your accomplishments, all of your achievements thus far in school. And you've achieved what you have through one attribute—hard work. Although you've all achieved to different degrees, I'm sure one feeling is common among all of you. There are times, perhaps late at night when you're studying for a test, or perhaps in the late afternoon when you're doing homework at a time when you'd much rather be outside with friends—there's a time when you say to yourself, 'Why bother? Why go through all this study, and work, and pain? Hey, who really cares?' The answer to the question, 'Who really cares?' is seated around you tonight. Look around. There are literally hundreds of people here tonight—for you. Parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, teachers, administrators—We are all here because we care. We care about hard work. We care about trying. We care about perfection. We care about YOU.

When you as students walk across this stage tonight to receive your diploma, know that we understand the hard work you've undertaken in the classroom, on the playing field, and in all the aspects of your school life that went into this one, big moment. In a very small way, this is our opportunity to say thank you—thank you for trying; thank you for working to your capacity; thank you for not giving up; thank you for being you.

This is your night. Enjoy it, and accept our wishes that this ceremony may be one part of a rich and rewarding life for each one of you.

—Dan L. Miller

Truancy is a part of American folklore. From the days of Tom Sawyer, mature Americans have chuckled over the antics of adolescents attempting to avoid the drudgery of the classroom in favor of the delights of the old swimming hole. Even today, teachers and administrators chuckle over the lame excuses that students use to cover their absence from school. However, the time has long passed when school personnel can afford to take lightly the unexcused absence of any student. Times have changed since playing hooky was simply considered naughty. Today an education is a necessity, and the present degree to which students deprive themselves of the benefits of a formal education is astonishing.

—Dan L. Miller

The only behaviors that administrators consider to be more deserving of extreme disciplinary measures than truancy are possession of drugs, insubordination, physical assault, vandalism, and use of alcohol. Ranking truancy this high and recommending extreme disciplinary measures to deal with it reflects the frustration that administrators feel about a problem that they consider to be as serious as alcohol abuse and physical assault.

—Dan L. Miller

The most devastating consequence of truancy is its reinforcement of undesirable behaviors. Once an attendance pattern has been established it tends to perpetrate itself.

—Dan L. Miller

There is little evidence to support the contention that suspending students from school changes their school behaviors, reduces their truancy, or makes them better persons because of the experience....With so little evidence of the effectiveness of suspending students from school, it seems contradictory for school administrators to continue to rely so heavily on a practice that is so punitive and harmful. The use of punitive suspensions, however, is firmly established in the educational system. Educators have traditionally looked to punishment as a way to change errant behavior and develop responsibility among students. The evidence, however, is quite to the contrary.

—Dan L. Miller

Alternatives to out-of-school suspension include work-study programs, special education programs, teacher training sessions, student ombudsmen, alternative schools, behavior modification, counseling sessions, peer counseling, contract systems, and planned learning experiences. In-school suspension is the most popular alternative for dealing with student misconduct.

—Dan L. Miller

There is little evidence to support the contention that suspending students from school changes their school behaviors, reduces their truancy, or makes them better persons because of the experience.

—Dan L. Miller

Students who absent themselves from the classroom are students who have taken their first step toward failure.

—Dan L. Miller

Statistics do not tell the whole story of the truancy problem, for students who are on the streets when they should be in classrooms face harsh consequences. Not only do they suffer, but so too do their parents, the school personnel responsible for their education, and all members of their communities.

—Dan L. Miller

Absenteeism, and truancy in particular, are problems of such magnitude that school administrators have an increasingly difficult time dealing with them in both elementary and secondary education. The consequences of declining school attendance are serious, for students who absent themselves from the classroom are students who have taken the first step toward failure. They cannot participate in formal learning experiences, they cannot interact with their peers in a productive academic environment, and they are not in a position to receive the positive reinforcement, counseling, and tutoring from teachers, counselors, and administrators that are critical to academic success.

—Dan L. Miller

Not only is the deleterious effect of truancy upon students of prime concern, but so too is the dramatic impact that truancy has upon school finance, crime, dropout rates, teacher morale, vandalism and test scores.

—Dan L. Miller

School administrators are in a position to see first-hand the impact of truancy. Most school administrators attempt to change truant behavior through punishment, in particular by suspending children from school. While it is difficult to gauge the psychological and educational damage incurred by suspending children from school, it is also clear that suspension inhibits children's growth and development in several ways. Students who are suspended from school are usually those who have academic problems and can least afford to miss classwork. Because they are not supervised while they are suspended, they often get in trouble outside school. They lose contact with those school personnel who are in the best position to help them, and their alienation is further reinforced by physical exclusion from their peers and from the school environment. Since truant students need guidance and support from teachers and administrators, school personnel should be helping these students understand and modify their behavior through guidance and therapy, rather than turning them away by suspending them from school.

—Dan L. Miller

On a survey conducted by the American Association of School Administrators in which administrators were asked to indicate what they considered to be the most negative result of poor attendance, seven consequences ranked in order of importance from most important to least important were cited:

Permanent intellectual and/or vocational damage to student dropouts.
Overall lowering of academic standards and achievement in the school.
Frustration and morale problems experience by teachers.
Poor impression of the schools by the community at large.
Increased paperwork and record keeping for teachers and administrators.
Vandalism and petty crime perpetrated by truants.
Reduced state aid computed on the basis of average daily attendance.

—Dan L. Miller

Sample Tardy Procedure: A student is tardy when that student enters the classroom door after the bell has rung. A student's tardiness is excused when he/she reports to class with an admit from the office marked 'Tardy Excused' or that student has a hall pass from another teacher. A student's tardiness is unexcused when he/she reports to class with an admit from the office marked 'Tardy Unexcused' or that student has no hall pass from another teacher.

—Dan L. Miller

I am concerned with Robin's attendance, Mrs. Sample, to the extent that I will pursue every avenue in trying to insure her daily attendance at school. Robin is expected to attend every class every day. If her attendance does not improve shortly, I will file a petition with the court concerning her truancy and/or file a report of child neglect with the Department of Children and Family Services.

In an effort to avoid taking these steps, I would like very much to work closely with you and Robin in a effort to design a program that would help to insure her regular attendance at school. Would you please meet with me on Friday, October 22, at 9:00 a.m. so that we may work together to see that Robin receives the education she deserves? If you need transportation to school, please let me know, and I will arrange for you to be picked up.

—Dan L. Miller,
Principal

Caring teachers, personal counseling, innovative instructional materials, and effective teaching techniques have little impact on students who are not in school to benefit from them.

—Dan L. Miller

Research has also been done to determine the relationship between grades and attendance. Carl Ziegler wrote a book titled *School Attendance as a Factor in School*

Progress. His research study looked at the relationship between the attendance of 307 seventh graders and their school grades. Ziegler, too, found a strong, positive relationship between grades and attendance. Whether the student's absences were truant absences or excused absences, the more classes a student missed, the lower were his or her grades.

—Dan L. Miller

MODEL STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

Philosophy: Jefferson Junior High School is committed to the philosophy that every student should attend every class every day. Regular attendance and promptness are expected in all classes and are essentials of good performance of any job. Learning to participate in group discussions, developing an appreciation for the views and abilities of other students, and forming the habit of regular attendance to one's tasks are legitimate objectives of any course. Learning that is lost due to absence can never be adequately replaced. Each student should be aware that attendance is part of his or her evaluation in each class. A student should understand that excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, will drastically affect the class grade.

Parent/Student Responsibilities

1. Parents should encourage good school attendance.
2. Parents should see that their children attend school every day and on time.
3. The only reason a child should be kept home is for an illness serious enough to prevent the child from completing the school day.
4. Should the child be kept home for illness, the parent is to call the school office on that morning to report the absence. If the parent forgets to call, they may write a note for the student when the student returns to school.
5. Students are responsible for reporting to each class on time every day.

Teacher Expectations

1. Set an example—be in school every day.
2. Closely follow through on all building attendance procedures and make up work policies.
3. Be strict and consistent—insist that students attend daily and arrive on time.
4. Insure that you use good classroom management techniques and effective teaching techniques. Use variety in your methods. Make class special.

Learn something new every day and make class an experience students can't afford to miss.

5. Conduct special projects or particularly interesting assignments on Mondays and Fridays when absenteeism tends to be highest.
6. Design a more difficult make-up test for students who are absent on test days to encourage all students to be present and take tests the first time around.
7. Reinforce good attendance in all contacts with parents—open house, progress reports, letters, phone calls, etc,
8. Phone parents of repeated absentees and discuss the importance of work missed and the need to promptly make-up work missed.
9. Be friendly and greet students in a personable manner as they enter your class. Keep your room clean, and decorate your room to create a pleasant working atmosphere.
10. Give impromptu quizzes.
11. Create a reward system for good attendance.
12. Help to improve punctuality by having something for students to do when they first get to class.
13. On the last school day of each month, issue two good news certificates to each student in your homeroom who has had perfect attendance for the month.

—Dan L. Miller

MODEL LETTER TO ALL PARENTS REGARDING ATTENDANCE

Jefferson's Absent-Minded Students

Although Jefferson is as good a school or better than any other school in the district, there is one area in which Jefferson rates dead last—attendance. Each month average daily attendance percentages are figured for each school in the district. Jefferson's daily attendance averages between 86 and 89 percent, which makes Jefferson the school with the lowest rate of attendance in District #60.

On the average, a school can count on 4% of its students being absent on any given day due to illness. Absence beyond the 4% level is usually due to reasons other than illness. The most common reason for absences beyond the 4% level is truancy. On a typical day at Jefferson, therefore, there might be as many as 50-60 of our 500 students absent, with approximately 40 of those absences due to truancy.

The staff at Jefferson has set as its building goal this year the improvement of our students' attendance. There are a number of things we can do to improve attendance, but the greatest effort to get the child to school must be made by the parent and by the individual student. We at Jefferson are committed to the philosophy that every student should attend every class every day. Regular

attendance and promptness are expected in all classes and are essentials of good performance of any job. Learning to participate in group discussions, developing an appreciation for the views and abilities of other students, and forming the habit of regular attendance to one's tasks are legitimate objectives of any course. Learning that is lost due to absence can never be adequately replaced.

I would encourage all parents, therefore, to discuss this philosophy with their children and to impress upon them the importance of good school attendance. Secondly, I would ask you as parents to do everything you possibly can to insure that your child gets to school on time every day. If your child is too ill to make it through the school day, then, of course, that child should stay home in bed for the day. Parents must call Jefferson in the morning to report that their child is home ill for the day. If you forget to call, you may send a note to school with your child the day your child returns to school. Students who are not excused from school by their parents will be considered truant and will be expected to make up the time they missed in classes in an after-school detention study hall.

In addition to holding truants responsible for making up lost class time, students with good attendance will be rewarded monthly with 'Good News Certificates', which may be turned in for chances in a weekly drawing in which students will win prizes such as school supplies, books, coupons, free ice cream, and tickets to Jefferson's Hollywood Movie Party to be held each month. There will also be a competition among homerooms for best monthly attendance. As a staff, Jefferson teachers have also discussed and put into effect a number of techniques to use in the classroom to improve student attendance.

Again, however, we as a staff cannot improve your child's attendance alone. We must work cooperatively to get all Jefferson students to school each day to insure that each one is getting the best education possible. It has been said that a mind is a terrible thing to waste. Let's not waste our children's minds by allowing them to sit home watching TV or walking the streets or lying at home sleeping during the school day. Let's get them to school, where their minds can grow and develop as they should.

—Dan L. Miller, Principal

How many students are usually truant from classes on any given day? Generally, the percentage of unexcused absences for most schools runs from 2 percent to 5 percent. In an average sized high school of 1500 students, this means that, on any given day, 30 to 75 students would have missed one or more class sessions without an excuse. Thirty to 75 students may seem like quite a few, but consider the fact that while those 30 students are out of class there are 1470 students who are attending all of their classes.

—Dan L. Miller

Truancy is a warning by the student that something is wrong. In homes or in office buildings which are equipped with smoke detectors, a loud alarm blares when there is a trace of smoke indicating a fire. That alarm continues to sound until someone comes to solve the problem by putting out the fire. The same warning system is built into a human being. To alert parents to the fact that something is wrong, babies and small children cry just as loudly as a smoke alarm. When the child turns into a young adult, the crying turns into other kinds of warnings. The teenager who is truant from school is sending out a signal to his parents and to the people at school that something is wrong. A problem exists that must be solved. Many times this warning goes unheeded, or it is heeded too late. The student may already have developed so many problems that it is no longer a simple task to correct them and get the student functioning effectively once again.

—Dan L. Miller

For half of all truant students, truancy is not their only vice. Because of some emotional problem or personal problem or character flaw or personality deviation, truant students also become involved in other problems— shoplifting, vandalism, drugs, etc. In a research study conducted by M. J. Tyerman of 137 truant students, he found conclusively that truancy was associated with other forms of delinquent behavior. In studying his set of truant students over a six-year period, he found that by the end of the study 64 of his 137 students had police records while 24 of his students had been removed from the home and placed in detention homes or reform schools.

—Dan L. Miller

Not only can truancy have a very harmful effect on you while you are in school but consider the results of wasted years in school on your later life. Many researchers have studied adults who had been truant in school and analyzed their life's problems. A man named Lummis did a study of 1000 men being inducted into the army. He found that those men who had been truants in high school were the same men who exhibited the worst conduct while in the army. When these men left the army, it was generally found that they frequently had long periods of unemployment.

—Dan L. Miller

Reasons for truancy fall into three categories:

1. Some students miss classes because of home and family problems,
2. Some students miss classes because of school-related problems, and,
3. Some students miss classes because of personal problems, behavior problems, or habits.

—Dan L. Miller

In a long-term study in St. Louis, Robins and Ratcliff studied the lives of men who had been truant in school. They generally found that truancy in school lead to the following adult problems: failure in school, dropping out of school, leaving home before the age of eighteen, early marriage, low wages, job problems, marital problems, depression and anxiety, drug addiction and/or alcoholism, criminal activity, and violence. If you look back at the list of problems that truant students have as adults, you'll see that there is a logical progression from one problem to another. Because of a lack of attendance in classes, the truant student fails at school, falls far behind in classwork and credits, and eventually gets so frustrated that he drops out. Because of the desire of the truant to be independent and on his own, he leaves home early to live with friends or to get his own place. Many truants feel that their problems will be over once they are free from the hassles of school and parents. They soon find that they are very wrong. The same types of problems they experienced in high school follow them into the job and marriage.

—Dan L. Miller

Don't let truancy ruin your education, your relationships, and your future. Everyone has problems and difficulties in life, but truancy only makes everything worse. Show some strength and courage, address your responsibilities at school, and ensure a successful future for yourself.

—Dan L. Miller

EVERYBODY has problems! They may come in different shapes and sizes and degrees of difficulty, but everyone has issues. Actually, that's what life is—a series of problems to address and overcome. And, if you're not thrown by them, they can make life interesting. They can be an exciting challenge if you know how to tackle them. The happiest people and most successful people aren't the people without problems. They're the people who know how to solve their problems.

—Dan L. Miller

The secret of success when it comes to solving problems is to attack them directly and to cut down on wasted motion. In other words, instead of jumping from one solution to another trying to find the answer, think through each solution to its possible outcome before you do anything about it. This is a kind of mental trial and error process. You think about the solutions before you try them. In this way you can eliminate some of the solutions that won't work without wasting time actually trying them out. You can then put all your effort into the solution you finally do select and give yourself a better chance of reaching your goal.

—Dan L. Miller

Joining company with those who can succeed where you can't do so alone is sometimes a solution to a difficult problem. For example, one person alone cannot change a law—so he joins an organization composed of people who feel the same way he does, and jointly they may succeed. When anyone joins in working with a group, whether large or small, he identifies himself with that group; he considers himself a part of it. This is normal and healthy. We all do it when we want to solve a big problem and can't do it by ourselves. If you sincerely want to be able to attend school regularly, for instance, one of the surest ways is to develop an interest in school. You can develop an interest by joining a club, organization, activity, or sport. You'll be making a new set of friends, you'll be having fun, and you'll begin to enjoy coming to school. School will become a more happy place than it may now be.

—Dan L. Miller

When you aren't getting anywhere with your problems, when they persist or keep coming back to trouble you, then you should recognize that it's time to ask for help. This doesn't mean throwing up your hands in despair and saying, 'This is too much for me—I'll let someone else solve this one.' It doesn't mean giving up. Getting help when something is too much for you is a sign of intelligence and maturity in dealing with your problems, and it shows that you are taking the wisest course of action under the circumstances.

—Dan L. Miller

You can tell friends things you can't tell anyone else. A friend can offer advice that you wouldn't take from anyone else. That's the nature of friendship. Often the friend can help you see your problem more clearly. She may be able to offer a hint that will help solve the problem. Be aware, however, that friends may want to please you and may simply agree with a bad plan you've developed. Activate your crap detector to make sure the advice of a friend rings true.

—Dan L. Miller

Quotations, which can be located in hundreds of available collections, have many practical uses. Librarians can use quotations effectively to enliven library lessons or speeches and lend authority to concepts, procedures and facts that they present. The teaching librarian can also use scholarly quotations to effectively stimulate thought in those who are participating in group library lessons. Librarians can use particular quotes or pools of quotations for theme topics or as the basis for poster or collage projects, or they may also display apt quotations on signs or bulletin boards or feature a 'thought of the day.'

—Dan L. Miller

Centuries ago Voltaire stated that ‘the multiplicity of facts and writings is becoming so great that everything must soon be reduced to extracts.’ Considering that we are now in an age of information glut, we have apparently arrived. Regardless of whether Voltaire was prophetic, there are a number of advantages to using quotations as a staple in the English classroom.

Quotations are short. Considering the fast-paced, media culture in which our students are immersed, a quotation ranging from five to six words to three or four sentences is readily acceptable to the adolescent in a hurry. As a change of pace from short stories, poems, and novels, it’s refreshing to delve into the genre of the quotation to stimulate thought and focus on the development of communication skills.

—Dan L. Miller

By using quotations teachers can **lend authority to their words**. Students will more readily accept particular views knowing that great thinkers and authorities from the past have also held those views. It is a plus when a particular quotation or proverb is familiar to students because those well-known sayings have already earned universal acceptance. If, for instance, one is teaching about concise writing, the following quotations make the point and add authority to the lesson.

Say all you have to say in the fewest possible words, or your reader will be sure to skip them; and in the plainest possible words or he will certainly misunderstand them. (John Ruskin)

The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do. (Thomas Jefferson)

In composing, as a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written: you have no idea what vigor it will give your style. (SydneySmith)

—Dan L. Miller

Teachers can use quotations to **summarize an idea or define a concept** that might otherwise take several paragraphs to cover. By using quotations one can very well make a complete, concise statement about any aspect of literature, learning, or life. By exploring in class the following two quotations, teachers may generate some insight into the concept of the development of language. Do the quotations, indeed, describe in a few words the origin and development of language?

Language is not a abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary-makers, but is something arising out of the work, needs, ties, joys, affections, tastes or long generations of humanity, and has its bases broad and low, close to the ground. (Walt Whitman)

Language develops by the felicitous misapplication of words. (J. B. Greenough)

—Dan L. Miller

Teachers may be able to express themselves better and **make their points** more precisely through the use of quotations. For instance, F. Scott Fitzgerald would help a teacher stressing effective uses of verb forms.

About adjectives: all fine prose is based on the verbs carrying the sentences. They make sentences move. Probably the finest technical poem in English is Keats's 'Eve of Saint Agnes.' A line like: 'The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass' is so alive that you race through it, scarcely noticing it, yet it has colored the whole poem with its movement—the limping, trembling, and freezing is going on before your eyes. (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

—Dan L. Miller

Whether a teacher is preparing a lesson, writing a speech, or writing an article, the inclusion of quotations can **enrich and enliven the content** and more effectively deliver the message. Quotations are particularly effective for getting the students' attention at the beginning of a lesson.

A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged; it is the skin of all living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used. (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.)

Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and goes to work. (Carl Sandburg)

—Dan L. Miller

Students often need **motivation** to appreciate a particular subject or topic, and quotations provide insights into the value of a particular topic. Consider, for instance, the following on the nature and value of writing:

Anyone can make history. Only a great man can write it. (Oscar Wilde)

The appeal of writing is primarily the investigation of mystery. (Joyce Carol Oates)

—Dan L. Miller

Through quotations teachers can stimulate students to **view an issue in a new light** or to think about a new topic. Note possibilities for discussion and analysis when considering the following views on the classics:

The classics are only primitive literature. They belong to the same class as primitive machinery and primitive music and primitive medicine. (Stephen Leacock)

A classic is a book that's stood the test of time, a book that men and women all over the world keep reaching for throughout the ages for its special enlightenment...Classics open up your mind. Classics help you grow. Classics help you understand your life, your world, yourself. (Steve Allen)

—Dan L. Miller

A question that strikes close to home for every young student of composition is 'how much **revision** is necessary?' Perhaps students will be able to form a clearer concept of the need for revision after discussing the following two quotations:

The advice I would offer to any writer is that even when you think you have revised your book to the point where you cannot look at it again, it is time to sit down and revise it some more. (Michael Korda)

Too much polishing and you spoil things. There's a limit to the expressibility of ideas. You have a new thought, an interesting one. Then, as you try to perfect it, it ceases to be new and interesting, and loses the freshness with which it first occurred to you. You're spoiling it. (Leo Tolstoy)

—Dan L. Miller

Through a series of quotations the author can **distill** virtually all aspects of a particular issue or concept. And by presenting quotations chronologically, one can show the changing views on a particular subject from age to age. It may be worthwhile to focus discussion on the following chronology of quotations demonstrating the shifting views of duty over the centuries:

413 B.C.—We should not argue when duty calls—we should act. (Sophocles)

400 A.D.—In doing what we ought we deserve no praise, because it is our duty. (St. Augustine)

1823—The last pleasure in life is the sense of discharging our duty.
(William Hazlitt)

1927—What is the use of such terrible diligence as many tire themselves out with, if they always postpone their exchange of smiles with Beauty and Joy to cling to irksome duties and relations? (Helen Keller)

1953—Nobody is bound by any obligation unless it has first been freely accepted. (Ugo Betti)

1961—People are complaining almost everywhere that the sense of duty is disappearing. How could it be otherwise since no one cares anymore about his rights? (Albert Camus)

—Dan L. Miller

Whether taken from 200 B.C., Victorian England, or the Roaring '20s, quotations yield insight both into the **nature of the age** and also into the **nature of the people** who originated the quotes. Quotations embody habits of thought, customs, and moral values. By carefully selecting from the writing of one period, one can unfold, little by little, characteristics and values of that particular age. Similarly, by selecting passages from a particular author's writings, a teacher can illustrate the style, techniques, values, and the unique traits of that writer.

Alexander Pope's poetry was didactic, satiric, witty, and technically superb. He dealt with 18th-century generalizations about a rational universe, optimism, and deism. Pope's poetry concerned itself most often with what was correct, whether in literature or social conduct. By presenting to students and discussing with them these lines from Pope's writing, one could give a good overview of the poet and even whet the appetites of some students to read Pope in more depth.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance. ('An Essay on Criticism')

Two err is human, to forgive divine. ('An Essay on Criticism')

All nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.
(‘An Essay on Man’)

Satire's my weapon, but I'm too discreet
To run amok, and tilt at all I meet.
(‘Imitations of Horace’)

I never knew any man in my life who could not bear a another's
misfortunes perfectly like a Christian.
(‘Thoughts on Various Subjects’)

It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow necked bottles; the less
they have in them the more noise they make in pouring out.
(‘Thoughts on Various Subjects’)

—Dan L. Miller

The entertainment value of literature, is, perhaps, its single most important justification. Teachers can provide students with a great deal of **pleasure** through the judicious selection of quotations that are humorous, that are a clever play on words, or that present a distinctly fresh view of life.

Poetry is a kind of gasp, and there it is, a spark on the page.
Fiction, on the other hand, is like swamp fire. (Joy Kogawa)

From the moment I picked your book up until I laid it down I was
convulsed with laughter. Someday I intend reading it. (Groucho Marx)

—Dan L. Miller

Quotations are particularly appropriate for **introducing new teaching units**. Students need to understand the value of what is to be studied, and teachers may present and discuss appropriate quotations at the beginning of a unit. Consider, for instance, the appropriateness of introducing a unit on language by using the following as a focus for discussion.

If you scoff at language study...how, save in terms of language, will you scoff? (Mario Pei)

The limits of my language stand for the limits of my world. (Ludwig Wittgenstein)

A picture his worth ten thousand words,’ goes the time worn Chinese maxim. But one writer tartly said, ‘It takes words to say that.’ (Leo Rosten)

—Dan L. Miller

Teachers can **display** on signs, posters, or digital media quotations they consider most thought-provoking or inspirational. The quotations will serve as a constant reminder of messages the teacher wants to get across. One can feature a ‘thought for the day’ on the board, for example:

Literature his news that *stays* news. (Ezra Pound)

Literature is man’s written record of what it is like to be alive.
(Unknown)

All great speakers were bad speakers at first. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Language is the dress of thought. (Samuel Johnson)

—Dan L. Miller

Use a particular quotation or a pool of quotations as the basis for **assignments**, themes topics, small group discussions and reports, research papers, or as the basis for poster or collage projects.

All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*. (Ernest Hemingway)

Writing has power, but its power has no vector. Writers can stir the mind, but they can’t direct it. Times change things, God changes things, the dictators change things, but writers can’t change anything.
(Isaac Bashevis Singer)

—Dan L Miller

A **paraphrase** of a quotation illustrates stylistic differences between the two versions and can be an exercise in interpretation. Dictionary skills are also called into play when paraphrasing such quotations as:

In a play, certainly, the subject is of more importance than in any other work of art. Infelicity, triviality, vagueness of subject, may be outweighed in a poem, a novel, or a picture, by charm of manner, by ingenuity of execution; but in a drama the subject is of the essence of the work— it is the work. If it is feeble, the work can have no force; if it is shapeless, the work must be amorphous. (Henry James)

If it were a rainy day, a drunken vigil, a fit of the spleen, a course of physic, a sleepy Sunday, an ill run at dice, a long tailor’s bill, ay beggar’s purse, a factious head, a hot sun, costive diet, want of books, and a just contempt for learning—but for these...the number of

authors and of writing would dwindle away to a degree most woeful to behold. (Jonathan Swift)

—Dan L. Miller

The **study of vocabulary** can be enhanced by presenting selected words in quotations and explaining connotations and denotations. Consider, for example the multiple uses of the word *golden* in the following:

The golden age, which a blind tradition has hitherto placed in the past, is before us. (C. H. Saint-Simon)

Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed. (John Mason Neale)

Silence is golden. (Swiss Proverb)

—Dan L. Miller

As a classroom exercise one can ask students to **match quotations** to themes, characters, events, terms or textbook passages. As part of the exercise, they should explain their reasons for matching the quotations as they did. Discussing those answers could prove profitable in understanding the concepts being explored. Consider the possibilities for discussion centered on the following quotations matched to Edgar Allen Poe's poem 'Annabel Lee.'

Death always comes too early or too late. (English Proverb)

One cannot live with the dead; either we die with them or we make them live again. Or else we forget them. (Louis Martin-Chauffier)

Perhaps the best tribute you can pay someone who dies is to share his belief in life by putting your life ahead of his death. (Max Lerner)

You never realize death until you realize love. (Katherine Butler Hathaway)

—Dan L. Miller

Teachers can ask students to identify in quotations ideas and values and **compare and contrast** them with ideas already discussed in class. By examining quotations from unidentified authors, they can hypothesize about the authors' lives, values, and characters. Students make inferences from the style, choice of words, the

allusions to people and events to discover the location, time and conditions that produced the message as well as the roles, intent, and character of the author.

—Dan L. Miller

Quotations can function in any number of effective ways in the English classroom, and because of their brevity, the effect of the message, and their general usefulness, teachers should consider quotations as a staple of the unit lesson plan.

—Dan L. Miller

Do not underestimate the importance of birthdays and anniversaries in the life of a wife.

—Dan L. Miller

RANDOM IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE:

- Teach and remind students of behavior you expect for class in general and for specific activities. Occasionally during the lesson remind students of the behavior you expect, and as often as possible recognize and praise appropriate behavior (particularly with the most difficult students—‘I like the way Nico is paying attention and ready to start the song,’ ‘Jane is quiet and ready to go,’ ‘I like the way you all lined up.’ (You can even set a goal for yourself to provide during class 5 positive comments each for your misbehavers.) It makes your day as a teacher much more pleasant to be giving out positive comments as opposed to yelling and being upset.
- One of the most effective approaches with most students is to communicate frequently with parents and enlist their help in managing the students’ behavior. This takes work, and many teachers don’t communicate as often as they should, but if you can develop an ongoing dialogue with the parents of difficult students, it can ease your classroom management workload tremendously. Call every week, and call also to offer praise for improved behavior. If you’re dealing with 15 nasty students, that’s only 15 calls per week. You might work out a contract with parents. If the student behaves well in class, they can have some special privilege at home—pick a movie for weekend viewing, a McDonald’s meal, stay up a half hour later than usual, play a video game for longer than usual—whatever the parent thinks will best motivate the student to behave in music class. If parents use e-mail, you can also communicate with them via e-mail. If you put a lot of effort into ongoing parent communication, it can make a difference.
- You can even ask parents who are available during the day to attend your class while their child is present to oversee their child’s behavior. The parent

can just check into the main office and say they have a meeting with you and then come down to the classroom.

- As a teacher you can also make a special arrangement with a misbehaving student to earn privileges in class for proper behavior. For instance, if you have to reprimand them about proper behavior more than twice, they lose their privilege. After about three class sessions, you can change the criteria to no reprimands about proper behavior. Privileges can be ‘sitting at the teacher’s desk or in a special place,’ ‘being first in line,’ or ‘choosing an activity,’ for instance. You can also use tangible rewards such as stickers, school supplies, decals, colored pencils, bookmarks, pencil toppers, or discount coupons for local merchants. With your school ID, you could talk to store managers at McDonald’s, Target, Burger King, etc. to get a supply of discount coupons to use as incentives.

You can also have the misbehaving student keep a behavior chart. Make up a chart with check boxes for every five minutes of class. The student gets to mark a box for every five minutes of good behavior. (Monitor or nod or smile to the student if she silently seeks your approval or acknowledgment.) If the student has all boxes checked at the end of the period, and you concur with the checks, the student earns a reward.

- Use peer pressure by offering class rewards for good behavior and following proper procedures. Recognize and praise good behavior frequently, and have some criteria for the class earning their reward.
- Teach and demonstrate and even give bad examples of the behavior you want students to demonstrate—general classroom behavior, lining up behavior, behavior for a specific activity, etc. Many teachers just expect good behavior but don’t actually teach it. It is just as important to teach behavior as it is to teach music. You must have student attention and engagement for your lesson to be successful and for students to learn.
- Move the misbehaving student right next to you as you teach so you can closely monitor behavior and so you can praise positive behavior more easily.
- Set up a tape recorder or use a smart phone in the classroom and explain to the students that you will turn on the recorder when someone starts misbehaving. You will then play the recorded audio for the parent and the principal. (In reality you need only play it for the parent during a conference or phone conference.) To affect behavior, many times you need only to threaten to turn on the recorder. But if you do turn it on, follow

through with playing it during a phone conference or personal conference so students know it's not an idle threat. You can also use a video recorder for this procedure.

- Hold a private one-on-one conference with the student. Many teachers yell at students and consequence students but never really sit down to have a personal discussion with the student. During the conference make expectations clear but also listen to any concerns the student may have and solicit conversation from the student on how the two of you can work together to have a pleasant classroom experience without misbehavior.

—Dan L. Miller

MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY TRAFFIC— POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Objectives and expectations—in an effort to promote the optimum school environment free of classroom interruptions, distractions and disturbances from the hallways, and to promote cooperative and safe hallway conduct, the following policies have been written. They have also been written in an attempt to promote learning by setting expectations for students that they arrive in class on time and prepared, that they are fully engaged in purposeful learning activities during class time, and that they are respectful of others within the building.

1. Teacher arrival—teachers are to arrive at school and be on duty by 7:55 each morning. Not only is it a staff member's professional obligation to be on time to work, but staff members working in the building will help provide school-wide supervision prior to the opening of school.
2. Morning supervision—Teachers are to be on duty at their supervisory post by 8:10 each morning. Front hallway teachers should keep an eye on students through the front doorway to monitor behavior outside the building. Teachers should ensure that students remain outside until the 8:15 entry bell rings. (In inclement weather an announcement will be made at approximately 8:00 indicating that students may be allowed in the locker bays before school.) Teachers should allow students into the building prior to 8:15 only if they have legitimate passes. From 8:15 to 8:25 teachers should supervise the locker bay area to promote proper conduct and to help ensure that students get off to classes on time.
3. Early Entry—Students may enter the building without a pass prior to 7:55 AM for club and sports activities such as band and team practice. Students must remain with their teacher in these supervised activities. If students are released from their activity prior to 8:15, they are to go outside the building. Students may enter the building as early as 7:55 if they have a signed pass from a teacher indicating they may enter at the noted time to meet with the

teacher. Teachers should issue a permanent pass to students who will meet with them on a regular basis. For large group meetings before school, such as a test review session, teachers should have students fill out passes to be signed by the teacher or the teacher should notify the office of the situation. Teachers may also issue passes to students for legitimate library work during early entry time. Early entry students may not report to lockers but must report directly to the destination on their passes. Early entry students must also remain supervised by a teacher until the 8:15 entry time.

4. Tardy to class—Students are considered tardy to class if they enter the classroom after the bell has rung. A student's tardy is considered 'excused' if that student has a pass in hand and the time the student arrives in class is not later than three minutes after the pass was issued. A student's tardy is 'unexcused' if the student arrives in class without a pass or if it is later than three minutes after the pass was issued. Teachers are to record all unexcused tardies on the 'Daily Tardy List' and see that this list is turned in to the office at the end of each day. Students who are late to lunch will similarly be recorded on the Daily Tardy List.
5. Study hall—The intent of study hall is to provide an uninterrupted period of time for independent study in an environment conducive to learning. Study hall, therefore, is to be independent, silent, study. Also, generally, once students arrive in study hall, they are to remain there. Students may be excused from study hall if they have a pass from a teacher to be with that teacher for the period for academic purposes. These students should check in with the study hall teacher prior to the beginning of the period, show the study hall teacher their pass, and report immediately to the teacher issuing the pass. If a student fails to report to the teacher issuing the pass, that teacher should report the student's absence to the office. Students may also be taken from study hall by the counselor, social worker, psychologist, or an administrator for conferencing or testing. Students who need to use the library during study hall must obtain a pass from a teacher, report to the library prior to the beginning of their study hall, give the librarian their library pass, and remain in the library engaged in productive study for the entire period. The study hall teacher will put an absence list in the attendance pouch outside the study hall
6. Hall passes—The optimum learning situation in any classroom is for students to arrive on time and prepared to be engaged in productive learning activities throughout the period. Toward that end, the philosophy governing movement from and to classrooms is that when students arrive at class, they are to remain there. There are to be no routine hall passes for washrooms, drinks, et cetera. Students have numerous opportunities to go to the washroom before school, during P. E. class, at lunch, after school, and every

46 minutes during passing periods. Students at this age should be able to control themselves for 46 minutes, and there should be no reason for them to go to the washroom during class time. An emergency may occasionally arise, however, in which you need to make a professional judgment. If you feel a student is ill, send that student on a hall pass to the nurse. If in your judgment, a student seriously needs to use the washroom, issue a student hall pass to use the washroom. If in the future repeated requests come from the student to use the washroom, consult with a nurse and/or administrator. Students should also be expected to report to class prepared. Do not allow students with missing materials, books, or assignments to return to their lockers to get them. Rather, make provisions in class for missing materials. Keep a supply of extra books, pens, and pencils that you loan students in exchange for collateral—something important that a student would not leave the class without such as a watch or shoe. Also keep a supply of scratch paper in the room available to students when they run out of their own. If a student forgets an assignment in the locker, tell that student to turn it in after class or after school. In the event that students finish their work early in class, they should always be prepared with a library book or other productive materials with which to keep themselves occupied. They should have no need to return to their locker for these.

Students wishing to leave class to see a counselor, social worker, or administrator should be told that they are to follow procedures by leaving a message with the attendance secretary before school. The person they wish to see will then call them to the office at the most convenient time. (Also use professional judgment in these cases. If a student student is visibly upset or in a crisis situation, you should send them to the appropriate person on a hall pass.)

Hallway traffic must be restricted to an absolute minimum. Any student in the hallway during class time must have a pass, and that pass must be the official school hall pass.

7. Lunchroom traffic—After eating lunch and being excused from their tables, students may go outside to play or they may be seated on the north side of the gym. Students who wish to use the washroom should form two orderly lines near the east exit—girls washroom and boys washroom. Staff members should allow five students per washroom line out of the gym at a time. As one student returns from the washroom, another student should be released. Students or groups of students remaining in the washroom for extended periods of time should be checked. Any student sent from the gym area by a staff member must have a hall pass.
8. Early Exit—Students who are to be released early from school are noted on the daily attendance sheet. Teachers should release these students at the

time noted with a hall pass to the office. The students will then sign out at the office and wait in the office or near the front doorway for their parents to pick them up.

9. After School—All students are either to be out of the building by 3:00 or with a teacher in a supervised activity. Students staying after school should have their coats and books with them so that when they finish their session with the teacher or their activity they will be prepared to leave the building at the nearest exit.
10. Hallway Misconduct—Teachers are to monitor the hallways during passing periods by standing in or near their doorways. Be aware of hallway misconduct such as shouting, swearing, pushing, horseplay, booking, tripping, running, and displays of affection. Talk with students and warn them about minor incidences of misconduct. Refer a student to the office for repeated acts of hallway misconduct or for more serious acts—booking, tripping, rough horseplay. To refer a student to the office get the student's name, tell the student you will make a referral to the office for misconduct, and then write a note or talk to the assistant principal describing the behavior. You may also for serious acts pull the student into your room, sit them at the desk and call the office for an administrative to pick up the student.

—Dan L. Miller

Looking for happiness? Visit an Irish pub—any Irish pub.

—Dan L. Miller

An In-School Suspension Program staffed by experienced, certified teachers offers the following alternatives for the students, the classroom teacher, and the administrators:

- While the students are in the suspension room, they do their usual assignments provided by the regular teachers under the supervision and guidance of the suspension center teacher;
- Students are in the school building for the entire school day rather than roaming around the community;
- Getting suspended loses much of its appeal when students realize that they will be supervised and required to do their work instead of being 'set free';
- Students are available so that the school may best use its supportive services team to help toward solution of the problems that resulted in the suspension;
- The in-school suspension need not be as formally documented as the out-of-school suspension, so the student, therefore, avoids the establishment of an ongoing record that could adversely affect his school career;

- The school does not perpetuate students' feelings of alienation by excluding them physically;
- The school continues to receive state aid for students through average daily attendance.

—Dan L. Miller

In the usual program of in-school suspension, students who are suspended are placed in an isolated room under supervision of an adult for a brief period of time ranging from 1 to 10 days. While in that setting, the students are expected to keep up with their school work, but they are usually given no credit for the work done, for they are considered to be suspended from classes and their continued absence from regular classes is, therefore, considered to be unexcused. As a result, many students assigned to in-school suspension spend much of their time sleeping, talking with friends, gazing out the window, or reading magazines.... There should be an expressed philosophy behind any program of in-school suspension and definite objectives to be met in the program.

—Dan L. Miller

The purposes and structure of in-school suspension programs are many and varied. Although most programs isolate students and provide them with an opportunity to complete already assigned schoolwork, effective programs of in-school suspension also provide academic enrichment, personal counseling, behavior modification, affective learning, and self-help strategies.

—Dan L. Miller

Children experience in school virtually every challenge of life, including failure, disappointment, achievement, reward, rejection, hope, and despair. No other social institutions has as much opportunity as do schools to work with children regularly, alter trends in their personal growth and development, and help them solve personal problems and better manage their lives. Childhood problems are common and normal, but they need to be dealt with quickly and firmly or they are likely to persist.

—Dan L. Miller

Programs of school discipline have evolved from being strictly punitive programs, to programs of exclusion and suspension from school, to programs of restriction and limitation within school. The next step in this evolution should be programs that make constructive use of students' time by providing cognitive input and personal counseling that will alter counterproductive behavior and lead to positive changes in students' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behavior.

A program of therapeutic discipline is designed as the next step in the evolution of in-school suspension and is expected to educate rather than to punish students. It is intended that students would be helped to understand the reason for their behavior,

why that particular behavior is counterproductive to their own well-being, and what they could do to overcome their problems. A program of therapeutic discipline should help students understand the basic motivations behind their actions and help them analyze their attitudes and behaviors. It is intended to provide them with the facts they need to solve their problems and to permit them to see alternative solutions to their problems and the consequences of each solution. The program might very well encourage students to face their situations maturely and to plan and carry through constructive courses of action to solve those problems.

A Therapeutic Discipline program could effectively address such student behavioral issues as alcohol abuse, anger and aggression, attitude toward work, cooperation, courtesy and sportsmanship, drug abuse, honesty, responsibility, smoking, tardiness and truancy, theft, vandalism.

—Dan L. Miller

What has been done for the student in situations involving detention or suspension? More mature students may consider the actions a joke or an inconvenience, and, certainly, most consider it a waste of time. The less mature students may be frightened and concerned about parental reprisals and come to resent school more than they already may. Detention and suspension seem, therefore, to foster alienation and resentment rather than positive modification of behavior. Since the student is obviously in need of guidance and positive input on the part of teachers and administrators when in trouble, the administration should seek ways to help the student understand and modify his or her behavior through guidance and therapy rather than turning him or her away from school and not making profitable use of the time lost in suspension.

When a student misbehaves in school, the situation presents such an obvious opportunity for learning that it seems contrary to educational philosophy to waste that student's time in detention hall or out of school. Any educator truly interested in the welfare of the students in his charge would certainly feel more should be done for the student exhibiting deviant school behavior than what is presently done to him or her.

—Dan L Miller

As see it now stands, most schools favor a system of discipline which places in detention or suspension a student expressing deviant school behavior on the theory that the student will corrupt his or her classmates or that he or she is disruptive to the educational process. That student, regardless of the behavior, has the right to remain as a part of that educational process. It is only through education that the teacher, dean, counselor, or principal has any hope of modifying that student's behavior. Suspension, in essence, is a do-nothing policy. Virtually nothing is done to help the student readjust. A program of therapeutic discipline, on the other hand, helps the dean to take positive, practical steps towards the students rehabilitation. Rather than arousing resentment, bitterness, and a desire for revenge in a students,

the dean could very well become a powerful force in helping to shape many students' futures. With the proper counseling and recommendation of appropriate reading materials, potential dropouts or chronic troublemakers may indeed, change their conceptions of themselves in the educational process of which they are a part.

—Dan L. Miller

The integration of personal counseling, bibliotherapy, writing therapy, and contingency contracting in an in-school suspension setting can be an effective way of dealing with adolescent truants in a positive and productive manner.

—Dan L. Miller

Who, indeed, is the dean? Is he or she an authoritarian figure respected in the school and community for his or her dynamic leadership and fair policies? Is he or she an individual parents and students turn to for direction and guidance? In most cases the dean is seen as the individual who manages the detention center, who determine suspensions, and who lectures students on their behavior. The image of the dean within the school and within the community is far from positive. The position of dean can in image and in fact be the most negative in the high school, but is this negativism the only alternative? Must it be this way? Certainly not. Today more than ever the position of high school dean must be elevated to one of strong, positive leadership. Being responsible for the effective management of a large group of young people, the dean is in an ideal position, in most cases, to make the most significant contribution to the high school student's education. In fact, rather than wallowing in negativism of the position and feeling crushed by the endless flow of problems and confrontations, the dean should be envisioning his role as the single most dynamic and challenging position in the school. The dean should be able to broaden the scope of the job beyond that of the 'enforcer,' the one who manages the school's system of detention, who decides which students are to be suspended and for how long they are to be denied the right to an education, and who delivers lectures which often fall on deaf ears or who scolds or counsels students and fails to provide substantial, positive input needed by the student for the student's effective readjustment.

The dean, while maintaining an educational atmosphere conducive to the teaching and learning process, can and should be viewing the role as the single most dynamic curricular position in the school. There is no time more right for learning than when a student is in trouble or has a problem. Times when the student is troubled or when the student exhibits deviant school behavior are the perfect moments for the dean to step in and make a positive contribution to the development of that student's character. The dean can do that most effectively not in the narrow, one-dimensional role of the authoritarian behind the desk but as the administrator who understands the motivation behind the student's behavior, provides the student

with the facts and information he or she needs to solve his or her problems, and helps the student plan and carry through a constructive course of action.

—Dan L. Miller

THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

A well-conceived and relevant curriculum attuned closely to the needs of young people can generate a mood of positivism within a school and thusly reduce the need for rigid administrative control. So also does the classroom teacher stand as a major deterrent to infringements against school order. Although a dynamic curriculum and a professional staff can certainly reduce behavioral deviations, guidelines for student behavior are mandatory. Adolescents at the high school level are fast approaching adulthood. Indeed, many of them have physically reached adulthood by the time they graduate, but in reference to emotional growth and maturity they are several years removed from adulthood. Inherent in the teenager is the desire and often passion for freedom from authority. A large part of maturity is the responsible control of one's emotions and urges, and many adolescents have not yet reached that stage of maturity. Those excesses of the adolescent, therefore, which do not succumb to controls from within must be modified from without.

Limits for student behavior must be clearly understood and accepted within the school. Adelaide Johnson attributes 'a sizable incidence of juvenile delinquency to the inability or refusal of adult authority figures to establish clear limits for youth to operate within.' Such limits are needed by all, in differing degrees depending on maturity levels. For the insecure teenager in a world of conflicting values, interests, and behavior these limits are mandatory. Just as our American society bases its order on the Constitution of United States of America so must the school prepare a carefully written code of behavioral management. The purpose and procedure of this code should reflect the school's philosophy of education and the worthwhile values of the community. This codification of the laws of the school should serve as a guide for the educational program in that it makes discipline a working part of the school's philosophy of education, clarifies each student's status, minimizes hasty and emotionally influenced action, and establishes a clear-cut support for teachers and administrators. Once a well-defined philosophy of discipline is in hand and clearly understood, the school community has a strong base from which to work toward the positive emotional growth of the student body.

—Dan L. Miller

Writing therapy can serve as an ancillary vehicle for self-insight. During a disciplinary interview a student may be defensive and actually more worried about saving himself or herself or covering up his or her errors than in taking a thoughtful look at himself or herself and his or her behavior. During a writing session, however, he or she will have time to think and reflect, and while still perhaps trying to cover up his or her actions, the writing may prove cathartic and start in motion

the process of self-evaluation and self-insight. The student, unhampered by the dean, now has time to cool down, reflect, and express his or her feelings in a comfortable atmosphere. Rather than battling the dean in an interview, the student is only struggling with himself or herself and his or her own problem. He or she may very well, during the writing, even solve the problem or realize the counter productivity of his or her behavior.

—Dan L. Miller

Another important function of writing therapy may also help the dean counsel students in need of help. A student who has no friends, is immature and being teased by other students, or for any reason has a strong need to communicate with someone in a position to help him or her, may be able to keep in close and constant touch with the dean through emails. At any time at home or at school when the student feels troubled and needs to communicate with a friend, he or she should feel free to do so through an email to the dean. The dean should have established with the student a positive relationship that would promote this type of correspondence, and, in fact, the dean could build a large portion of his or her counseling around this particular system of communication. Realistically, the dean cannot spend as much time in counseling as many students would want or as much time as many students may need. A student taking advantage of this system of communication would write as long an email as he or she needed. Many students are discouraged when they want to talk with the dean or their counselor but can't because the dean is out or busy. If the student does get in to see the dean, the dean may be rushed because he or she has other work to attend to. By writing an email, the student is free to say whatever he or she wants and to communicate for as long as he or she wants. The dean, of course, should also make it a point to keep in personal contact with these types of students and to counsel them as often as possible. The email writing system of communication can, moreover, spread the services of the dean over a larger portion of the student body and extend the length of therapy and counseling.

—Dan L. Miller

As it now stands, most schools favor, or at least employ, a system of discipline which places in detention or suspension a student expressing deviant school behavior on the theory that he or she will corrupt his or her classmates or that he or she is disruptive to the educational process. That student, regardless of his or her behavior, has a right to remain as a part of that educational process. It is only through education that the teacher, dean, counselor, or principle has any hope of modifying the student's behavior. Suspension, in essence, is a do-nothing policy. Virtually nothing is done to help the student readjust.

—Dan L. Miller

The writing process crushes souls, and all writers seek solace in habits and paraphernalia to help them through the struggle....I, as writers everywhere,

struggle with choices—an agreeable ambience, ideal illumination, the proper pencil, and music or silence.

–Dan L. Miller

Sylvia Plath wrote on pink, lovely-textured Smith memorandum pads. Me? I prefer to scroll on the backs of rejections printed on finely-textured stationery from all the best publishing houses. E. L. Doctorow wrote in his attic at a desk facing the wall, while John Cheever preferred the darkened basement of his apartment building, writing next to the furnace. I need sunshine through my window and a view of my neighbors schlepping their backpacks and briefcases through the harsh, winter snow, digging out their cars, and starting their office commute.

–Dan L. Miller

John Steinbeck used only round pencils because hexagonal pencils cut his fingers after a day's use. Round pencils shift in my fingers and lack the gravitas of the hexagon I use only hexagonal pencils for notes and outlines—red pencils for revising words and blue pencils for editing grammar and phrases. Edmond Rostand wrote *Cyrano de Bergerac* in his bathtub. I doze, so my manuscripts would be rejected not by a publisher but by bathwater.

–Dan L. Miller

I write also when not in my home office, and it's usually at social gatherings or events—I'm writing in my head. My wife is the one to nudge me and tell me to stop writing. I jot notes on playbills, I wake in the night to record brilliant ideas delivered in a dream, and I dictate to my iPhone while at a ball game the plot for my next story. My world of writing unfolds most effectively, however, in my home office. I thrive in my sanctuary closed to reality and open to the world of imagination.

–Dan L. Miller

Although we all appreciate the library as an important part of our intellectual lives, everyone perceives experiences, objects, and institutions in their own, unique way. By reviewing brief quotations describing unique perceptions of great thinkers regarding the institution of the library, our appreciation of libraries may be further enhanced.

In addition to our own increased appreciation of libraries, quotations, which can be located in hundreds of available collections, also have many practical uses.

Librarians can use quotations effectively to enliven library lessons or speeches and lend authority to concepts, procedures, and facts that they present. The teaching librarian can also use scholarly quotations to effectively stimulate thought in those who are participating in group library lessons. Librarians can use particular quotes or pools of quotations for theme topics or as the basis for poster or collage projects,

or they may also display quotations on signs or bulletin boards or feature a ‘thought for the day.’

—Dan L. Miller

When asked the question ‘What is a school?’ Most people would describe the neighborhood institution. The popular notion of a school has come to be the idea of a building with rectangular classrooms within which are found rows of seated children facing a lecturing teacher. When one says ‘school,’ it would be refreshing if people were to imagine various alternatives to the traditional brick and mortar schoolhouse. People’s needs in life differ greatly. Also, as an individual develops through life one’s needs are going to change.

Everyone’s needs or requirements for a school will differ. Socrates in solitude would have dried up and remained unproductive. He needed a dialogue with people and the opportunity to teach and learn through questioning. Thoreau would have been stifled in the teeming city of Athens. His education would have been hampered for lack of a place to think and the absolute freedom he needed to contemplate. Helen Keller would not have profited from life in the city and surely would have perished if left to herself in the woods. She needed a close and patient relationship in a familiar location in order to thrive. In order to make the learning process function effectively, these individuals had to define ‘school’ for themselves and work within their own academic configuration.

The location and process of learning that one defines and establishes for oneself resides in a school. Conventional student desks in a stuffy environment comprise that place in which children, in most cases, get close to but don’t quite reach optimal learning. Many fit and function well within the confines of the school, but others still need, whether they realize it or not, to define for themselves and perhaps even become instrumental in establishing for themselves their school based solely on their unique needs.

A location and a process define a school. Ideally, it should be and could be imagined as being any activity, at any location, at any time in which learning takes place.

—Dan L. Miller

DISCIPLINARY REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Common Offenses

Unprepared, no materials, chewing gum, improper dress, repeated talking back (minor) and repeated disruptions, refusing to follow teacher’s instructions (minor), not working in class, swearing (minor), talking back, refusing to follow classroom procedures, cheating, smart aleck remarks, graffiti (minor), name-calling, horseplay, or indecent gestures.

Most common offenses such as those listed above should be managed by the classroom teacher. However, when those offenses continue after the teacher has intervened, a disciplinary referral should be written.

Teacher intervention prior to writing a disciplinary referral for a student must include at least (1) conference with the pupil, (2) phone call/letter to or conference with parents, and (3) notice to the guidance counselor. (To notify the counselor about a student, discuss with a counselor in the office the specific problems you are experiencing or leave a detailed summary of the student's problem behavior in the counselor's mailbox.)

After a teacher has followed through with these interventions for a particular student, the teacher should write discipline referrals to the assistant principal for each subsequent offense.

Missed Classroom Detention (Immediate Referral)

The teacher writes a referral to the assistant principal noting parent contact. If no guidance conference has been noted, the assistant principal will write a detention which is at least double the time of the teacher's detention and deliver it to the student. He will then forward the referral to the counselor for a conference. If a guidance conference has been noted, the assistant principal will meet with the student, penalize the student, and complete the referral process.

Hallway Offenses

Horseplay, running, inappropriate language, and inappropriate displays of affection should be referred to the office.

To refer students to the office:

- Talk with the student, sit the student in your classroom, and call the office for an administrator to pick up the student. Or
- Talk with the student, take the student's I.D., write a note describing the behavior, and turn both in to an administrator.

If students refuse to give you their name or I.D. card, follow those students to their next class and ask the teacher for their name. Then write a disciplinary referral form and turn it in to the assistant principal. There is no need for a student conference, parent call, or guidance referral.

Attendance Offensives

Attendance problems are handled by our detention system and by the assistant principal. Do not write disciplinary referrals solely for attendance problems, but do see the assistant principal if you have questions or concerns about a student's attendance.

Extreme Offenses

Swearing (extremely disruptive or directed at the teacher), extreme disruptive behavior, graffiti (repeated or extreme cases), insubordination (extreme), vandalism, smoking, fighting, illegal substance abuse or possession, assault, theft, sexual exhibitionism, extortion, possession of a weapon, pulling the fire alarm.

Extreme offenses such as those noted above should be referred to the office immediately. Use the intercom to summon an administrator to the classroom to escort the offending student(s) to the office. Follow up with a written referral and confer with the assistant principal at a later time. The assistant principal will advise you on the need for a parent phone call or conference.

—Dan L. Miller

WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO REPORT TO CLASS UNPREPARED

Teachers are faced and always will be faced with the problem of students reporting to class with no pencil, no pen, no paper, no textbook, etc. There are a number of reasons for students reporting to class unprepared, but in many cases it is a student who has chosen to fail. We could take the attitude of ignoring the student and allowing him/her to fail, but this is unprofessional, not in the student's best interest, and the student's idleness will soon turn into behavior that will upset your teaching and instruction for the rest of the class.

Therefore, I would recommend the following procedures for dealing with no-material students:

- Keep a supply of scratch paper—old forms, the backs of used paper, discards from the copy machine, etc. (Do not stock good paper because students will rely on it and even take it for use in other classes.) When students show up without paper, give them whatever scratch paper they need or direct them to take it from the supply you have in a box or tray.
- Keep a supply of pencil stubs that are good enough to make a readable copy but so undesirable that they won't be stolen. These can be found abandoned

in students' desks or on the floor of the classroom or in the hallways. Also, collect pens that are left behind by students.

- Keep one to three textbooks in the classroom for loan. These also could be ragged, discard textbooks.
- When students shows up without pen or pencil or other needed supplies, help them out after attending to other students' needs by loaning them materials for collateral. Exchange your pencil stub for a student's ID card, ring, watch, or shoe—something they will be unlikely to leave class without. At the end of class make sure the student returns your item in exchange for the collateral.
- For chronic offenders make sure parents are aware of their child's lack of preparation by sending a progress report and also by holding at least a phone conference. You also may request that parents purchase a packet of supplies for their child for your class so that when the child reports to class unprepared, you have a spare set of supplies with which to provide him or her.
- When students report to class without a text, loan them one for the period for collateral. Do not let them take texts from the classroom.
- When students claim they have lost their text, continue to loan them a text for collateral on a daily basis for classroom use only and also tell them they must pay the school secretary for a new textbook. When the student presents you with a receipt for a purchased text, issue them a new textbook and be sure to record the textbook number. If the student hasn't purchased a new text within a week, call the parent and notify them of the situation. Also tell the parents you can only loan the student a book for another week—that the student must either find the lost book or purchase a new one.

Never make it easy for a student to fail. Too many students choose this path—deliberate failure—for any number of reasons. The greatest service you can do these immature and not-very-wise students is to put every obstacle in the way of their achieving their goal of failure. Your time will be limited and you will not be able to overcome all the obstacles, but you should at least be able to take care of the materials problem.

—Dan L. Miller

My children are the most important aspect of my life, and the love of a child is the strongest love there is. You don't actually realize it until you have a child. To me

raising, nurturing and experiencing all that a child provides is the true meaning of a complete life.

—Dan L. Miller

There is good news and bad news regarding the literacy levels and literary engagement of today's youth. The good news is that today's young people are reading and writing at high levels heretofore unachievable. They are engaged in literacy activities for major portions of their day. The bad news is that their reading and writing is comprised of communicating through social media—Twitter, Facebook, and texting. Although the level of literary engagement is high, the quality of the engagement is quite low. Texters and chatters communicate with phrases, single words, sentence fragments, misspellings, myriad abbreviations, web slang, acronyms, and emoticons-:).

—Dan L. Miller

Culture Shock rocked my literary sensibilities lately during a casual conversation with a recent college graduate. At the graduation party of this 'Straight A' biology major headed to Harvard medical school, I was leading the obligatory, congratulatory chit chat when I asked him if he'd read anything interesting or exciting lately. He looked at me as if I were from Mars and literally said, 'I don't read. The only thing I do read are textbooks I need to read for classes.' In my own life I've never not read and find it hard to believe highly educated others do not read for pleasure.

—Dan L. Miller

The ancient Greeks and Romans had no universities. Their instruction in law, rhetoric, and philosophy was excellent, but it was not organized into the form of permanent institutions of learning. Many students sat at the feet of Socrates over the many years of his teaching career, but not one diploma did he issue. Not until the twelfth century did there emerge in the world those features of organized education with which we modern students are familiar. The machinery of instruction represented by faculties and colleges and courses of study, examinations and commencements and academic degrees beginning in the Middle Ages makes today's university student the heir not of Athens but of Paris and Bologna.

—Dan L. Miller

GRADUATION SPEECHES

Several students will be selected this year to deliver speeches at the promotion exercise. A contest will be held, and those students writing speeches judged to be the best will deliver them.

GUIDELINES FOR SPEECHWRITING:

- The speech should be 2-3 minutes long.
- The speech should be written neatly in ink on one side only of each sheet of paper.
- The topic of this speech is of your own choosing. Use your imagination. It should be appropriate for a graduation, and you should say whatever you feel would be interesting, meaningful, and useful for your classmates to hear at this point in their lives. (Don't hesitate to ask for advice from parents and teachers.)
- The first page of the speech should be totally blank except for your name in the upper right-hand corner. Do not put your name on any other page.
- Staple the pages together.
- Turn the speech in to the principal's office by the end of school on Monday, May 18.

I would ask that Language Arts teachers review these guidelines with their students and discuss the writing of the speech. I would ask that other teachers encourage students to enter the contest and offer whatever ideas or advice they can.

I also need a group of teachers to volunteer to read and judge the speeches. I also need some volunteer teachers to work with the winning speakers during the week prior to promotion to help them rewrite, polish, and practice their speeches. Please let me know if you wish to help out.

—Dan L. Miller

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

I usually get minimum input for the Newsletter, so for this issue I'd like to request input from everyone. Think back over the past couple of months about activities in your class, interesting events or incidents, and outstanding student achievements, and also think ahead about upcoming events. Then jot down any information you feel would be appropriate for the Newsletter. As much as possible, please mention specific students' names.

Ideas:

- A student who has a perfect record of A's on tests or quizzes.
- A student with perfect attendance thus far.
- An interesting report or project a student has presented.
- An interesting discussion that was held in class.
- A particular lesson you conducted that may be of interest to parents.
- A film you showed or a guest speaker you had.

- Something interesting you may have done outside of school either related to your field or to a special interest you may have.
- Most improved student(s) in your classes.
- A special project or assignment coming up that you want parents to be aware of.
- Any special event you want to alert parents to.
- Students who have been particularly helpful in school or are providing services for others.
- Achievements of students in activities outside of school.
- Simply describe what activities you've been conducting it in your class over the past few weeks.
- Policies or procedures in your department that you feel need to be reinforced.

I get a lot of positive feedback on the Newsletter, and it can be a very effective means of promoting goodwill, school spirit, and support. It can help to improve the image of Jefferson Junior High School, so please help promote your school by submitting to me an article or information by Tuesday, January 22.

THANKS!

—Dan L. Miller

Time is important for learning. There is a direct relationship between achievement and active learning time. Although the time needed for a student to master a concept or skill varies according to the student's rate of learning and other factors, the more time a student spends in active learning, the more that student will learn.

There are three levels of learning time:

Time allocated for instruction (allocated time).

Time actually spent on instruction (instructional time).

Time the student is actively engaged in learning (time on task).

Frequently, time on task is considerably less than allocated time. Therefore, within the framework of allocated time, teachers should plan their classroom activities and homework activities to increase actual instructional time and time on task.

Teachers should work to increase academic learning time by creating a system of rules and procedures that facilitate clerical and housekeeping tasks and that deals with disruptions and disciplinary problems. Teachers may also have to allocate extra time through homework, individualized assignments, or other means so their students can master the required subject matter.

—Dan L. Miller

BIBLIOTHERAPY

A simple and effective method of helping children and parents deal with life traumas or specific behavioral problems is to provide them with books and instructional pamphlets designed to explain such issues in an age-appropriate way. Parents and children often take comfort in the fact that they are not alone in what they are experiencing and that there are suggested ways of coping that have proved successful for others in similar situations.

A good source of books is the *BookFinder 4: When Kids Need Books*, a listing of annotations of children's literature that addresses their needs and problems. The collection is published by *American Guidance Associates*, Circle Pines, Minnesota and edited by Sharon Spredemann Dreyer. Libraries can also provide lists of books on specific topics. Bookstores are also sources of therapeutic readings.

—Dan L. Miller

ENTERTAINMENT FIELD TRIPS

All field trips taken during school hours are to be valuable, educational experiences for students, and the field trips are to be directly related to the District #87 curriculum. Field trips for the purpose of student entertainment or reward are not to be taken during school hours. Field trips to locations such as Great America, Enchanted Castle, Disney on Ice, Kane County Cougars, and roller skating parties can be enriching experiences for students, but trips such as these are to be taken only outside of school hours.

The intent of this procedure is to place a premium on valuable academic time and to not reduce the time students spend in academic pursuits in exchange for endeavors that do not promote learning related to the District #87 curriculum.

The only exception to this procedure is the one-day, 8th grade graduation trip, which is usually a visit to the City of Chicago and often includes a boat tour. This trip provides students with a valuable cultural experience and is a fitting activity to culminate their years of elementary education.

—Dan L. Miller

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

At-risk students are often unprepared or unwilling to accept responsibility in school, at home, or in the community. Responsibility may be defined in terms of a student's ability to take initiative and follow through on an assignment. Young people are rarely given true opportunities to take responsibility outside the classroom setting. The involvement of at-risk students in a school or community project can develop a sense of group and individual pride. It can foster self-esteem and responsibility and can serve as an activity that develops a 'family' feeling among classmates. It can also develop an esprit de corps within the class and help

make the school experience an enjoyable one. Involvement in a service project will also give students an opportunity to use skills learned in the classroom and put them to practical use. School or community service projects help the at-risk class make a significant contribution to the school or community and also put the students in contact with local adults who have developed the skills necessary to make them successful in their community and who could serve as positive role models for the students.

Participating in community or school service projects helps students apply their academic knowledge to real-life situations. Students can also be encouraged to explore and identify changes in their attitudes toward themselves and others. Ideally, they should be placed in a helping relationship with persons who are actually in need of assistance and who will appreciate receiving help.

In setting up community or school service projects, it is important to:

Sell the program to students by describing the need and specify why they should be involved by pointing out what others will gain from their services;

Hold training sessions that will enable students to carry out volunteer work before they begin—e.g., on active listening skills or teaching strategies;

Periodically arrange time throughout the school year for reflection on the volunteer experience; and

Make celebrations of accomplishment an integral part of the community/school service program.

These opportunities can lead to feelings of enhanced competence and self-esteem for student volunteers. Such service experiences can also assist students in making the transition from school to the world of work.

—Dan L. Miller

THE PURPOSE OF GRADES

There are many purposes for using grades in the school program. Grades provide incentives to learn for many students. Most students are motivated to attain the highest grades and to receive the recognition that often accompanies such grades, and they are motivated to avoid the lowest grades and the negative outcomes that sometimes are associated with those grades. Grades also provide information to students for self-evaluation, for analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and for creating a general impression of academic promise, all of which may enter into educational planning. Finally, grades are used to communicate students' performance levels to others who want to know about past achievement or want to forecast future academic success. Teachers in subsequent classes use grades in these ways.

The most recognized purpose of grades, however, is to communicate the achievement status of students to their parents. The grade, then, symbolizes the

extent to which a student has attained the important instructional goals of the reporting period for which the grade is assigned.

—Dan L. Miller

GRADING ON THE CURVE

The curve referred to in the name of this method is the normal, bell-shaped curve that is often used to describe the achievements of individuals in a large heterogeneous group. The idea behind this method is that the grades in a class should follow a normal distribution, or one nearly like it. Under this assumption, the teacher determines the percentage of students who should be assigned each grade symbol so that the distribution is normal in appearance. For example, the teacher may decide that the percentages of A through F grades in the class should be distributed as follows:

6% of the students will receive an A
22% of the students will receive an B
44% of the students will receive an C
22% of the students will receive an D
6% of the students will receive an F

Grading on the curve is a simple method to use, but it has serious drawbacks. The fixed percentages are nearly always determined arbitrarily, and the percentages do not account for the possibility that some classes are superior and others are inferior relative to the phantom ‘typical’ group the percentages are intended to represent. Grading on a curve also takes all incentive away from lower-performing students. They soon realize that their grades have little to do with how well they master course content. They must ‘beat’ higher-performing students to succeed. No matter how hard they work, their performance will always be evaluated relative to that of higher-performing students.

The use of the normal curve to measure student achievement in a single classroom is simply inappropriate and is not to be used.

—Dan L. Miller

SELF-ESTEEM DEVELOPMENT

At-risk students have established patterns of failure in school. They generally have a low level of self-esteem and very little confidence in their ability to succeed in school. They also often engage in negative social behaviors. Students who have a better understanding of themselves, feel confident in their abilities, and can make decisions that benefit them in a positive way will have a better chance of succeeding in school. Therefore, a part of the At-Risk Program is a component to address family and peers, self-discipline, resolving conflicts, and self-respect. The classroom

teacher working collaboratively with the school counselor will carry out a specific self-esteem program. Together they will plan and deliver a program intended to address the self-esteem needs of the at-risk children in the program.

There are few characteristics which will have as significant an impact on whether a student fails or succeeds in school as how the student feels about himself or herself. By helping the at-risk student feel better about himself or herself the teacher can strengthen the child's belief that he or she can succeed, which in turn should lead to better performance in all areas of the child's life, including school. Following are strategies and activities which will facilitate the building of self esteem in children: Plan for success. Put students in situations where success is probable. When it is obvious that a learning goal is too difficult, break the process into a series of smaller, simpler steps.

Take time to meet with the 'at-risk' student on a daily basis to discuss the successes of the day. Discuss why the success took place, how it made him or her feel, and how it could be duplicated.

Provide a classroom environment which is warm and supportive. In such an environment, failure is not feared but considered a part of the learning process. Accept all students and let them know you care about them. Students will feel important when teachers demonstrate through their actions that they care. Accentuate the positive. Give students praise when it is earned. Help the student recognize and appreciate accomplishments. Draw attention to the student's strengths and how these strengths are being utilized. Contact parents when the student is doing well.

Have reasonable goals and expectations for achievement within the classroom. Anxiety and frustration are reduced when expectations are clearly stated and are within the reach of the student's ability.

Choose a 'Student of the Week.' Give each child an opportunity to discuss what it is they feel good about. The student may choose to display schoolwork, family photos, creative work, certificates, etc.

Have students keep a journal of 'positive thoughts' that relate to school, their families, outside activities, etc.

Declare an 'I'm Special Day' when students can focus on and explore the attributes that make them unique.

Realize that you will affect your pupils' self concept each and every day. HOW you affect their self concept is your choice.

—Dan L. Miller

SUMMER READING/SUMMER FUN

Educational research has demonstrated that students who engage in no academic pursuits during the summer months actually regress and lose learning. These students then experience a 'catch up' period of time when they return to school in the fall. It is very important, therefore, that students participate in some type of

summer reading program during the long layoff from school. All public libraries offer excellent summer reading programs for young people. These programs are fun, they provide incentives for reading and they get young people into the library on a regular basis. Our students in grades 2-8 also have extensive reading lists of books that are best suited to their reading levels. It would be very good for them to continue reading books from their reading lists over the summer by checking books out of the public library.

Whatever parents can do to help students structure their reading over the summer would go a long way toward helping students ‘keep up’ and avoiding having to ‘catch up’ once school starts in the fall. Remember, as Mark Twain said, ‘The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can’t read them.’

—Dan L. Miller

Students are not reading enough literature to make a significant difference in their reading growth. District-wide the greatest single improvement we can make in our reading program is to increase the amount of reading that students do. To improve reading skills significantly, students truly need to read massive amounts of literature. There is a direct correlation between the amount of literature students read and their reading growth. The more a child reads, the more that child’s reading skills will improve. We need to have high expectations for student reading and help students work toward meeting those expectations. The massive amounts of reading will help them achieve at higher levels more than any other aspect of the reading program.

To quote from research addressing the effect of large amounts of reading on student reading achievement: ‘An encouraging message for teachers of low-achieving students is implicit....We often despair of changing our student’s abilities, but there is at least one partially malleable habit that will itself develop abilities—reading!’ (Anne E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich).

There is enormous variation in the amount of independent reading that students do outside of school. Cunningham & Stanovich report that 5th grade students who read the most (at the 98th percentile in amounts of independent reading) read 4,358,000 words per year while students at the 10th percentile read only 8,000 words and students at the 2nd percentile report reading nothing outside of school at all.

In the process of reading those four million more words, avid, fluent readers ‘acquire new language and vocabulary, new conceptual knowledge, and new comprehension challenges and new modes of thought to which they would not otherwise be exposed’ (Marilyn J. Adams and Maggie Bruck). Practice makes their word recognition skills automatic, freeing them to concentrate on higher-level ideas in their reading.

Greater fluency leads to better skills, more pleasure, more information...more reading! And so the cycle continues.

While good readers are spiraling upward to higher and higher levels of language and knowledge, struggling readers are spiraling downward into lowered expectations, lack of motivation and limited practice (Keith E. Stanovich). Because their reading is so labored, they don't read, and because they don't read, they don't develop the language base or background knowledge of their peers. With every passing year, their vocabularies and background knowledge become more and more discrepant from other students, and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to narrow the gap and access the materials of the classroom.

We seriously need to increase the amount of reading our students are doing.

—Dan L. Miller

RECRUITING PROCEDURES

Educationally the most important contribution we can make to the children of this district is to place the most qualified teachers possible in our classrooms. We have always made a significant effort to find and hire the best teachers possible. Our district, however, is at a disadvantage in competing with larger districts offering higher salaries. In addition, there is nationwide teacher shortage which has affected our district more and more over the past years. As you know we have had a difficult time, for instance, filling special education positions.

In an effort to attract and hire the best teachers for this district, we need to meet candidates face-to-face in recruiting fairs. I would like to ask you to volunteer to attend one or more recruiting fairs to help with our recruiting effort. Most fairs are close enough to drive to within a day, and your travel expenses will be paid. In those cases in which fairs are not close, your expenses for travel, food and lodging will be covered.

RECRUITING FAIR PROCEDURES

Set up display:

- Display the list of vacancies on the wall behind the table or in front of the table. (This is very important since it attracts candidates!)
- Table Cover
- Picture display
- Business Cards
- Brochures
- Pens

Interview candidates:

- Ask candidate to talk about background and preparation for teaching and areas of interest.
- Administer the Ventures Screening instrument. For every candidate either ask them the questions and record their responses, or have them complete the form in writing and give it to you. (If they don't want to take the time to fill out the form, ask them to take it with them, complete it and mail it to me.) After the job fair score each form and attach it to each candidate's resume.

Describe the school district:

- Location—Proximity to Chicago and advantages
- Nature of schools
- Advantages of School System:
 - Strong, structured curriculum
 - Compute labs, Computer Curriculum
 - Current, effective learning programs
 - Unique programs: Music labs, Reading Renaissance, Math Renaissance
 - Ample supplies and materials for teachers: math manipulatives, calculators for every student, core classroom libraries, science kits, no quotas on photocopies, etc.
 - Curriculum guides and professional resources
 - Mentor program
 - Staff Development: Workshops, out-of-district workshops, graduate tuition reimbursement
 - Generally, small class size
 - Competitive salary, full hospitalization/medical coverage with no deduction from paycheck
 - Stable administration, strong, supportive school board
 - Technology
 - New school/excellent facilities

Answer questions

Provide candidates with business cards and brochures. Ask candidates to visit the district web site and complete the application. Also indicate they can get further information on the district from the web site.

Follow Up:

- Take notes on the back of the resume and rate each candidate A-F based on your overall opinion of the candidate. (Do not write on the front of the resume! This information indicates the relative strength of the candidates, and I use the information to determine which candidates to bring in for interviews. I would generally not bring in 'D' or 'F' candidates, and I do not want to bias in-district interviewers with the comments intended for me.)
- Return everything to the assistant superintendent
- The assistant superintendent will send thank you letters to the candidates
- Submit receipts for food and lodging and submit a completed Travel Reimbursement Voucher to the assistant superintendent.

This is a very important administrative service of four district. I very much appreciate your participation.

—Dan L. Miller

JEFFERSON JACKPOT PARENT LETTER

One method of promoting positive student behavior and achievement is to recognize and reward that behavior and achievement. Too often in working with young people, we focus on negative behavior and failure because, when it happens, it is very evident and something that we obviously want to help the student change. Rather than only penalizing bad behavior and awarding 'Fs' for failure, a powerful method of improving behavior and performance is by noting the positives and rewarding them.

Shortly at Jefferson Junior High we plan to initiate an incentive program in which students will earn Good News Certificates for being good students. Teachers and the principal will issue certificates for such good deeds as perfect attendance, doing well on class assignments, helping teachers in class, exemplary behavior, noteworthy achievement, academic progress, etc. Students will then take the certificates home to be signed by a parent. Students next will return the signed portion of the certificate to the Jefferson Jackpot box in the school's library. Each Friday there will be a drawing in which one 6th, 7th, and 8th grader will be chosen to win a prize package consisting of such items as spirit mugs, school supplies, posters, paperback books, CDs, nicknacks, buttons, a ticket to the monthly Hollywood Movie Party, and discount coupons, etc. All students who earn certificates are also eligible for the grand prize drawing at the end of the year. Last

year's grand prize was a season pass to Great America. (All prizes are either donated or purchased by the P.T.O.).

All prizes are donated by parents, staff members, or local businesses. So, in order to get our program off to a healthy start, I'd like to ask you as parents to take a quick walk around the house and toss some times into a box or bag that you feel would be appropriate for give-aways in Jefferson's incentive program. Simply drop the items by at the office of have your children drop them off. Our students will certainly appreciate them, and it's one way we can recognize and reward positive behavior and achievement and perpetuate and improve that positive growth. THANKS!

—Dan L. Miller

FAILURE NOTICE

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Test results show that your child is achieving below minimum standards in the area or areas checked below.

_____ Reading _____Mathematics _____Writing

The reason for writing you at this time is to be sure you are aware of your child's achievement problem so that you can work together with the school to try to improve the situation. Be sure you have discussed this problem with your child's classroom teacher so that you can help in efforts to bring achievement up.

Your child will be tested in the above areas again in April. If achievement continues to be below minimum standards in two or more areas, it is likely that your child will be retained at the current grade level for the next school year. You should also consider enrolling your child in summer school, starting in June, to try to improve achievement in problem areas.

—Dan L. Miller

TARDINESS

Jefferson Junior High School has recently initiated a program designed to help students get to class on time and to be prepared to start class at the beginning of the period. The program was started because of the problems that tardiness causes. When a student enters class late, that student interrupts the entire class, misses the opening instructions from the teacher, and often forces the teacher to repeat instructions or retake attendance. The student affects the morale of the teacher and those students who make a point of getting to class on time. Therefore, in an effort to help students form a habit of promptness that will benefit them throughout their lives, students late to class are being asked to spend time in the library after school in a study hall setting monitored by a teacher. Students are expected to study quietly or complete their homework. Students without work are given assignments,

and the teacher supervising in the library is available to help students with their work as needed.

Even in the short time the program has been in effect a significant change has become evident. The halls are clear when the bell rings, and students are in class ready to learn.

—Dan L. Miller

JEFFERSON ATTENDANCE RATE HITS BOTTOM

The Average Daily Attendance rate is the percentage of students who attend school over a period of time. Jefferson's Average Daily Attendance for the month of December was distressing. Of the 21 regular elementary and secondary schools in the district, Jefferson had the worst rate of attendance. Average Daily Attendance rates among the schools ranged from a high of 96.699% to Jefferson's low of 90.173%. This means that, on the average, 10% of Jefferson's student body was sitting at home every day instead of attending school and learning.

According to a national survey, 4% of a school's population is absent on any given day due to illness. Taking illness into account then, one can expect 4%, or 20 of Jefferson's 500 students, to be absent every day from Jefferson. This is normal. The 6% of Jefferson's pupil population beyond that normal range is home for some other reason. These reasons are apparently illegitimate, because I find it very hard to believe that Jefferson students are more sickly than the students at other schools in the district.

So, what is the reason for the high rate of absenteeism? Some students control their parents and simply stay home when they want to. Some students are unsupervised, and the parents are not aware that they are skipping school. Some parents keep their children home to do chores, run errands, or babysit. Some parents take their children on vacations or business trips during the school year. Some parents simply don't want to go through the hassle of arguing with their children when they say they want to stay home from school.

Whatever the reason for the high rate of absenteeism, the responsibility for seeing that a child attends school regularly and gets the education he or she needs rests with the parent. Every parent should be concerned enough about their child's future that they are not willing to risk that future by sitting back and watching their child miss the education they need to survive as adults. The more school a student misses, the poorer will be the quality of education that student receives.

We as a community, therefore, need to take more pride in our children and be more concerned about their education. Parents need to aggressively follow through on getting their children to school. They are just as healthy as students attending other schools and should be participating in the educational program to the same degree as do the students in other district schools.

—Dan L. Miller

Your decisions and subsequent actions determine your future.

—Dan L. Miller

People maintain sequestered lives and drift through existence in their exclusionary bubbles. For a dose of reality...exposure to diverse segments of society...ride the subway.

—Dan L. Miller

DREAM CHILD

My Easter baby.
Long-desired.
A bunny cap and
Fuzzy ball
Topped your cherished head.
Bright and sweet,
You soared beyond belief.
And truly
I was blessed.
So proud that you served.
So sad when you left,
And crushed on your return.
Viewed by only me,
Your grisly, shattered corpse
Was now my dream...my child.

—Dan L. Miller

THE GREAT MOSQUITO FESTIVAL OF 1992

They're little bugs I know.
But, oh, they love me so.
The fest convenes just once a year.
So many come from far and near.
The bravest to the woods do get
To find out who can get most bit.
I emerged with thirty-one.
A lucky day for me...I won!

—Dan L. Miller

GONE BUT NOW FORGOTTEN

The cool breeze
And the brown leaves of Fall
Shepherd me as I
Stroll silently, solemnly
Through measured rows of limestone shrines.
One weathered, faded stone
Shows only "Died 1855."
Death is forever;
Memories are not.

—Dan L. Miller

THE MOUSE

Farm-fresh face
With a broomstick build
And a Dutch-boy cut.
A wooden gaze
Fronts a silent, shy, young miss.
No one noticed—
The Mouse.

At 50, though—
Fetching figure, stylish hair,
Flirty eyes, charming soul,
And bright-eyed, beaming smile.

The caterpillar dazzles
By morphing to a butterfly.
But...a mouse into a beauty?

Who knew?

—Dan L. Miller

GOD'S LITTLE PRINCESS

Down the lane
The little sentry mans her post,
Staring at the flowing fields of harvest-ready grain.
A fair breeze fingers her flaxen curls,
And the morning sun highlights her
Delicate face as she turns
To gaze a good ways down the road.
Her arms are snugly sheltered deep within
Her shapeless woolen sweater as she
Hugs herself to ward off dawn's raw chill.
Her soft eyes don't yet smile.
Her sweet face grows forlorn.
From my seat at the window I gaze
With adoration as my little princess
Waits upon the bus to school.

—Dan L. Miller

FIRST CHILD

Over your crib,
Late at night,
We tuck you in,
Just one more time.
We stand above you,
Hugging, gazing, and reveling
In what we've achieved
In creating our tiny wonder.
You've added new
Meaning to our lives.
You've doubled our joy and
Forged a family from a marriage.
We hope that in your life
You find the joy we've found in you.

—Dan L. Miller

THIS UGLY WORLD

Kids may flee a frightful worm,
Or pause to crush the furry wretch.
But little did those children know
The beauty yet to be.

As girls do grow they often think
That beauty rules the face,
The figure, and the dress.
They don't yet know
There's beauty in evoking smiles
When you yourself are sad.
There's beauty in big bodies,
If the heart is big as well.
There's beauty in pure thoughts,
Exuberance, a soul that glows.

So look, don't judge.
I'll guarantee.
That beauty dwells
In all you see.

—Dan L. Miller

WAS IT THE GIRL OR THE TIME?

We once had youth, beauty, passion, joy.
She was my world, my cherished love.
Shapely, dainty, playful, fair—
My barefoot flower child.
Ours was the perfect world—
worry-free for her and me.

A life gone by, she still appears,
A vision now—yesteryear's amour.
Her surreal visage charms me still.
Do I hold dear the girl or just the dream?
The time's long gone,
And, sadly, so is she.

—Dan L. Miller

FISH LIPS FOREVER

Fish lips fried up in pure butter's a treat
That millions of folks 'round the world just won't eat.
They're crunchy, then chewy. They slip down your throat
With an effort that gags even those who take note
Of their flavor and texture which makes them select.
Spice them up, stuff them. I'm sure you'll detect
That fish lips give you the chance to create
New concoctions to fascinate those who relate
To the world's strangest food and aren't yet afraid.
Try lips on some toast spread with sweet marmalade.
Scoop through a dip with a lip and you'll find
Once overlooked pleasures to boggle your mind.
Now don't let the rubbery feel make you sick,
But do thank the Lord to your teeth they don't stick.
Parties are livened when fish lips are served.
Your guests at the outset will all seem unnerved
But will soon recover and then they will be
Quite ready for the next course of roast chimpanzee.
To picnics you must bring some deep-fried fish lips
And serve a strong wine that allows just two sips.
At intimate dinners the fish lips enhance
Your chance of reward with the utmost dispatch.
"Care for a fish lip?" "Ah, well, thank you, no."
"Aw, gee at least try one. They beat eating crow."
Open your mind up and give them a try,
Fish lips will soon be as common as pie.
Come on, get some courage and down a whole bunch.
They soon may replace all that popcorn you munch.

—Dan L. Miller

OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY

The day occurs just once a year,
When lovers muse as one.
“But don’t you know that’s just not so?
For I delight not once a year
But every hour, every day
And bless this love we share as one.”

—Dan L. Miller

FOREVER SEVENTEEN

Soft, cherub cheeks so eager for my touch.
Your childlike play so sweet.
With midnight eyes
And flowing hair
I’d often grasp to pull you close.

Our time was short, our passion free.
My first love left an imprint on my heart
I carry to this day.

So now at sixty-three—
Alive or not.
You are to me—
Forever Seventeen.

—Dan L. Miller

BOMBSHELL

Doggie play group.
(Yep. That’s a thing.)
Yappy Hour.
Sprinkles plays, and I’m amused.
A beauty stands nearby.
Face of an angel.
Curvy, youthful figure
Squeezed into a deliciously indecent dress.
Flowing tresses down the back.

Model material all around.
Perfection.

When bumped by another,
She flips the bird.
The heavenly face turns foul.
A whiskey-thick voice
Spews venom.

Then—
A smile and a wink to me.

What are my chances?

—Dan L. Miller

BROKEN GIANT

1925

A giant fortress crowns the hill,
A bouldered, stone facade.
The yawning doors sit
High atop the broad, steep stair,
As students amble up and in
To dedicate the virgin beast.

1970

I scale the massive stair,
Begin my walk of life.
I worked; I taught.
The Giant nurtured my success.
My work bore challenge, passion, joy.
Passion turned to romance,
And romance bred a wife.

2025

Homecoming.
The wrecking ball looms large.
The Giant's massive stairway
Offers me a challenge now.

My classroom's changed,
My hangouts hard to find.
Flaking paint and warping floors.
The Giant needs to rest.

My mood grows dark.
The life, the joy, the spirit's died.
The Giant now must sleep,
And so, in fact, must I.

—Dan L. Miller

MY DOG'S DEEP THOUGHTS

Late in the evening as I sink into my chair, Phaedo slumbers on the hearth. Quickly to sleep, he quivers, twitches, and makes throaty grunts—breeding thoughts particularly unique to dogs:

Today my master told me I was PRETTY. Actually, he told me I'm pretty annoying, but I like to focus on the positive.

A small dog is a pain in the neck when we're around and pain in the heart when we're not.

Sir Licks-a-Lot's master once told him that dogs are okay if you're into alarm clocks that poop.

My master's cousin had Porkchop cremated and used the ashes to fill an egg timer. She said he was lazy when he was alive, so he might as well do something helpful now that he's dead.

We dogs see the first tear... catch the second... and stop the third.

Every girl needs a dog like me to help her laugh when she thinks she'll never smile again.

Listen, I'm a nice dog. So if I'm nasty to you, you need to ask yourself why.

Yesterday my neighbor's little girl watched her dog get run over by a car. She sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died, he licked the tears off her face.

After endless deep thoughts, Phaedo shook off the deep sleep, padded to the kitchen and Hoovered his midnight snack.

—Dan L. Miller

IT COMES FROM WITHIN

Believe in yourself and always stand tall.
Those who have doubts are the ones who will fall.
Love what you do and show off your style.
Hard work and effort will make it worthwhile.
Stay focused on all that you wish to achieve.
The power's within you if you just believe.

—Dan L. Miller

SEARCHING FOR FOREVER

Perhaps someday, somewhere I'll find
The perfect girl to make my bride.
Rarer than a wheel unturned,
Fairer than the girls I've spurned,
Just who I am searching for.
Call it false or foolish, or
Wrong because I won't succeed.
I'm steadfast, though, and won't concede.
I'll always search. I know she's there.
find her when I'm least aware.

—Dan L. Miller

MORE BUTTS THAN BRAINS

Sittin'.
People sit.
Just sit.
Really?
When life's so short?
Sittin'
Wastes one's precious time,
Such vital bits of life.

Life is not a waiting room.
Your action breeds delight.
Sit with
A pole, a book, a phone.
Catch a fish, communicate,
Converse, consort.
Revel in life while you can.

—Dan L. Miller

MOURNFUL LONGING

Innocent child at play with friends.
Nevermore.

Youthful athlete praised by all.
Nevermore.

Beautiful woman and handsome guy.
Nevermore.

Romance and passion.
Nevermore.

Adoration and success.
Nevermore.

'cause now—
Timeworn, wizened, wrinkled, weak,

It's very much beyond my reach.

—Dan L. Miller

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

I DID IT!

Success!
Honor Roll.
Joy rocked my soul
As festive tears flowed free.

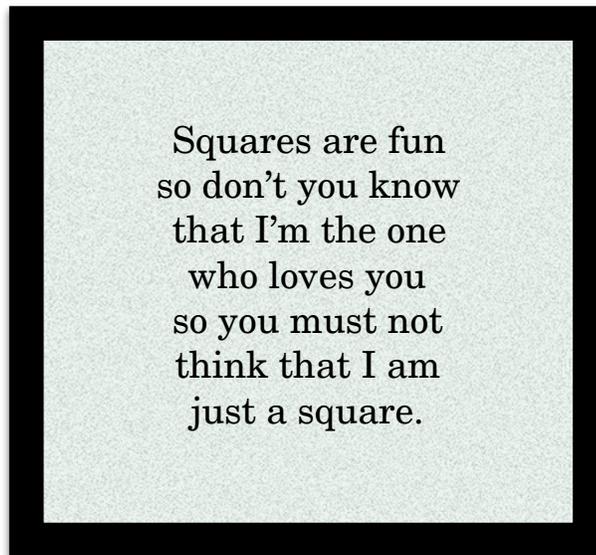
I DID IT!

With Dad, who sweat daily near the lathe.
With Mom, who nightly wrapped me 'round with body, arms, and books.
With Teacher, who proved to me I could be more.
With Lunch Lady Laurie, who oversaw my allergies to food.
With Custodian Clark, who hovered near to ward off bullies.
With Biscuit, who wagged and licked and cuddled her support.

I DID IT!

—Dan L. Miller

SQUARES ARE FUN



—Dan L. Miller

CALLED TO CREATE

Most in life do not create,
But teachers daily work to shape,
The youth—their hearts, their minds.
Nurturing their intellect one finds,
He's helped them grasp a point that's rare;
It's common knowledge now they share.
The teacher revels just to hear, "That's great!"
He did what few can do—CREATE.

—Dan L. Miller

THE PERPETUAL POET

So often with others I write in my mind.
My wife when she sees me will poke from behind.
I wake in the night to scribble what seems
Some clever ideas conveyed in my dreams.
At ball games I often draft with my phone
The gist of, to me, the world's greatest poem.
I find that my writing flourishes best,
In places I find myself fully obsessed.
I thrive in that setting,
While often forgetting
I've closed out all life—
Including my wife.

—Dan L. Miller

BABY BOOK

A book is brick to a baby.
A bulky, baffling, block.
Lick it, kick it,
Poke it, stroke it.
Riddles thrive inside,
Unidentified.

—Dan L. Miller

SPECIAL EFFECTS

For you, inventive artists forged a gift—
The magic, the power, the poetry of light.
An unbound world
Where sorrow slips away.
Where those alone can live as one.
Where laughter brightens a dull world.
Where life's replaced with one renewed.

Behold the brilliance of a setting sun,
Shiver in the damp of a dense, London fog.
Live an alternate reality.
Feel, relate, escape, enjoy.
Popcorn? That's a bonus.

—Dan L. Miller

THE FOIBLES OF FAMOUS AUTHORS—AND ME

Pink, textured pads were the preference of Plath.
The backs of rejections are my chosen path.
On a desk in the attic and facing a wall
His novels Doctorow tended to scrawl.
Cheever it was who faced a hot furnace
Alone in the basement with a pad for his surface.
For me, it's a window I need with a view
Of my neighbors to work in the snow they trudge through.
It's only round pencils that Steinbeck would use.
The hex cut his fingers on others he'd choose.
Rounds tend to shift around in my grip.
The hex gives me service without any slip.
Rostand often bathed while he wrote,
But I tub doze, and my stuff just won't float.
So books in a soapy bathtub I author,
Rejected they'd be by my tepid bath water.

—Dan L. Miller

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

The play of us all depends on the others.
We act and react—performing as brothers.
We rise or we fall as a group, not as one.
We all share the honor in games that we've won.

—Dan L. Miller

BLINDSIDED BY LIFE

It took me more than twenty years
to realize Life can maim.
I'd always thought my life was safe,
my future filled with joy.
But then She came and set me straight
on just what Life can do.
I've tried since then to guard myself
against such woe,
But found that, much to my dismay,
life sucks when void of love.

You're reaching now that time of life
when you'll discover, too,
That life is not all bliss,
but sometimes grief and pain.
Think now, my Dear, and take your time.
Your whole life lies ahead.
Choose well and someday
you will find,
That life is more appealing
when sorrow's left behind.

—Dan L. Miller

DONE

Bright beginnings.
Top honors. MBA.
Flying high; well-connected.
Ruined romance. Foolish choices.
Cubicle. Cubicle. Cubicle.

Stale air in the Buick laboring up the drive.
Hunched and haggard,
Plodding to the duplex made for one.
Worn couch. Frozen food. Stale TV.
Finally, my refuge in bed.
I'm thirty-eight...and done.

—Dan L. Miller

GRANDPA'S SLOW DEMISE

In the dreary cellar my grandpa,
Pale and frail, stares forlorn
From a straight-back chair.
In the tomb before the tomb.
Clammy, cold, dank, dark cave.
Coughing, wheezing, fading
Toward a final sleep.
Meeting his vacant gaze,
I near his shrouded, speechless form,
Harvesting sputum-filled pads—
Bits of life purged trash bag by trash bag.
It wasn't long and
At the end,
A part of me passed with him.

—Dan L. Miller

FRANCIS LOVED FROGS

Francis was fond of frogs.
In fact, Francis loved frogs.
She'd sit for hours on the bank of Sawyer's crick,
Watching, studying, smiling at the green,
Spotted skin stretched tight over two bulging eyes
And small, pointed, protruding bones.
Francis loved to eye the frogs plopping,
Slopping, clopping through the shallows.

Rising slowly from the bank and easing into the
Brook, Francis squished the silken, slimy, silt
Between her toes and then sank ankle-deep
Into the goop to await her moment.
She thrust a length before the leaping
Frog to clutch him in mid-air.

Francis loved to view the frogs with their
Bony backs and soft, bloated bellies, their
Eyes bulging as their throats swelled
With deep, mellow burps.
The legs slapped Francis' arms as she
Held her captor with both hands and
Kissed him on the nose.

But then, big, bad, Granddaddy frog stole up behind Francis,
Hunched, lunged, and slurped her up.

He didn't know—
That Francis loved frogs.

—Dan L. Miller

MY NEWBORN

Change.
Feed.
Cuddle.
Sleep.
Repeat.

—Dan L. Miller

The lilting beauty of Romantic classical music is truly massage for the mind.

—Dan L. Miller