



Quote the Raven- "Nevermore!"

As I sit down to write our note for this week, I have a cup of coffee in my hand, more to warm my mind than my body. It's raining outside. A cool wet gray seems to have enveloped the day and the beautiful office windows seem to be inviting the weather into the room.

As I close the door on this week and look forward into the next I realize that we are deep into fall. Halloween stands as sentry at the entrance to November and holidays beyond. Warm memories ebb in of trick-or-treating as a child, walking my own children as they excitedly visited homes on our street, and my wife and me (and our dog Murray) greeting polite goblins and characters while sitting on the front porch.

I am also reminded of [Vincent Price's reprise of The Raven](#), a poem by Edgar Allan Poe. You may remember it: "*Once Upon a Midnight dreary while I pondered weak and weary....*" Scary to me as a youngster.... It speaks more to me now as to how powerful our mind's eye is to what we see and what we think we see. This past week has set me to wrestle with this concept: What do we see and what do we think we see?"

A keynote speaker at the GCTM conference showed us statistics that reveal that in the 60 years of the organization's existence, we have not closed many of the achievement gaps here in Georgia. A young professor asked the question of me, "IF we have been working for 60 years not to move the needle, what ARE we doing?!" A valid question. One that I have pondered many times as a teacher when invested time and energy yielded

poor results on assessments. And when students did do well on assessments asked, "Are we doing enough?"

It is easy to become comfortable with the standard, but to do so makes us blind to the needs of our students and the needs of our society. In the past few weeks, I have walked into several classrooms. In almost all, the teachers are working hard and the students not working as hard, but working. The thing that struck me the most is that even in the most innovative classrooms the passage of learning flowed from one source.... teacher or coach or presenter or video screen.

When I research something **that I want to understand**... how do I act? The answer is simple. I ACT.

We know this is how humans learn. Babies experience the world through touch and taste. Eager elementary students explore the world of mathematics best through manipulatives. The growth of STEM and STEAM initiatives reveal that we realize our standard models are not working!

What are we, as math educators, doing to get students to be actors and not watchers or followers or copiers? Or do we persist down the path of *longing* for students who think and engage, but settle for students who, at best, mimic and who generally are lost? Eager to learn math - nevermore.....

As the Edgar Allen Poe poem closes, the raven is perched on the bust of Pallas Athena, a symbol of wisdom. The Raven repeats, "Nevermore!" Our poem narrator lies on the floor dying, mourning a lost love. His soul to be lifted - nevermore.

That got dark real quick?

The question remains ... what are we doing to create genuine learners?

Happy Maths,

Peter