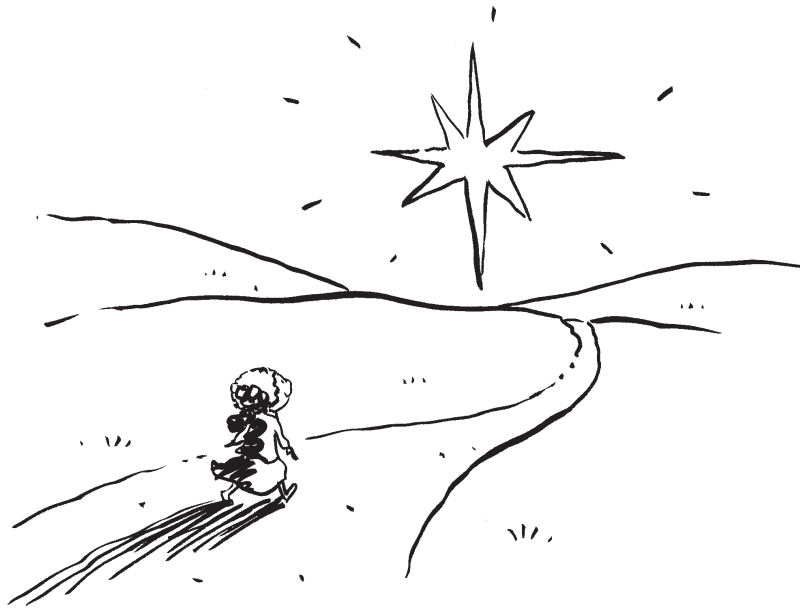


# The North Star Classroom Resource Guide

How to Integrate the Themes of the North Star Approach in  
Your Classroom Throughout the Year



Written by  
Sue Pandiani and Peter H. Reynolds

Illustrated by  
Peter H. Reynolds

Published by  
FableVision Inc.

Dedicated to all of the  
innovative teachers, creative parents,  
and children with amazing futures ahead of them.

And to the original Cape Cod, Massachusetts students who helped inspire  
and shape the activities in this guide.

Special thanks to:  
The North Star Jr. Navigators, The Navigators  
The Guides, The Voyagers, The Guiding Parents  
and  
North Star Friends



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progressive educator friends! You can contact us at: [info@fablevision.com](mailto:info@fablevision.com).  
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# Table of Contents

<b><i>SECTION 1 - An Introduction</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>
• Welcome, by Paul Reynolds	2
• What Is the North Star Approach?	4
• A Few Notes About This Guide	8
• Additional Resources	10
 <b><i>SECTION 2 - Testing the Winds</i></b>	 <b><i>11</i></b>
• Getting Started on Your North Star Journey	12
• Supplies Checklist	13
• Inside the Binder for Students	19
• Inside the Binder for Teachers	24
• Getting Started in the Classroom	26
• The North Star Family	29
 <b><i>SECTION 3 - Setting Sail</i></b>	 <b><i>31</i></b>
• Invite Parents Along on the Journey	32
• Cooperative Voyaging	35
• Starting Off the Year	38
 <b><i>SECTION 4 - On Your Journey</i></b>	 <b><i>43</i></b>
• Units and Activities	
• The North Star Scavenger Hunt (grades K-5)	44
• The North Star Hemisphere Project (grades K-3)	45
• The North Star Special Talents Project (grades K-5)	48
• The North Star Ships (grades K-5)	50
• The Navigator Lantern (grades 1-3)	51
• Star Students (grades K-5)	52
• Personal Constellations (grades K-5)	54
• StarVisions (grades K-5)	55
• Graphing Talents (grades 1-5)	56
• The North Star Book Talk (grades K-5)	57
• North Star Characters (grades 1-5)	59

• Units and Activities (cont.)	
• North Star Publishing (grades K-5)	62
• Birthday Biographies (grades 1-5)	64
• Have You Ever Been Lost? (grades K-5)	65
• North Star Journey Bar (grades 2-5)	67
• Star Gardens (grades K-5)	69
• North Star Radio (grades 2-5)	70
• North Star Play (grades 1-5)	71
• Creating a Class Website (grades 1-5)	72
• Activities Created by Teachers	
• SMART Song	75
• Mutiny Resolution	76
• Weeklong North Star Mini-Unit	77

<b>SECTION 5 - History</b>	<b>79</b>
----------------------------	-----------

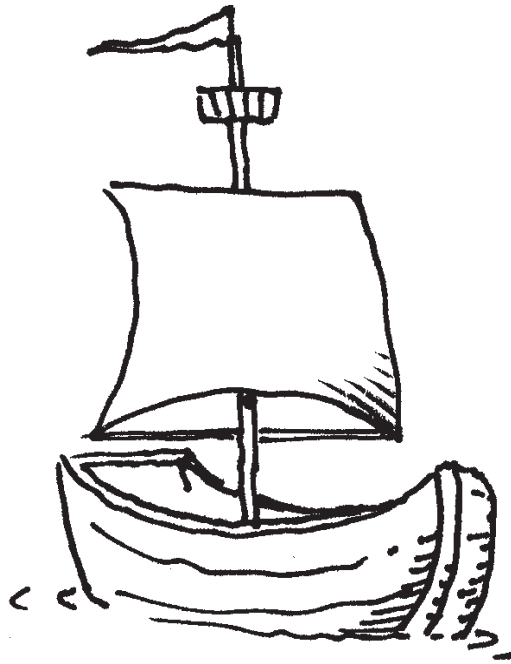
• A Message from Peter H. Reynolds	80
• Notes from Sue Pandiani, Co-Author	81
• Stories from the Classroom	82
• Addressing 21st Century Skills	86
• Addressing ISTE Standards	87
• About the Authors	90

<b>SECTION 6 - Reproducibles</b>	<b>R1</b>
----------------------------------	-----------

• Ship To Shore Binder	R2
• Constellation Portfolio	R11
• Cooperative Voyaging Materials	R15
• SmartStars Survey	R27
• Guiding Beacon of the Week	R37
• North Star Inspiration for the Voyage	R61



# An Introduction



Welcome, by Paul Reynolds	2
What Is the North Star Approach?	4
A Few Notes	8
Additional Resources	10

# Welcome

## to the North Star Classroom Guide!

*This is a guide filled with ideas, stories, and activities designed by a great teacher, and magical illustrations by a gifted artist. It is also a story about how that teacher — Milken National Educator recipient, Sue Pandiani — made a connection to the artist and author — Peter H. Reynolds — and the magic that followed. As a third-grade teacher at Ella F. Hoxie Elementary School in Bourne, Massachusetts, Sue and her students began corresponding with Peter, who was working on The North Star, a children's book describing learning as a journey of self-discovery. The work became the basis for a year-long curriculum.*



*Calling her students the “North Star Navigators,” Sue encouraged them to become poets, thinkers, philosophers, and artists as they engaged in internet-based reading and writing projects, creating poems, stories and artwork that explored their individual lives, gifts, and talents. This spirit of self-discovery is one that is cherished by Peter, who also wrote a series of motivational books for the classroom, including The Dot and Ish, following the publication of The North Star.*

*As Peter's twin brother and a great admirer of Sue's inspired teaching, I was lucky enough to witness the evolution of this chance meeting and the wonderful impact their combined energy, enthusiasm, talent, and love of children and learning has had on children, parents, guardians, entire families and other educators.*

*Since this guide was first published in 1999, many schools around the world have adopted its practices and philosophy in many ways, big and small. Some schools have adopted The North Star theme for the entire school (such as Sandown Elementary School in New Hampshire). Many have given us feedback on the impact The North Star has had on not only their students, but their educational community as well.*





*The original North Star Navigators are well on their way to adulthood now. One, getting ready for high school graduation, wrote to Sue, "I truly believe that our year with you will stay with us for our lifetime. I am constantly reminded of you as I start to follow my new dreams and begin a new journey. I have you to thank for illuminating my dreams so long ago."*

*Why is this approach so powerful? Because it reaches to the core fundamentals of successful learning: by putting the learner first and central, and then, by linking the home to the school*

*experience. The North Star Approach recognizes that in our quest for individualized instruction and improved student achievement what needs to be central is the student's understanding of him or herself. That has to START the process! Read for yourself what teachers have reported on page 82.*

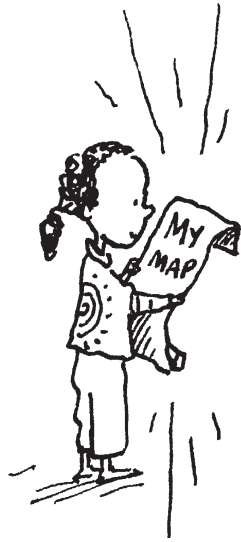
*Let this guide serve as suggestions and encouragement, or as a step-by-step model for creating YOUR North Star Classroom. Take the concept out for a one-day cruise...or let it become a year-long journey. And please let us know how you're doing or if you need any additional help. Your learning voyage is important to us!*

*Good luck on YOUR learning journey!*

*President, FableVision*

*Let your students discover  
their personal constellations.  
The stars that guide them.  
Let them teach YOU about  
their personal curriculum.*

## What Is the North Star Approach?



So, what is the essence of the North Star Approach? Before we launch into the practical activities in the guide, it is important to understand how to navigate this learning voyage.

The North Star Approach takes its cues from each individual student — not from scope and sequence charts, not from technology manufacturers, nor from software developers or academic committees.

The North Star Approach is all about helping students determine what knowledge, research, and new skills they need on their unique life journeys. After all, isn't that what the whole learning endeavor is — helping young people navigate productive, fulfilling, rewarding life journeys? The North Star Approach suggests that each learner develop a personal curriculum.

The North Star Approach acknowledges different learning styles and teaching styles. It tailors learning experiences which decrease stress and increase novelty, personal context, and long-term memory. It acknowledges multiple intelligences — billions of intelligences. It allows teachers to respond to emotions before test scores, interests before scope and sequence charts, spontaneous ideas before canned software content.

As Dr. Gary Stager, faculty at Pepperdine University, says,

"At a chaotic time when politicians push national testing and parents are hooked on phonics, Peter H. Reynolds' delightful book [*The North Star*] reminds us that the learner is central to the learning process."

The North Star Approach challenges students to master the 21st century skills so necessary in today's world. These tools are the cornerstone of a North Star voyage. Reading, writing, problem solving, communication, citizenship, creativity, innovation, informational literacy, flexibility...

These all make a North Star journey more rewarding and fruitful.

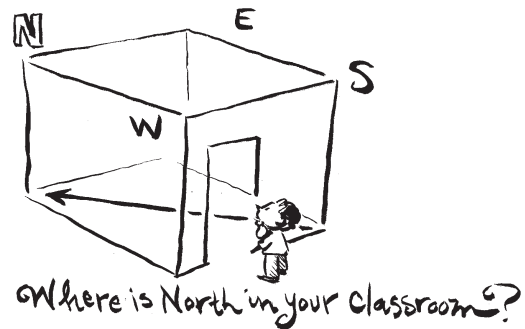




Each tool is like a deep well upon which to draw, but it is a deep well belonging to the learner. Each skill can provide a wealth of ideas for student-inspired projects, writing, reading, and problem solving. Twenty-first century skills will provide the framework for expression . . . the learner will provide the message.

The North Star Approach draws on a learner's personal curriculum; relies on personal content; and nurtures personal expertise. The following four categories are cornerstones of a learner's North Star personal curriculum.

- **Interests** (Hobbies/Passions/Point of View)
- **History** (Family/Personal Experiences)
- **Impact** (Mission/Service)
- **Future Thinking** (Career/Life Path)



The North Star Approach invites students to become philosophers, deep thinkers, and to be thoughtful about their journeys. Many students have trouble seeing beyond tomorrow. The North Star Approach helps young people explore the concept of time in more depth. It helps students see that the journey is a long one in need of planning, care, and wisdom. It inspires an understanding between cause and effect, action and consequence. The North Star Approach gives students a better sense of their own personal timelines.

The North Star Approach celebrates the blank canvas ~ the empty sheet of paper ~ the spark of curiosity ~ the sudden "Aha!" ~ the unplanned answer ~ the unexpected solution ~

**the original thought!**

The North Star Approach helps students cope with obstacles along the journey. Students are faced with more and more temptations and distractions from a thoughtful journey. Each Navigator responds differently to the challenges thrown his or her way, but for more and more young people (who are only a few years from becoming the adults of our society), external pressures can interrupt navigation. Violence on television, drugs, family dysfunction, fashion, peer pressure, and sex are just some of the influences on the personal journey

For more information on 21st century skills, check out <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/>, home of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The Framework's page in particular has pertinent information on assessments, curriculums, and classroom environments.

that can be stronger than inner-guidance. Inner-guidance systems are often under-nourished and under-developed, and sometimes have never been exercised at all.

**Damaged voyages are due in large part to three things...**

1. lack of guidance (Parental, societal, mentor, personal, or spiritual guidance.)
2. lack of self-vision (Sometimes referred to as self-esteem, but where self-esteem is about feeling good about one's self in the present moment, self-vision is also about being able to see the betterment of one's self in the future. It is about dreaming big – knowing that a bright future IS possible.)
3. rebellion (While a rebellious nature can be part of a young person's growth, it can be exacerbated by an educational system that disregards the personal needs and nature of the individual.)

The North Star Approach applauds the shifting paradigm from short-term memorization to long-term learning with an emphasis on personal context and meaningful projects. This shift is happening slowly in some places and not at all in others. The hope of the North Star Approach is that this process will speed up!

The North Star Approach is a blend of the new thinking about learning. It is a reflection of the best thinking about making learning more rewarding and effective by acknowledging different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and emotional intelligences. It blends student-constructed learning and creative assessment.

It helps trigger conversations about the critical issues, and helps explore what is really important on the journey. The North Star book is an allegory to help explore the issues of what is really important in a meaningful learning journey.

The North Star contains a simple message coming at a complicated, fast-paced time. It's time to slow down and be thoughtful about one's own journey.



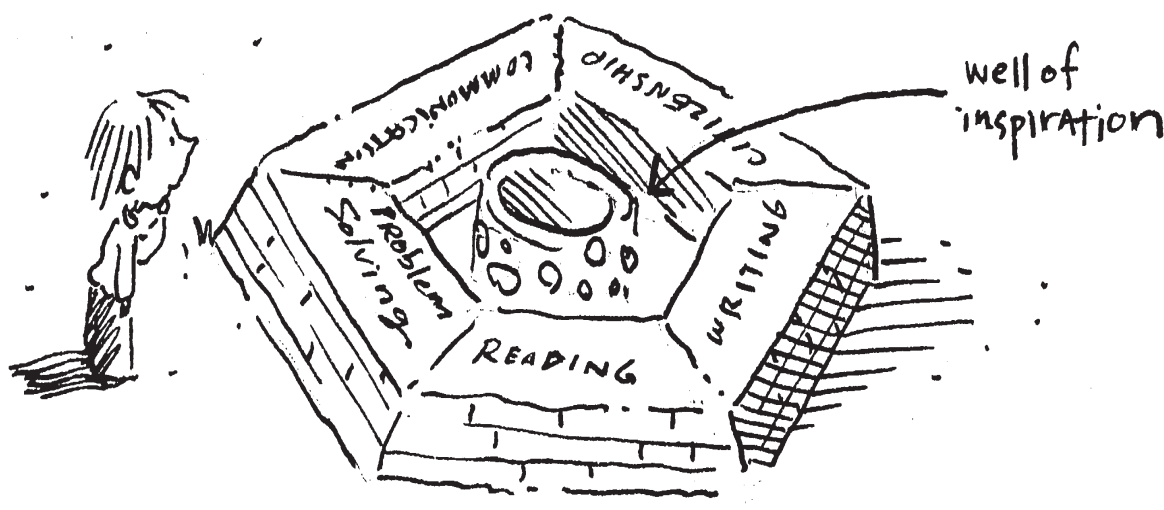
Technology and the internet are triggering a paradigm shift so dramatic that educators can only guess how schools will operate in the upcoming decades. The rules are being rewritten. The exciting thing is being here to witness the evolution – to see the limitations being lifted.



Anything will be possible.



The North Star Approach can easily be adapted to your current curriculum. In fact, amazing things can happen without changing much. Keep 90% the same, but allow for 10% North Star thinking in your day. (Of course, a higher percentage of North Star thinking is an added bonus!) Let your students discover their “personal constellations” – the stars that guide them. Let them teach YOU about their personal curriculum. Let them see the connection between foundation skills and their constellations. If you do, your collective learning voyages will be rich and rewarding.





## A Few Notes About this Guide



**This guide is appropriate for a wide grade span...**

The North Star Classroom Guide was developed for the elementary classroom, but even the most simplistic activities can easily be adapted for higher grades.



**Implementing the North Star Approach is like a voyage...**

The length of your voyage is up to you. An hour a day over a week would provide enough time to explore the themes. We have included a "Weeklong North Star Cruise" that outlines one way you could experience some North Star magic in a week. However, once you start the voyage, it is easy to just let it keep going. One of the big lessons of the North Star Approach is that the learning voyage never stops. Many of the ideas in this guide are tailored to be used daily, in the classroom and at home.



**You can reproduce the artwork...**

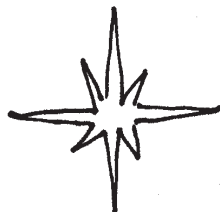
Feel free to use the art in your classroom, on your bulletin boards, and for assignments and notes home if it helps the voyage along.



**Having a copy of *The North Star*\* is a terrific addition to your classroom library...**

There is an online version of the story, so it is not absolutely necessary to buy it. However, there are many advantages to having the real book in the classroom. One advantage is the book can also be sent home with each child to read with their families. Families treasure the story!

\*See page 10 for more about the North Star book, website and community.





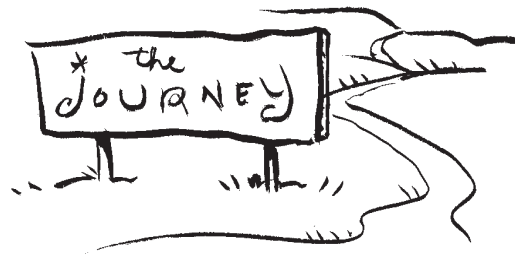
## The North Star Approach can benefit your classroom in many ways...

While the North Star Approach benefits students in some traditional ways, it is really an approach that takes care of the things that often get forgotten. Things the traditional system ignores or is afraid to talk about, and yet the very things we, as educators, parents, and caregivers, KNOW our students need:

- a sense of self
- a sense of direction
- confidence
- faith
- hope
- encouragement
- healthy spirits and souls

We are proud to stand up for the things that matter...

- great, inspired teachers; curious, inspired learners; concerned and supportive families
- creativity - art - music - community service - global concern
- slowing down and appreciating each other, ourselves, and the world around us
- innovation - breakthroughs - original thought
- fulfilled journeys - dreams come true



*We knew Kaela was a blossoming child, but you and the North Star theme have created a full blown orchid! Not only has Kaela been influenced, but her younger sister, Julia, a first grader, has followed the great adventure. She can't wait to be a Navigator. The North Star theme encourages individuality, creativity, fun and team work. I can remember the day Kaela came home so excited about her class that she sat right down on the computer and wrote a two chapter book on the North Star.*

— Grateful Parents

## Additional Resources



### ***The North Star Book***

From award-winning Candlewick Press, *The North Star* is the gentle, magically-illustrated book for children, parents and educators who need encouragement on the learning journey to be brave enough to dare to dream, and strong enough to follow their own unique path. Written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds, it is a fable of a young boy on his journey through life. Peter wrote the story in 1996 to help reach “off the path” learners who were not being served by the current educational system. The story supports educators and caregivers who know how debilitating a test-centric education can be and how lost we all can be when we forget the real essence of learning and lose its inherent joy. The story *The North Star* and its related website are wonderful resources to help launch a North Star Classroom.

### **The North Star Website**

For more North Star support and on-line activities, point your browser to <http://www.fablevision.com/northstar>. In the spirit of *The North Star*, all of the activities - including an online, abridged version of the book, are available at no charge for all teachers, students, and lifelong learners. Many of the activities mentioned in this guide can be supplemented with activities on the North Star website.

### **The North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources**

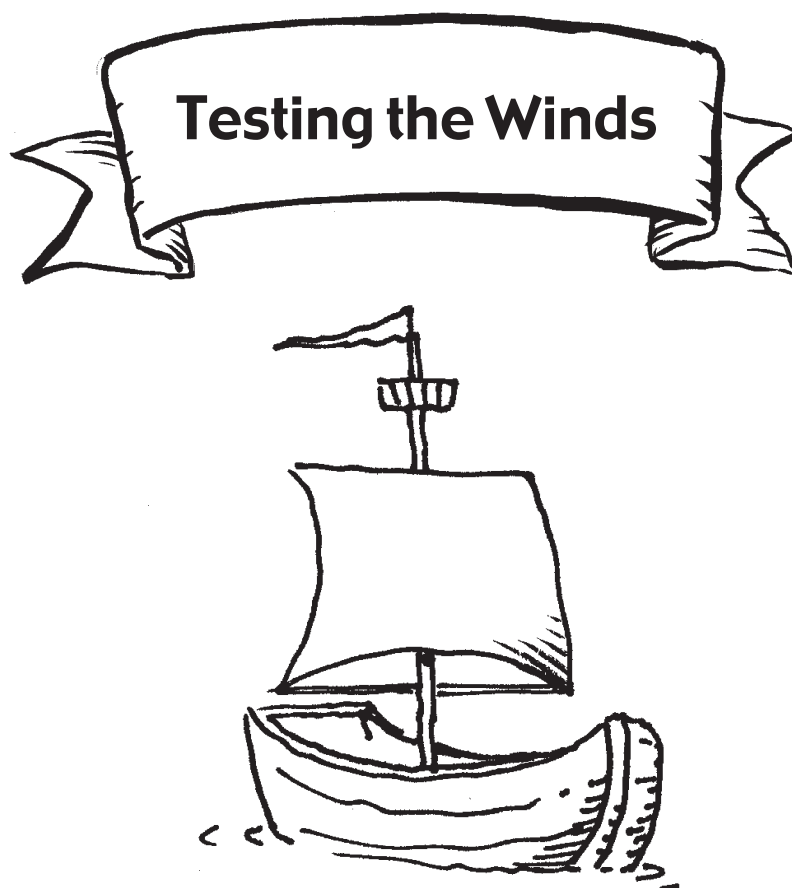
This guide references many different websites and software programs which may contribute to your journey. For more information on any of the sites and programs mentioned, please visit the North Star Guide: Web Resources at [www.fablevision.com/guide](http://www.fablevision.com/guide). A username and password are required to access the page: your username is navigator and your password is guide (both are case sensitive).

### **The North Star Community**

Created to provide a forum of shared classroom experiences, the North Star Community of Practice is another great resource for the North Star teacher. Visit online at <http://www.thenorthstarcommunity.org> to read and contribute stories, struggles and successes, and become an active member of the North Star Community.

### **The North Star Musical Journey**

The North Star Musical Journey is a musical experience designed for young performers, based on the award-winning book *The North Star* by Peter H. Reynolds, with original songs composed by Tim Beckman. The North Star Musical Journey is a multimedia experience students love - a perfect addition to a North Star year! For more ideas on a culminating theater project involving the North Star, read page 71.



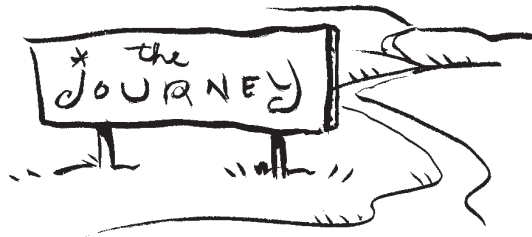
• Getting Started on Your Journey	12
• Supplies Checklist	13
• The North Star Book	14
• Ship-to-Shore Communicator	15
• Constellation Portfolio Binder	16
• Reflection Log	17
• The Ship-to-Shore Communicator	18
• The Navigator Section (an explanation)	19
• Monthly and Weekly Calendars	20
• The Reflection Log	21
• Navigator Certificate	23
• Family/Teacher Section (an explanation)	24
• Absentee Notices	25
• "It Takes a Fleet"	25
• Getting Started in the Classroom	26
• The North Star Family	29

## Getting Started on Your North Star Journey

Time to put the oar in the water.

Ready?

The North Star Approach is very **flexible**. You might want to start out slowly and incorporate only one or two activities suggested here, or, you might want to prepare for your year-long voyage with all the bells and whistles. In either case, have your materials at-the-ready before you launch your North Star Classroom.



For those of you who would like to make this voyage, you'll need to stock your ship with supplies. We've noted what you'll need throughout the resource guide. An essential tool is the story *The North Star*. There will be plenty of time during the year to read and re-read the story for more exploration. In the beginning, your students will enjoy the story of a boy who gets lost and how he finds his way and helps others find their way. Feel free to adapt and modify what is suggested here — you know your classroom best. Consider this guide a buffet where you can pick and choose and take back to your classroom as much as you feel comfortable tackling.

Another essential resource is the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources, which we've equipped with every link and online technology referenced in this guide, as well as any new resources. Feel free to send an e-mail with new links you'd like to add!  
(<http://www.fablevision.com/guide>)



For your convenience this guide is easy and straight-forward and includes LOTS of reproducibles which will make your mission easier. And remember, while this guide helps you launch your journey, the North Star Community is close by (see page 10). It will be your constant source of additional inspiration and sharing with a growing community of innovative educators who are taking the same voyage!



## Supplies Checklist

Here is the at-a-glance checklist of the supplies you will want to order or make before taking your Navigators on their North Star voyage. Feel free to adapt this list to fit your resources and time availability. The following pages include suggestions for using each item in the classroom.

- ☐ 1. *The North Star* book  
The award winning book by Peter H. Reynolds, which inspired the first-ever North Star classroom.
- ☐ 2. Ship-to-Shore Binder/Workbook  
This binder, or workbook, is a communication tool to help the Navigator keep track of work and his or her schedule, as well as to strengthen the family connection.
- ☐ 3. Constellation Portfolio Binder/Folder  
Portfolios allow everyone involved to see how the students have progressed throughout the year.
- ☐ 4. A Reflection Log  
Reflection is a technique that helps students review what they have learned through journaling the day's experiences. You can buy Blank Books from [barebooks.com](http://barebooks.com).
- ☐ 5. Miscellaneous environment enhancers – star related artwork, ocean sound effects on CD, etc.



### Note from Sue Pandiani:

The binder approach works well in my class, but it takes a good deal of time to prepare. Most good things do. It isn't necessary for you to do the binders unless you feel it matches your own approach. Just notice the themes and discover your own ways of nurturing them in your classroom.



**Checklist Item:**  
***The North Star Book***

*The North Star* book is available through FableVision at [www.fablevision.com](http://www.fablevision.com), or you can bookmark the on-line version at <http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/read.html>. You'll want to read the story with your class, probably more than once, and you'll also want it available throughout the year for students to reference throughout their voyage.



## Checklist Item: Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator Binder

Navigation is knowing where you are and where you are going. Navigators can look at the shoreline and the stars to guide them. They can also use charts and other instruments, so the North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator is a critical component of a North Star Classroom.



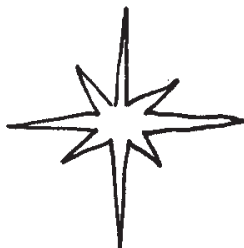
### What is it?

The North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator is a communication tool to help the Navigator keep track of work and his or her schedule, as well as to strengthen the family connection.

### How do I make it?

Buy three-ring binders, 1 to 1.5 inch size. Insert the Navigator title page on the front cover (available on page R2), and use see-through plastic sheet protectors inside to hold:

- two illustrated section covers (Navigator Section and Family/Teacher Section, available on pages R3 and R4 for photocopying)
- the Navigator Reflection Log (composition notebook)
- notes to and from home



## Checklist Item: Portfolio Binder

Portfolios can be a powerful tool for everyone involved to see student work and see how they have progressed throughout the year. Developing a portfolio offers each student an opportunity to learn more about their own learning voyage. The Constellation Portfolio can be a useful tool for facilitating students' reflection on:

**Where have I been?**

**Where am I now?**

**Where am I going?**

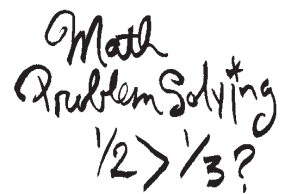
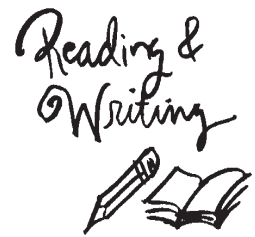
**Where do I want to be? (this is a BIG North Star question!)**

The portfolio can be used as a showcase — a collection of student—and teacher-selected work. Note: If a student is to learn to value their own work and themselves as a learner, then it is important that they be involved in selecting the pieces to be included.

A three-ring binder works well as a portfolio. Be sure to include a table of contents, a copy of the poem "I Believe in Me" by Peter H. Reynolds, content area dividers, and pages for reflection. It may also contain samples of a student's work in all subject areas, such as:

- Portfolio Reflection
- North Star Reading & Writing
- North Star Math & Problem Solving
- North Star Social Studies
- North Star Science
- North Star Art & Music, etc.

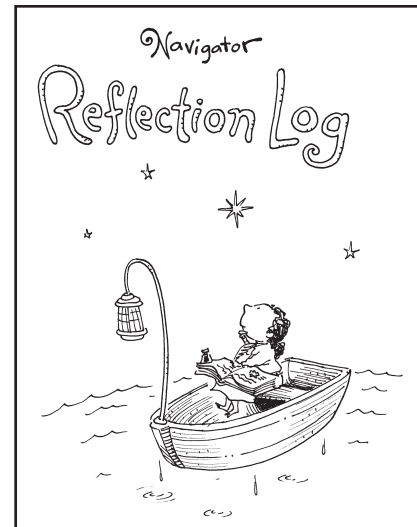
By dating all entries, the student will be able to chart their improvement and growth as the year progresses. You may wish to provide a scoring rubric for the child to do a self-evaluation of their work. Periodically you may wish to include a piece of reflective writing where the student explains why a piece was included, what they felt they did best, and what they want to improve upon.



## Checklist Item: Navigator Reflection Log

A small composition notebook or a Blank Book (available from Bare Books) makes an excellent **Navigator Reflection Log**, and will fit into the sheet protector of the student's North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator.

- Using a reflection log is a journaling technique that helps students review what they learned and what experiences they had during the day.
- It gives students the opportunity to reflect on what they know.
- The reflection log also allows you to help inspire literacy by tapping into a student's experience. This is a key element of the North Star Approach.
- The Reflection Log also provides parents with a glimpse into their child's day, allowing them to ask questions or to expand on what is being experienced. This is very important!



Students often prefer to do their reflective writing on the computer as opposed to hand writing it in a journal. This is always another option for keeping the Navigator Log. They will need to print out their nightly entries, three-hole punch them, and keep them in a separate three-ring binder.

### Note from Sue Pandiani:

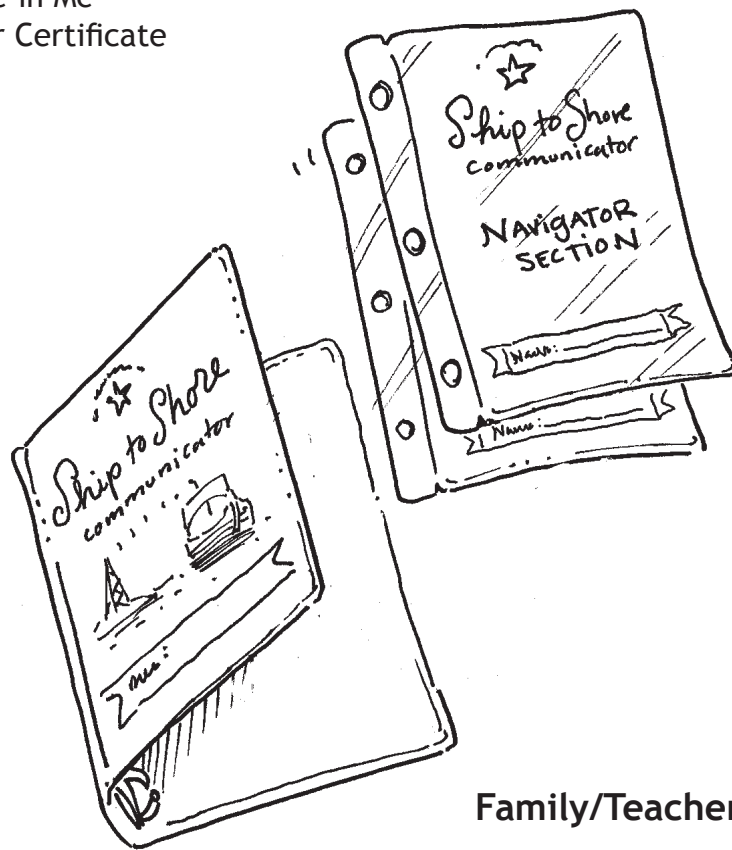
You might consider Stationery Studio® software by FableVision ([www.fablevision.com/stationery-studio](http://www.fablevision.com/stationery-studio)) which includes artwork from *The North Star* to inspire writing. Another great option for students to use is Lifejournal, a journaling program available through Chronicles Software. More information on Stationery Studio® and Lifejournal is available on the North Star Guide: Web Resources.



# The North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator Binder

## Navigator Section

- Section Divider
- Monthly Calendar Sheet
- Weekly Calendar Sheets
- Plastic sleeve with Navigator Reflection Log
- "I Believe in Me"
- Navigator Certificate



## Family/Teacher Section

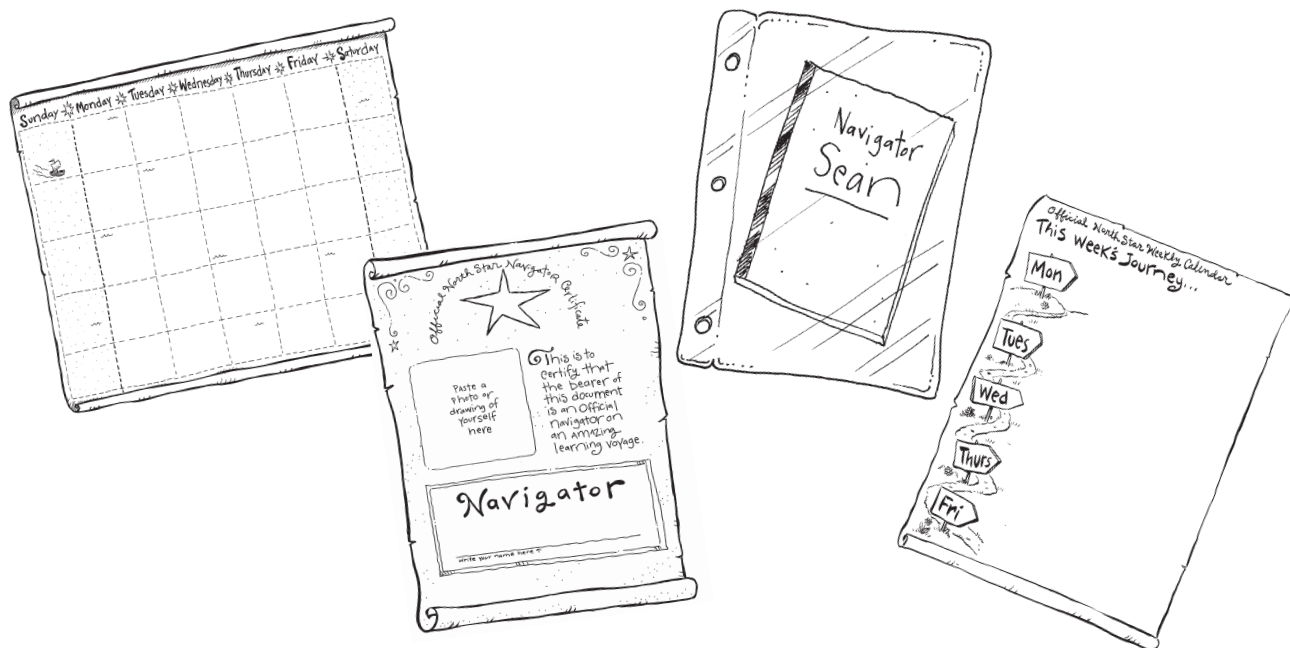
- Section Divider
- Plastic sleeve for notes between home and school
- "It Takes a Fleet"
- North Star Absentee Notices

## Ship-to-Shore Binder: The Navigator Section

The first section of the Ship-to-Shore Binder is the Navigator Section. This is where students can “stow away” their own work and where there are tools to help them organize their voyage.

All of the elements of the Navigator Section can be found in the reproducible section at the back of this book, starting on page R1. They include:

- Peter’s illustrated **Section Divider** reproducible, “Navigator’s Section.”
- a **Monthly Calendar** where Navigators can record upcoming events, projects, birthdays, etc.
- a **Weekly Calendar** that helps Navigators keep track of their nightly homework assignments.
- an empty sheet protector to hold the **Navigator’s Reflection Log** (see page 21), as well as assignment sheets that the teacher is sending home, and any other class work.
- poems and songs that remind students they are unique and special! We’ve included the poem, “**I Believe in Me**” by Peter H. Reynolds (page R7) and the **Navigator Certificate** (page R8).







## The Monthly & Weekly Calendars

(available on pages R5 and R6)

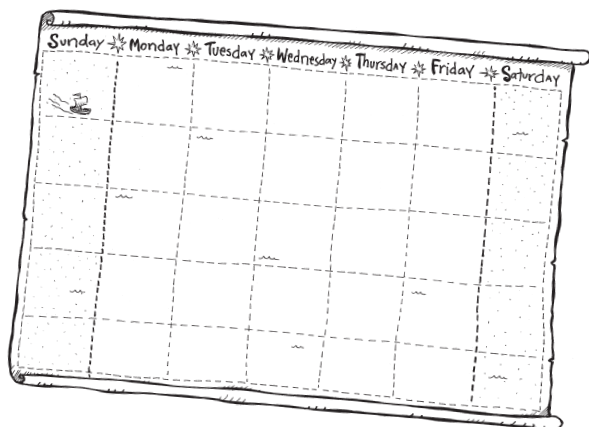
Having a sense of time, and a sense of control about what is heading their way gives the Navigator an important tool for the journey.

*\* If I know what I will find over the hill, I will be better prepared.*

Open House is a great opportunity to explain what a valuable tool the monthly and weekly calendars can be. Remind parents that the calendars can be used to help organize busy students involved with after-school activities and weekend commitments.

Using the monthly and weekly calendars provides an opportunity for **teaching organizational habits** and **time management**. These skills are some of the most important ones a learner can have for his or her life-long journey. Encourage families to compare the classroom calendars, with events and projects due, to their family schedules. See the note below for actual testimony from the parent of a North Star Navigator:

*"When my son had a hockey tournament scheduled the same weekend that a science poster was due on Monday, we planned in advance to have the assignment done ahead of time. That involved setting up a schedule for gathering materials, having books and reference information on hand, planning the poster and writing the rough draft, editing, writing the final copy, and assembling the poster. This calendar tool should help to prevent those last minute panic sessions of, 'I have a project due... tomorrow!'"*



### Note from Sue Pandiani:

Another excellent tool for time planning is TimeLiner™ from Tom Snyder Productions. It is an easy program that allows even very young children to create timelines. They can create timelines of their year, month, week or day. It is useful too for future planning. Students will enjoy imagining what their future timelines will be like!





## Reflection Log Tips

The goal of reflection is to get students thinking in a new and more introspective way. Since many students have not experienced this before, it is vital to model writing effective reflections before expecting students to do this independently. Start by posing a few questions, such as:

- What was the favorite part of your day?
- Was there something in particular that you learned that was new?
- Was something hard to understand?
- What made you laugh?
- What inspired you today?

Sue Pandiani describes her own process:

*In the beginning of the year, I have my third graders reflect upon their day. I record their responses on a chart, and write a summary in paragraph form for a class Reflection Log.*

*In this way I model how to write a journal entry. I try to show them how to reflect upon the highlights of the day, instead of "We went to the library at 11:00, lunch at 11:30"; I write "We listened to Native American music today and closed our eyes and tried to imagine what we saw. Then we wrote about it. Ms. Pandiani read mine and she cried. She said they were happy tears."*

*While I am teaching my students how to write from the heart, I am also modeling proper sentence form: subject, predicate, proper punctuation, capitalization, underlining titles of books, etc.*

*I have a large flip chart on an easel. I prefer this to a blackboard that is erased daily because I can turn back pages when teaching a particular concept. So for the first three weeks of school, I brainstorm with them about what we did or learned that day. We write their entries together.*

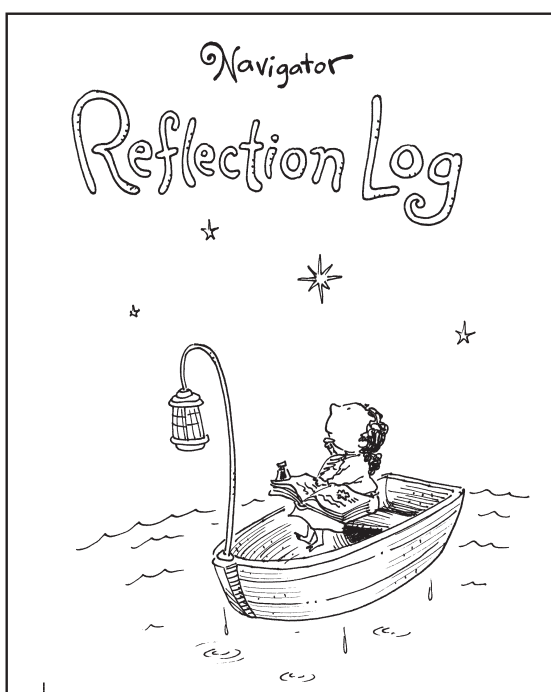
*When you feel as though your students are ready, begin assigning the log entries as part of their Navigator nightly duties. Have your Navigators use their imagination and ask them to pretend that they are in their ship's cabin at night. Each evening one of their duties is to record an entry in their log. They are to focus on their learning voyage. What took place in their North Star Classroom that day? I remind them that it is a reflection of the school day; a summary of their day's North Star moments. Enlisting parents to help has been a great success for me. I ask them to help me and their Navigator by reading, checking, correcting, and signing the Reflection Logs. I also ask parents to be encouraging and to be interested in what their child has written. It is a lost moment if a parent circles misspelled words without having actually read what their child wrote.*

Studies show that children need 9-10 hours of sleep a night to remember and process everything they learn. Reflection, written or spoken, can jumpstart the process.

For more information on brain-research and sleep, check out articles at [www.healthday.com](http://www.healthday.com) (keyword: sleep) and John Dewey, author of *The School and the Curriculum* and *How We Think* (<http://dewey.pragmatism.org/>)

If you are using FableVison's Stationery Studio® software for your writing, you may want to consider the following designs:

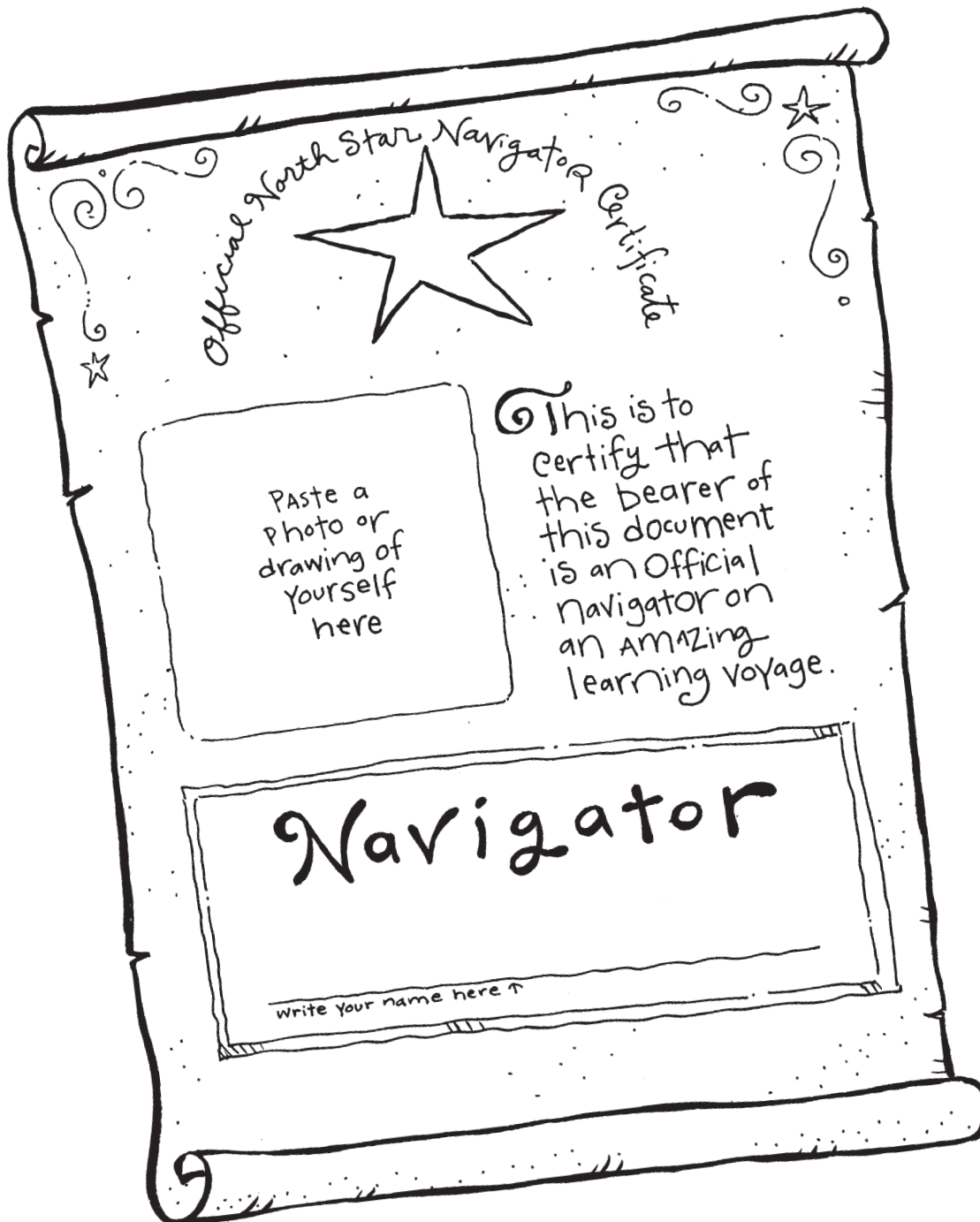
- This Year I'm on a Journey
- North Star
- My Goals
- Back to School
- Books and Pencils
- Boy/Girl at Computer
- Cloud
- Flights of Fancy
- House on Head
- I Have a Dream
- Kids with Pencil
- Parchment
- Pencils
- Rocket Ride
- Ship
- Starry Gift
- Thoughts Take Flight
- Toot Your Horn



## Navigator Certificate

(available on page R8)

This is an optional page, but helps involve the Navigator in the drama of the North Star Journey. Being part of a community can also bolster students' confidence and connect them to their personal learning journey. This certificate can be slipped into the back of the Ship-to-Shore Binder or given to students to put inside their notebook.



## Ship-to-Shore Binder: The Family & Teacher Section

The Family/Teacher Section is for all communication between home and school. This is where you can put a separate sheet protector as a place for...

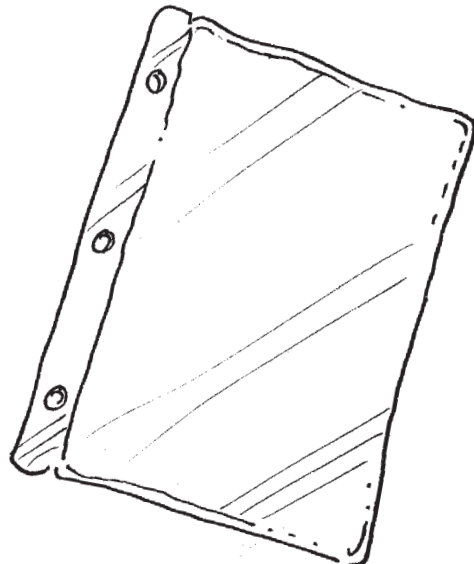
- any correspondence from home
- notices from the office and the PTA
- notes and messages from the teacher

The only way to discover a child's true learning journey is to have daily, two-way, real conversations. Find out what the spark is for him or her!



Remember, the North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator is an important communication tool which will help guide you the teacher, the Navigator, and parents on the shared learning voyage. Ask the parents to check it each night and encourage the students to have it with them at all times. It should go home every afternoon and return each morning with completed assignments. Think of this as a super-deluxe homework folder.

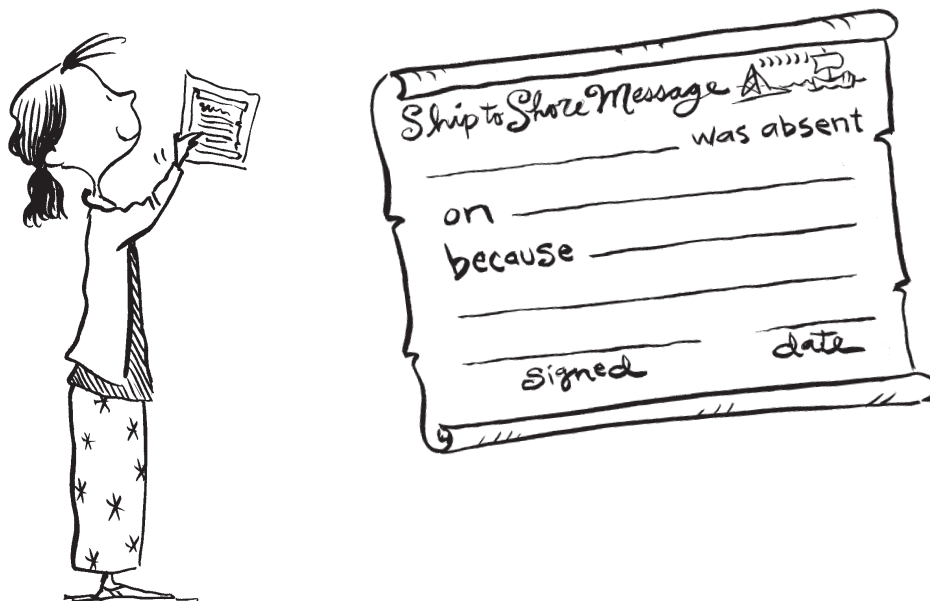
*Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, by Margaret J. Wheatley is a great resource for building student-parent relationships and beginning meaningful conversations.



## Absentee Notices

(available on page R10)

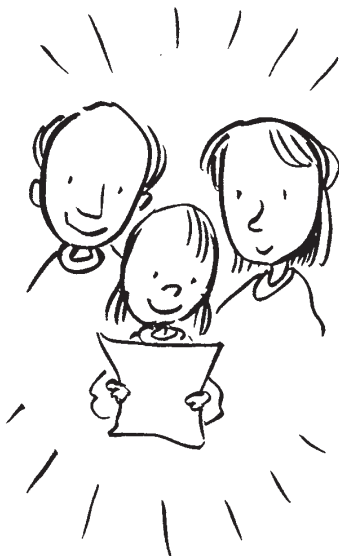
Hopefully they won't need too many of these, but inevitably along the journey, a Navigator gets sick or has to take a detour. These ready-to-go absentee notices work well. It is convenient for parents to have a form in-hand. It also echoes the theme of the North Star Classroom, and enrolls parents in the drama and fun.



## "It Takes a Fleet"

(available on page R9)

We have lots of ideas and support for students in this guide, but here is something just for parents and families of the Navigators. It is a message of how much their child's learning voyage depends on them! All teachers need their help if their child's journey is to be successful.





## Getting Started in the Classroom

### 1. Read the Book Yourself

We'd highly recommend you read the story *The North Star* as this is the main theme throughout the year. You may want to read the story online, ([www.fablevision.com/northstar](http://www.fablevision.com/northstar)) or order a copy of the book from FableVision (1-888-240-3734). The book is also available at Amazon.com and other retail outlets.

### 2. Decorate Your Room

Preparing the classroom environment is very important — it elevates the drama of the experience and shows the significance of the unfolding journey. There are lots of ways to decorate the classroom that visually support the themes of *The North Star*. Throughout this guide, we've included many activities that transform the metaphor into student-created and teacher-created props. All of them help bring to life in tangible ways the important themes you'll be encountering during the year.



As unique  
as your  
fingerprint

### 3. Read the Book Aloud to Your Students

You'll want to read this story aloud with your students as well. You can read it the first day or wait a week or two — announce a countdown to the reading of *The North Star*. This "drum roll" builds excitement and anticipation. If your students are working with FableVision Navigator Workbooks, they can use the Island Two activity.

### 4. Be Patient

When you do read the story, don't expect the children to understand it completely the first time. It is an allegory filled with rich metaphors and it will take some time to explore their meanings.

### 5. Ask Questions

There are so many themes to explore in *The North Star*. See suggestions for conducting a North Star Book Talk on page 57.

**6. Share the Book with Families**

Get a “traveling copy” of *The North Star* for students to take home and read with their families. If possible, get a copy for your school library and town library too.



**7. Enroll Volunteers**

Getting help from parent volunteers can make the difference. Even parents from previous grades are often all too willing to dedicate time and energy to the North Star classroom. This is a real testament to the power of the North Star community. It’s not just about our journey – it’s about helping others on their journeys!

**8. Do the Survey**

A great way to start the year is with The North Star Parent Survey that is sent home to parents to get a “snapshot” of their children. The survey often provides key insights into how students learn and interact with others. This is the kind of valuable information that often takes an educator three or four months to uncover. A sample survey, which you are free to use or adapt, can be found on page R14.



**9. Discuss Different Ways to Be Smart**

Spend some time helping students understand that there are many ways of being smart and learning. North Star classroom advocates are big fans of Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences theory. The North Star metaphor of individual “constellations” helps children see that there are many unique stars. Some easy-to-use sheets, based on Dr. Gardner’s research, are included on pages R27 through R34. These pages will help students think about their different “smart stars.” This is a fun way to help students identify how they are nature smart, number smart, word smart, body smart, art smart, spirit smart, or all the other types of smart. Once you’ve identified all the possible intelligences, you can sing the SMART song! (See page 75.)



### 10. Start Your Own Website

Think about starting your own classroom webpage if you don't have one already. Don't worry if you're not internet savvy – if you're new to the web, read through the tips and tools included here. As Sue likes to remind teachers, "Creating and maintaining a site is a challenge, perhaps not everyone's cup of tea, but for me, it matches my learning style." You will find some great information on Sue's experience, as well as information on crafting a North Star classroom webpage.

For more information on Howard Gardner's research on Multiple Intelligences, visit [www.howardgardner.com](http://www.howardgardner.com), or read *Multiple Intelligences*, by Howard Gardner.

Also be sure to visit <http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/make>, for North Star art and animation created by Peter H. Reynolds, ready for your website or to print out to use in your classroom.

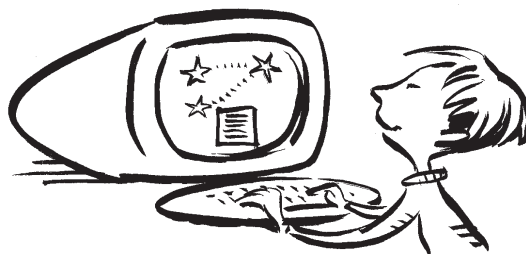
### 11. Make a Navigator Star for Each Student

Use the star template on page R24 to cut out a star for each Navigator. Have the student write their name, and adjectives to describe themselves. Ask them:

- What makes you special, unique, an individual?
- What are your talents and abilities?
- What activities are you involved in?
- What are your favorite subjects in school?
- What are you good at?
- What adjectives could be used to describe you?



Have students write all of their responses on a star. Color it, decorate it with glitter, and suspend it from the classroom ceiling above their heads. Remind them to look up at their stars, and let their ideas guide them throughout their day.





# **The North Star Family**

## **The Junior Navigators**

(younger brothers, sisters, friends)

## **The Navigators**

(the current class)

## **The Guides**

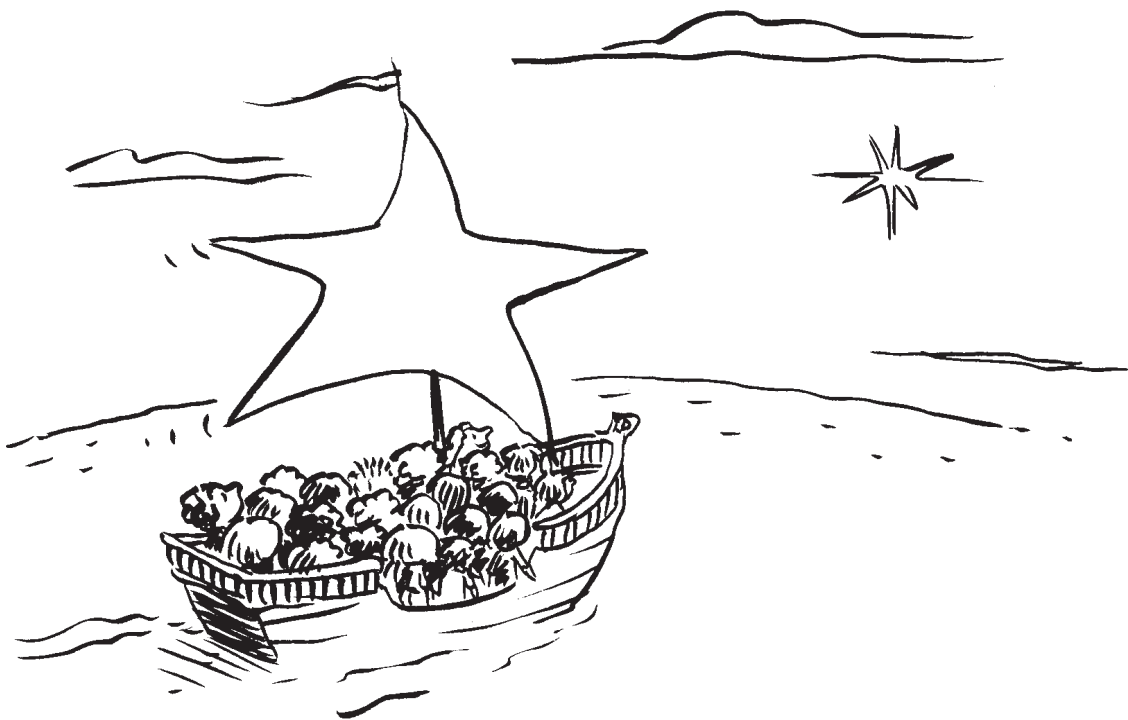
(last year's students)

## **The Voyagers**

(all alumni students!)

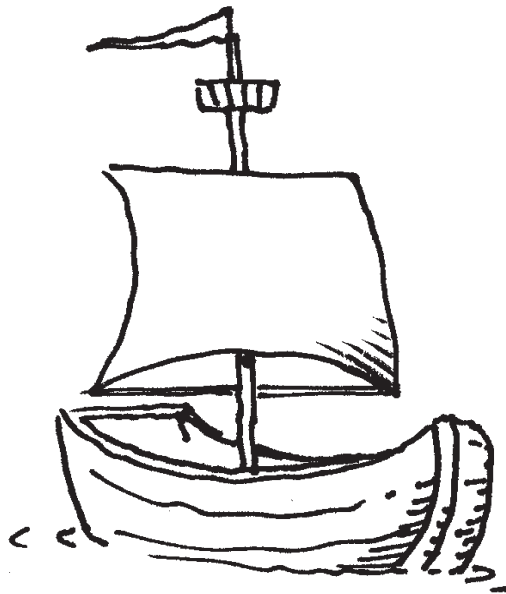
## **The Guiding Parents**

## **North Star Friends**





# Setting Sail



- Inviting Parents and Guardians Along on the Journey 32
- Cooperative Voyaging 35
- Starting Off the Year 38

## Inviting Parents and Guardians on the Voyage

INFORMING parents and guardians that this school year is no ordinary year is part of the formula for having a spectacular year. The other component is to INVITE them to participate. The Ship-to-Shore Communicator Binder is a bridge between home and school.

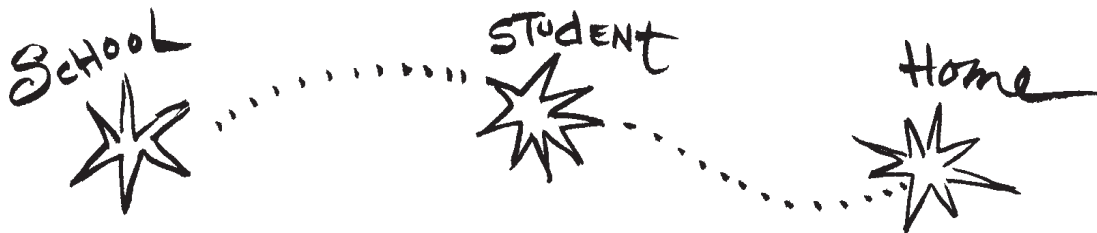


One letter invites parents to a North Star Open House. This can be the open house at the beginning of the year, or a separate event. Included is a sample of a letter Sue Pandiani sent home inviting parents and guardians to the special night on the following pages.

The poem "It Takes a Fleet" is placed into the Ship-to-Shore binder, so that parents are sure to read it. It describes the critical partnership between teacher and family in helping navigate a young person's learning voyage and reminds parents that the learning journey depends on support at home. Home support is a very big problem for many classrooms, but many parents and guardians, have just not been invited on the journey.

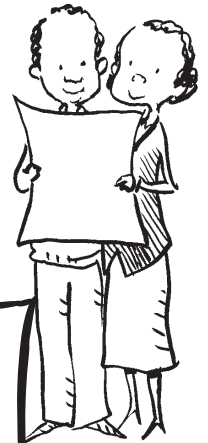
This kind of beacon helps underscore that teachers are not alone in helping a child learn. Together, the collaboration between home and school can create magic and solve seemingly unsolvable problems.

Not all problems can be solved by just inviting parents and guardians on the voyage. But as parents and guardians hear the message of the North Star Journey for themselves, they will see that the best is yet to come.



## Introduction Letter to Parents

Most teachers send home a letter at the start of the year to let families know what lies ahead. Here is the letter Sue Pandiani sends to the parents and guardians of her students. It may give you ideas of what you want to share, as well as a good overview of the North Star Classroom.



### *North Star Navigators, The Voyage Begins!*

Summer is over and it's back to school, but also back to exciting challenges, new adventures, and lots of third grade learning and fun. Hello, my name is Sue Pandiani, and I will be your child's teacher at Hoxie School this year. This year we will be using the theme of being on a voyage. We will call ourselves the North Star Navigators. I will begin by reading the book, *The North Star* by Peter H. Reynolds. It is a story about **self-discovery and realizing one's true potential**. The message is that life is a journey and there are many paths that we can take, but there is one that is best for us, and that is our own path. **It raises questions about individuality and our uniqueness**. We explore our strengths and talents, and discuss abilities and disabilities. Another important message is that we are not on this journey alone. There are many people in our lives and important events that influence who we are and who we will become. That's where the family connection becomes so strong and so important.

I have found that having a year-long theme along with a special class name, a class flag, etc. promotes a feeling of unity. Last year's class was the first North Star Navigators' class. They will act as our fourth grade role models this year, and serve as our North Star Guides. Last year's Guides are now the Voyagers at the middle school. Our Junior Navigators are our younger brothers and sisters who are in first and second grade. I think the feeling of community and family is our greatest asset. I'm just trying to reinforce it in a creative, and I hope, inspirational way. All the third grade curriculum will be the same; we'll just use a common thread to weave it all together.

Navigation is knowing where you are and where you are going. Navigators can look at the shoreline and the stars to find out where they are. They can also use charts and other instruments to guide them. They can communicate "ship-to-shore."

This brings me to a very important component of our school year, the **Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator**. It is a study skills notebook, where the Navigator will keep the following organizational tools: a monthly calendar for upcoming events and projects, a weekly calendar for nightly homework assignments, a sheet protector for you to put notes and messages in for me or the office, a place for homework and class work going

home, and a section for school and classroom communications. So, think of it as OUR "ship-to-shore" communication device for finding out where WE (Navigator, parents, teacher) are. PLEASE check it each night, and encourage your child to keep it with them. It should go home every afternoon, and return each morning, with homework done, of course!

We will keep a journal, called the **Navigator's Reflection Log**. I will model what is expected for a while, so they will have an idea of reflecting on the day's events and using proper sentence structure. I would prefer a few well-written sentences, with proper spelling and punctuation, rather than an entire page of sentence fragments. The Navigators will keep a collection of their work in another three-ring binder called the **Constellation Portfolio**.

Besides reading The North Star, we will also read various books that deal with the theme of accepting differences and celebrating our own uniqueness. Crow Boy, Eagle Eyes, and Be Good to Eddie Lee, are just a few of the stories that help children to understand harmful stereotypes and labels. We will focus on the many different ways of being smart (multiple intelligences) and share our special talents with each other. Each child will receive a SmartStars Survey that encourages them to think about their strengths and interests. We will work on them in class, but I would also like the students to share them with you and ask for your input regarding their talents and abilities. I will be asking your child to bring to school a small display or project that explains their special interests on display for Open House, so that we can all celebrate their extracurricular activities as well as their work in school. Last year's exhibition was wonderful, and we had 100% participation. So, please encourage your child to share his or her special talents.

Have I overwhelmed you yet? I wish Open House, which will be on the 23rd, was the first night of school so that I could explain all of this in person. As I state on my Web page, I too am on this journey with my students, and what an adventure it will be!

So many of you have already asked how you can help. Hopefully, I will have more information regarding my schedule by Open House. For now, any contributions you can make to our classroom supplies would be greatly appreciated: glue sticks, thin markers, colored pencils, a box of tissues, 35 mm film...expensive, but I take tons of pictures of your stars, I call them my cherubs. And of course we always welcome books for our classroom library. The three-ring binders that we will use for our Ship-to-Shore Communicators were donated last year, but I had to purchase them myself this year at a cost of \$1.99 each. If you are able to contribute two dollars to defray the cost, I would be most appreciative. Thanks! I am very excited about this year and hope that you and your child are, too. You can contact me at: teacher@teachers.net

Not "The End," but rather... "The Beginning!"  
Ms. Pandiani

## Cooperative Voyaging

The North Star voyage is significantly smoother when Navigators master the art of cooperation. Just as it takes a crew to sail a boat and navigate the rocky shoals, a group of students working well together can transform a learning environment. Cooperative learning can be your own unique blend of the many excellent approaches out there. Discover what works best in your own North Star Classroom. Students' academic performance, critical thinking, self-esteem, and social skills will increase dramatically if they learn to voyage as a crew. Try the North Star Hemisphere Project (page 45) to get everyone into the same ship.

One suggestion for establishing "cooperative voyaging" is to organize the students into several four-member crews. The groups become ships on the learning voyage. Each crew selects a name for their ship and creates a sign which is displayed on the Cooperative Voyaging Board.

Each group also designs a Crew Folder which contains:

- Rules for Being a Good Crew Member
- The North Star Learning Pledge
- Suggestions for Resolving Conflicts or "Mutinies"
- Duties for the Crew
- Evaluation Forms

*Teaching Children to Care: Classroom Management for Ethical and Academic Growth, K-8* (Ruth Sidney Charney) is a great book regarding classroom dynamics.



The group folder is a place to store worksheets and assignments the whole crew may need, as well as all work the group produces.

## Crew Roles:

Each Navigator picks one job.

\*\*\*\*\*



### First Mate

Keeps crew voices low and watches for signs of mutiny (arguments).

### Helmsman

Makes sure all crew members contribute ideas and participate.

### Quartermaster

Takes care of the materials for the crew.

### Mate on Watch

Keeps crew members on task and keeps track of time.

\*\*\*\*\*



These roles are just a guide to show the Navigators that there are specialty skills within groups, but you may want to point out that each person in the crew may have strengths in all of these areas. All voyagers have a bit of Quartermaster in them, each might be just as fine a leader as the designated Helmsman. The Navigator assigned each role, though, is responsible for making sure these tasks are carried out, not only by themselves, but also by the other crew members. One of the most important lessons about leadership is how to enroll others in the mission.





### **Cooperative Voyaging Board**

Create a bulletin board where each group can display their ship's sign. The sign includes an illustration of their ship, the ship's name, and names of the crew. Post a Guiding Beacon of the Week sign to focus on one social skill per week. This is also an ideal location for North Star Inspiration for the Voyage posters (these are all located in the back of this guide, beginning on page R15).

### **Crew Folder Cover (available on page R15)**

Staple or glue this cover to a 16" x 22" piece of oaktag which is folded over to make a folder. This folder is shared by the crew. The Mutiny Resolution, Cooperative Voyaging Pledge, Crew Duties, Rules for Being a Five Star Crew Member, and Evaluation Forms can be popped into the folder. Crew members can add additional pages to support projects the group is working on together.

### **Mutiny Resolution (available on page R16)**

There are NO mutinies within a North Star Classroom. When conflicts occur, ask your students to try writing a letter - the mutiny resolution sheet will help them get started.

### **Crew Evaluation (available on page R17)**

Here, the group can review how well they worked together on a project.

### **Smooth Sailing Award (available on page R18)**

This award can be given to a group who worked exceptionally well on their project. It is not really the project that is being recognized, rather it is the teamwork that led to the final project.

### **North Star Cooperative Voyaging Pledge and Rules for being a Five Star Crew Member (available on pages R19 and R20)**

These pages can go into the Crew Folder, and are invaluable tools for smooth sailing.

### **Crew Duties (available on page R21)**

For more information on the Crew Duties, see the Crew Duties reproducible.

## Starting Off the Year

### North Star Special Talents Project

One way to start the year is with the North Star Special Talents Project. Everyone has special talents, favorite sports or books, things they feel they do well or want to learn to do better, or activities they particularly enjoy. With the North Star Special Talents Project they get a chance to share that with their new classmates, and learn what makes each and every one of them a unique individual. Sue Pandiani suggests sending a letter home to explain the Special Talents Project. Here's her example:



Dear Parents/Guardians,

The North Star Special Talents Project should be a fun one to work on together. Your child will present what they feel is special about them to their classmates on Monday. If they play the piano, I would love to hear them play. If they dance, I would love to have them perform for us. They can bring in a tape and dance to their music. Or they could bring in a video of a performance. However, not all children are comfortable doing this. Some of my former students have brought in trophies, and team pictures, and even team shirts, if they played a sport. One of my dancers brought in a costume, her ribbons and pictures. Another had a display of cards and magazines about auto racing. They could make a poster or a collage. One of my sixth graders brought in samples of her artwork, and another brought in a collection of his poetry. Parents will have an opportunity to view the display, but not see any performances. So, a little something with the child's name on it and what their talent or talents are, would be nice to have for Open House. Example: Hi, I'm Katie. I play the piano. I've been taking lessons for two years now. Here is a picture of me at my recital.

Please, I want this to be a way of celebrating your child. Let them choose their talent, let them do the project themselves, let them have fun showing off. They will not be graded on it. This is NOT a competition. It is a wonderful way for all of us to learn about each other in areas other than school work.

Sue Pandiani

## The North Star Parent Survey

This is the survey which we recommend sending home at the beginning of the year. Feel free to modify or add questions – we find that **open-ended questions** are the best as they allow parents to provide as much information as possible. This tool helps give a great “snapshot” of each Navigator and will allow you to begin tailoring their learning voyage accordingly.

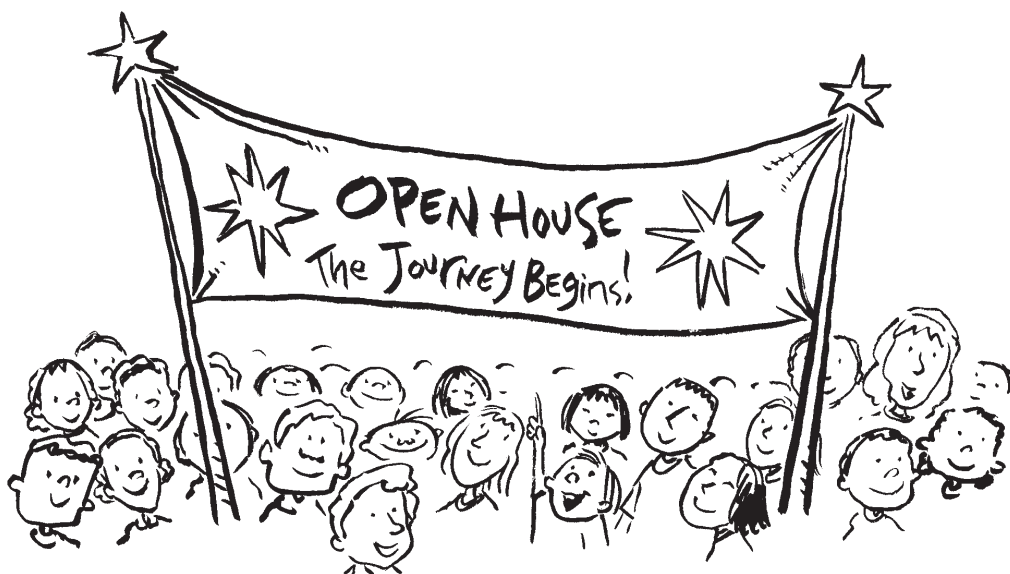
## The North Star Open House

The traditional Open House, that occurs usually a week or two into the school year, affords an opportunity to introduce parents to the North Star journey – one that they will be a part of during the upcoming year, and beyond!

The Open House is a great time to display the North Star special talents projects. Celebrating the uniqueness of each student is one of the underlying concepts of The North Star. It is important for parents to recognize and nurture the idea that their children each have a unique constellation of stars – each star representing their interests, talents, culture, history and future dreams. It is their constellations that will guide them like the stars guided ancient Navigators and many of today’s voyagers.

Open House is a time to reflect on what’s really important – a time to slow down, like standing on the beach staring up at the stars. These moments are increasingly rare in the fast-paced world in which children are growing up.

*On the next page is the handout that Sue passed out at the Open House. Feel free to adapt it to your situation:*



## North Star Navigators Open House

### Welcome Aboard!

*This handout will give you a bird's eye view of the exciting learning voyage ahead for all of us. Feel free to ask me questions!*

*Mission. To be inspired to learn all we can. To follow our North Stars. We will use the theme of a voyage and guiding stars as the theme for the whole year. Your child is not just a student, he or she is a Navigator. We will be exploring themes from the book *The North Star* by Peter H. Reynolds to help understand the learning voyage. We all have different paths, different ways of being smart. Different ways of expressing what we know. We even have different schedules for blooming. Our mission is not to learn just facts and figures, but rather to learn how each of us learns best. With that knowledge, we can tackle any problem, learn whatever interests us, and dream any dream, no matter how big. Another mission is to learn how we can use our gifts to help others.*

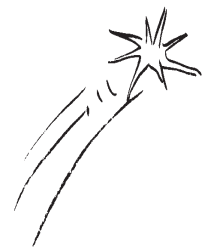
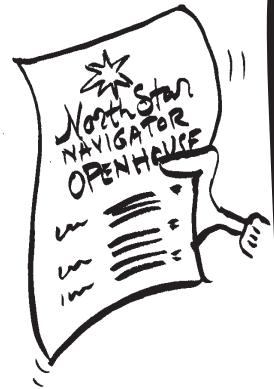
*Curriculum. These are the areas that we will be studying this year: (Insert your own!)*

*When we begin a theme, Navigators are encouraged to bring in any of their own books or materials to share with the class. Parents, I encourage you to discuss with your Navigator what they are learning in school! Keep in mind our themes when visiting the library or buying books.*

### Daily Work and Assignments.

*One of my goals is to help my Navigators with organizational skills. Please remember to check the North Star Family Ship-to-Shore Communicator each evening. Remind your child to keep all of his/her homework in it, and to have the Ship-to-Shore with them when they leave for school in the morning. Please encourage your child to do quality work on assignments at all times. I'd love your help with checking your Navigator's spelling, handwriting, organization, neatness, and accuracy.*

*Children work at different rates. If your child completes his/her assignments quickly, ask them first if they did quality work. Does their assignment reflect their true ability? Then suggest that they do what I call "Above and Beyond," like reading a book, practicing cursive writing, crafting a letter to a family member, checking to see if your shopping list adds up. My experience is that in the time students watch a half hour TV show, they could have done some great "Above and Beyond."*



While I try to encourage students to watch less television, TV and DVDs can be entertaining and educational. Know what your Navigator is watching. Try watching it with them and ask questions along the way.



Trouble on the journey? If your child is struggling to complete an assignment in the allotted time, don't worry. Just take a moment to sign what they were able to complete, and drop me a note if you can. If the problem is beyond assigned work, let me know that too. We'll work on a solution together.

#### *Classroom Supplies.*

Thank you so very much for the contributions to our classroom. You have been most generous and I am greatly appreciative!

#### *Communication.*

Please use the Family section of the Ship-to-Shore as our means of keeping the home/school connection strong. I will use it for newsletters and messages from myself and the office. I have also asked the children to check the sheet protectors in the morning for notes from home. For those of you on-line, don't forget our Web pages and e-mail:

<http://www.webpage.net/webpage>  
[teacher@teacher.net](mailto:teacher@teacher.net)

Trust your instincts...Use your own compass...  
Voyage Bravely!

Ms. Pandiani







• Units and Activities	
• The North Star Scavenger Hunt (grades 1-5)	44
• The North Star Hemisphere Project (grades K-5)	45
• The North Star Special Talents Project (grades 1-5)	48
• The North Star Ships (grades K-5)	50
• The Navigator Lantern (grades 1-3)	51
• Star Students (grades K-5)	52
• Personal Constellations (grades 1-5)	54
• StarVisions (grades K-5)	55
• Graphing Talents (grades 1-5)	56
• The North Star Book Talk (grades K-5)	57
• North Star Characters (grades 1-5)	59
• North Star Publishing (grades 1-5)	62
• Birthday Biographies (grades 1-5)	64
• Have You Ever Been Lost (grades K-5)	65
• North Star Journey Bar (grades 2-5)	67
• Star Gardens (grades K-5)	69
• North Star Radio (grades 2-5)	70
• North Star Play (grades 1-5)	71
• Creating a Class Website (grades 1-5)	72
• Activities Created by Teachers	
• SMART Song	75
• Mutiny Resolution	76
• Weeklong North Star Mini-Unit	77

Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5

Time needed: 30-90 minutes

## The North Star Special Talents Scavenger Hunt

### Objectives:

- Students will discover new facts about their classmates.
- Students will identify and discuss their own likes and strengths.

### Overview:

Starting the year with the Special Talents Scavenger Hunt helps students learn about their new classmates' interests and talents. Students create a list of their own special talents, and then try to find other Navigators in the room whose responses match theirs. At the end of the year the activity is repeated, to see how students have learned and grown.

### Step-by Step:

1. In class, the Navigators can make a list of their favorite subject at school, a favorite game or sport, something they do well at home, and something they would like to learn how to do. Kidspiration is a good software tool for them to organize their thoughts.

*For example:*

- My favorite subject is math
- I collect stamps and coins
- I play soccer
- I want to learn to rollerblade

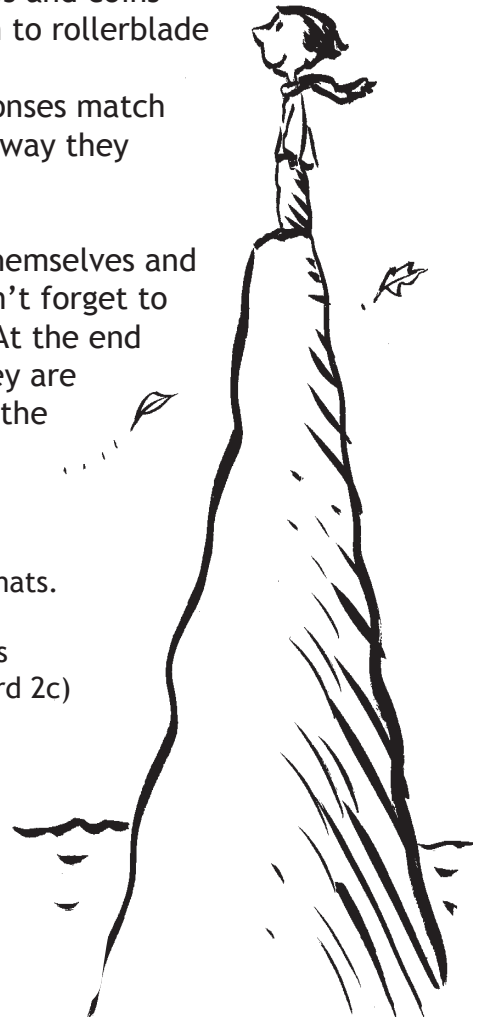
2. Students try to find fellow Navigators whose responses match theirs, and who have different responses. In this way they begin to learn about each other's special talents.
3. As extra credit, students may draw a picture of themselves and write a story or paragraph about themselves. Don't forget to date and save it in their Constellation Portfolio! At the end of the year you can repeat the same activity. They are able to see how they have grown and changed by the end of the year.

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats. (Standard 2b)
- Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures. (Standard 2c)
- Process data and report results. (Standard 3d)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills (Life and Career Skills)





Suggested Grade Levels: K-5

Time needed: 30 minutes - 2 hours

## The North Star Hemisphere Project

### Objectives:

- Students will take responsibility for actions and behaviors.
- Students will help create a trusting and supportive classroom community.

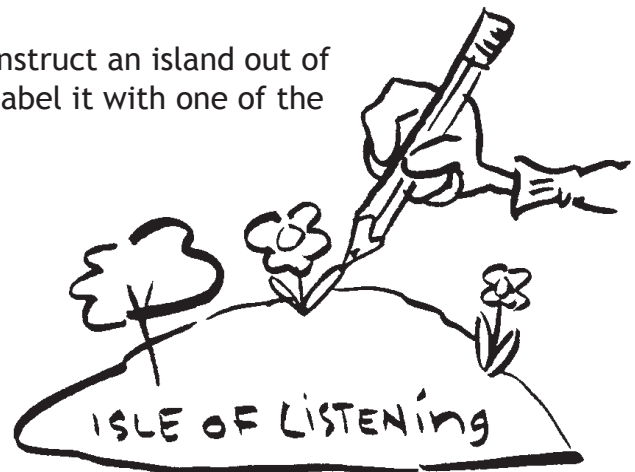
### Overview:

While you're busy helping students learn to read, write and problem solve (among other skills) you can also help foster **positive social skills, attitudes, and behaviors**. If you need help finding the goodness and the heart of your classroom community, try creating a North Star Hemisphere. This activity was inspired by a metaphor that Peter came up with when he and Sue were discussing the challenge of behavioral problems in the classroom. He imagined two groups of islands: the good ones we hope to voyage toward and a group of bad ones that we hope to steer away from.

Sue's North Star Hemisphere was a 6' long, 5' high map representing all of the things a good Navigator needs for the Voyage, and also the ones that will steer him/her off course. Whatever the size or shape of yours, it serves as a visualization of where the Navigators are and where they might choose to navigate toward. It is made up of a group of islands or archipelagos, representing admirable social skills and negative classroom behaviors as well. You can follow her ideas, but be creative! Put your own twist on it, and let the students help! (Sketch Studio is a great program for them to test out their ideas.)

### Step-by-Step:

1. Begin by brainstorming a list of good behaviors that promote a desirable learning environment.
2. Reach consensus as to which ones are most important, and narrow the list down to ten or twelve.
3. Working in pairs, have the children construct an island out of construction paper and markers, and label it with one of the names from the list.



4. Glue those islands in the center of a large sheet of blue paper. These are the Golden Archipelago. It is among the Golden Archipelago that their dreams and stars will come true.
5. Outline them in gold glitter.
6. Next, brainstorm a list of negative behaviors and attitudes that interrupt learning within the classroom.
7. Follow the same procedure as the Golden Archipelago and construct the Lost Islands.

**Note from Sue Pandiani:**

Here are some names that former Navigators have come up with and that were used quite successfully in their classrooms!



**The Islands of  
the Golden Archipelago**

Friendship Island  
Island of Listening  
Island of Imagination  
Peaceful Isle  
Isle of Perseverance  
Thoughtful Island  
Responsibility Island  
Thankful Island  
Island of Respect  
Bravery Isle  
Trustworthiness Isle  
Isle of Kindness

**The Lost Islands**

Inconsiderate Volcano  
Selfish Isle  
Disobedient Island  
Talkative Island  
Temper Island  
Unkind Volcano  
Disrespectful Swamp  
Foolish Volcano  
Irresponsible Volcano  
Rude Swamp  
Loud Volcano  
Lazy Volcano

8. Place the Lost Islands on the outer edges of the Hemisphere circling the center islands.
9. Finally, have each student cut out and label their own Navigator Ship (use the ship template on page R23). Place these on the Hemisphere using double-sided tape or a poster adhesive so that they can be moved.



10. During the course of the day ask the Navigators to look up at their Hemisphere to discover where they are (which island), and where they might need to navigate if they're lost in the Lost Islands. The North Star Hemisphere can serve as a gentle reminder of proper social skills, or a visual image of their behavior if the Navigator's ship is actually moved. They are the Navigators. They have the choice and ability to change course, and sail in a new direction. Conflict is a real part of the journey, and learning to manage it will make the voyage that much easier.

**ISTE Standards Addressed:**

- Use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues. (Standard 1c)
- Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project. (Standard 4b)

**21st Century Skills:**

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Initiative and Self-direction (Life and Career Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5

Time needed: 1 week at home for preparation,  
2-3 minutes per student  
in-class time for presentations.

## The North Star Special Talents Project

### Objectives:

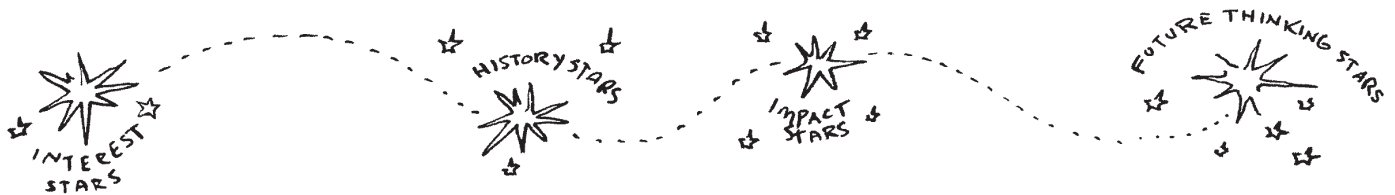
- Students will create a physical representation of a talent or activity where they feel they excel.
- Students will present their talent and project to the class.

### What's It All About:

In the Special Talents Project (mentioned in the Scavenger Hunt on page 44), students create a project representing their special talent. They then bring in the completed project and present it to their classmates. What a wonderful introduction to public speaking! It is an opportunity to work on presentation skills such as facing the audience and speaking slowly and clearly. It is also a perfect time to discuss being a good audience, listening skills and being respectful of each other.

If the Special Talents Project is completed towards the beginning of the year, the Open House is a great time to put the projects on display for all to see. Some children might make a poster representing their talents, while others prepare a performance of dancing or karate, or even make a video of their special talent. Often children bring in trophies and medals as a display. Every student should have the opportunity to make an online constellation map (available on the FableVision website) and chart their interests and talents.

This is a wonderful way for you, as their teacher, to see what makes them proud about themselves. Having that knowledge in your classroom means you are able to use it as positive reinforcement. A child might feel defeated one day in math, but you can mention how talented he or she is at playing basketball. Remember, some of our stars are brighter than others.



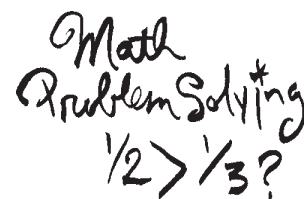
For more advanced students, take the lesson one level further. A software program like BrainCogs® (available at [www.fablevision.com/braincogs](http://www.fablevision.com/braincogs)) helps students to identify learning strategies that best suit the way they learn and can help them develop their talents in your classroom!

#### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas or products. (Standard 1a)
- Communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats. (Standard 2b)
- Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on appropriateness to specific tasks. (Standard 3c)
- Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project. (Standard 4b)

#### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Media Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Initiative and Self-direction (Life and Career Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: K-5

Time needed: 30 minutes

## The North Star Hanging Ship

### Objectives:

- Students will take ownership of their surroundings by decorating them.
- Students will gain confidence and belief in their dreams.

### What's It All About:

Have your students design a ship for their own voyages - on Crayola's website, they have plenty of suggestions (search under Transportation or Travel)! Tell them to make it a sturdy one to help them navigate those rocky shoals. Make it a creative one, worthy of their dreams. Christen it with a magical name to guide them on their journey. Have them hang it next to their star, and remind them that it is theirs to sail.

For more advanced students, the activity can be modified. Students can design the ships themselves, according to historically accurate models. Encourage them to visit sites such as [www.building-ship-models.com](http://www.building-ship-models.com) for ideas.

### Group work:

### The North Star Group Ship

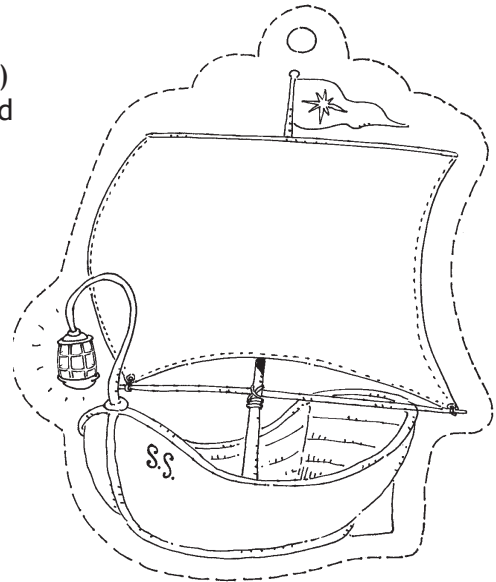
Have student groups decorate a ship together and label it with the group's ship name. Then hang them all on a bulletin board. (See page 35 for more on cooperative voyaging.)

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Create original works as a means of personal or group expression. (Standard 1b)
- Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on appropriateness to specific tasks. (Standard 3c)

### 21st Century Skills:

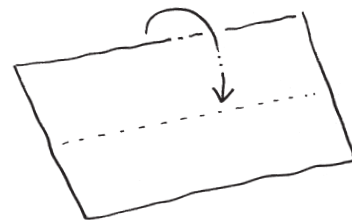
- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: 1-3

Time Needed: 1 hour

## The Navigator Lantern



### Objectives:

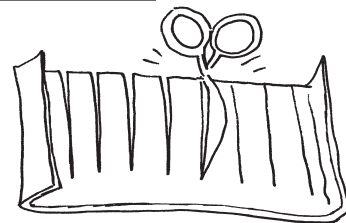
- Students will cultivate a love of reading.
- Students will recognize their ability to self-motivate by contributing to their surroundings.
- Students will design and build their own lanterns.

### Overview:

To foster independent reading, try assigning nightly Navigator reading as another one of their evening duties, or pleasures. A wonderful motivational device is the Navigator Lantern. The Lanterns can be constructed in school and brought home to their Navigator's quarters. Again have them use their imagination, and pretend that they are reading by the light of their star inside their Lantern. Let the "glow" of their star illuminate the way on their reading voyage.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Fold a rectangular (12" x 9") piece of oak tag in half lengthwise.
2. Make an outward fold on each side.
3. Cut slits about 1/2 inch apart from center fold up to outward fold lines.
4. Open up the rectangle and roll it into a cylinder. Fasten edges together.
5. Add a handle.
6. Use a piece of string or line to suspend a star inside the lantern (you may wish to include a glow-in-the-dark star on it).
7. Decorate it with color and glitter.



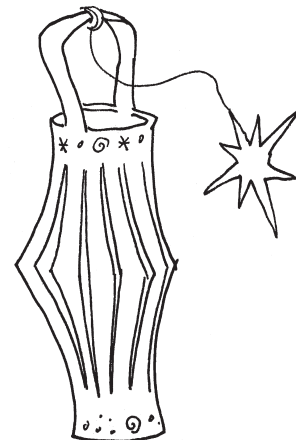
A great follow-up is to let the students create a few more decorations for their reading rooms. Enchanted Learning Crafts and Squigley's Arts and Crafts have lots of suggestions. (Visit the Web Resources webpage for details.)

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas and products. (Standard 1a)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Media literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Initiative and Self-direction (Life and Career Skills)



**Suggested Grade Levels: K-5**

**Time needed: 15 minutes daily or weekly**

## Star Student

### Objectives:

- Students recognize the individuality of each and every classmate.
- Students will develop a sense of pride in demonstrating North Star qualities.
- Students will build a classroom of mutual support and encouragement for peers.

### Overview:

How do you make each child feel special? How do you teach children that it is important to stop and help each other along their journeys? A North Star suggestion...Star Student. Each day you can honor a different Navigator as a Star Student.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Begin by cutting out a star for each Navigator.
2. Have the Navigators label it with their name and paste their photo in the center of the star.
3. Select a student and pass their star around the classroom so that their fellow Navigators can write positive comments about them. Ask them to write what they see as special about this Navigator.
4. Afterwards, the Star Student can decorate it.
5. Once each child has had a star completed by the class, it will be used again as you rotate through your class list, one student per day.
6. Display the star in a special location for the day. Have the child wear a special necklace, such as a star. Place a special figurine on their desk, or honor them by having them carry the Navigator Flag, or by being the line leader. During the course of the day, have the class focus on making that student feel special by helping them and
7. At the end of the day, ask the Star Student to share with the class who made their journey easier that day.





Epson Craft Projects offers a Storyteller Photo Album, which allows you to insert pictures of each Star Student and write alongside the picture those traits which made him or her a Star. Eventually you'll have an album of your whole Star Classroom!

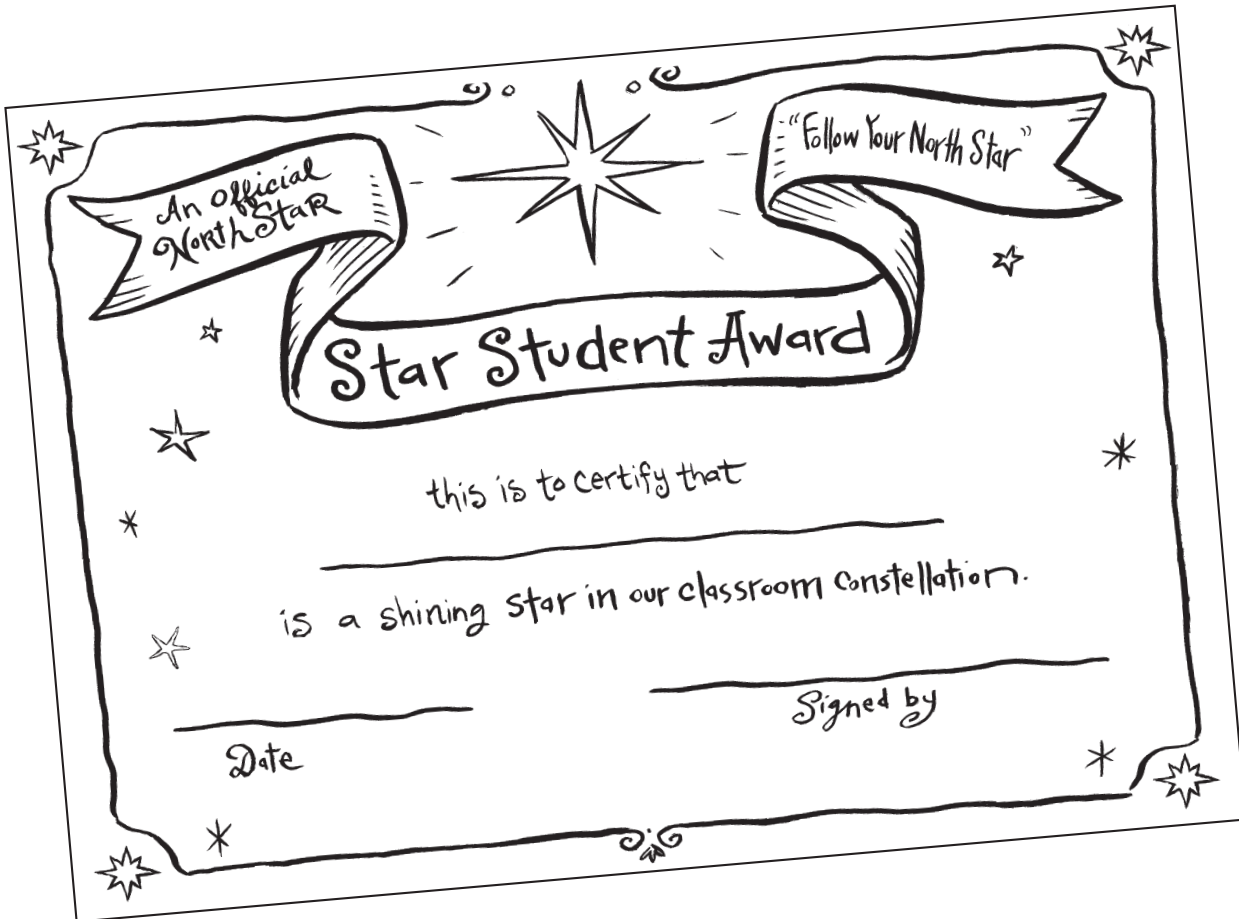
For more advanced students, award a Star Navigator once a week, instead of daily. Reward Star Behavioral Qualities as well as academic or creative qualities. Encourage students to share talents, heritage, and other unique personal traits.

ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures. (Standard 2c)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning. (Standard 5c)

21st Century Skills:

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills (Life and Career Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)
- Leadership and Responsibility (Life and Career Skills)



## Personal Constellations

### Objectives:

- Students will identify their personal motivators and important things in their lives.
- Students will find new connections between interests, relate to classroom material on a new level.

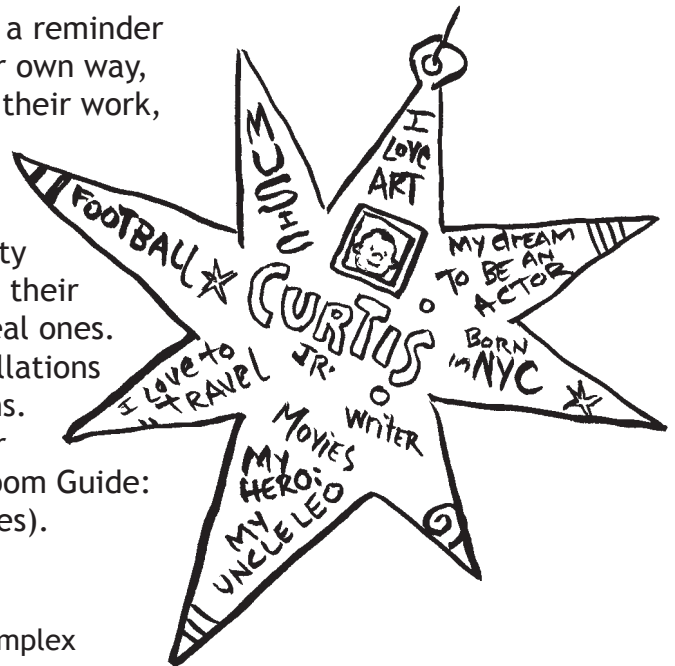
### Overview:

One way to help students identify their interests and connect to the curriculum is to map them. Starmaps (referenced on page 77) can be created on paper, using cut-out stars on a larger piece of poster board, or with the online Personal Constellation MapMaker.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Encourage the students to imagine the important things in their lives as if each one were a star.
2. The stars might connect to one another, or they might all connect back to the student in separate ways, forming a unique individual constellation.
3. Post constellations around the room, as a reminder that each student is special in his or her own way, and as a link between the students and their work, helping them to give each project their own personal touch.

More advanced students can expand the activity by looking up real constellations and modeling their personal constellations after their choice of real ones. Students should explain their choice of constellations and learn a few facts about their constellations. The science search engine Scirus can help your students find facts (visit the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources for links to Scirus and other sites).



### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues. (Standard 1c)
- Students will communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats. (Standard 2b)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Initiative and Self-directions (Life and Career Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: K-5

Time Needed: 45 minutes - 90 minutes

## StarVisions

### Objectives:

- Students will view and discuss images to stimulate their imaginations.
- Students will gain self-confidence in their personal creative abilities by connecting with a living artist's work.



### What's It All About:

Inspiring literacy is a goal for all teachers and parents. Helping foster inspired writing is a dream come true. The themes of The North Star are ripe for thoughtful, inspired writing. This also leads to an appreciation of deeper, more meaningful literature. Navigators are not just creative writers and readers, but are also philosophers about the life-long learning journey.



Be inspired by one of Peter H. Reynolds' StarVision illustrations (visit the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources for the link). Post your students' poems on your North Star website. Try all different sorts of art; create a mosaic with Green Forest Studio online!

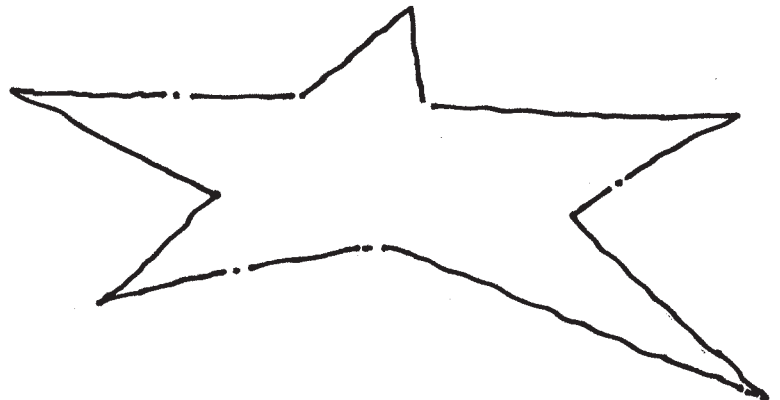
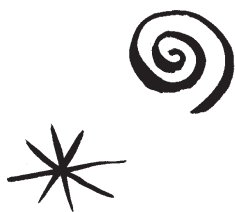
StarVisions is a collection of Peter's work that is very gentle, inspiring, and evocative. Children connect naturally to the images, which inspire the imagination. They can be a great way to spark class discussion, poetry, stories, and projects. Feel free to print the images from the site and post on your bulletin board.

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Plan strategies to guide inquiry. (Standard 3a)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning. (Standard 5c)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Media Literacy (Information, Media, and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Initiative and Self-direction (Life and Career Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5

Time Needed: 15-30 minutes, once a month

## Graphing Talents

### Objectives:

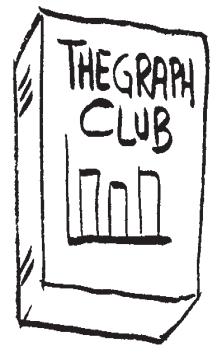
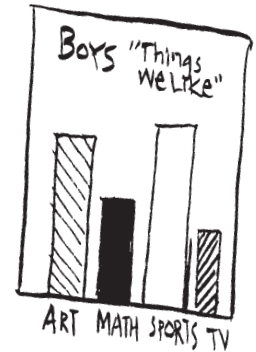
- Students will evaluate their own progress.
- Students will learn to use different sorts of graphs and discover which works best for them.

### Overview:

Later in the year, you and your Navigators can explore students' talents and interests by using a graphing program to help students see patterns and begin to understand that there are many ways of looking at data. The same information can be viewed in pie, bar, line and picture graphs.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Students will graph their own data with easy-to-use software like The Graph Club (Tom Snyder Productions) or Inspire Data (Inspiration).
2. Then visit Lifejournal online, a tool for your Navigators to write out thoughts on their progress.
3. Begin comparing graphs by setting up graphs that represent the different talents and interests in the room. You can also set up graphs to see how gender may play into interests. (e.g. Does gender play a role in talents?)
4. Begin a thoughtful discussion about the role of culture, media, and peer pressure in students' lives. These are great jumping-off points, and subjects flow naturally into one another!



### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures. (Standard 2c)
- Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media. (Standard 3b)
- Understand and use technology systems. (Standard 6a)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)

Suggested Grade Level: K-5

Time Needed: 1 hour - 90 minutes

## The North Star Book Talk

### Objectives:

- Students will discover a deeper understanding of books they read.
- Students will lead classmates in discussion.
- Students will generate creative and investigatory questions.

### What's It All About:

Most of you are familiar with conducting a book talk after reading a book as a group, so we won't tell you how to do one. It is suffice to say *The North Star* is the sort of book that offers lots of jumping-off points. It is full of details and meaning that can be uncovered through thoughtful dialog and questions. Each time students read the book they will understand more and more. Here are some questions that teachers might use with the students:

- *Why did the book end with "The Beginning" rather than "The End"?*
- *Why did the author use the North Star in the story?*
- *What is a constellation?*
- *What was strange about some of the signs the boy found along the path?*
- *When did the boy fall behind, according to the cat?*
- *Why didn't the frog follow the boy out of the swamp?*
- *What things did the boy like? What was his constellation in the shape of?*
- *When did the star grow even brighter? Why?*
- *What was your favorite part of the story?*
- *What do you think happens next if the book had a sequel?*
- *What are the important stars in YOUR constellation?*
- *Have you ever been lost? How did you find your way home?*
- *What tools/ways did people use to navigate throughout history?*
- *What tools/ways do people use to navigate now?*
- *How would you get from here to Italy? What would you have to know?*
- *What would you have to bring with you? How much planning would you have to do?*

Continued

- *In your own life, how much planning should you do in order to navigate into your future?*
- *What inspires you on the journey? Who inspires you? What are you good at?*
- *What would you like to be good at in the future?*
- *Where are you going on your journey? Where would you LIKE to be going?*
- *What could help you get there?*
- *How big can you dream?*
- *Can a town have a dream? Can a country have a dream? Can the world have a dream?*

### Group Work:

### Student-led Book Talks: The Author's and Illustrator's Chair

Allow the students to create their own questions for other books and lead class discussion. Encourage creativity and critical thinking by adding "what if" questions. To help the students find new books or authors, encourage them to visit Gnook's Literature Maps online.

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Plan strategies to guide inquiry. (Standard 3a)
- Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on appropriateness to specific tasks. (Standard 3c)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning. (Standard 5c)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5

Time needed: 30-45 minutes daily or weekly

## North Star Characters

### Objectives:

- Students will identify and discuss characters' multiple intelligences.
- Students will connect to characters and invest themselves in the books.

### Overview:

Students love to read books with characters they can connect to. *The Don't-Give-Up-Kid* and *Eagle Eyes* by Jeanne Gehret, and *Be Good to Eddie Lee* by Virginia Fleming are two of many such books. What makes the characters in these books special? Let the Navigators find out!

### Step-by-Step:

1. Begin discussion with the Navigators about different learning styles, and accepting and appreciating uniqueness. The Navigators can explore the many ways of being smart, and having multiple intelligences.
2. If you have a bulletin board devoted to this you can use FableVision's North Star posters or create posters for each of the ways of being multi-smart. These are the SmartStars. Which ones shine brightest in each student's constellation?
3. Begin a new book with the class, perhaps one mentioned above. As you read, ask the students, "What kind of smart do you think Chibi, in *Crow Boy*, is?" Very often they can recognize that a character can be smart in many ways; some ways are just stronger (brighter stars) than others.
4. Challenge students to look at themselves in the same way. One could have a really big Math Smart star, and a big Body Smart star, but he might also have a medium Music star.
5. This is another activity that is great fun to repeat at the end of the year. "How has your constellation of smart stars changed?" "Are some stars shining even brighter now?"
6. To dig a little deeper, encourage the Navigators to create a day in the life of a character. With easy blogging sites like Blogger, they can create a world for the characters. (See the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources online for more information)

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Identify trends and forecast possibilities. (Standard 1d)
- Plan strategies to guide inquiry. (Standard 3a)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)



## North Star Suggested Books

Here is a list of recommended books, which reflect the North Star themes of individuality, creativity, and acceptance. Some support the themes of navigation and astronomy, while others are simply lovely stories with beautiful illustrations which have inspired us. Feel free to use whatever works with your classroom.

### For the Very Young

*Spray* by Robert J. Blake  
*The Big Dipper* by Franklyn M. Branley  
*Is There Really A Human Race?* by Jamie Lee Curtis  
*The Star Maiden* by Barbara Juster Esbensen  
*The Christmas Candle* by Richard Paul Evans  
*The Little Boat* by Kathy Henderson  
*Edward The Emu* by Sheena Knowles  
*The Boy and the Cloth of Dreams* by Jenny Koralek  
*Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon* by Patty Lovell  
*Mother Earth* by Nancy Luenn  
*Through Grandpa's Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan  
*When I Grow Up, I Want to Be Me* by Sandra Magsamen  
*My House Has Stars* by Megan McDonald  
*If You Were a Writer* by Joan Lowery Nixon  
*It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr  
*My Very Big Little World* by Peter H. Reynolds  
*The Dreamer* by Cynthia Rylant  
*The Story of Cape Cod* by Kevin Shortsleeve  
*The Story of the Little Black Dog* by J.B.Spooner  
*The Little Black Dog Buccaneer* by J.B. Spooner  
*Riptide* by Frances Ward Weller  
*Madaket Millie* by Frances Ward Weller  
*Working Cotton*, by Sherley Anne Williams  
*Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima  
*Honkers* by Jane Yolen

### Right in the Middle

*Pockets* by Jennifer Armstrong  
*Dream* by Susan V Bosak  
*The Dancing Turtle* by Pleasant DeSpain  
*The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes  
*Grandfather's Pencil* by Michael Foreman  
*Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkison  
*The Wild Horses of Sweetbriar* by Natalie Kinsey-Wanock  
*Star Baby* by Amy Lawson  
*Ship of Dreams* by Dean Morrissey  
*The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds  
*Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds  
*Dear Children of the Earth* by Schim Schimmel  
*Serendipity* by Tobi Tobias  
*A New Life For Sir Christopher* by Richard M. Wainwright



### For the More Advanced

*The Craft of Sail* by Jan Adkins

*Lu and the Swamp Ghost* by James Carville

*The Secret of Old Zeb* by Carmen Agra Deedy

*Treeman* by Carmen Agra Deedy

*Mystery History of a Pirate Galleon* by Fred Finney

*Be Good to Eddie Lee* by Virginia Fleming

*Eagle Eye* by Jeanne Gehret

*The Don't-Give-Up Kid* by Jeanne Gehret

*You Are Special* by Max Lucado

*Sun Song* by Jean Marzollo

*Zoo in the Sky, A Book of Animal Constellations*

by Jacqueline Mitton

*The King's Equal* by Katherine Paterson

*The Voyage of the Frog* by Gary Paulsen

*Milo and the Magical Stones* by Marcus Pfister

*Stars/Constellations: Seeing Stars* by Barbara Seiger

*So Few of Me* by Peter H. Reynolds

*You'll Grow Soon, Alex* by Andrea Shavick

*Follow The Dream* by Peter Sis

*Polar The Titanic Bear* by Daisy C. S. Spedden

*Follow the Moon* by Sarah Weeks



**Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5**

**Time Needed: 15-20 minutes daily, or 30 minutes semi-weekly.**

## North Star Publishing: The Blank Book

### Objectives:

- Students will increase love of creativity and writing.
- Students will learn to trust their instincts.
- Students will feel supported in their efforts.

### What's It All About:

Kids naturally love to write...and somewhere along the line they lose that excitement. The blank page strikes them with fear! What will I write about? What will I say? What grade will I get? Who will want to read it? I have nothing to say! Teachers often say that writing is one of their most important and challenging teaching objectives.

### Teachers, parents and educators must:

- Motivate and support young writers.
- Encourage conversation...good conversation leads to good writing!
- Read to and with your students and write often ~ across the curriculum ~ and for a real audience.
- Share what is written; provide writing choices; teach the writing process.
- Praise what is written.

This is a tall order. In some classrooms, when children write stories and poems, the teacher will go through each one making corrections, comments and encouraging notes. A North Star approach broadens this idea. Art can inspire, which is why students love Stationery Studio (visit FableVision's website for more information). And for off-the-computer creativity, The Blue Bunny ([www.dedhambluebunny.com](http://www.dedhambluebunny.com)) offers the Blank Book, a book with completely blank pages, just itching for colors and words to be added! The Blank Book is suitable for crayons, watercolor markers, and colored pencils as well as pen and pencil, encouraging creativity and innovation.

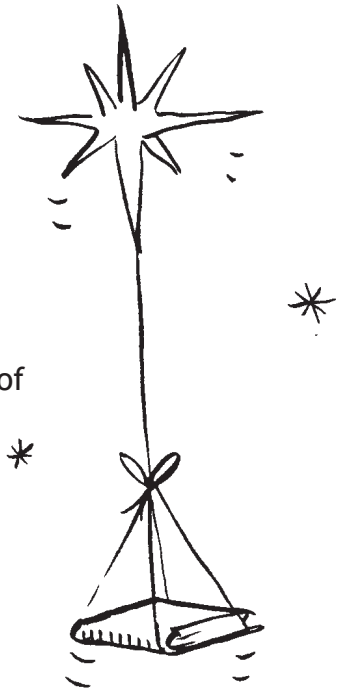
Stepping off the traditional path, parents are invited into the process. On the next page, see a sample letter Sue sent home to parents, to share the idea of the book-creating project.

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Create original works as a means of personal or group expression. (Standard 1b)
- Exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity. (Standard 5b)
- Select and use applications effectively and productively. (Standard 6b)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Flexibility and Adaptability (Life and Career Skills)



## ***Dear North Star Guiding Family,***

I'm sure that your children have shared with you that each student now has his or her own blank book, so that they will be able to write and illustrate their own book before the year ends. We have been writing our stories in the blue journals which have been set up just like the blank books, including number of pages, title page, dedication, etc. The Navigators have had writing time every day in school and it has been their homework each evening, so most of the children are very close to being finished. Since I have 23 Navigators and each book contains 28 pages, I will need your assistance.

I am asking each of my cherubs to have their book edited at home. Please sit down with your Navigators and share his/her wonderful story. Help them to correct their spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure.

I might suggest that if you come across a page that has to be totally corrected, simply cross out the page, go to the back of the journal, rewrite that page number, and start on a fresh page. Each of these journals will then be copied into their white books, which will again have to be checked for errors, and then finally illustrated, and gone over in pen. Yes, it is a tremendous undertaking, but the final product is worth every moment of it!

I would like to do a Writing Workshop on Monday. All parents are welcome to help us edit and revise our books. If each book is edited at home, and arrives in school on Monday error-free, and of course finished, Monday will be a breeze for the parents who are our editors. I would love to see Monday as a day of revision, rather than editing... ask your child, they know the difference between the two. I cannot tell you how much they have matured as writers this year! Imagine third graders who can recognize a simile, a metaphor, or personification....amazing!

Please know how much I appreciate your support, assistance, and interest in your child's education. I could never do this without YOU! YOU are making my journey easier, as the Navigators say. : )

**Ms. Pandiani**



**Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5**

**Time Needed: 20-30 minutes of preparation a day, 60-90 minutes of celebration and activities on the birthday.**

## Birthday Biographies

### Objectives:

- Students will research historical characters, and learn about their personality traits and historical importance.
- Students will connect to history and relate to famous historical characters.



### What's It All About:

When working on a biography or history unit, instead of dressing up like a famous character, why not throw a birthday party for him or her? Besides the invitation, card (students can make their own with Stationery Studio® software), gift, song and party game, the students also create a constellation for the famous person. This provides a creative and alternative way of assessing student learning. Will they be able to select important events, people, and talents that influenced this person's life? Use iFlash flash card software to help students categorize information (links available on the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources).



The higher the students' level, the more in-depth and realistic they can make the birthday celebration, and the more information they can gather on the famous person. This can really bring history to life!



### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems. (Standard 2d)
- Plan strategies to guide inquiry. (Standard 3a)
- Locate, organize, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media. (Standard 3b)
- Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project. (Standard 4b)



### 21st Century Skills:

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Information Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills (Life and Career Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)

Suggested Grade Levels: K-5

Time Needed: 1 -2 hours

## Have You Ever Been Lost?

### Objectives:

- Students will share short stories based on personal experiences.
- Students will compare and contrast stories with peers' experiences.

### What's It All About:

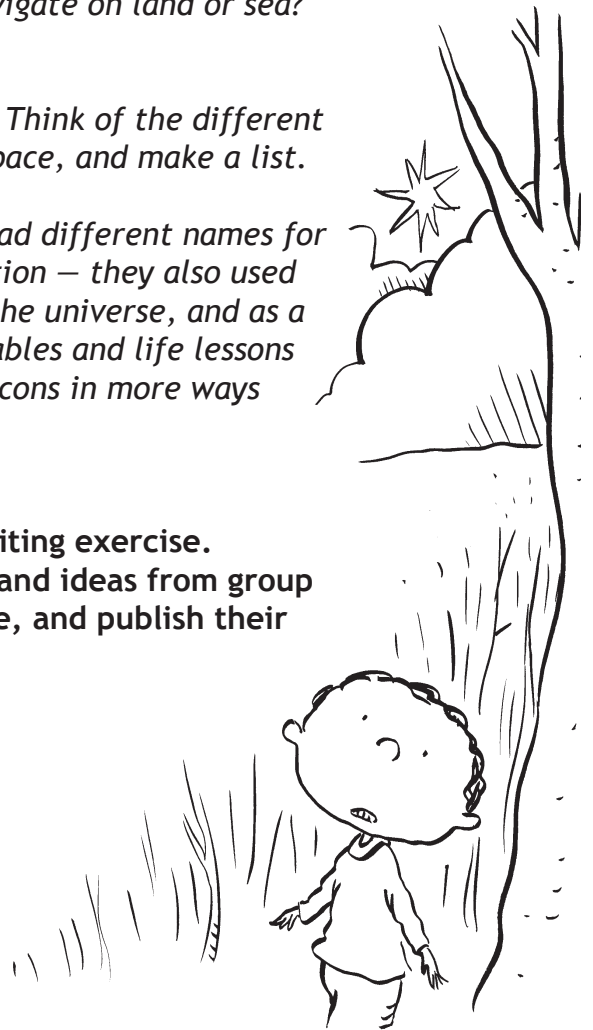
After reading *The North Star*, here's an activity to continue exploring themes of being lost, getting "un-lost" and preparing for the journey. Children LOVE talking about their LOST stories.

Sample discussion generators:

- *Have you ever gotten lost?*
- *How did you manage to get un-lost?*
- *What tools did ancient people use to navigate on land or sea? Make a list.*
- *What modern tools help us to navigate? Think of the different ways this is done on land, sea, air and space, and make a list.*
- *Think about how different cultures all had different names for stars, but they all used them for navigation — they also used them as a backdrop for the meaning of the universe, and as a framework for elaborate storytelling. Fables and life lessons emerged from the stars. They were beacons in more ways than one.*

For more advanced students, add a creative writing exercise.

Suggest they build off of their new discoveries and ideas from group discussion. Students may work in pairs or alone, and publish their work when they've finished!



## Group Work: Class Story

Encourage the class to write a story together: write the first sentence, and then allow the students to each write a sentence, continuing the tale. If you choose to project the story on an interactive whiteboard as it is written, all the students can easily contribute to the project using Alpha Smart NEOs! When you finish, you can publish the story with Stationery Studio® and Lintor Books!

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Create original works as a means of personal or group expression. (Standard 1b)
- Identify trends and forecast possibilities. (Standard 1d)
- Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media. (Standard 2a)
- Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems. (Standard 2d)
- Use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions. (Standard 4d)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Flexibility and Adaptability (Life and Career Skills)
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills (Life and Career Skills)



Suggested Grade Levels: 2-5

Time needed: 1-2 hours

## North Star Journey Bar

### Objectives:

- Students will practice ratios in a realistic setting.
- Students will create and design their own labels for North Star Journey Bars.
- Students will explore necessary food groups for survival.

### Overview:

A North Star Journey Bar is good snack food for a Voyager. What do you need in your North Star bar? After the Navigators create their North Star Journey Bars, they can discuss what else they need for their journey, and they can design a label to market their North Star Bars.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Begin by letting the voyagers brainstorm their ingredients. Here are some examples to get you started:
  - **Sweets and oils:** canola oil, vanilla, brown sugar, honey, juice, cinnamon
  - **Fruits:** coconut, dried mango, berries, dried apple, banana chips, figs, raisins
  - **Proteins (nuts):** almonds, pecans, walnuts, peanuts, peanut butter

*\*Teachers: please heed your school policy for nut and tree allergies.*

  - **Carbohydrates (grains, breads):** sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, oats, rice krispies, pumpkin seeds
2. Making North Star Journey Bars is a great group task, and dividing the class into groups of four or five enables you (and any volunteers) keep a guiding eye out. Make sure someone in each group is measuring and recording what goes into the bowl!
3. Here are some examples of questions you might have the students respond to as they invent their bars:
  - *How much peanut butter do you need to hold oats and raisins together?*
  - *Does adding coconut change it?*
  - *Does adding juice change it?*
  - *Can you add dairy or vegetables into your bar?*
  - *Do you want a sticky bar or a crunchy bar? Why might one be better than the other for a long voyage? Should the bar go into the oven or the fridge?*

4. The students can share their results, taste each others' North Star Journey bars, and determine which they like best.
5. To follow-up the activity, encourage the students to make a supplies list for their journey. What do they need besides food? What ingredients do they need to make the perfect North Star Journey Bar?
6. To check out health factors, they can visit My Pyramid, from the US Department of Agriculture.
7. Now you can market your North Star Journey Bar! Have the students design a label for their bars. How much did the ingredients cost them? How much do they want to sell each bar for?

\*This activity pairs well with books such as *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (grades K-2), *My Side of the Mountain* (grades 3-5) or *Hatchet* (grade 4-5), all of which follow themes of survival and creation.

**More advanced students can keep track of the ratios between ingredients. When the bars are all made, they can compare their ratios with other groups.**



**ISTE Standards Addressed:**

- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas and products. (Standard 1a)
- Contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems. (Standard 2d)
- Collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions. (Standard 4c)
- Use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions. (Standard 4d)

**21st Century Skills:**

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Flexibility and Adaptability (Life and Career Skills)
- Leadership and Responsibility (Life and Career Skills)



**Suggested Grade Levels: K-5**

**Time needed: 45-60 minutes to begin,  
10-15 minutes daily care**

## Star Gardens

### Objectives:

- Students will play a role in the life cycle of plants, connecting them to the world around them.
- Students will practice a basic scientific method, comparing and contrasting their constant garden with student-chosen independent variables.

### What's It All About:

*Mary Mary, Quite Contrary, How does your garden grow?*

Gardens can be as unique and individual as the people who grow them. Some gardeners believe pumpkins grow best when fed milk. Others grow flowers using coffee grounds as fertilizer.

Let students choose their own flowers to plant in window boxes, or outside if temperatures in your area permit. They may choose to model their gardens after the gardens of their favorite North Star folk. Encourage their creativity:

- What might Marie Curie have put in her garden to help her flowers grow?
- What about Ben Franklin?
- What was easy to grow in their lifetime?
- What were some popular old wives' tales concerning plants back then?

One way for students to measure their gardens' progress is against a controlled garden, either hand-gardened in a typical traditional water + sunlight form. Another options is a simulated garden such as Garden with Insight, where the students can monitor the growth of their online garden while creating optimal weather and climate conditions. (Visit the North Star Classroom Guide: Web Resources for more information.)

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues. (Standard 1c)
- Plan strategies to guide inquiry. (Standard 3a)
- Use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions. (Standard 4d)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Media Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Productivity and Accountability (Life and Career Skills)

**Suggested Grade Levels: 2-5**

**Time Needed: 90 minutes - 2 hours**

## North Star Radio

### Objectives:

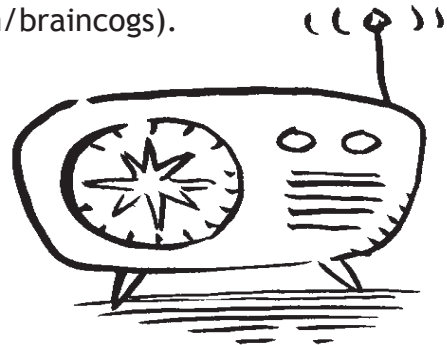
- Students will develop and write a story for reporting purposes.
- Students will practice pronunciation and communication by reading aloud.
- Students will have an authentic context (a radio show) to motivate research in other class subjects.

### What's It All About:

Many students feel self-conscious about reading out loud, sharing their ideas, or even having their voices heard by their peers. By creating a class radio show, every student can have an opportunity to practice reading aloud and develop oral communication skills in a comfortable and friendly environment.

Students can report on classroom news, the weather, or cultural events going on in school. A task as simple as reading *The North Star* becomes an event when sound effects are added - check out FableRadio to hear how they do it!

The technology for this activity can be as simple as a microphone hooked up to a laptop and recording to a CD, or as complex as a full recording studio. Visit <http://www.superschooluniversity.com> for more ideas by Bob Barboza, creator of Kids Talk Radio. Kids Talk Radio is a similar program, designed for Middle School, which trains students to operate computers, sound effects equipment, recording equipment, and FileMaker software as they create a classroom radio station. Kids Talk Radio recommends using BrainCogs® to help students work on remembering, prioritizing, checking, and using other good study skills as they create their radio program. (BrainCogs, the interactive learning and studying program from FableVision, is available at [www.fablevision.com/braincogs](http://www.fablevision.com/braincogs)). Kids Talk Radio uses *The North Star* as the sample story when students learn to add sound effects to books.



### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Process data and report results. (Standard 3d)
- Identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation. (Standard 4a)
- Exhibit leadership for digital citizenship. (Standard 5d)
- Understand and use technology systems. (Standard 6a)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Information and Communications Technology Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy Skills)
- Flexibility and Adaptability (Life and Career Skills)

Suggested Grade Levels: 1-5

Time Needed: 30 - 60 minutes a day

## North Star Play

### Objectives:

- Students will take ownership of a class project and help create the assignment.
- Students will put together a play, from learning lines to measuring for costumes.

### Overview:

Write a play for your students to perform, or choose one. Allow the students to take charge of creating their own props and costumes. A play is an excellent way to bring out creative energy in students, and builds creative writing, organizational and social skills.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Write a play for your students to perform. Let them suggest story and character ideas, or for more advanced students assign them scenes to help write. Students may be ready to help you write it, using a program like ScreenPlay Outliner.
2. During the rehearsal process students can build props or puppets and find their own costumes.
3. By connecting the play to a book you're reading in class or a section of history, you can assess the students' understanding of the material.

### Note from Sue Pandiani:

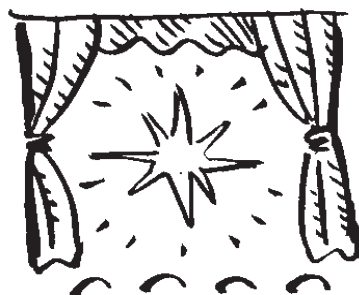
One option for a performance is the North Star Musical Journey, an eleven-song musical written by Tim Beckman, a teacher inspired by The North Star. It has been performed by students around the world. The performance kit includes tips for production, a CD with the music, lyrics and a script! The full kit is available from FableVision. What better addition could there be to a North Star School Year?!

### ISTE Standards Addressed:

- Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas or projects. (Standard 1a)
- Plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project. (Standard 4b)
- Demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning. (Standard 5c)

### 21st Century Skills:

- Creativity and Innovation (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Flexibility and Adaptability (Life and Career Skills)
- Social and Cross-cultural Skills (Life and Career Skills)
- Leadership and Responsibility (Life and Career Skills)



## Creating a North Star Classroom Website

### Objectives:

- Students will share their projects and successes with a larger audience.
- Students will create a website with the teacher, and have input into the design of the site.



### What's It All About:

When Sue began using the North Star Curriculum in her classroom, she had already visited many school and classroom home pages, and recognized the tremendous potential they had of expanding the classroom community to the world.

The first thing Sue discovered was Claris HomePage, which made the HTML work a lot easier. Although HomePage is no longer an option, some other easy-to-use webpage builders can be found at [www.geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com) and [www.buildyourownwebsite.org](http://www.buildyourownwebsite.org).

Background and images were found on free graphics pages, and by using on-line tutorials, a few manuals, and lots of trial and error, a page can emerge - and don't forget that the students may enjoy the trial and error as much as you do!

Peter sent three hand-drawn pictures to Sue's students and invited them to write stories or poems about them. She posted them on her classroom site, and shortly thereafter published a poem or a story written by every child in the class, on a "Create the Magic" page.



Publishing student work gives them a sense of power. They have a reason to write, a purpose, an audience, and the act of posting their writing on a website gives value to what they create.

When you create your own classroom website, keep in mind what options you want available: do you want an online community? A comments page so that the students may see who is visiting? Your website will constantly be evolving and changing and growing, much like your classroom!



**Here are some suggestions for what you might include:**

**A Welcome Page** introducing the class.

**The Navigators' Page** that includes a brief description of the various pages of your site, along with links to other relevant pages. Sue included the North Star site, the on-line version of The North Star, the North Star Cards of Inspiration, and Screen Saver.

**A Table of Contents** that allows for easier navigation of the site. Each page links back to this page.

**A Log**, the "What's New" page that gives the visitor a ready view of what has recently been added to the site or what is happening in the classroom.

**A Guest Book** and a form to submit an entry to the Guest Book.

**Student-created cyber cards.** Sue's students created images in the classroom, scanned them in, and added words of support. They can also be translated to either French or Spanish - two languages often studied in higher grade levels.

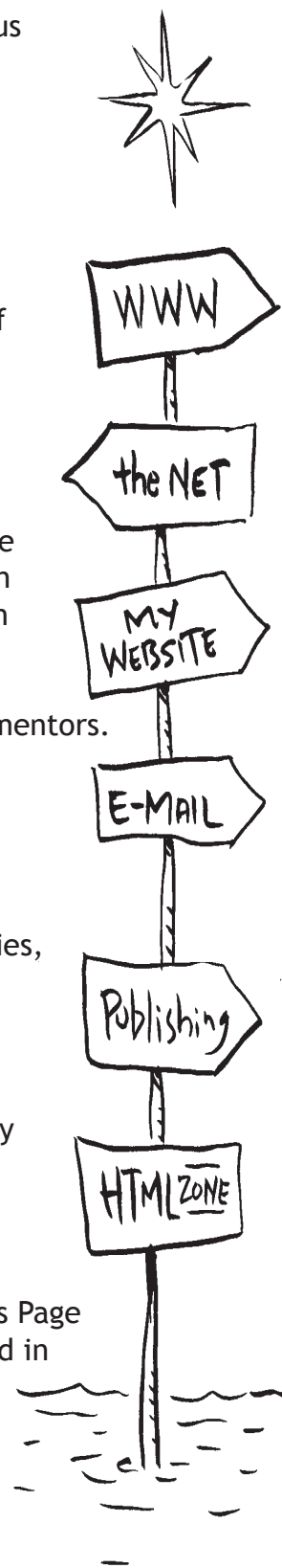
**A Page of Encouragement** — words and images from students and mentors.

Each student can have his or her own **individual web page**, on the "Discover a Star" page which you may also want to link to the MapMaker software. The individual student page may include the Navigator's constellation, and a poem and paragraph written about themselves. Students may also choose to provide co-authored stories, contributions by the teacher, and links to other sites.

**The "Literary Magazine"** page for publishing stories and poems.

**The "Lantern News"** on-line newspaper, which can also include any articles from outside publications where students or the school are highlighted.

**A Projects Page** that includes a "StorySTARTers" page. Sue's class linked their website to the North Star StarVisions site. The Projects Page is a place for students to post any on-line projects they are involved in as well as classroom projects such as The North Star Radio.



**A North Star Teaching page** is a great spot for the teacher to share ideas and activities.

**The Guiding Parents page** is where parents are encouraged to correspond with the class and publish their own work.

**The Guides' and Voyagers' pages** allows the teacher to keep in touch with former students. They become mentors to the incoming class and are encouraged to continue to submit their work. These pages can also link to samples of their work that they created while they were students in the North Star classroom.

**The Junior Navigators' page** is a spot to post work submitted by younger siblings and North Star friends as well.

**And the StarSites pages** are meant to be a resource for students, parents and teachers providing links to useful internet sites.

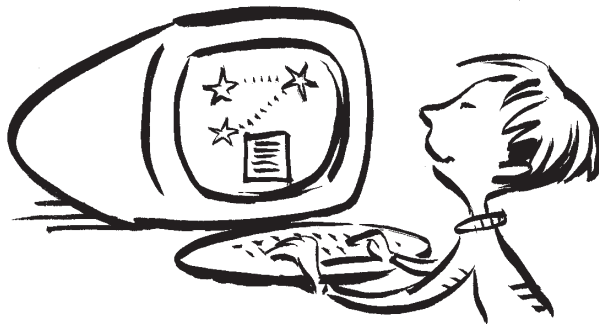
Your website is a beautiful reflection of your classroom. It also is a place to create new experiences that would be difficult or impossible without the website. Be inspired! Create your own cyber-voyage, put your own unique aspects into it, and e-mail [info@fablevision.com](mailto:info@fablevision.com) to show off your finished product.

**ISTE Standards Addressed:**

- Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on appropriateness to specific tasks. (Standard 3c)
- Advocate and practice a safe, legal and responsible use of information and technology. (Standard 5a)
- Transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies. (Standard 6d)

**21st Century Skills:**

- Communication and Collaboration (Learning and Innovation Skills)
- Media Literacy (Information, Media and Technology Literacy)



## The SMART Song

Contributed by Sally Moorer  
Second Grade Teacher, Marion Primary School, Virginia



*I found these lyrics on a teacher's website a few weeks ago. Our class sang it over our school intercom during morning announcements! We had a great time! I made a copy for all the teachers to use with their classes.*

## The SMART Song

*(Tune: Did You Ever See a Lassie?)\**



There are eight kinds of smartness,  
Of smartness, of smartness,  
There are eight kinds of smartness,  
And we use each one.

There's body smart and music smart,  
And people smart and self smart,

There are eight kinds of smartness,  
And we use each one.

There's number smart and picture smart,  
And word smart and nature smart.

There are eight kinds of smartness,  
Of smartness, of smartness,  
There are eight kinds of smartness,  
And we use each one.

*\*Adapted from Co-op Structures for the Multiple Intelligence Classroom, by Spencer Kagan.*

## Mutiny Resolution

Contributed by Maryann Molishus  
Second Grade Teacher  
Goodnoe Elementary School, Pennsylvania

We use Responsive Classroom (<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>) and Second Step Problem Solving (<http://www.cfchildren.org/cfc/ssf/elem>) in our district. Mutiny Resolution (as well as the Star goals) work well with these practices.

I modeled how to write a letter and would suggest writing the letter when the children had conflicts that they could solve on their own. The children had a hard time writing the letter in an effective format as well as responding to the messages they received, so I wrote a letter template in a way that made it easier.

As the year progressed, the children used the writing more effectively. It was empowering, and, I believe, sometimes just the act of writing down troubles can make one feel better. I also found it amazingly helpful when I was feeling angry with the class.

When we did have some serious class problems, I would write what we called a Mutiny Report on a large piece of paper. I read it and posted it with the "please reply" included. Within a few hours, the children, using Post-It Notes, had come up with several strategies for improving the class. They also would include apologies and some amusing "I didn't do it, but if it did..." comments. It truly helped me feel better, helped the children think about their responsibilities, and gave us feedback to use to prevent future conflicts.





## The North Star Weeklong Cruise

Only have a week to implement North Star ideas into your classroom? Here is a sampling of the earlier-mentioned North Star activities to get some North Star magic flowing in your classroom in just five days.

### \* Read the Book

Read *The North Star* by Peter H. Reynolds. Conduct a "Book Talk" and share your thoughts and feelings. *The North Star* is available in book form and also on-line:

<http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/read.html>

### \* Write About the Book

Write and illustrate what the story means to you. Read "letters from school children" on the North Star website:

<http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/letter1.html>

### \* Create Your Own Constellation

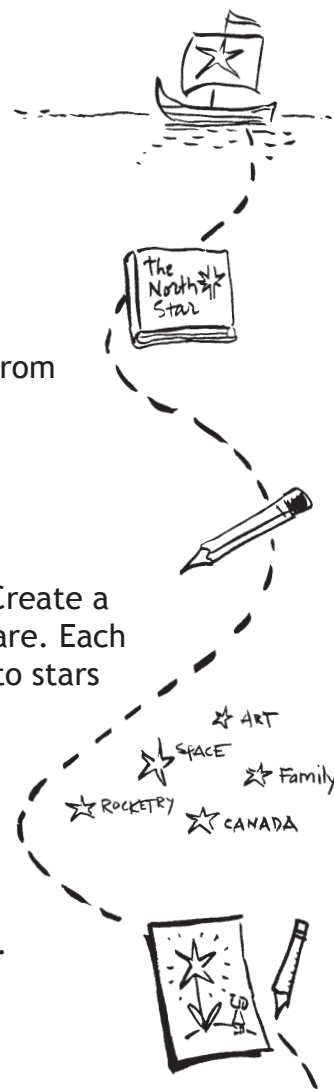
Imagine that the important things in your life were each a star. Create a StarMap using the on-line Personal Constellation MapMaker software. Each student can type in things of meaning which will be translated into stars on a constellation map. Try the MapMaker software at:

<http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/mapper.html>

### \* Visit the StarVisions Exhibit

Be inspired by one of Peter Reynolds' StarVisions, and publish what you write with Stationery Studio® and Lintor Create-a-Book. Visit the site for ideas:

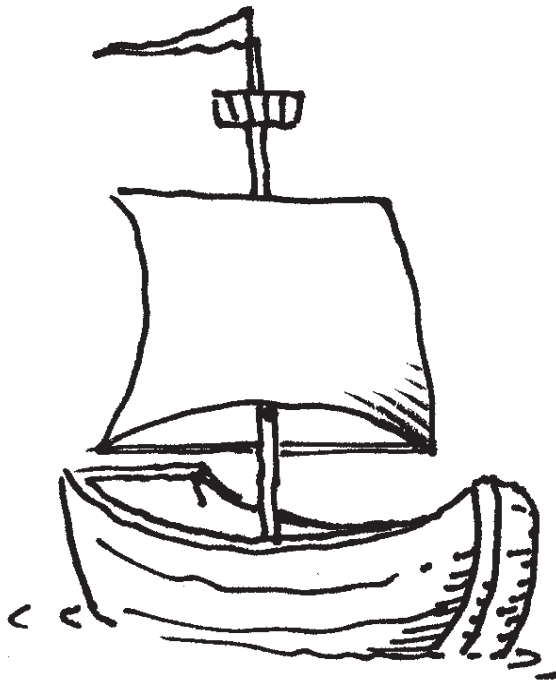
<http://www.fablevision.com/northstar/starvisions/svision.html>



Glance through this guide and pick a few things out to supplement your cruise. Remember: there is no right order.

Make your own path! (How very North Star!)





• A Message from Peter H. Reynolds	80
• A Note from Sue Pandiani	81
• Stories from the Classroom	82
• Addressing 21st Century Skills	86
• Addressing ISTE Standards	87
• About the Authors	90

## Inspiration for your OWN Journey

### *Our Brightest Stars*

*by Peter H. Reynolds*

*Teachers are among  
the brightest stars  
in our constellation...*

*They guide us,*

*Inspire us.*

*They light the way,*

*They help us see patterns in the stars.*

*They are there even when the clouds roll in,  
Teachers are around us, their spirit surrounds us,  
twenty-four hours a day.*

*They help us find true north.*

*They help us navigate our way  
to our true potential.*

*They are stars.*

*They are among the brightest stars  
in our constellation.*

## Notes from Sue Pandiani, Co-Author

I have educators from all over the world, from many grade levels, asking how to create a North Star Classroom like I did. I have opened up all my files to share with you. It's not a recipe, just some ideas for how it could be done. I want you to do with this guide what I always do when I first explore a new program, or unit, or approach to learning. I make it my own!

As I read through a new project, I begin to make connections with what I already do, with my teaching style, with my students' learning styles, and our third grade curriculum. I love to make connections for my students so that they can become completely immersed in a theme. So, if I'm investigating a science unit or computer program, I begin to think about the books and stories that my students can read that will relate to this theme. What writing projects will it generate? Will I be able to make a connection with the internet or our classroom website? What unit in social studies can I teach at the same time? How do I make a math connection? I am constantly adapting and creating new ideas and materials from it. Some parts I might decide to skip, and others will receive greater attention than the program calls for.

My North Star Classroom is by far the most innovative and rewarding project I have ever been involved in. Peter H. Reynolds' beautifully illustrated book *The North Star* sparked a "learning voyage" which my students and I would navigate together

The project emphasizes communication between school and home — it serves as an accessible and inviting bridge between teacher and parent. Parents are instantly attracted to the magic of The North Star's messages. As a result, they are involved and very supportive. Siblings have also joined in. Younger siblings are called Junior Navigators. Students who have moved on to the middle school are the North Star Voyagers. Once you are a Voyager, you are a Voyager for life!

I believe that it is our duty as caregivers to draw out the talents and skills of students. Their unique vision and creative output is a testament to the power this kind of program can tap into. The overall message which I helped students take with them was that they all had a **very special journey**, no matter what obstacles they encountered or what labels peers or others tried to put on them, and that any dream is possible if they try.

Each year my North Star Classroom has grown and evolved through my interaction with Peter, our reading and shared ideas, and our experiences with other teachers, but also because of the children and their parents' feedback. How exciting to realize that just around the corner lies a whole new idea yet to be created, perhaps by you or by one of your students. Take our ideas, **change them, create your own magic, make them your own**. Write to us. Tell us what you are doing. Good luck. Enjoy!

Sue Pandiani, Co-Author

## Stories from the Classroom

"After the children made their constellations (which are displayed in our room) and answered the questions about what kind of learner they are, we made big individual stars for each child. In the middle of each star it has "[He/She] is SMART." On each part of the star we wrote all of the child's strongest areas of interest/ learning styles. The children LOVED it. They decorated their stars and put them up beside their constellation. I heard them saying, "Look how many ways I am smart!"

—Sally Moorer, Teacher, 2nd Grade



"When I began collaborating with my 7th grade Family and Consumer Sciences teacher to develop a technology infused child care program, I had students read *The North Star* online to discover what a wonderful grade appropriate story for children is all about...(we also posted the site on our FCS eBoard to make it easy to find online when they are home with a young child or babysitting).

"After reading *The North Star*, they began to see how simple drawings and words are very powerful...and meaningful... and they wrote and illustrated their own stories to read to kindergarteners on our field trip to kindergarten! I always tell people new to the FableVision site to start there...at *The North Star*...it is so special..."

—Agnes Zaorski, Teacher, 4th Grade



"I began the year by reading and discussing the book. I teach second grade, so I wasn't sure how deeply young children would understand. We discussed how we were all going to get to the end of the second grade year, but that we would not all have the same journey. I made copies of the blank North Star and ship on white card stock. Each child named their ship and used crayons, water colors, or markers to color it. They also put their name on the sail. Then we brainstormed hopes, dreams, goals for the year. I asked the children to choose one goal related to school, their health, their homes (families), and community service. They also had to choose a big dream - if they could do anything they wanted, what would it be. The big dream was the hardest. They then wrote each goal on a point of their star and colored the star.

"For the beginning of the year, I posted the star guiding the ships on the bulletin board outside our classroom. After about a month, I took down the stars and ships and then a bit after that, I chose about 3-4 stars and ships at a time and made a bulletin board in our classroom entitled "Featured Journeys." I hung the ships and stars on the board. Those featured children also chose one of Peter H. Reynolds' inspirational posters that they thought would either help them individually or that they thought was needed by the class as a whole. This gave the children a chance to look at their goals and reflect on how things were going. It also gave the class a chance to really look at someone else's "journey." I could tell by the poster choices

that the children were really aware of their needs and the needs of the classroom. For example, one student who always had a messy desk was positive she needed to choose the "Keep a clear desk. Don't break your neck. ..." poster.

"One thing I noticed this year, and I can't say for sure that it was because of this approach, but the children were much more aware of their needs (weaknesses) and the needs of their classmates. And, they were much more comfortable verbalizing them and discussing them together. The class knew that one child needed to speak louder, another could not stop talking, another was very messy, another did not complete homework, another had a hard time following school rules. Of course, they also knew each other's strengths, but I think that is more typically discussed than the weaknesses. Since the children were so open, I was able to include them in any behavior-type plans that were set up to help individuals."

—Maryann Molishus, Teacher, 2nd Grade



"Each school year, I try to organize and facilitate student led conferences for the parents/guardians of my students. I believe this is an excellent way to encourage my students to reflect on their accomplishments and to continue setting new goals as the school year begins to wind down. The primary tool used is each Navigator's Constellation Portfolio.

"Throughout the year the students and I take time to add work to our portfolios and to reflect on our goals and accomplishments (I kept one last year). I encourage everyone to choose work in a variety of curricular disciplines that can be reflected upon and critiqued for overall quality and personal growth (using templates I provide to them).

"I encourage students to choose work that shows growth and effort toward meeting goals even if it is not "the best". Most students are honest evaluators and include selections that show improvement over time as goals are met...Not just their best work.

"When a student meets with parents, the portfolios contain enough work to initiate discussions that last well over 45 minutes. It's a great way to answer my students' questions about "why do we have to think about and write about work we have already finished?" It adds closure to the school year and our learning voyage."

—Kevin McGroary, Teacher, 5th Grade



"A few years ago we began using Peter H. Reynolds' book *The North Star* as the year-long guiding theme for our 1st and 2nd grade classroom guidance program. Our monthly guidance lessons help students learn new things about themselves and those around them, as well as skills that will help them on their life journeys, and their learning journeys, which makes *The North Star* an ideal theme for our program.

"After a brief discussion of the story, students quickly develop an understanding of the themes and messages and carry those messages with them throughout the year. One of our discussion questions at the start of the year is, "What is the message of *The North Star*?" We ask this again at the end of the year. Student responses almost always reflect their own understanding. Here is a sampling of what 1st and 2nd graders say is the book's message or moral:

- To be yourself
- To do your own thing, and not worry about what everyone else is doing.
- To follow your dream.
- That everyone is different and has their own things that they like to do, and their own place they like to be.
- To follow your own star.
- To follow your heart.

"Students also learn from this story the importance of accepting, respecting, supporting and celebrating others as they do they same."

—Maribeth Bush, School Counselor, K-2



"In the swirl of research-based instruction and educational accountability, it's easy to forget one thing: Great teachers don't teach subjects, or content, or standards. They teach children! That's why I embrace the North Star Approach in my classroom. It recognizes and celebrates individual constellations of abilities, experiences, and preferences. It uses strengths to build weaknesses. It places kids directly in the center of the classroom. And it provides a uniquely flexible, practical interface that my students, their families, and I use to navigate our true potential.

"I've used components of the North Star Classroom Guide to improve my instruction, my classroom management, and my outreach to families. They are imbedded throughout my classroom environment, from the Smart Stars Surveys that I complete every fall with my students to the Inspiration posters that we use as guiding parameters and principles. Because the Guide is aligned with professional standards and contemporary research, it fits into virtually any classroom or school program. My teaching teammates and I particularly relish the fit between the North Star Classroom Guide and Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, as well as many other cornerstones from the worlds of gifted education and progressive teaching.

"*The North Star* is about learning with a purpose. It's about sharing the journey with others. It's about creating, out of the elements around us, that which does not already exist.

"As the education paradigm continues to shift, as it always will, I realize that there are things which never change. The North Star Classroom Guide is an application of many of these universal truths, which have the greatest impact on student achievement, and which always will."

—Wade Whitehead, Teacher, 5th Grade





"Our school is a new school, now in its' 6th year. Prior to our opening the building, I came across *The North Star* book. I purchased the book, the musical, and the Classroom Guide and have utilized them each year. Our school is called Sandown North and our slogan is, "Follow Your North Star". Each Monday, we gather as a whole school for Monday Morning Meeting. During that time, staff and students (mostly students) share their accomplishments, read a story, sing a song, share artwork etc. We end each meeting by singing the Journey song (from The North Star Musical Journey kit). I begin my classroom guidance with all of the classrooms by reading *The North Star*, and end the school year by reading it again.

"Throughout the school year, I use the North Star Classroom Guide. Many of the "Guiding Beacons" are hung up around the school and I give teachers packets of information to use within their individual classrooms. We have incorporated the ideas of the book in to our school culture. Two years ago, we embarked on a new journey. We introduced a program called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, (PBIS). As the name suggests, it's a program that encourages positive behavior, rather than focusing on the negative. We call our program, Star Quest and have found that the children really understand what it means for us to be on a quest, a journey both as individual learners and as a school community."

—Nancy Stafford, School Councilor, K-3



## Addressing 21st Century Skills

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has created a framework of three sections of skills necessary for today's students. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 identifies the core subjects as English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; arts; history; and geography. But, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills adds global awareness, financial literacy, civic literacy and health awareness.

Each activity in the North Star Guide incorporates 21st Century Skills. These skills are:

### 1. Learning and Innovation Skills

Learning and innovation skills increasingly are being recognized as the skills that separate students who are prepared for the complex life and work environments in the 21st century, and those who are not. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future.

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration

### 2. Information, Media and Technology Literacy

Information and communications technology (ICT) literacy is the ability to use technology to develop 21st century content knowledge and skills, in support of 21st century teaching and learning.

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT Literacy

### 3. Life and Career Skills

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills.

- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Initiative & Self-Direction
- Social & Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity & Accountability
- Leadership & Responsibility

Information on the 21st Century Skills is available at <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/>

# International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) National Educational Technology Standards for Students

The technology standards for students are divided into six broad categories. Standards within each category are to be introduced, reinforced, and mastered by students. These categories provide a framework for linking performance indicators found in the Profiles for Technology Literate Students to the standards. Teachers can use these standards and profiles as guidelines for planning technology-based activities in which students achieve success in learning, communication, and life skills.

Each activity is aligned with the ISTE Standards. These standards are:

**1. Creativity and Innovation** Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

- a) apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or
- b) create original works as a means of personal or group expression
- c) use models and simulations to explore complex systems and issues.
- d) identify trends and forecast possibilities.

**2. Communication and Collaboration**

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

Students:

- a) interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- b) communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- c) develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures.
- d) contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.

### **3. Research and Information Fluency**

Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information  
Students:

- a) plan strategies to guide inquiry.
- b) locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
- c) evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on appropriateness to specific tasks.
- d) process data and report results.

### **4. Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving & Decision-Making**

Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources.

Students:

- a) identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation.
- b) plan and manage activities to develop a solution or complete a project.
- c) collect and analyze data to identify solutions and/or make informed decisions.
- d) use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.

### **5. Digital Citizenship**

Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

Students:

- a) advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.
- b) exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.
- c) demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.
- d) exhibit leadership for digital citizenship.

## 6. Technology Operations and Concepts

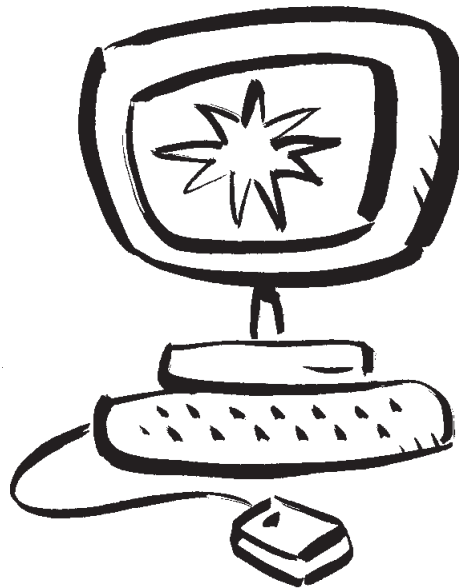
Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations.

Students:

- a) understand and use technology systems.
- b) select and use applications effectively and productively.
- c) troubleshoot systems and applications.
- d) transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

ISTE standards are available at <http://www.iste.org/>

*Although these standards were created to be utilized solely in regard to technology, we understand that, just like students, all classrooms are different. Not all classrooms are equipped with the same technological capacities. With this in mind, we have reviewed and found these standards applicable whether the projects have been researched and created completely via computers or partially with good old fashioned pencil and paper.*



## About the Authors

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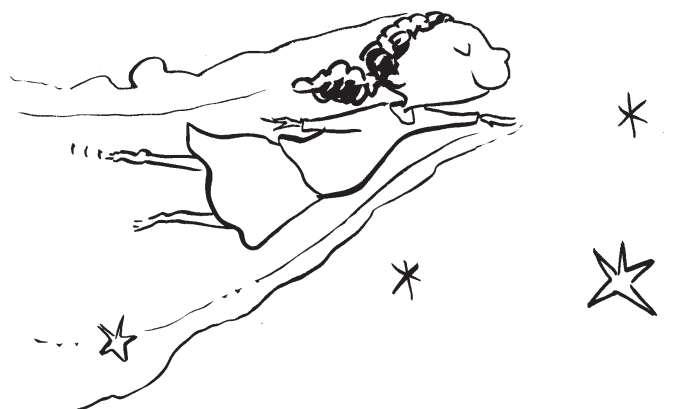
### Sue Pandiani

Sue Pandiani is an educator from Bourne, Massachusetts. She is a Primary Science Specialist at the Ralph Talbot and Thomas Hamilton Primary Schools in Weymouth, MA. Previously, Sue was a Title I Mathematics Specialist at the William Seach, Frederick C. Murphy, and Lawrence W. Pingree Primary Schools in Weymouth.

Sue graduated from Anna Maria College, in Paxton, Massachusetts and later received an honorary doctorate, Doctor of Humane Letters, from her alma mater in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments as an educator.

Sue has been trained in a constructivist approach to learning through the Massachusetts Department of Education Project PALMS (Partnerships Advancing the Learning of Mathematics and Science). She has presented at numerous technology workshops and expositions, often accompanied by her students as well as Peter H. Reynolds. She has served as a member of the Weymouth Public Schools Gifted and Talented/Advanced Learners Curriculum Review Council and the Gifted and Talented Curriculum Review Teacher Leadership Team.

Sue received a Peter Farrelly Teacher Leadership Award in 1995. She has been a nominee for both the Bourne Education Person of the Year Award and the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Award. Sue was one of four Massachusetts teachers, and one of 160 educators nationwide to receive the 1998 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. The recipients are honored for their dedication to children and their distinguished accomplishments. The foundation recognizes educators for their leadership, creativity, and effectiveness. Sue now serves as the Massachusetts' Milken Educator Network state liaison for the Milken Family Foundation.



## Peter H. Reynolds

While Peter H. Reynolds is indeed an artist and author, he is best known for his mission to use media to tell stories that matter and challenge us to reach our full potential.

Peter's cornerstone work, *The North Star* (FableVision) has inspired "children of all ages" around the world as a book, curriculum and musical. His other best selling books about protecting and nurturing the creative spirit include *The Dot*, *Ish*, and *So Few of Me* (Candlewick Press). The film version of *The Dot* (Weston Woods) went on to win ALA's Carnegie Medal of Excellence for the Best Children's Video of 2005 and the film version of *Ish* was announced as one of ALA's 2006 Notable Children's Videos. Peter has illustrated the New York Times best-selling Judy Moody series (Candlewick Press) and New York Times Bestseller *Someday*, and various other books.

In addition to his books, Peter has created educational software products to support the key elements of the North Star Approach. Peter's company, the Emmy-award winning FableVision, is a turn-key educational media developer and publisher committed to creating educational products that help all learners navigate their full potential. With offices in Boston, Dedham, Portland, Oregon and London, the FableVision team is a fundamental part of the North Star community with its unique brand of innovative, technology-delivered storytelling and learning. FableVision's ([www.fablevision.com](http://www.fablevision.com)) most popular products include Stationery Studio®, Get A Clue®, BrainCogs®, and Essay Express™.

Peter is a renowned speaker on creativity, inspiration, and education at many educational conferences. These include the Anytime Anywhere Learning Conference, the Constructivist Consortia, the Community of Caring Conference, the Park City Literary Festival, the Boston Globe Children's Festival, NECC, CACue, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, on PBS and on Fox TV. Peter has been called "extraordinary," and "an inspiration." Teachers testify " [he had] a profound impact on my life as a professional," and "I am RE-motivated to reach deeper into every child so that I can teach and understand them individually."

L. Michael Golden, formerly of the PA Department of Education wrote, "As always, Peter went beyond expectations to rekindle the imagination and passion of everyone in attendance." Wherever he goes, Peter promotes literacy and learning, and inspires lifelong learners to make the journey a meaningful one.

