

Newspaper in Education Presents
inquizi **kidz**

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kidzbiz
Tech and Tumble Teen

By Leslie Rowe

When you've been learning a skill since you were two years old, it seems simple to you. That's how Jade Wutzer, a seventh grader at **Harlee Middle**, views two of her talents: competition cheerleading and technology. With the same graceful ease, she can tumble across the gym floor or manipulate a digital photograph on the computer. Jade, an active member in Harlee's Technology Students Association (TSA), plans to compete in TSA's State competition in Orlando this spring. She'll try her hand in these categories:



Jade Wutzer

Graphic Arts, where she will create a digital display showcasing a timeline of technology; *Video Challenge*, a project adding special effects to a digital video, and *Problem Solving*, where Jade and two teammates will solve an on-the-spot challenge while competing with other TSA groups. Jade's big smile, confidence, agility, technology skills, and easy-going nature will take her far into the future. Oh—one more thing about Jade—if you see her today, February 4, 2004, wish her a **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!** Starting now, she's a teenager!

school biz
Gone Fishin'-With Technology

By Leslie Rowe

There's a saying by an unknown author that says, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." In Brian Stephens' technology classes at **Harlee Middle School**, he's giving fishing lessons. Not with bait and tackle, but with tough lessons in problem-solving skills.



Brian Stephens

Whether Brian is teaching aerodynamics, robotics, digital imaging, and computer aided design (CAD), or creating projects with the lab's computer numerical controlled (CNC) mill—he's working hard to instill the basics of problem-solving skills within the minds of his students. "My goal is to teach them how to figure it out themselves," Brian said. "Some students have to overcome what I call 'learned helplessness.' You should see the look on their faces when you tell them they are smart!" In addition to his classes, Brian enjoys helping students in Harlee's Technology Students Association (TSA) with advisor Linda Chambers. And when he's not at school, he's busy teaching problem-solving skills to his own three children. Hook, line, and sinker!

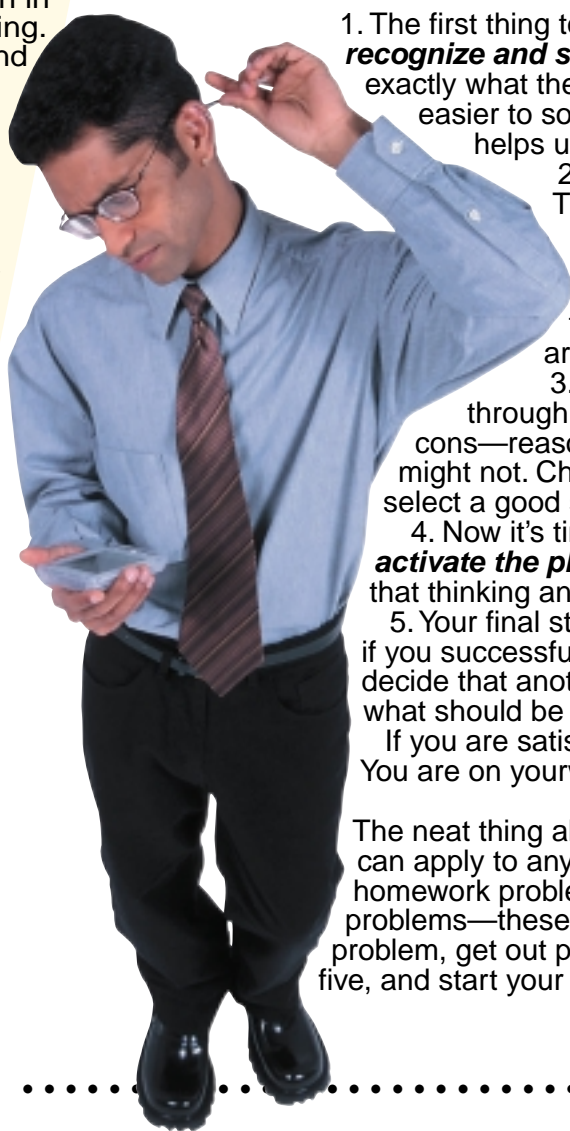
Problem Solving

You can be a problem solver!

By Julie Gillies

Who doesn't have problems? The answer is—nobody! From the busy CEO of a major corporation to a kid at home doing the chores and feeding the pets, we all face problems every single day. Whether your problem involves work or school, whether it seems really big or it's just a small thing, it's still *your* problem—so finding the answer is very important to you.

Did you know that engineers, scientists, and many other professionals use a set of problem solving steps to help them come up with solutions to all sorts of difficulties at work? You may not be an engineer, a mathematician, or a rocket scientist but you can use the same set of guidelines to help you navigate through life's obstacles. Think of the steps below as a new set of tools for you to learn to use—only instead of building a workbench or a dresser, you're building a solid set of problem-solving skills.



1. The first thing to do when a problem arises is to **recognize and state the problem clearly**. By identifying exactly what the problem is, you define it and make it easier to solve. Sometimes, just writing things down helps us to focus more clearly.
2. Next, **consider all possible solutions**. This is the time to collect as much information as you can and begin brainstorming. Ask for ideas from friends or family. Try "thinking outside the box." Be creative and bounce ideas around!
3. Begin to **develop a plan**. Think things through carefully. Try making a list of pros and cons—reasons why your plan might work and why it might not. Choose the best information and begin to select a good solution that really will solve the problem.
4. Now it's time to get rolling! Your next step is to **activate the plan**. This is when you begin to apply all that thinking and start doing what you decided to do!
5. Your final step is to **evaluate the plan**. Ask yourself if you successfully solved the problem. If not, you may decide that another solution could work better. Decide what should be changed and then go back to Step 3. If you are satisfied with your results, congratulations! You are on your way to becoming a better problem solver!

The neat thing about problem solving skills is that they can apply to any kind of problems. From math and homework problems to relationship and friendship problems—these steps work! So next time you're facing a problem, get out paper and pencil, make a list from one to five, and start your brain's engines!

Discover the Future

Many different careers focus on solving problems. If you enjoy figuring things out, then consider any of the following careers:

- President of the United States**
- Detective**
- Police Officer**
- Investigative Reporter**
- Engineer**
- Research Scientist**
- Mystery Writer**
- Chemist**
- Botanist**
- Counselor**
- Judge**
- Lawyer**
- Coach**
- Entrepreneur (business owner)**
- Parent**

For more career information see your school counselor and get information on-line at:
<http://jobstar.org/tools/career/spec-car.cfm>
 OR
<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp>



explore it

Problem-Solving Activities

Here are two different problem-solving projects to try. You can do them alone and compare your best two attempts, but it's much more fun to compete with a friend or two. So go ahead, call a friend and get competitive!

Project One: Paper Stretcher

Problem: Using only the materials listed, create the longest continuous piece of paper possible.

Resources: One sheet of 9"x12" drafting paper, one 12" ruler, and one pair of scissors.

Directions: The paper must be continuous...nothing twisted or tied together. The length will be raised on each end until the lowest part is off the floor. If the paper breaks before it leaves the floor, the measuring process will be repeated with the longest piece. The winner will have the longest straight-line distance between the two ends of paper.

Project Two: Leaning Tower of Paper

Problem: Using only the materials provided, construct the tallest freestanding tower possible. The paper may be taped to the floor to keep it from moving.

Resources: One sheet of 9"x12" drafting paper, 18" length of masking tape, and one pair of scissors.

Directions: The structure will be measured ten seconds after anything touching it has been removed. The winner will be the tower with the greatest perpendicular distance from the floor.

Activity Source: *Problem Solving* by Bruce Barnes, Scholastic Futures Publishing

InquiziKidz page is published every Wednesday in the Bradenton Herald-East Manatee Herald. Provided by Newspaper in Education, Kristin Lamphron, Education Manager (941) 748-0411 ext. 5031 Darren Falterman, Digital Media Specialist © Knight-Ridder Productions, inc.

- Sugg Middle School
- Ballard Elementary Magnet
- Daughtrey Preparatory Magnet
- Harlee Middle Magnet**
- Johnson Middle Magnet
- Lee Middle Magnet



- Haile Middle School
- Lincoln Middle Magnet
- Manatee Elementary Magnet
- Rowlett Elementary Magnet
- Tillman Elementary Magnet
- Wakeland Elementary Magnet

Schools listed in red offer instruction in the subject area featured in today's InquiziKIDz

Next Weeks Inquizikidz - How can we teach our children to serve the community?

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