

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### Calling All Ideas!

We are looking to start a BRAND new Concept Schools 'K-2 "Event"' but we need some ideas from teachers, administrators, etc..

Please share your creativity using the following link:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lhkmfNab\\_STOOTWr-fnr\\_tZd8KSjhShuNyna1n0u7w/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lhkmfNab_STOOTWr-fnr_tZd8KSjhShuNyna1n0u7w/edit?usp=sharing)

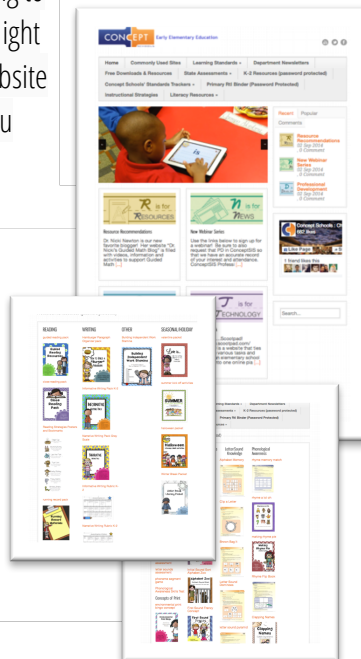
### New Website Features

Have you been to the Early Elementary Department site yet? Here's the link:

<http://elementary.conceptschools.org/>

I've been working hard at trying to add TONS of things teacher might find helpful to one central website so you can have everything you need in just one place.

There are new resources for Guided Reading (videos!), a link to the Rtl Binder, and sign up documents for upcoming webinars. If you need access to the password protected tabs, please feel free to email me.



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### Webinar PD Series

Have you been interested in some of the professional development options listed in SIS but we haven't been able to schedule for me to visit your school/region? My plan is to offer some of those via as webinar. You can see the offerings and sign ups using the link below. Shortly before the date of the webinar, I will email you a link that directly connects you to our webinar tool, Zoom.

<http://elementary.conceptschools.org/category-3/>

**IMPORTANT:** Please make sure you sign up on ConceptSIS under the Staff>Performance Management>PD Offerings. Be certain you are choosing the "webinar" option. Also, if you are interested but there are no times that fit your schedule, please send me and email so we can find some other time.

### Upcoming Reading Event:

ReadQuest is a one-day (March 3<sup>rd</sup>) event that brings K12 students from all over the country together to celebrate the power of reading—and the incredible places it takes us.



Register your class today and you'll be automatically entered in weekly drawings for a \$25 Amazon gift card, along with prize drawings on the day of the event.

**FREE?!?!?** (or really, really cheap)

Stay Tuned...

Until then, teacher discounts...

<https://www.giftcardgranny.com/blog/the-complete-list-of-66-teacher-discounts/>

# "I Just Don't Have Enough \_\_\_\_\_"

By Jennifer Sajovec

Ask your educator friends to fill in the blank above. You might hear "money!" or "coffee!" However, I'm guess a lot of you said TIME!

There are only so many hours in a day...and even less in a school day. One of the hardest tasks for any teacher is learning how to fit all that learning into a few precious hours. Here are some tips on how to make the best use of time with your students!

## Come to Terms (and Make Peace) With Your Limitations

There is only so much instructional time in a day...period. We can lament about this to others hoping one day that "extra time" will be delivered in a decorative package with the cutest handtied bow or we can accept the reality of now.

Start taking a critical look at your schedule. Per the schedule you are given at the start of the school year, you should have 90 minutes ELA, 90 minutes math, and 90 minutes (social studies/science.) EVERYTHING (and I mean EVERYTHING) should be deducted from those totals. So if you are doing a read-aloud, that get deducted from the 90 minutes ELA time. A 20-minute calendar lesson should be deducted from 90 minute math block.

Start with columns on a scrap sheet of paper and put your total minutes at the top. Then start deducting from that total what you have planned into your day. Notice when I ran out of minutes, I still didn't even do any writing! Another look at this column has me rethinking that morning worksheet!

ELA	Math
90	90
morning worksheet 30	
read aloud 10 min 70	
phonics lesson 10 min 60	
guided reading/ center 30 min 30	
story of the week 30 min 0	

## Cut Out the Extras

Yes, I know groundhogs are cute and there are TONS of fun activities on Pinterest. But I'm pretty sure that after it was covered in Kindergarten, the kids get the point (and we live in the Midwest; there is ALWAYS 6 more weeks of winter.)

Now it's time to sit yourself down and go over the things you have planned for the year and ask these questions:

- What specific standards is this lesson/activity targeting?
- Will the students have covered these or will cover these in other grades?

- What is the current level of mastery of this skill in my CURRENT class? (hint; if over 80% has mastered, put it in small group.)
- What are my TRUE academic goals for this lesson/activity? Does this lesson/activity help my students grow as readers, writers, mathematician, scientists....etc.?

Now what does all this truly mean? I'm sure many of you thinking "Great! We just cut out all the fun." No, just get creative with the lessons/activities that truly support student academic growth. I loved doing art projects with my Kindergarten classrooms but we just didn't have the "extra" time to make those adorable Love Bugs. Instead we tried to find project that tied art with science/social studies. For example, during our animal classification unit, students created an animal from each group using the characteristics they had just learned.

## Make It Simple

How many times do you find yourself wondering why cut and paste activities take double the amount of time you had allotted? AND there are little pieces of paper all over the floor and we've lost 3 glue stick caps. Try some simple modifications to cut down on things like this:

We have all seen the activities where students cut out things at the bottom and match/glue them to the corresponding word above. My quick fix for this would to have students draw simple lines connecting the picture to the word.

## Double- and Triple- Dip!

As many of you know, I am a HUGE proponent of integrating science/social studies into the ELA block. Yes, it's great for student understanding but what I find is the BIGGEST benefit is that this method (interdisciplinary units/planning) is an IMMENSE time-saver. If you are truly looking for "extra time" and you are not using the interdisciplinary units, please shoot me an email. We can find a way to make things work.

In closing, a few honest looks at your schedule/daily planning as well as having critical conversations about this with a trusted colleague can truly help you make the very best use of your instructional time. (And don't get sucked into the Pinterest black hole of guilt...no one's REAL classroom looks like that.)