

Department News

The first and second interdisciplinary units for Kindergarten-Third Grade are now finished. We are continuing to roll out unit as the weeks continue. Please see the Interdisciplinary Unit Clarification for additional information about planning and implementation. A draft of the scope and sequence for all K-3 Interdisciplinary Units is almost finished! It will be shared at each region's PD days or sent out to all K-3 teachers in early November.

Concept Schools Spelling Bee is open to all 3rd grade teachers. The deadline for registration is November 7th. Teachers should begin printing flyers and organizing classroom/school spelling bees. Your school may also wish to organize a club to help support spelling bee winners. For more information, click on the following link:
<http://english.conceptschools.org/concept-spelling-bee/>

Free?!

TPT Freebie: From Hello Literacy! 3 Key Ideas for Parents about the Common Core: A Handout
<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/3-Key-Ideas-for-Parents-about-the-Common-Core-A-Handout-829954>

Discounts for Teachers: This website lists all of the retailers and organizations offering discounts to teachers.
<http://www.passionforsavings.com/discounts-for-teachers/>

Funny!

While looking for unit resources, I ran across this nifty site. Someone made a "Wikihow" and easy put "How to Teach Kindergarten" into just 7 simple steps! Oh what the general public does not know about elementary school teaching... To think, we never needed those degrees when it was all spelled out right on this site. <http://www.wikihow.com/Teach-Kindergarten>

Curriculum Updates



SIS Updates:

Units have changed from "Miscellaneous" to "Interdisciplinary" as a subject; all standards have been loaded under "Interdisciplinary." Teachers can change the subject title of their own units to access the standards in order to be able to attach them.

We are continuing to work on improvements such as a different look to the lesson plan boxes as well as a better way for teachers to collaborate on lesson planning. Thank you for providing feedback to pass along to the ConceptSIS developers

Interdisciplinary Units:

Interdisciplinary Unit 2 for all grade levels is complete. A scope and sequence of topics/content ideas is almost finished and will be presented at the fall professional development sessions.

Elementary Education Website!

We now have a website just for K-3 teachers. I am updating it monthly with curriculum updates, free resource of the month, and professional development news. I am also trying to feature different schools and classrooms throughout our network. Thank you to everyone who sent pictures (I'm trying to put up as many as possible!)

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Pairing Texts: Moving Beyond Fiction and Informational Text

The Common Core State Standards have asked teachers to consciously plan for a more balanced literacy approach. This mean teacher must use equal parts informational text and fiction.

There has been a wide variety of information distributed on what this type of pairing looks like. Many teachers pair a fiction with an information text. Some pair fiction with fiction. Others try to pair a fiction story with a poem. What Common Core has really asked teachers to do is be very intentional when pairing texts. That is, there should be a specific objective for choosing paired texts. For instance, a teacher may introduce an informational text book about pioneer life just before students read Sarah Plain and Tall. They use the information presented in the first text to better understand the characters and setting in the second.

At a recent reading conference I attended, most of the presentation I saw echoed this same approach. However, they extended text pairing further. Two of the presenters talked about pairing informational text with other informational texts. One example given was how teachers should pair biographies. If students are learning about the life of George Washington Carver, a teacher could pair "A Weed is a Flower" and "George Washington Carver: The Peanut Wizard." Each book presents the information about Carver in a different way. Looking at the text structure becomes part of the learning opportunity.

Ideas for Pairing Texts:

- Let students use a nonfiction text to prepare them to read a fiction text, or vice versa.
- Use one text in one reading context and the other in another. For example, read one text aloud and use another during shared reading, or use one text in shared reading and another in small group instruction.
- Use related texts on the same topic to do what we refer to as "reading up." You can literally build a staircase of complexity for readers by giving them easier texts on a topic to read before they read the harder texts.
- Use the pairing to teach comprehension skills such as compare/contrast (two different versions of the same folktale.)
- Pair up a fiction book with a poem or even try to pair information text with a poem. What about song lyrics?
- Pair books by the same author and then ask students to notice things like text structure and features, word choice, etc.
- Pair a text with a movie. After reading the text and viewing the movie, ask students about "author's purpose" or in this case "director's purpose."
- Use website texts to support informational texts