

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### CONNECT TO OUR RESOURCES

Have you check out the Department's web page? There are links to some great thing there as well as a central place to find things like the unit outlines and yearly scope/sequence documents.

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

In addition to the website, you can also periodically check our Google Drive to find things that I have created or are not on the website. Here is the link to the Google Drive for K-2 Resources.

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B6FjXc7-cwyUQ0ZvQUtZMDNvX3M&usp=sharing>

### UPDATE ON RESOURCE RAFFLE

At the beginning of the year at our PD, we talked about a montly raffle for a TPT gift certificate. In order to encourage more of you to submit things you create, I have now decided to offer either a TPT gift certificate or a Target gift card.

Please submit anything original that you have created that goes with our Concept curriculum or can be used in K-2 classrooms. This month's submissions are due by Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Simply send them to me via e-mail and I will add your name to the raffle basket.

### Contact Information:

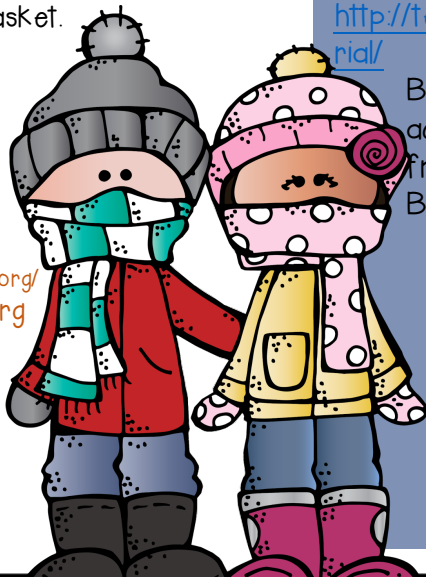
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## FREE?!?!?

### Resources for Read Aloud/Shared Reading

All Kids love to hear stories read aloud to them. Read Alouds are used to boost vocabulary skills, help develop comprehension strategies, and foster a love of reading (crucial for building independent readers!) However, finding resources can be tricky. Here are a few options...

### Epic! Online Books

<https://www.getepic.com/>

Epic! is now one of my favorite sites for teachers. It offers over 10,000 free books for teachers. You simply sign up for an educator account and browse all their books for FREE Tip: Play one of the "Read to Me Audio" books while you prep for the next activity as a huge time saver.

### TumbleBooks

<http://www.tumblebooklibrary.com/>

Although Tumblebooks does require an account, you can sign up for a free 30 day trial. Also, many public libraries offer their patrons access via their library card numbers. See if your personal public library has access or check to see if the local public library near your school can give you an educator account.

### Scholastic BookFlix

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/bookflixfree/rial/>

BookFlix is another site that requires an account but again, many local libraries offer free access with a library card number. BookFlix pairs fiction and non-fiction texts!

### Stoyline Onlines

<http://www.storylineonline.net/>

Who wouldn't love Betty White reading a story out loud?!? There are not many stories on here but the ones they offer are excellent!

## Making the Most of EVERY Moment: Time Saver Tips

By Jennifer Sajovec

Did you know that the average classroom spends about 27% of the day on non-instructional tasks (using the bathroom, lining up, walking from class to class, etc.)? This number has been known to jump as high as 40% for some classrooms where tasks take longer than the norm.

### Set a Baseline

Do you know how long your class currently spends in non-instructional tasks? In order to improve, we must first know where we are struggling. Use your phone and set a stopwatch. Every time your students "transition", hit the start. Hit stop again when students are ready to learn. Keep doing this throughout the day and you will get a baseline of how much time. If you wanted to get VERY specific, stop the clock for each interruption not related to academics (i.e., "She's in my spot.")

Now that you have a baseline, share that with your students. Make it a class challenge to lower that number. Kids will move mountains if they are rewarded. Once your "time wasted" number dips below your set goal, reward them (and yourself!) Sidebar: If you're having trouble identifying areas for improvement, invite a colleague or administrator in to record on-task/off-task observations.

### Timers are Your Best Friends!

Kids are naturally motivated in any countdown rush. Use that to your advantage. Display a timer on your whiteboard/smartboard and set it to a desired goal. Reward students for meeting your goal.

Here is a great set of timers for teachers:

<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/classroom-timers/>

### Establish Routines and Jobs

Who gets the paper and pencil? Is there a quick process to pass out papers and collect papers? Do you have a number order for kids to line up (This. Is. HUGE.)

Having classroom jobs isn't just about developing responsibility in students, it can also be a way to divide and conquer tasks. Also, make little decision such as allowing your paper passer to pass out papers before the end of your lesson so they are at the students seats when they arrive.

### Be Specific in Transition Direction!

Give ALL of your directions ahead of time. Set very clear guidelines. Here's an example:

"In a minute, you are going to return to your seat to begin the math practice activity. You will have 2 minutes to gather your needed items and put your name on your paper. You will need a pencil, scissors and the worksheet. When I say go, move silently to your desk, set out your requested items and write your name on your paper. Remember, you have only two minutes and it must be silent. Ready? Go"

Set a timer for two minutes and then begin the directions right way. Post visuals on the boards for the materials (i.e., picture of pencil, scissors, and worksheet) on the board.

### Use Your (Bathroom) Time Wisely

Do you take your class to the bathroom as a group? Do you often have to wait when taking your students to a specials? Use this time wisely! (Bonus: If you keep kids busy, you will minimize the opportunity for misbehavior!)

Take a book or novel. Read to your students as you wait. Have a set of math flash cards handy.

Students can raise their hand to answer or teach them the simple trick of using fingers to show the answer.

### NEVER Wait!

We are all guilty of the "I'll wait until it's quiet."

Statement. Boy, this can quickly backfire on us. One tip is to give students a set transition time (you have two minutes to get to your seats and get a pencil.

The directions will be begin after the two minutes.")

Now, make sure you actually begin. It will take a few times for students to get used to you starting right away even if they are not ready, but you should keep going.

### Always have a back-up!

Most activities take WAY longer than we plan. However, once in a blue moon, you finish up early. Keep a basket of learning activities ready just in case. These are also great in case you are called away from the room and a sub steps in.

