

DEPARTMENT NEWS

HOUR OF CODE

This a global movement reaching out students around the world for one hour introduction to computer science. Yes, even little ones can learn to code. It's as easy as them dragging and dropping "blocks" and then just test it out. Try it yourself and you'll be hooked!

<https://hourofcode.com/us>

Hour of Code will be held on December 7-13th. There are many prizes are involved for participating schools and teachers, including a free \$10 gift card to either Amazon or iTunes for every educator participating. There will be a brand new tutorial for the 2015 Hour of Code, featuring "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." Students will join Leia to create and share your own game in a galaxy far, far away.

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-cwyUQOZvQUtZMDNvX3M&usp=sharing>

NOVEMBER TPT GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER!
Congratulations to Natalie Jones (Minnesota MSA) who won a TPT gift certificate for her monthly resource submission.

There will be a chance each month for all of you to submit resources for our monthly drawing.

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FREE?!?!?

Listening Centers

Are you looking for resources for a listening center? Try these ideas:

Using QR codes:

Many teachers have already made recordings of many, many popular books. They then generate QR codes to use. Student simply scan the QR code with a QR reader and the device takes them right to the recording. You can find these for free or for a charge on Teachers Pay Teachers. If you are interested, see this free example on TPT:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/QR-Code-Listening-Center-Freebie-2000483>

HMH-Audio Hub:

If you use HMH Journeys at your school, you can find audio versions of the basal textbook stories on Think Central. The are under the Teacher Gateway and Resources. Scroll down until you get here:



Earbuds and MultiJacks

This blogger has an excellent idea about how to get "cheap" earbuds for each student as well as how to get multiple students listening to one story on one device.

<http://www.teachingmadness.com/2015/02/the-perfect-listening-center-with-ipads.html>



Tips for Handling the Holidays (in your classroom)

By Jennifer Sajovec

The holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Years, etc.) are such a special time of year for everyone. It's a time to celebrate and relax with family and friends. However, the holidays are also VERY VERY stressful, even for our young kiddos.

Fear of the Unknown

Imagine you've been doing something the same way every Monday-Friday for the past three months and now it is going to change. Yikes! Yet, this is essentially what will happen during students' Winter Breaks. They've come to school, eaten a good breakfast and lunch, and followed a regular routine. Now for two weeks they may not have that same sense security.

Tip: For students feeling especially anxious, write them several little notes they can take home with them over the holidays. Let them know you will see them when the break is over.

Watch the Countdowns

So many of us are really looking forward to RELAXING over break so we start a countdown. We also plan special things during that last week and break from our norms. This just heightens the anxiety for many students who are already nervous about what to expect over their extended breaks (Thanksgiving, Winter, etc.)

Tip: Try to keep things as consistent as possible. Keep your daily schedule the same and maybe plan just a small celebration at school.

You may also watch for students who are acting out or seeming more reserved than usual. They may need to share out loud their anxiety about the upcoming break.

So What Are You Getting?

I'm sure we are all guilty of talking to kids about what they are going to ask for for the holidays. Every family would love to be able to get their children the special things they ask for but sometimes it's simply not possible. But when a child asks for it over and over again, he/she might assume "Santa" (or someone else) will be able to make good on their request.

Tip: Instead of talking about what students are going to get (or got) ask them about a special memory or simply refrain from talking about gifts.

Respect for All Cultures

The week before Winter Break in many schools is now called "Holidays Around the World" where students learn about December holidays all over the world (Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa, etc.) It is a great way to expose students to traditions in other cultures. However, did you know that Hanukkah is not the holiest of holidays in the Jewish community? Yet, because that's sometimes the only Jewish holidays young kids learn about, they develop a misunderstanding of the religion/culture.

Tip: If you are planning a "Holidays Around the World" celebration, do PLENTY of research on each culture/religion. For instance, you can teach about Hanukkah (since it usually happens in December) but also cover some of the more important Jewish holidays such as Rosh Hashanah.

