DEPARTMENT NEWS

Donorschoose.org

Have you completed your Donor's Choose project yet? Last March, during #bestschool day, we had TONS of projects fully funded by donors in their local areas?

Be ready for the March by posting a project you would like funded. Here's an example of as project posted by one of our own network teachers:

https://www.donorschoose.org/project/technological-world-of-students/2376494/

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/r3egion? My plan is to offer some of those via as webinar. Please see the following offerings. Shortly before the date of the webinar, I will email you a link that directly connects you to our webinar tool, Zoom.

Please make sure you sign up on ConceptSIS under the Staff>Performance Mangament>PD Offerings. Be certain you are choosing the "webinar" option for both of these.

If you have any questions, concerns, needs, etc., please feel free to email me.

Reading and Math Centers 101

https://docs.google.com/a/conceptschools.org/spreadsheets/d/1CA0nseHVwOMU5OUTJfXPeoopL_HpG0RSOgj_FrRx0do/edit?usp=sharing

Using STAR Early Literacy Assessment

https://docs.google.com/a/conceptschools.org/spreadsheets/d/1rIDhltbaJmLqXsRip68tqnw_hWBweXeayK3hUUDmWMw/edit?usp=sharing

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

Tech for Classroom Management

ClassDojo is all the rage in classroom management but did you know there are many more tools out there to help successfully manage the atmosphere in your classroom?

WEBSITES

Bouncy Balls!

www.bouncyballs.org

Are you looking for a way to get your class to stay quiet or keep the noise level down to below jackhammer decibel? You can display this site on your STAR board directly from your computer. This site even allows you to set the sensitivity level so you can allow your students to chatter away but keep them from getting too loud.

Class123

https://class123.ac/home

This site is very similar to Class Dojo but does have a few extra features such as the ability to make a digital class seating chart as well as the option to set a class goal for rewards.

APPS

Pick Me!

http://www.classeapps.com/pick-me

This app allows you to randomly pull a student's name and you can also record if their answer was correct.

Team Shake

https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/team-shake/id390812953?mt=8

Ever spend time trying to put students into groups/teams, etc. and end up missing a few names? This app allows you to put in names and it will generate the lists for you!

Decide Now!

https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/decide-now!/id383718755?mt=8
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ru.kritrus.drumfull&hl=en

It's a free asp that you can use in so many ways. You plug in choices you want, give it a name and presto!, you have an instant spinner!

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Ambiance..is EVERYTHING!

By Jennifer Sajovec

Have you ever walked into a room and just wanted to curl up with a good book? Or been to a party that just seems to invite friendly conversations? Places from restaurants to spas seem to be designed to lure in business and make people really want to be there! Chances are their owners spent a LOT of time thinking about ambiance. You can use some of the same techniques to optimize learning in your classroom!

MUSIC

Relax your Class:

Did you know that lullabies range from about 60-72 beats per minute which is nearing the rate of a mother's heart beat while relaxed? Playing music in this range helps to calm wild and busy students while make them feel comfortable and welcome. Check out the following link which is a compilation of songs that follows the 60 bpm rule.

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLS91u_8OMuXvMh_BMXUKtyLwgLgxud-bn

Music for Transitions:

I'm sure there is that ONE song that all students will stop to sing along to… no. matter. what. Use that to your advantage! Instead of using your voice, set up a playlist that signifies transition times.
http://peppyzestyteacherista.com/2016/03/music-in-classroom-for-quick-transitions.html

Prices of Bluetooth speakers (and their size) have come down tons in recent years. So instead of trying to hook up your phone to your computer which hooks up to your speakers, directly pair your phone to as speaker. Here is a link the the speaker I have and it is awesome!
https://www.amazon.com/Cambridge-SoundWorks-OontZ-Angle-Generation/dp/B010OYASRG/ref=sr_1_3?s=electronics&ie=UTF8&qid=1484166229&sr=1-3&keywords=bluetooth+speaker

Pandora:

Computer algorithms that allow people to find JUST the right type of music for their mood has revolutionized the way we all use music. Many teachers have tapped into these often free resources to make specially tailored "stations" for their classrooms. Here is one teacher who blogged about her use of Pandora:

http://www.hippohoorayforsecondgrade.com/2014/05/pandora-in-classroom.html

LIGHTING

Turn on any bright overhead light and I want to run and hide. I work best with a nice soft lamp or natural light. However, I've worked with colleagues who said they would fall asleep in my work space. Lighting is truly an individual taste. Provide different lighting options in your classroom for different students and different situations.

http://susanfitzell.com/make-classroom-lighting-learner-friendly/
https://www.amazon.com/Cumulus-II-Skypanels-Fluorescent-Diffuser/dp/B000VIJ8X6/ref=pd_sbs_t_3

OTHER

Temperature:

I once went to a PD on succeeding with "angry students" where the presenter said she kept a laundry basket of old sweatshirts in her classroom. The classroom and her students were always cold and, in return, either shut down or acting out.

Keep a thermometer in your classroom. Pay close attention to how your students respond to the different temperatures. Although controlling the temperature in each classroom is a feat nearing impossible, you may be able to make small adjustments for your students. If it's too hot, possibly bring in a box fan; circulating air sometimes just feels cooler.

Smell:

We all love walking into a house smell of fresh baked chocolate chip cookies. The sense of smell is the strongest emotional trigger? When it comes to our classrooms, we want children to connect good smells with positive memories of school and learning, without overdoing it.
http://www.pre-kpages.com/7-ways-to-make-your-classroom-smell-amazing/

Distractions:

I had a colleague whose classroom looked like the construction paper factory exploded and everything landed in her classroom. Way too distracting! We've all heard the "display student work" comments but some have taken it way too far. Yes, you should keep displaying prized student creations but be very thoughtful in the amount and placement in your classroom.

In final closing, fee free to try out anything you think might help make your classroom a welcoming and productive environment. However, one size does not fit all. You will need to adjust to the "feedback" that your students provide. Each student, each class and even each