

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Teacher Institute Wraps Up

All schools are back in session and our K-2 students are ready for learning. As you move into the Concept curriculum (after covering procedures and routines), please know I am available to offer any assistance you may need. We can always “meet” via our online webinar tool.

Here’s a direct link to the presentation:

<http://elementary.conceptschools.org/pd-slideshows/>

Follow Us!

I’ve now created social media accounts for our Primary Elementary Department. Be sure to like us! Then tag all your coworkers so they can find the page and follow us!

For a chance to win the 6 books, go to our Facebook Page (Concept Schools K2) and comment with the secret words. Secret words are embedded on page 2 of this newsletter!



Professional Development Sign-Up

Time to announce our new webinar series! Below is a link to the Fall Webinar Series:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gk4a_RdED2HxaqKFebT1Jn_n3Fn8Y-ZM_nTHhn3EAbk/edit?usp=sharing

For those of you who are new to webinars, you simply sign on on the Google sheets (be sure to check the tabs at the bottom) and there is a link that will log you into our program, Zoon. You’ll need at least a microphone and speakers (camera is not necessary).

You can sign up on my website via Google Sheet (note: be patient as it takes time to fully load).



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

Using Tech for Student Participation

So every teacher knows the strife of asking for students to answer only to be heard with crickets or the hands of the same students over and over. We’d love to have more students participate, but relying on the “caught you” strategy just kills the positive vibes in the classroom. Below are some tech tools you could easily use to increase the amount of student participation in your classroom.

R Randomly

They can then use the Random Name Selector feature to randomly call on a student to answer a question by one of two ways: Truly random, where repeated names are allowed, or a one pass – where all students are called once before they are called again. The device you're using will even call out (vocally) the student's name for you!



Popsicle Sticks

Teacher Picks replaces the mug of popsicle sticks sitting on your desk. Use it to randomly and effectively select and group students and to score responses during discussions.



Stick Pick

Pick a student at random with just a tap, swipe, or a shake -- but that’s just the beginning. Stick Pick suggests question starters for learners at different levels and also records how well students respond during classroom discussions. If a student is consistently scoring near the top or bottom, simply change the level so students aren't bored or frustrated. Depending on students' levels of English proficiency, they might be asked simple yes-or-no questions or to elaborate in longer sentences.



Pick Me!

The Pick Me! app is the perfect tool for teachers searching for a way to track formative assessment. Pick Me! will randomly pull a student's name for you to call on and after they answer the question you record whether or not it was correct using the thumbs up or incorrect using thumbs down. The data is saved and ready to export to your email account at the end of class. With different settings, you can set Pick Me! to remove students that answer questions correctly or leave them in for additional chances. Simply load your roster and you’re ready to go! Pick Me! was developed by teachers for teachers.

Improve Student Engagement

By Jennifer Sajovec

We've all had that "Bueller, Bueller, Bueller" moment when we're teaching and it seems like no one is listening. I love this quote from ASCD: "If classroom instruction is the raw material of education, student engagement is the catalyst that turns instruction into learning." It truly highlights the fact that if students are checked out then your teaching is not effective. Below are some strategies to help keep your students engaged and participating in your instruction!

Wait Time

This one is SIMPLE! Wait out your reluctant students by just increasing wait time. The recommended amount of wait time is between 6-8 seconds (and it will feel like forever). I would simply tap my foot to the lyrics of a slow song to get it just right. Ready for another spin on this technique? Tell students they are not allowed to raise their hands until the wait time is over (give signal). This solves the problem of the students who sit on their laurels once a couple kids raise their hand.

Use the 10:2 Method

For every 10 minutes of instruction, allow the students 2 minutes to process and respond to the instruction. This can be done in various ways by having them write what they have learned, questions they may have, or by discussing the content with a fellow student.

Whiteboards!!!!

I can't say it enough...whiteboards are super awesome for student engagement!

Imagine a classroom where every student has the



Full disclaimer: there will be an adjustment period as students learn the procedures and expectation for using these. When using whiteboards, be very clear on your expectation: they are a privilege and if a student does not show they can handle the privilege, you should be ready to revoke that privilege! Also, give students one minute at the start of using to freely draw! Get it out of their system before the actual work starts! I also gave students an additional minute at the end so if they still had their whiteboard when we were finished with the lesson, they could free draw again!

FREE BOOKS Secret Word: Pencil

Incorporate Movement

I can't tell you the number of times I've observed classrooms only to have students sitting in desks or on the rug for long periods of time. Twenty minutes in one spot is WAY. TOO. MUCH!!!! Truly having students respond to a question by moving to a certain spot in the room, writing on whiteboards, or standing (or sitting) when they are done thinking about the question.

Pick Up the Pace

One misconception is that we must go slow for students to really understand and engage in a lesson. There is a lot of evidence that shows that when teaching is at a brisk instructional pace, students have more opportunities to engage, respond, and move on to the next concept. Tip: pretend you are doing an infomercial. Seriously! You will just feel a difference in the engagement of students!

Random Pick Method

You have all seen teachers pull out their popsicle stick cups and choose a student to call on. It's still very much a tried and true technique. While perhaps not earth-shattering, the Popsicle stick approach to student engagement can provide a more random selection for answers, which means that the consistent



hand-raiser isn't dominating classroom discussion (and evaluation). Have each student write their name on a popsicle stick and place all the sticks in a cup. Ask a question of the class, draw a stick from the cup and have the student whose name is on the stick respond to the question.

I love this Popsicle stick hack (left) that always pops up on Pinterest. Here's a link to how it's done:

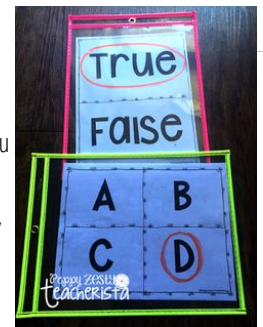
<http://www.fifthinthemiddle.com/2013/06/name-stick-holder.html?m=1>

Secret Answer

I love this activity because it's great for students that might not be as confident in their answers. These students are the ones that if you were doing Stand Up Sit Down or Thumbs Up Thumbs Down as a class, they would be looking around the room to see what other students' answers are before they would answer it themselves. To do the exercise properly, have your students place their hand near their heart (physically) and hold up the appropriate number of fingers depending on what their answer is. This way, especially if all the students are facing the teacher, it is difficult for students to copy their neighbor's answer.

Response Cards

This is another great way to get your students involved during class time. And frankly, sometimes it's nice to just mix things up a bit. You can use Response Cards for any number of responses, including: agree/disagree, true/false, yes/no, greater than/less than, multiple choice, and emotions.



Quick Draw

This activity is great, especially for visual learners or students that aren't quite writing yet. After learning a new concept or topic, have your students draw a picture about what they've just learned. For example, after reading part of the story: Jack and the Bean Stalk, have your students draw what has happened in the story up to that point. Then a student may draw a picture of a boy planting seeds with a bean stalk growing in the background.

Want More Ideas???

This teacher blogger has a four-part blog series on student engagement that has some great ideas.

<http://www.primarily-speaking.com/2016/01/keeping-students-engaged-part-1.html#.WbBT89OGNcA>

Here's another blog post by a primary teacher:

<http://www.notsowimpyteacher.com/2016/09/ways-to-increase-student-engagement.html>