THE EDUCATION FUND
FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ideas with IMPACT

2026
2027

Elementary | Middle | Senior High Projects

IDEA EXPO TEACHER CONFERENCE

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR ALL EDUCATORS

MIAMI LOVES TEACHERS



50+ NEW INSPIRING WORKSHOPS

WITH FLORIDA STANDARDS



THE EDUCATION FUND 40 YEARS

FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

INNOVATION IN ACTION FOR EDUCATION

Our work reaches all 20,000 educators in 470+ schools and makes a difference in the lives of 310,000+ students.

Use the QR code to safely donate online or go to www.educationfund.org/donate

Here's a small taste of our accomplishments:

- ★ $100+ million raised for public schools
- ★ 68% of students increase math knowledge
- ★ 61% of students increase science achievement
- ★ 34% increase in students' college enrollment
- ★ 54% of students improve eating attitudes
- ★ 203,444+ students and teachers recognized for their artwork
- ★ 4.5+ million students and families benefitted from $32.3+ million in free school supplies since Hurricane Andrew
- ★ 3,540+ business professionals recruited to step into the shoes of a teacher for a day

THE EDUCATION FUND 40 YEARS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Table of Contents

STEM/STEAM
Sponsored by Assurant
- Print, Play, and Prototype: Advanced 3-D Printing for STEM
- Lotion Lab: The Chemistry of Hand Cream
- Paper Circuits 101
- Butterflies In The Classroom
- Come Make a Potion Down the Rabbit Hole
- Foamageddon Lab: Elephant Toothpaste
- You Can Do the Cube!
- Student Science Teachers: Learning by Teaching

ROBOTICS
Sponsored by FPL
- Unlock the Competitive Edge with VEXcode VR
- AIM High
- Ready, Set, Build! From Class to Competition
- 3D Adventures: Bringing Ideas to Life

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Sponsored by Lynn & Louis Wolfson II Family Foundation
- Media with Purpose
- Coding for Conservation
- Eco-systems for Native Species

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/RESILIENCY
Sponsored by Suncoast Credit Union
- Pechocho's Pause: 10-Minute Reset
- Nobody Prepared You For This
- Level Up: Attendance & Excellence Rewards

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
- Cracking the Code of Comprehension: Using AI to Teach Text Structure
- The Storyteller's Triad©
- Act It Out! Teaching Grammar with Puppets
- Reading Strategies Across the Curriculum
- Take Note: Mastering the 5 W's and Cornell Notes

HEALTH & WELLBEING
Sponsored by USDA
- Crafting Calm: Aromatherapy Stress Dough
- Beyond the Tray
- Food Forests for Schools Program Kickoff
- Green Schools Blueprint: School-Wide Action
- EnergyCAP: Roadmap to Green School

VISUAL ARTS
Sponsored by Assurant
- Carry On, Creatively
- From Sketch to Sculpture: Papier-Mâché Pets
- Creative Symmetry
- The Mixed Media Artist's Book
- Motion, Marbles & Ink

SOCIAL SCIENCES
Sponsored by Education License Plate
- "Glocal" Storyteller Ambassadors
- History by Design: Constructing a Mongolian Yurt
- The Culture Collection
- String Theory: Kandi, PLUR, & the Art of Co

LEADERSHIP CULTURE
Sponsored by Franklin Covey
- Building Leadership Cultures: The Leader in Me Journey

ESE
- Balloon Powered Learning for ESE

ESOL
- Agency: The Key to ELL Success
- Fantasy Vacation Presentation

TECHNOLOGY
- Differentiation with AI
- Gemini Gems for Educators
- AI for ESE: Empowering Diverse Learners
- Reading Pathways in Google Classroom

HOLOCAUST STUDIES
- Teaching Trunks on the Holocaust
- Resources for Holocaust Education Week

FINANCIAL LITERACY
- Passport to Financial Freedom

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS
- SmartPath to College

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION
- Write, Create, Publish: Children's Books in the Classroom

PODCASTING
Sponsored by Lynn & Louis Wolfson II Family Foundation
- Podcasting for Change

Overall program sponsorship provided by the School District Education Foundation Matching Grants Program and Education Fund License Plate.

A Message from the Superintendent

of Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Rafael A. Villalobos

Miami-Dade County School Board

Mari Tere Rojas, Chair
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September 2, 2026

For more than four decades, The Education Fund has been a valued partner of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), supporting our educators through professional development, networking opportunities, grant funding, and innovative programs that strengthen teaching and learning.

Programs such as Ideas with IMPACT provide teachers with opportunities to bring innovative ideas to life, share effective strategies, and inspire their colleagues. These efforts directly support M-DCPS' commitment to recognizing teacher leadership, encouraging innovation, and providing our educators with the resources they need to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students.

The Education Fund's Idea EXPO is another outstanding example of this commitment. By providing a forum for some of Miami-Dade County's most innovative educators to showcase their creativity and best practices, the conference fosters collaboration and celebrates the exceptional work taking place in classrooms throughout our District. I commend The Education Fund for creating this important opportunity for educators to learn from one another and share engaging, student-centered practices.

Through Ideas with IMPACT, The Education Fund continues to expand access to innovative and cost-effective teaching strategies through classroom grants, professional learning opportunities, discussion series, webinars led by M-DCPS educators, and the Idea EXPO Teacher Conference. I commend the dedicated educators who contribute their time, expertise, and passion to this initiative and encourage our teachers to take advantage of these valuable resources.

We are also proud of the Miami Loves Teachers partnership among M-DCPS, The Education Fund, the College Football Playoff Foundation, and the Orange Bowl Host Committee. This collaborative effort reflects our shared commitment to motivating, supporting, and retaining exceptional educators while ensuring that our teachers feel valued for the important work they do each day.

As Superintendent, I look forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership with The Education Fund and to supporting initiatives that empower our educators and ultimately enhance opportunities and outcomes for every student we serve.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our teachers, our students, our schools, and our community.

Sincerely,

Rafael A. Villalobos
Superintendent of Schools
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



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100% of the funds will be used for teacher compensation and school security

All Miami-Dade County Public and Charter Schools will have police presence.

Over 300,000 Public & Charter School students will benefit from this initiative.

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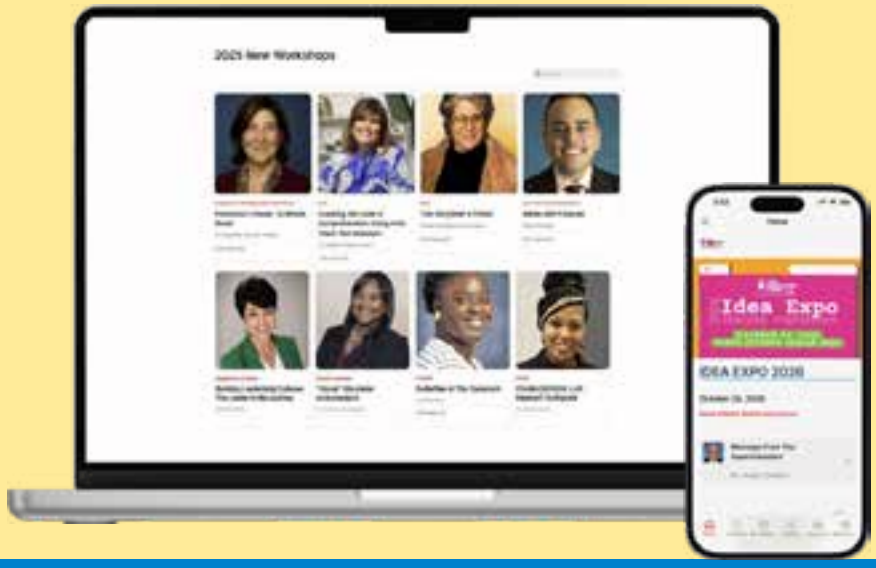
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THE EDUCATION FUND
FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2026 Idea EXPO
TEACHER CONFERENCE

GET THE APP FOR A CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES!

Earn Impact Points for Extra Prize Entries!



HOW TO ACCESS THE IDEA EXPO 2026 APP

1. Scan the QR code with your phone's camera. The app will open in your web browser. Or, type the link into your browser.

🍏 iPhone

Tap the Up Arrow

🤖 Android

Tap the 3 dots in the top corner.

2. Sign in
- Enter your email address.
- Check your email for a security code and follow the instructions.

3.Browse & select workshop
- View all available workshops.
- **Pick only ONE workshop per session.**

4.Register & pay - Regular Price Just $14.99 if registered by Sept. 18 (includes hot breakfast and lunch!) Add Promo Code EARLY26 at checkout.

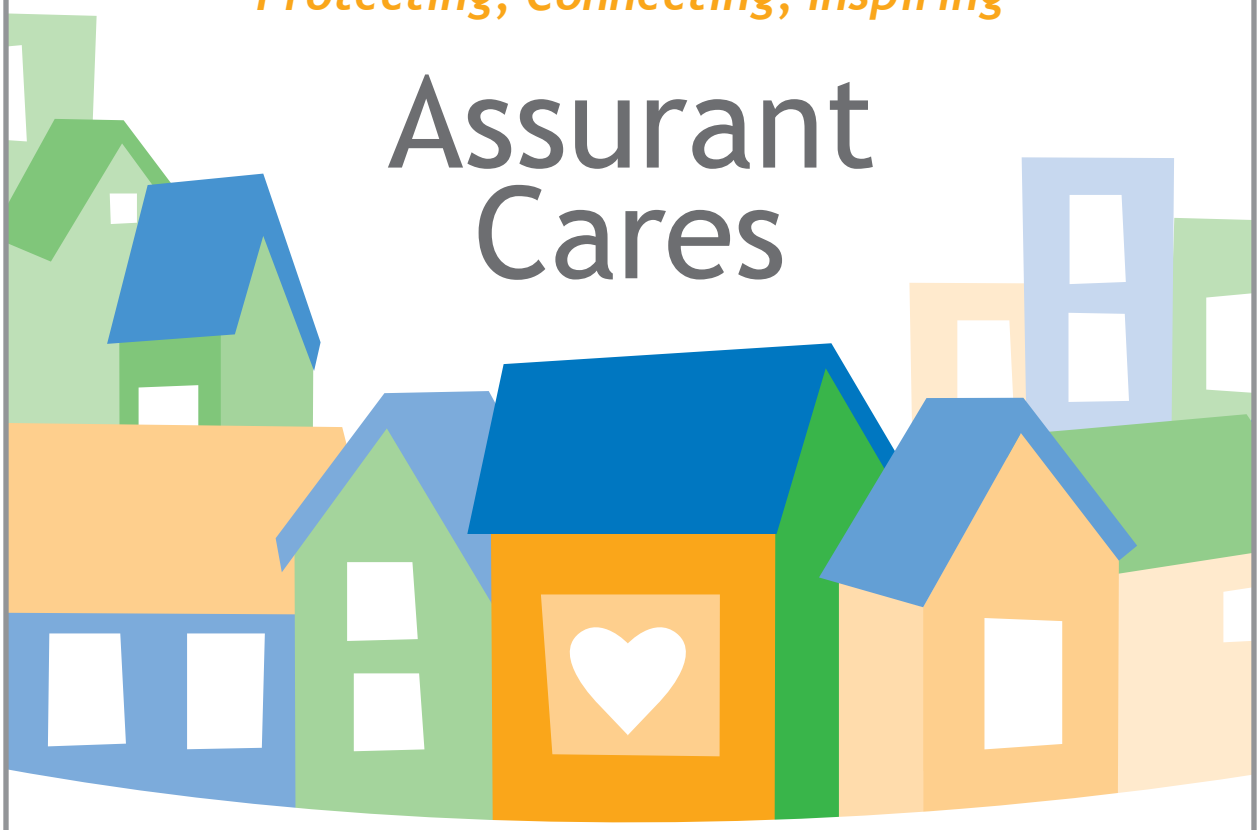
- Tap Register to finish and submit payment.

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD APP

email Audrey@EducationFund.org for more info

Protecting, Connecting, Inspiring

Assurant Cares



The Assurant Foundation is proud to support public education in Miami-Dade County. We believe in teachers and that's why we work with **The Education Fund**. Through our partnership, we know that teachers will get the resources and professional development opportunities that are so valuable. Thanks for all that you do to build brighter futures.

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PRINT, PLAY, AND PROTOTYPE: ADVANCED 3D PRINTING FOR STEM

Create and use classroom-ready 3-D models that turn STEM lessons into authentic investigations.

Subject Area: STEAM

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This workshop transforms 3-D printing from a novelty into a powerful instructional tool that supports both teacher-created resources and student-driven innovation. Participants will learn how to design and print affordable classroom manipulatives, models, and lab equipment that make abstract STEM concepts easier to visualize while reducing instructional costs. The workshop then shifts to the student experience, demonstrating how to use 3-D printing to facilitate design thinking, engineering, and problem-based learning. Teachers will explore strategies for guiding students through the process of designing, testing, refining, and printing solutions to authentic scientific and engineering challenges. By combining practical classroom applications with student-centered design, this approach strengthens spatial reasoning, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving while increasing student ownership and engagement. Participants will leave with ready-to-use ideas for integrating 3-D printing into STEM instruction in ways that are innovative, cost-effective, and immediately applicable.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Scientific Investigation: Use 3-D printed anatomical, geological, and engineering models to explore concepts that are difficult to observe in real life.
- Comparative Analysis: Measure and compare anatomical models, fracture patterns, and tectonic plate movements to draw evidence-based scientific conclusions.
- Engineering Design: Design, print, test, and improve original 3-D solutions to authentic scientific and engineering challenges.
- Biomimicry: Create structures inspired by nature that maximize strength while minimizing material use.
- Environmental Engineering: Design and evaluate 3-D printed water filtration systems by testing how different structures affect water flow.
- Astronomical Modeling: Build and investigate 3-D topographical models to understand how surface features, light, and shadows influence astronomical observations.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Instructional Integration: Learn how to use 3-D printing to teach STEM concepts through hands-on investigations rather than technology demonstrations.
- Digital Design Resources: Discover how to locate, customize, and prepare high-quality 3-D models for classroom instruction using beginner-friendly design tools.
- Engineering Design Process: Explore strategies for guiding students through testing, troubleshooting, and redesign while using failed prints as valuable learning opportunities.
- Hands-On STEM Investigations: Experience classroom activities that use 3-D printed models to collect data, solve problems, and explore scientific concepts.
- Quantitative Analysis: Learn how to design investigations that incorporate measurement, data collection, and evidence-based analysis using 3-D printed models.
- Cost-Effective Prototyping: Implement simple prototyping techniques that help students refine designs before printing, reducing material waste while strengthening design-thinking skills.

STANDARDS

SC.912.L.15.1 - Explain how the scientific theory of evolution is supported by the fossil record, comparative anatomy, comparative embryology, biogeography, molecular biology, and observed evolutionary change.
SC.912.P.12.9 - Analyze the combined effect of forces on an object.
SC.68.CS-CS.1.3 - Describe how models represent a real-life system.
SC.912.N.3.5 - Describe the function of models in science, and identify the wide range of models used in science.
ETE.6.01 - Apply the principles of engineering design in the creation and evaluation of a prototype.

MATERIALS

- 3-D printer
- 3-D printer filament
- Access to a computer with free 3-D software (Tinkercad)



LOTION LAB: THE CHEMISTRY OF HAND CREAM

Students create handmade lotion while applying chemistry concepts such as emulsification, stoichiometry, percent composition, and product formulation.

Subject Area: STEAM

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Help students connect abstract chemistry concepts to a real-world product they use every day: lotion. Through hands-on laboratory experiences, students formulate, test, and analyze their own handmade hand cream while exploring the chemistry, marketing, and product design behind consumer goods. Students follow a multi-step process to combine polar and nonpolar ingredients, calculate raw ingredient ratios, and determine percent compositions, reinforcing stoichiometry and applied mathematics. They also investigate how ingredient choices affect physical properties such as texture, hardness, stability, and performance. Using an "omission strategy," students leave out key ingredients to observe what happens when an emulsifier or other component is missing, giving them immediate visual evidence of each molecule's role. By the end of the project, students take home their own lotion and gain a stronger understanding of chemistry, entrepreneurship, and real-world product development.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Omission Strategy: How to make multiple lotion batches while intentionally leaving out key ingredients to observe how each component affects the final product.
- Emulsification: How oil and water separate when an emulsifier is missing, providing visual evidence that polar and nonpolar molecules do not mix on their own.
- Chemical Reactions: How to create a custom emulsifier by measuring stearic acid and using mole calculations to determine the exact amount of triethanolamine needed for a 1:1 reaction.
- Molecular Changes: How an acid-base neutralization reaction changes molecular interactions and helps turn separate phases into a uniform surfactant.
- Percent Yield: How to weigh the finished product, compare it to starting masses, and calculate percent yield.
- Troubleshooting: How to use experimental data to evaluate results, identify problems, and redesign a better lotion formula.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Omission Strategy: How to design labs where students intentionally leave out key ingredients to visually observe what happens when a molecule is missing from a formula.
- Practical Math: How to embed scaling factors, stoichiometry, mass ratios, and pre-lab calculations so students use math as a necessary tool for successful product creation.
- Student Ownership: How allowing students to keep their finished, labeled lotion increases engagement, pride, and positive attitudes toward chemistry.
- Testing Stations: How to set up classroom testing loops, such as spreadability and texture stations, that help students turn a physical product into graphable data.
- Engineering Design: How to move students beyond basic recipe-following by using troubleshooting, percent-yield calculations, and test results to redesign stronger formulas.
- Hands-On Implementation: How to model complete and incomplete lotion batches, guide pre-lab calculations, facilitate stress-test stations, and lead participants through making their own lotion to take home.

STANDARDS

SC.912.P.8.9 - Apply the mole concept and the law of conservation of mass to calculate quantities of chemicals participating in reactions.

SC.912.P.8.6 - Distinguish between bonding forces holding compounds together and other attractive forces, including hydrogen bonding and van der Waals forces.

SC.912.N.1.1 - Define a problem based on a specific body of knowledge, for example: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth/space science.

MA.912.DP.1.1 - Given a set of data, select an appropriate method to represent the data, depending on whether it is numerical or categorical data and on whether it is univariate or bivariate.

MA.912.DP.1.2 - Interpret data distributions represented in various ways. State whether the data is numerical or categorical, whether it is univariate or bivariate and interpret the different components and quantities in the display.

MATERIALS

- Water
- Mineral Oil
- Wax
- Stearic Acid
- Emulsifier
- Beakers
- Stir Sticks
- pH Paper
- Hot Plates or Water Bath
- Syringes



PAPER CIRCUITS 101

Light up learning through creative paper circuit projects that make electricity easy to see, test, and understand

Subject Area: STEAM

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This hands-on workshop helps educators bring electricity concepts to life through the use of low-cost paper circuits. Participants will build and test series and parallel circuits while exploring current flow, brightness, reliability, and energy transfer in an engaging, inquiry-based environment. Through experimentation and troubleshooting, teachers will develop a deeper understanding of how circuits work and how to help students visualize abstract electrical concepts. The workshop demonstrates how paper circuits can serve as a foundation for creative projects such as light-up greeting cards, interactive displays, and student-designed models that blend science, engineering, and art. Participants will also explore extensions using switches, multiple LEDs, and small motors to introduce engineering design challenges and real-world applications. Educators will leave with ready-to-use lessons, practical classroom strategies, and engaging activities that make electricity accessible, meaningful, and memorable for students.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Engineering Design: Design, build, and refine working circuits through hands-on experimentation and problem-solving.
- Troubleshooting: Identify and correct circuit failures while developing persistence, critical thinking, and debugging skills.
- Energy Transfer: Explore how electrical energy moves through circuits and powers lights, switches, motors, and other components.
- Scientific Inquiry: Make predictions, test ideas, collect observations, and draw conclusions based on circuit performance.
- Creative Expression: Apply circuit knowledge to create light-up greeting cards, interactive displays, and other artistic projects.
- Problem Solving: Analyze challenges, evaluate solutions, and improve designs through iterative testing and refinement.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Circuit Instruction: Learn how to teach series and parallel circuits through hands-on paper circuit activities that make electricity concepts accessible and engaging.
- Conceptual Understanding: Explore strategies for making abstract concepts such as current flow, energy transfer, and circuit behavior visible and concrete for students.
- Engineering Design: Discover ways to scaffold learning from simple circuit construction to more advanced engineering challenges involving switches, LEDs, motors, and interactive designs.
- Inquiry-Based Learning: Utilize questioning, experimentation, and observation techniques that encourage students to investigate, test, and explain circuit behavior.
- Troubleshooting Strategies: Learn methods for helping students identify problems, revise designs, and develop perseverance through productive struggle.
- STEM Integration: Connect science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.

STANDARDS

SC.5.P.11.1 – Investigate and illustrate the fact that the flow of electricity requires a closed circuit (a complete loop).
SC.5.P.10.4 – Investigate and explain that electrical energy can be transformed into heat, light, sound, and motion.
SC.4.P.10.2 – Investigate and describe how electrical energy moves through a complete circuit and can be transformed into other forms of energy.
SC.3.P.11.1 – Investigate and identify materials that conduct electricity and materials that do not conduct electricity.
SC.912.N.1.1 – Define a problem and conduct scientific investigations by collecting data, using evidence, and communicating results.

MATERIALS

•Copper tape (conductive adhesive tape)
- Coin cell batteries (CR2032)
- LEDs (various colors)
- Cardstock or heavy paper
- Clear tape or glue
- Small hobby motors (optional extension)
- Paper clips or binder clips (for switches)
- Markers, scissors, and craft supplies



BUTTERFLIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Give students a front-row seat to one of nature's greatest transformations while bringing science, literacy, and conservation to life.

Subject Area: STEAM

Grade Level: K-5

Description:

Turn your classroom into a butterfly habitat and give students a front-row seat to one of nature's most remarkable transformations. In this engaging, hands-on project, students observe monarch caterpillars as they grow, form chrysalises, and emerge as butterflies while exploring life cycles, pollination, native plants, and conservation. Along the way, they connect science, reading, art, and environmental stewardship through authentic observation and inquiry. Perfect for grades 2–5, this project sparks curiosity, encourages responsibility, and helps students understand the critical role pollinators play in supporting ecosystems and agriculture. Teachers will leave with a simple, affordable way to create unforgettable learning experiences that bring science standards to life and inspire students to become advocates for the natural world.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Life Cycles: Observe and document the complete monarch butterfly life cycle, from egg to caterpillar, chrysalis, and adult butterfly.
- Scientific Observation: Record daily journal entries to track changes in monarch caterpillars, butterflies, and milkweed plants.
- Pollinator Ecology: Explore the role of monarch butterflies and other pollinators in supporting ecosystems, agriculture, and food production.
- Plant and Animal Interactions: Investigate the relationship between monarch butterflies and milkweed, including habitat needs and survival requirements.
- Environmental Stewardship: Develop an understanding of conservation practices and the importance of protecting native species and habitats.
- Data Collection: Gather, record, and analyze observations to identify patterns and changes throughout the life cycle process.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Classroom Habitat Management: Learn how to establish and maintain a safe monarch butterfly habitat, including caring for caterpillars, supporting healthy milkweed growth, and observing each stage of metamorphosis.
- Cross-Curricular Integration: Discover ways to connect butterfly studies to science, reading, writing, art, and environmental education through authentic learning experiences.
- Hands-On STEAM Learning: Explore interactive activities that engage students in observation, measurement, journaling, data collection, and scientific inquiry.
- Pollinator and Conservation Education: Gain strategies for teaching the importance of pollinators, native plants, biodiversity, and environmental stewardship.
- Scientific Observation and Documentation: Learn how to guide students in recording observations, tracking growth and change, and drawing evidence-based conclusions.
- Student Engagement: Utilize real-world experiences that spark curiosity, foster responsibility, and create meaningful connections to science concepts.

STANDARDS

LAFS.2.SL.1.1 / LAFS.3.SL.1.1 – Participate in collaborative conversations.
MAFS.2.MD.1.1 / MAFS.3.MD.1.1 – Measure and estimate lengths using standard units.
MAFS.3.MD.3.5 / MAFS.4.MD.3.4 – Represent and interpret data using graphs.
VA.2.C.1.1 / VA.3.C.1.1 – Explore and express ideas through the arts.
VA.4.C.2.2 / VA.5.C.2.2 – Use visual arts to communicate understanding of concepts.

MATERIALS

- Milkweed Plants with Monarch Caterpillars
- Monarch Butterfly Habitat Enclosure
- Composition Notebooks
- Permanent Markers
- Magnifying Glasses
- White Poster Boards
- Digital Camera or Tablet for Documentation and Photography

ASSURANT®



COME MAKE A POTION DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

Design your own magical scent enveloped in a whimsical world of a limitless possibilities.

Subject Area: STEAM

Grade Level: PreK-8

Description:

Invite students into a whimsical, Alice in Wonderland-inspired garden tea party where they become “Little Scent Alchemists” and explore literature through hands-on fragrance design. Guided by magical storytelling, students connect characters, setting, and imagination to the creative process of making a personalized perfume. Using safe, kid-friendly fragrance oils or essential oils, students select from floral, fruity, fresh, and sweet scents such as rose, lavender, orange, strawberry, mint, green tea, vanilla, and cotton candy. They learn how to blend two to three scents, choose a roll-on or spray bottle, decorate their container, and name their one-of-a-kind perfume using inspiration from Alice in Wonderland characters and themes. Teachers learn how to combine sensory engagement, literacy, science, measurement, and creative expression into a safe, classroom-ready activity.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Sensory Exploration: How to use their five senses to explore a fairytale-inspired learning experience.
- Literature Connection: How Alice in Wonderland can inspire imagination, setting, and creative design.
- Natural Materials: How plants, flowers, herbs, and oils produce different colors, textures, and fragrances.
- Fragrance Discovery: How natural scents are released from a variety of botanical materials.
- Creative Inspiration: How to use sensory observations from nature and literature to design a personalized fragrance.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Sensory Literacy: Learn how to use fragrance design and storytelling to deepen students' understanding of characters, setting, and theme.
- Fragrance Blending: Explore safe techniques for guiding students in selecting and blending kid-friendly fragrance or essential oils to create personalized perfumes.
- Cross-Curricular Integration: Connect literature, science, mathematics, and creative expression through a hands-on, standards-aligned project.
- Classroom Implementation: Discover strategies for organizing a themed "Little Scent Alchemists" experience, including materials, safety considerations, and student-friendly procedures.
- Creative Expression: Guide students in designing, decorating, and naming original fragrances inspired by literary characters while encouraging imagination and student voice.

STANDARDS

VA.912.S.3.8- Develop color-mixing skills and techniques through application of the principles of heat properties and color and light theory.
SC.K.N.1.1- Collaborate with a partner to collect information.
SC.K.N.1.2-Make observations of the natural world and know that they are descriptors collected using the five senses.
VA.2.F.1 : Creating, interpreting, and responding in the arts stimulate the imagination and encourage innovation and creative risk-taking.
MA.K12.MTR.7-Apply mathematics to real-world contexts.
MA.K12.MTR.5-Use patterns and structure to help understand and connect mathematical concepts.

MATERIALS

- A variety of flowers and herbs
- Alice in Wonderland books
- Various fruits
- Small jars
- Empty perfume bottles
- Hypoallergenic Jojoba oil
- Essential Oils
- Funnels
- Scissors
- Paper towels
- Labels or Stickers
- Droppers
- Coffee beans

ASSURANT®



FOAMAGEDDON LAB: ELEPHANT TOOTHPASTE

Chemistry explodes into learning in the ultimate Elephant Toothpaste STEM lab.

Subject Area: STEM

Grade Level: 6-8

Description:

Foamageddon Lab transforms the popular Elephant Toothpaste demonstration into a rigorous, standards-based STEM investigation. Students explore chemical reactions, catalysts, reaction rate, and exothermic energy while designing experiments, collecting quantitative data, analyzing variables, and defending conclusions using Claim-Evidence-Reasoning. The project connects chemistry, physics, mathematics, and engineering design in one high-engagement lab experience that moves beyond a simple “wow” moment. Students strengthen critical thinking, scientific reasoning, data analysis, variable control, and evidence-based writing as they measure results and explain patterns. They also examine how changes in materials, amounts, or conditions affect the speed and intensity of a reaction. The lab supports curiosity, excitement, collaboration, and ownership of learning as students test, troubleshoot, and improve their experiment. Teachers learn how to turn a memorable science demonstration into a structured, district-aligned investigation that strengthens scientific literacy and cognitive growth.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Reaction Rate: How increasing yeast as a catalyst affects the speed of the Elephant Toothpaste reaction.
- Measurement: How to measure foam height in centimeters and calculate reaction rate using height divided by time.
- Temperature Change: How to record temperature changes to determine whether the reaction is exothermic.
- Variables: How to identify independent, dependent, and constant variables in a controlled investigation.
- Data Analysis: How to compare proportional and non-proportional relationships, graph multiple trials, and interpret trends.
- Scientific Reasoning: How to use CER writing to explain whether the reaction is chemical or physical.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Inquiry Labs: How to transform a simple science demonstration into a standards-based investigation that requires students to test, measure, analyze, and explain results.
- Engineering Design: How to structure hands-on labs using the Engineering Design Process, including testing, troubleshooting, redesign, and safe improvement of outcomes.
- Math Integration: How to embed rates, ratios, measurements, and graphing into science investigations in meaningful ways.
- CER Writing: How to teach Claim-Evidence-Reasoning using authentic lab data generated by students.
- Assessment: How to measure student learning through data tables, analysis, graph interpretation, and written scientific justification.

STANDARDS

SC.8.N.1.1 – Define a problem from the eighth-grade curriculum. Use appropriate reference materials to support scientific understanding.
SC.8.P.9.2 – Differentiate between physical changes and chemical changes.
SC.7.P.11.2 – Investigate and describe the transformation of energy. Recognize that energy can change forms within a system.
MA.6.AR.1.1 – Apply ratio reasoning to solve real-world problems.
MA.8.AR.2.1 – Graph proportional relationships and interpret the unit rate as slope.

MATERIALS

- Hydrogen peroxide (3% classroom safe)
- Active dry yeast
- Dish soap
- Plastic bottles or graduated cylinders
- Thermometers
- Measuring spoons and graduated cylinders
- Rulers (for foam height measurement)
- Data recording sheets
- Safety goggles and gloves
- Chart paper or digital graphing tool



YOU CAN DO THE CUBE!

Students strengthen algorithmic thinking, spatial reasoning, logical thinking, and problem-solving through the Rubik's Cube.

Subject Area: STEM

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Discover how the Rubik's Cube can become a powerful tool for building mathematical thinking, perseverance, and student confidence. In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn a step-by-step approach for teaching students to solve the cube while developing algorithmic thinking, spatial reasoning, pattern recognition, and logical problem-solving skills. More than a puzzle, the Rubik's Cube provides an authentic opportunity for students to practice persistence, overcome frustration, and celebrate incremental progress. As students master new strategies, they naturally become peer coaches, creating a collaborative classroom culture that values resilience and shared success. No prior experience is required—participants will learn to solve the cube themselves while receiving ready-to-use instructional guides and classroom implementation strategies. This engaging, low-cost project can be adapted for mathematics classrooms, STEM clubs, enrichment programs, or after-school activities, giving teachers the confidence to help students turn challenging problems into meaningful accomplishments.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Cube Structure and Notation: Identify centers, edges, and corners while learning standard move notation such as U, R, and F.
• Spatial Reasoning: Translate two-dimensional written directions into precise three-dimensional movements of the cube.
• Algorithmic Thinking: Follow and apply multi-step algorithms to solve the first two layers and complete the cube.
• Pattern Recognition: Recognize recurring cube configurations and match them with the appropriate solving sequence.
• Debugging and Persistence: Trace mistakes to specific steps, restart when necessary, and use errors to improve accuracy.
• Memorization and Fluency: Practice final algorithms until movements become more efficient, accurate, and automatic.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Rubik's Cube Fundamentals: Learn the official Rubik's Cube terminology, notation, and algorithms, and explore strategies for making complex instructions accessible to students.
• Instructional Scaffolding: Use a student-friendly slide deck to break the solving process into manageable, engaging lessons that build confidence over time.
• Troubleshooting Student Challenges: Solve the cube firsthand while identifying common mistakes, misconceptions, and strategies for guiding students through frustration and persistence.
• Classroom Implementation: Plan project pacing, lesson timing, and low-cost material acquisition to successfully integrate a 2–5 day Rubik's Cube project into existing instruction.
• Peer Coaching: Build a classroom culture where students who master the cube become peer mentors, fostering collaboration, leadership, and shared success.

STANDARDS

MA.K12.MTR.1.1 - Actively participate in effortful learning both individually and collectively.
MA.K12.MTR.3.1 - Complete tasks with mathematical fluency.
MA.K12.MTR.5.1 - Use patterns and structure to help understand and connect mathematical concepts.
MA.912.AR.1.1 - Identify and interpret parts of an equation or expression.
MA.912.F.1.1 - Given a relation, determine whether it is a function or not.

MATERIALS

• Class set of Rubik’s Cubes, based on class size

• Standard cubes or speed cubes

• School computers, tablets, or student devices for accessing the digital solution guide



STUDENT SCIENCE TEACHERS: LEARNING BY TEACHING

Students deepen their science knowledge by creating engaging learning resources for younger students.

Subject Area: STEM

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

In this authentic project-based learning experience, high school biology students deepen their understanding of complex concepts by creating standards-aligned instructional workbooks for middle school learners. Using structured templates and rubrics, students research, synthesize, and simplify biology content while developing chapters, illustrations, activities, glossaries, and bibliographies. Explaining concepts to a younger audience strengthens content mastery, scientific literacy, communication, and critical-thinking skills. The interdisciplinary process integrates biology, reading, writing, creativity, and design while encouraging student choice and ownership. The final product is a professionally bound workbook that provides a meaningful audience and a tangible demonstration of growth. Participants receive a classroom-ready framework with templates, timelines, rubrics, and assessment tools, making the project easy to replicate and increasing engagement and retention. This project is especially valuable for teachers at merged schools, as it creates meaningful opportunities for high school students to mentor and support younger learners.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Prior Knowledge and Misconceptions: Identify what they already understand about a biology topic and recognize areas that need clarification.
- Scientific Research: Use textbooks, class notes, and credible websites to gather information, evaluate sources, and cite evidence accurately.
- Lesson Design: Organize complex biology content into clear, teachable sections written for a middle school audience.
- Scientific Visuals: Create diagrams, labeled illustrations, and digital graphics that explain concepts such as cell structure, DNA, and food webs.
- Interactive Learning Activities: Design quizzes, crosswords, labeling exercises, and mini-labs that reinforce biological concepts.
- Academic Vocabulary: Build an A–Z glossary of key biology terms using accurate, student-friendly definitions.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Project Launch: Learn how to introduce a compelling driving question that positions students as creators and teachers of biology content.
- Project Scaffolding: Use a structured rubric to guide students through developing chapters, lessons, activities, glossaries, and other project components.
- Research and Content Development: Explore strategies for activating prior knowledge, conducting credible research, and translating complex biology concepts into age-appropriate explanations.
- Instructional Design: Create engaging lesson pages, interactive activities, diagrams, mini-labs, and visuals that deepen student understanding.
- Classroom Implementation: Leave with ready-to-use templates, timelines, differentiation strategies, and assessment tools to successfully implement and replicate the project.

STANDARDS

SC.912.L.14.1 – Describe the scientific theory of cells (cell theory) and relate the history of its discovery to the process of science.
SC.912.N.1.1 – Define a problem based on a specific body of knowledge and design an experiment to address it. Collect, analyze, and interpret data to make valid conclusions.
SC.912.L.17.5 – Analyze how population size is determined by births, deaths, immigration, and emigration.
ELA.912.C.1.4 – Write expository texts to explain and analyze information.
ELA.912.V.1.3 – Apply knowledge of word relationships, roots, and affixes to determine meanings of unknown words.

MATERIALS

- Project rubric and grading guidelines (student-friendly version)
- Table of contents and workbook template (print or digital)
- Sample student workbook/model examples
- Biology textbooks and curriculum resources
- Access to credible online research
- Computers or tablets for writing, research, and design
- Google Docs, Microsoft Word, or Canva for workbook creation
- Graphic/diagram tools (digital or hand-drawn materials)
- Paper (standard and optional color paper for covers)
- Printer (black-and-white or color)

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UNLOCK THE COMPETITIVE EDGE WITH VEXCODE VR

Prepare students for VEXcode VR competition through coding, strategy, and effective coaching.

Subject Area: Robotics

Grade Level: K-8

Description:

This session prepares teachers to successfully coach students for the M-DCPS VEXcode VR Competition. Participants will learn the essential coding skills, navigation techniques, and programming logic needed to guide students through virtual robotics challenges while gaining a thorough understanding of competition rules, scoring criteria, deadlines, and event expectations. The workshop also shares proven coaching strategies that help students maximize points, improve coding efficiency, debug programs, and compete with confidence. Because VEXcode VR requires no physical robotics equipment, teachers can easily implement competition practice in any classroom while building students' computational thinking and problem-solving skills. Participants will leave with competition-ready resources, coaching strategies, and practical tools to prepare high-performing teams and help students succeed in one of M-DCPS's premier coding competitions.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Robot Navigation: Program a virtual robot to move through mazes and playgrounds using precise movement commands and sequencing.
- Coding Challenges: Complete progressively more difficult missions that require collecting objects, avoiding obstacles, and reaching designated targets.
- Competition Simulation: Test coding strategies through timed challenges modeled after VEX robotics competitions to maximize efficiency and scores.
- Debugging: Analyze, troubleshoot, and refine code to improve robot performance and complete challenges more effectively.
- Code Optimization: Compare multiple programming solutions to determine the most efficient approach for completing a task.
- Strategy and Collaboration: Work with teammates to discuss coding approaches, evaluate results, and improve solutions through peer feedback.

TEACHERS LEARN

- VEXcode VR Fundamentals: Learn how to navigate the VEXcode VR platform, create programs, and use virtual playgrounds to teach coding concepts.
- Coding Instruction: Explore strategies for teaching sequencing, loops, conditionals, and problem-solving through engaging robotics challenges.
- Competition Preparation: Gain a clear understanding of competition rules, scoring, and strategies that help students maximize points and perform successfully.
- Classroom Implementation: Experience ready-to-use lessons featuring maze navigation, object collection, code optimization, and other VEXcode VR activities.
- Coaching and Debugging: Learn effective techniques for guiding students through debugging, collaboration, and performance improvement before and during competition.

STANDARDS

SC.6.PE.1 : Develop code segments to solve a problem
SC.6.CC.1 : Apply effective communication digitally
SC.6.PE.3 : Relate problem-solving strategies to computational thinking
SC.6.ET.1 : Identify emerging technologies
SC.6.ET.3 : Identify characteristics of robotics.

MATERIALS

- Computer with internet access



AIM HIGH

Aim High by building computational thinking through hands-on robotics and AI.

Subject Area: Robotics

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Introduce students to robotics, artificial intelligence, and computer science through an engaging, hands-on VEX AIM experience. In this workshop, participants will explore how students develop computational thinking and problem-solving skills by programming robots to navigate, respond, and complete autonomous challenges. Using a scaffolded approach, students begin with intuitive block-based coding before progressing to text-based programming, building confidence while developing essential coding skills. The workshop also demonstrates how AI vision sensors can recognize objects and AprilTags, allowing students to apply programming concepts to authentic, real-world scenarios. Through iterative design, testing, and refinement, students learn to think like engineers while developing perseverance, creativity, and collaboration. Participants will leave with practical strategies, classroom-ready activities, and a flexible instructional framework that makes robotics and AI accessible to learners at multiple skill levels while preparing students for future STEM and technology careers.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Autonomous Robotics: Program robots to navigate obstacle courses using sequencing, spatial reasoning, and autonomous movement.
- AI Vision: Code robots to recognize, track, and respond to objects and AprilTags using AI vision sensors.
- Programming Logic: Apply conditional statements and algorithms to solve sorting, navigation, and decision-making challenges.
- Block-to-Text Coding: Transition from block-based programming to Python while building confidence with professional coding concepts.
- Computational Thinking: Break complex problems into logical steps, test solutions, and refine programs through debugging and iteration.
- Engineering Design: Design, test, and improve robotic solutions through hands-on experimentation and problem solving.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Scaffolded Programming: Learn strategies for guiding students from block-based coding to Python while building confidence and conceptual understanding.
- AI Vision Integration: Explore how to teach object recognition and computer vision using AI sensors, AprilTags, and color-based programming challenges.
- Computational Thinking: Discover instructional strategies that connect coding concepts to robotics, spatial reasoning, and real-world problem solving.
- Debugging and Iteration: Facilitate collaborative troubleshooting and help students view coding errors as opportunities for learning and improvement.
- Robotics Classroom Management: Implement best practices for organizing, managing, and assessing engaging, inquiry-based robotics activities and team challenges.

STANDARDS

SC.5.PE.1.2 - Create a program in a graphical environment.

SC.5.PE.1.3 - Create a program using arithmetic operators, conditionals and repetition in programs.

SC.5.PE.1.4 - Detect and correct program errors.

MA.5.AR.1.1 - Solve multi-step real-world problems involving any combination of the four operations with whole numbers.

SC.5.CO.2.1 - Identify hardware components in the computation cycle as input, processing, output and storage.

MATERIALS

- VEX AIM Kit
- VEX AIM Field
- VEX AIM Software
- Engineering notebooks
- Compactible device



READY, SET, BUILD! FROM CLASS TO COMPETITION

Challenge students to design, build, test, and compete through hands-on engineering experiences.

Subject Area: Robotics

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Ready, Set, Build! immerses high school students in hands-on engineering challenges that take them from classroom design activities to competitive STEM events. Students apply mathematics, physics, and the engineering design process to plan, build, test, and refine prototypes using affordable, readily available materials. Through iterative design, data analysis, and structured teamwork, they develop technical skills while learning to evaluate performance, troubleshoot problems, and improve their designs. The workshop demonstrates how competition-based learning motivates students by providing authentic engineering experiences that build resilience, collaboration, and confidence. Participants will explore a low-cost, scalable framework that can be implemented in classrooms, STEM clubs, or competition teams and adapted for a variety of engineering challenges. Educators will leave with practical strategies, project ideas, and a clear roadmap for preparing students to succeed in engineering, robotics, and innovation competitions while strengthening STEM achievement and engagement.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Engineering Design: Design and sketch solutions to authentic engineering challenges using the engineering design process.
- Mathematical Modeling: Apply mathematics, measurement, and data analysis to evaluate and improve prototype performance.
- Prototype Construction: Build working prototypes using affordable, classroom-friendly materials.
- Testing and Iteration: Test designs, collect performance data, and refine prototypes based on results.
- Collaboration: Work in engineering teams while practicing communication, leadership, and shared problem solving.
- Competition Preparation: Present projects using engineering competition criteria and defend design decisions through evidence and data.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Competition-Based Learning: Learn how to structure engineering projects that prepare students for classroom showcases and STEM competitions.
- STEM Integration: Explore strategies for embedding mathematics and science concepts into authentic engineering design challenges.
- Team-Based Instruction: Discover effective methods for managing collaborative, hands-on engineering projects.
- Performance Assessment: Learn how to assess student learning through design documentation, prototype testing, data analysis, and reflection.
- Flexible Implementation: Adapt engineering challenges for classrooms, after-school clubs, enrichment programs, or competitive STEM teams.

STANDARDS

MA. 912. AR. 3.1 – Use mathematical models to represent and analyze real-world situations.
MA. 912. DP. 1.2 – Interpret and analyze data from experiments and simulations.
SC. 912. N. 1.1 – Define problems, design experiments, and analyze scientific data.
ETS1.A – Define and delimit engineering problems.
ETS1.B – Develop possible solutions using systematic processes.

MATERIALS

- Cardboard, foam board, balsa wood
- Tool Kit (screw driver etc)
- Multimeter
- Hot glue guns and glue sticks
- Rubber bands, string, fasteners
- Geometry kit
- Magnets
- Copper wire
- Etching Knife
- Wood Glue



3D ADVENTURES: BRINGING IDEAS TO LIFE

Inspire young innovators through hands-on 3-D design and printing.

Subject Area: Robotics

Grade Level: K-5

Description:

This hands-on workshop introduces elementary students to 3-D printing through age-appropriate design challenges that combine creativity, technology, and engineering. Using kid-friendly CAD software, students design and produce original objects ranging from simple individual creations to collaborative group projects. As they plan, test, revise, and reflect on their designs, they develop spatial reasoning, problem-solving, teamwork, and confidence with emerging technology. The process helps students understand how digital ideas become physical objects while reinforcing the value of experimentation and iteration. Educators will explore practical ways to integrate 3-D printing across STEM lessons and adapt projects for different grade levels and learning needs. Participants will leave with classroom-ready ideas, implementation strategies, and a clearer understanding of how 3D printing can support design thinking, engineering concepts, collaboration, and sustained student engagement in elementary classrooms.

STUDENTS LEARN

• 3-D Design: Use kid-friendly CAD software to design simple objects such as keychains, nameplates, and toy figurines.
• Research and Inspiration: Explore 3-D printing websites to discover existing designs, learn new techniques, and generate ideas for original projects.
• Collaborative Design: Work in teams to brainstorm, design, and print shared projects such as a class mascot or building model.
• Problem Solving: Revise designs to troubleshoot printing challenges while developing persistence and design-thinking skills.
• STEM Connections: Apply mathematics, science, and engineering concepts through measuring, scaling, material properties, structure, and balance.
• Presentation and Reflection: Share completed 3D creations, explain design decisions, and reflect on the design process and learning experience.

TEACHERS LEARN

• 3-D Printer Selection: Learn what to look for in a classroom 3-D printer under $300, including safety, reliability, print size, and ease of use for elementary students.
• Filament Selection: Explore child-friendly filament options, including PLA and biodegradable materials, and learn which materials work best for different classroom projects.
• Using Tinkercad: Gain an introduction to Tinkercad and strategies for guiding students through designing simple 3-D objects.
• Design Resources: Discover free websites such as Thingiverse and MakerWorld where students can safely download, customize, and print 3-D models.
• Classroom Implementation: Explore hands-on project ideas that incorporate 3-D design, collaboration, troubleshooting, creativity, and student reflection.

STANDARDS

MA.1.GR.1.1 – Identify, compare and sort two and three dimensional figures based on their defining attributes.
MA.1.M.1.1 – Estimate the length of an object to the nearest inch.
MA.1.NSO.1.2 – Read numbers from 0 to 100 written in standard form and expanded form.
SC.1.N.1.2 – Using the five senses as tools, make careful observations, describe objects in terms of number, shape, texture, size, weight, color, and motion.
MAFS.1.OA.1.1 – Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve problems involving putting together and taking apart.

MATERIALS

- 3-D Printer (under $300, classroom-safe model)
- Filament (PLA or other kid-safe, biodegradable materials)
- Computer or Tablet (with internet access for each student or group, could be a school computer)
- Tinkercad Account (free, web-based CAD software)
- Access to Free 3-D Model Websites (e.g., Thingiverse, Maker World)
- Project Worksheets / Planning Templates (journal for sketching designs and tracking projects)
- Measuring Tools (rulers or tape measures for scaling designs)
- Printer Maintenance Tools (scraper, nozzle cleaner, etc.)



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Environmental Conservation & Filmmaking

Funded by the Lynn & Louis Wolfson II Family Foundation

Lynn & Louis Wolfson II Family Foundation

With generous support from the **Lynn & Louis Wolfson II Family Foundation**, The Education Fund is helping teachers equip students with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to become the next generation of environmental stewards.

Through hands-on learning experiences, students explore the importance of environmental conservation while discovering how storytelling and filmmaking can be powerful tools for raising awareness and inspiring action. Teachers gain resources and strategies to bring environmental issues to life in the classroom—and to introduce students to careers that combine environmental conservation, media, and filmmaking.

The program supports teachers and students with:

- **Environmental conservation education** that connects classroom learning to real-world issues and local ecosystems.
- **Hands-on projects and instructional resources** that engage students in exploring and protecting the environment.
- **Filmmaking and storytelling experiences** that teach students how to use video to document environmental issues and communicate ideas.
- **Career exploration** that introduces students to opportunities in environmental media, filmmaking, conservation, and related fields.
- **Teacher professional learning** to help educators integrate environmental conservation and filmmaking into their instruction.



MEDIA WITH PURPOSE

Combine environmental stewardship, documentary filmmaking, and career exploration in one authentic learning experience.

Subject Area: Environmental Education

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

This workshop shows educators how documentary filmmaking and multimedia storytelling can deepen environmental learning while introducing students to career pathways in journalism, film, photography, digital media, communications, and environmental advocacy. Through a project-based approach, students investigate local environmental issues, conduct interviews, capture compelling visuals, and produce stories that inform and engage their communities. The process combines environmental science, journalism, and media production while strengthening research, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and digital literacy. Students also explore the professional roles involved in creating environmental media, from reporters and documentary filmmakers to editors, photographers, producers, and nonprofit communications specialists. Participants will leave with practical classroom resources, production strategies, and an adaptable project framework that can be implemented with students at varying levels of media experience. The workshop connects environmental stewardship with authentic storytelling, civic engagement, and career-ready skills.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Environmental Research: Investigate local environmental issues and identify stories with community relevance.
• Story Development: Develop clear story angles, interview questions, and production plans before filming begins.
• Newsroom Roles: Work as producers, reporters, videographers, editors, and photographers to complete a collaborative media project.
• Field Reporting: Interview scientists, community leaders, and environmental organizations while gathering video, photographs, and natural sound.
• Documentary Production: Write scripts, record narration, edit footage, and add graphics to create a finished documentary or short feature.
• Media Literacy: Examine how journalism and multimedia storytelling can inform the public and shape understanding of environmental issues.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Documentary Unit Design: Create a project-based unit that integrates environmental issues, journalism, and media production.
• Research and Interviewing: Guide students in researching local topics, developing story ideas, and conducting meaningful interviews with community experts.
• Field Production: Demonstrate classroom-friendly techniques for videography, audio recording, photography, and visual storytelling.
• Post-Production: Support students through scripting, editing, narration, graphics, and the completion of a polished documentary or short feature.
• Assessment and Career Exploration: Assess student learning while connecting the project to careers in film, television, journalism, photography, editing, and digital content creation.

STANDARDS

ELA.9.C.1.4 – Evaluate the development of logical reasoning in persuasive and informational texts. Analyze how evidence is used to support claims and determine the effectiveness of an author's argument.
ELA.9.C.3.1 – Follow the rules of collaborative discussion. Engage effectively in discussions by building on others' ideas and expressing ideas clearly and respectfully.
ELA.9.C.4.1 – Conduct research to answer a question or solve a problem. Gather relevant information from multiple credible sources and integrate the information effectively.
ELA.9.V.1.3 – Apply knowledge of academic vocabulary in speaking and writing. Use precise language appropriate for purpose, audience, and task.
VA.912.C.1.1 – Integrate knowledge and skills from other content areas to support artistic learning. Use creative processes to communicate ideas and solve real-world problems through media production.

MATERIALS

- Smartphones, tablets, or video cameras
- Tripods and external microphones (recommended)
- Video editing software (Adobe Premiere Pro, CapCut, iMovie, or DaVinci Resolve)
- Internet-connected computers or laptops
- Storyboarding and production planning templates
- Interview question and research guides
- Student production roles and workflow handouts
- Royalty-free music and graphics resources
- Rubrics for research, production, and final documentary assessment
- Access to local environmental organizations, parks, or community experts for interviews and field experiences



CODING FOR CONSERVATION

Connect coding and conservation through interactive Bee-Bot challenges that inspire young problem solvers.

Subject Area: Environmental Education

Grade Level: PreK-5

Description:

Coding for Conservation combines environmental science, literacy, and computer science in a hands-on STEAM experience designed for K–2 learners. Using a themed children's book, students explore the honeybee life cycle, the importance of pollinators, and the environmental challenges bees face. They then apply this knowledge by programming screen-free Bee-Bot robots on custom grid mats, creating step-by-step algorithms that guide their "bees" safely around hazards such as pesticides and toward flowers and other essential resources. This engaging project integrates Florida Computer Science standards with life science through tactile, age-appropriate learning that strengthens sequencing, spatial reasoning, and problem-solving skills. By treating mistakes as opportunities to debug and improve, students build confidence, perseverance, and teamwork while developing empathy for the natural world. Participants will leave with a ready-to-implement lesson that integrates science, literacy, and coding without increasing screen time or requiring advanced technology.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Pollinator Coding: Program Bee-Bot robots to navigate from the hive to flowers while learning how bees gather nectar and support ecosystems.
- Honeybee Life Cycle: Sequence and program the four stages of the honeybee life cycle using Bee-Bot missions and interactive grid mats.
- Debugging: Revise and retest Bee-Bot programs to safely navigate around environmental hazards such as pesticides, learning that mistakes are opportunities to improve.
- Patterns and Algorithms: Create repeating movement patterns and multi-step algorithms while exploring how honeybees communicate and locate resources.
- Conservation Connections: Discover the importance of pollinators, identify threats to honeybees, and explore how people can help protect local ecosystems.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Bee-Bot Programming: Learn how to operate Bee-Bot robots, manage stored commands, and use programming features such as the Pause function to support multi-step coding activities.
- Literature-to-STEM Integration: Explore strategies for connecting conservation-themed children's literature to hands-on coding and environmental science lessons.
- Custom Coding Mats: Learn how to create and use Bee-Bot grid mats featuring honeybee life cycles, pollinator habitats, and environmental challenges.
- Collaborative Learning Structures: Implement purposeful student roles, such as Lead Programmer, Blueprint Artist, and Eco-Inspector, to promote teamwork and active participation.
- Debugging for Young Learners: Facilitate "Debugging Circles" that help students identify, troubleshoot, and correct coding errors while reinforcing problem-solving and perseverance.

STANDARDS

SC.K.PE.1.1 - Discuss how a computer program is a set of instructions made by people to show a computer how to complete a task.
SC.2.PE.1.1 - Construct code segments using tools that do not require a textual programming language.
SC.2.L.16.1 - Observe and describe major stages in the life cycles of plants and animals.
SC.2.L.17.1 - Compare and contrast the basic needs that all living things, including humans, have for survival.
SC.2.L.17.2 - Recognize and explain that living things are found all over Earth, but each is only able to live in habitats that meet its basic needs.

MATERIALS

- Bee-Bot Programmable Floor Robots: Child-friendly, tactile robots with directional buttons (Forward, Backward, Left, Right, Pause, Clear, and GO).
- Transparent Pocket Grid Mats: 4×4 heavy-duty vinyl grid mats featuring exact 15cm x 15cm pocket squares to house custom curricular inserts.
- Custom Life Cycle Insert Cards: Printable, high-resolution visual cards depicting the four core biological stages of the honeybee (Egg, Larva, Pupa, Adult Bee).
- Custom Habitat & Threat Insert Cards: Printed map cards containing images of resource targets (Wildflower Patches, Honeycomb Hives) and ecological hazards (Pesticide Spray Bottles, Construction Sites).
- Physical Directional Arrow Cards: Tactile, laminated cards with directional arrows used by students to construct their physical code blueprints before inputting data into the robots.
- Core Mentor Text: Give Bees a Chance by Bethany Barton or The Honeybee by Kirsten Hall to introduce environmental conservation and literacy hooks.



ECO-SYSTEMS FOR NATIVE SPECIES

Bring science to life as students build a thriving ecosystem, monitor wildlife, and explore environmental conservation.

Subject Area: Environmental Education

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

This hands-on STEAM project engages students in creating and monitoring a school-based ecosystem designed to support native wildlife. Participants learn how planting native flowers and installing a solar-powered water fountain can attract butterflies, birds, and other local species while promoting environmental stewardship. Using a trail camera, students observe and analyze animal behavior, identify native species, and collect real-world data to draw conclusions about ecosystem health and wildlife activity. Throughout the project, students apply science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics concepts while developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and data analysis skills. The project also connects to broader environmental issues, including Everglades restoration and conservation of native habitats. By combining field research with technology, students gain a deeper understanding of biodiversity, ecological relationships, and their role as responsible citizens in protecting the environment.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Science: Students study water quality within the aquaponic system and learn about photosynthesis while planting native species.
- Technology: Students use tools such as ChatGPT, Google, and YouTube to research ecosystem design and wildlife habitats and trail cameras to monitor wildlife activity.
- Engineering: Students design and construct a campus ecosystem featuring a fishpond, native plants, and wildlife-friendly elements.
- Mathematics: Students calculate pond volume, determine the dimensions of the pond liner, and develop project budgets. They apply mathematical reasoning to manage resources and complete the project within financial constraints.
- Environmental Stewardship: Students learn how to create and maintain habitats that support native wildlife and contribute to environmental conservation efforts, including awareness of Everglades restoration and native species protection.
- Wildlife Observation and Data Analysis: Using trail cameras, students observe wildlife behavior, identify different species, collect and analyze data, and investigate solutions to challenges.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Environmental Stewardship: The importance of creating and maintaining ecosystems that support native wildlife, promote biodiversity, and contribute to environmental conservation.
- Renewable Energy Applications: How solar energy can be incorporated into ecosystem projects using solar-powered equipment and sustainable design practices.
- Native and Invasive Species: Strategies for helping students identify native and invasive species and understand their impact on local ecosystems and wildlife habitats.
- Everglades Restoration: Everglades Restoration Action Plan and how to connect local environmental issues to classroom instruction and student learning.
- STE(A)M Integration: Implement ecosystem-based projects that integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, while fostering critical thinking, data analysis, problem-solving, and real-world application of academic concepts.
- Project Implementation: Practical strategies for designing, building, and monitoring a school-based ecosystem that engages students in hands-on learning, wildlife observation, and environmental stewardship.

STANDARDS

SC.8. L.18 A. Living things all share basic needs for life. Living organisms acquire the energy they need for life processes through various metabolic pathways (photosynthesis and cellular respiration).
MA.2.M.1 Measure the length of objects and solve problems involving length.
G.K.12.3.1.1b Cooperative Research-Understand: Demonstrate ethical leadership and/or teamwork within a research workgroup.
G.K12.5.3.3b-Technology-Understand: Demonstrate the ability to propose new uses for current technology.
SC.912.E.7.1 Analyze the movement of matter and energy through the different biogeochemical cycles, including water and carbon.

MATERIALS

•Flower Seeds
- Flower bags
- DIY solar Panel
- Trail Camera
- A Big bin or a tarp for the pond
- Fish, fish food, and water quality testing kits (optional)

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PECHOCHO'S PAUSE: 10-MINUTE RESET

Turn a dolphin's stress signal into a powerful classroom tool that helps students build self-regulation, resilience, and empathy.

Subject Area: Classroom Management/Resiliency

Grade Level: 9-12

Description:

The Pechocho Slat Keychain Project transforms a real marine science case study into a practical social-emotional learning (SEL) tool that helps students manage stress and communicate their needs. Inspired by Pechocho the dolphin's unique stress-signal behavior, students create personalized keychains that allow them to nonverbally request a brief reset when feeling overwhelmed. By connecting animal behavior to human emotional wellness, the project blends biology, psychology, and creative design in a hands-on, engaging learning experience. Students develop self-regulation, empathy, resilience, and communication skills while helping foster a supportive and inclusive classroom culture. Ideal for Health Science and Marine Science classrooms, this innovative project provides teachers with a simple, stigma-free strategy to support student well-being, strengthen classroom climate, and promote both academic and social-emotional growth.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Marine Science: Exploration of dolphin communication and behavior through the study of Pechocho's unique stress signals and the ways animals communicate boundaries and emotions.
• Social-Emotional Learning: Development of self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, and healthy self-advocacy strategies.
• Biology and Psychology: Investigation of the connections between animal behavior and human emotional responses, including the science of stress and coping mechanisms.
• Nonverbal Communication: Practice using respectful, effective nonverbal signals to communicate needs and respond appropriately to others.
• Empathy and Community Building: Creation of a classroom culture that values boundaries, understanding, inclusion, and peer support.
• Research Skills: Analysis of scientific information related to dolphin behavior, environmental stressors, and human-wildlife interactions.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Social-Emotional Learning Integration: Strategies for using Pechocho's story as a powerful metaphor for emotional regulation, stress management, and healthy boundaries.
• Hands-On Wellness Tools: Experience designing personalized slat keychains that provide students with a practical, nonverbal method for communicating emotional needs.
• Classroom Management: Techniques for implementing a respectful 10-minute reset system that supports student well-being while maintaining classroom engagement and productivity.
• Interdisciplinary Instruction: Methods for combining social-emotional learning, marine science, biology, and psychology to create meaningful, real-world learning experiences.
• Empathy and Inclusion: Approaches for fostering a classroom culture that normalizes boundaries, reduces stigma surrounding mental health, and promotes psychological safety for all learners.
• Student Self-Advocacy: Tools and practices that empower students to recognize stress, communicate needs appropriately, and develop resilience and self-regulation skills.

STANDARDS

HE.912.C.2.4 – Evaluate how relationships, communication, and respect influence emotional health and well-being.
HE.912.P.8.1 – Apply strategies to manage stress and promote mental and emotional health in daily life.
SC.912.L.17.20 – Describe how human activity impacts marine ecosystems and the behavior of aquatic organisms.
SC.912.L.16.13 – Explain how environmental factors influence behavior and adaptation in living organisms.
ELA.912.C.1.4 – Write expository texts that analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources clearly and concisely.

MATERIALS

• Cardstock or acrylic blanks — for students to design and personalize their slat keychains
• Markers, paint pens, or colored pencils — to decorate and label each slat with meaningful symbols or words
• Key rings or clips — to attach the slat to backpacks or lanyards for daily use
• Reflection sheets or journals — for students to record emotional triggers, coping strategies, and reflections
• Visual aids of Pechocho — photos or short videos showing the dolphin's behavior to connect science and SEL
• Marine Science reference materials — articles or diagrams explaining dolphin communication and stress responses
• Teacher guide and rubric — outlining objectives, evaluation criteria, and reflection prompts
• Craft supplies — stickers, laminating sheets, or string for creative personalization

Educators Choice
Financial Guidance & Planning
Powered by Suncoast Credit Union



NOBODY PREPARED YOU FOR THIS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE, CONTROL, AND CLASSROOM SYSTEMS

New teachers build practical classroom management systems that strengthen instructional confidence, reduce burnout, and support long-term success in the profession.

Subject Area: Classroom Management/Resiliency

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This workshop helps new and early-career teachers understand that classroom management is not just about student behavior; it is directly connected to instructional delivery, classroom systems, and teacher confidence. Participants examine how their teaching habits, routines, and responses influence student behavior patterns and overall classroom culture. Through self-assessment tools, real classroom scenarios, and ready-to-use management systems, teachers identify what is working, where breakdowns are occurring, and how to make proactive adjustments. The workshop guides participants in creating a personalized classroom management plan they can implement immediately, regardless of grade level or subject area. Teachers strengthen instructional decision-making while also building confidence, reducing stress, and addressing one of the major reasons new educators experience burnout or leave the profession.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Student Engagement: How classroom management systems help students stay focused, participate appropriately, and remain actively engaged in learning.
- Behavior Outcomes: How instructional pacing, clarity, and delivery choices influence student behavior, attention, and classroom participation.
- Learning Environment: How proactive routines and procedures create a classroom where students know expectations and can spend more time learning.
- Student Support: How to identify management gaps that may be preventing students from succeeding academically or behaviorally.
- Action Planning: How to create a classroom management plan that improves consistency, reduces disruptions, and supports stronger student achievement.
- Reflection: How to examine classroom realities in order to make decisions that better support student learning, confidence, and success.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Self-Assessment: How to identify the gap between perceived and actual classroom management effectiveness using a structured reflection tool.
- Instructional Delivery: Why pacing, clarity, routines, and delivery choices directly influence student behavior and how to make adjustments in real time.
- Proactive Systems: How to build a classroom management system rooted in strong teaching practices rather than reactive discipline.
- Early Warning Signs: How to recognize when a classroom is beginning to trend toward mismanagement before it affects instruction or formal evaluation.
- Action Planning: How to create and implement a personalized classroom management plan within the first week back in the classroom.

STANDARDS

G.K12.5.1.3c Implement conflict management and resolution techniques to bring about positive change.

SP.PK12.US.10.3 Use organizational strategies related to planning, scheduling, time management, self-monitoring, and managing materials.

SP.PK12.US.3.6 Use effective time management and organization skills and strategies to complete class and work assignments.

SP.PK12.US.2.2b Use effective time-management, planning, and organization skills and strategies, including using a visual schedule or daily planner, setting goals and priorities, and locating, organizing, and sorting information.

SP.PK12.US.21.2a Use behaviors and skills, such as accepting feedback and adjusting own actions, to maintain appropriate conduct in the classroom and school.

MATERIALS

- Printed or digital Classroom Management Self-Assessment (provided by presenter)
- Classroom Management Action Plan template (provided by presenter)
- Scenario analysis handout (provided by presenter)
- Pen/pencil or device for note-taking
- No additional purchases required — total teacher cost: $0

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LEVEL UP: ATTENDANCE & EXCELLENCE REWARDS

Transform school culture with a fun, data-driven approach to improving attendance, behavior, and student engagement.

Subject Area: Classroom Management/Resiliency

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

The Level Up: Attendance & Excellence Rewards Experience is a dynamic, ready-to-implement program designed to boost attendance, engagement, and positive behavior through the power of gamification and student choice. In this interactive workshop, educators will learn how to create exciting quarterly reward events featuring activity stations such as gaming, arts, sports, and social challenges that motivate students to meet attendance and behavior goals. Participants will receive planning templates, implementation guides, and data-tracking tools that make it easy to replicate the program in their own schools. More than just an incentive system, Level Up helps transform school culture by shifting the focus from discipline to motivation, recognition, and connection. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to increase student engagement, improve school climate, and create meaningful experiences that encourage students to show up, participate, and succeed.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Attendance and Responsibility: Reinforcement of the importance of consistent attendance, positive behavior, and personal accountability through recognition and reward.
- Communication: Strengthening verbal and interpersonal communication skills through team activities, social interaction, karaoke, and collaborative games.
- Teamwork and Collaboration: Practice working effectively with peers through sports, team-building activities, creative projects, and group challenges.
- Leadership: Opportunities to demonstrate leadership, initiative, and positive citizenship while participating in organized activities and supporting peers.
- Confidence and Self-Expression: Building self-confidence through music, dance, karaoke, creative arts, and other activities that encourage individual expression.
- Creativity: Exploration of artistic expression through collaborative murals, drawing activities, and creative challenges that promote imagination and innovation.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Program Design: Strategies for creating and implementing a quarterly incentive program that promotes attendance, positive behavior, and student engagement.
- Student Motivation: Techniques for using positive reinforcement, recognition, and student choice to encourage participation and build a positive school culture.
- Activity Planning: Methods for designing and managing engaging activity stations that appeal to diverse student interests, abilities, and learning styles.
- Data Tracking and Accountability: Tools for developing clear eligibility criteria and monitoring systems to track attendance, behavior, and student participation.
- Schoolwide Alignment: Approaches for connecting incentive programs to existing school goals, PBIS initiatives, attendance campaigns, and student success efforts.
- Impact Measurement: Strategies for evaluating program effectiveness through attendance data, behavior referrals, student feedback, and other measurable outcomes.

STANDARDS

SS.912.C.2.2 – Evaluate the importance of civic participation and civic responsibility. Students recognize the value of active involvement and accountability within a community.
ELA.612.SL.1.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions. Students build on others' ideas and express their own clearly.

MATERIALS

- Giant UNO Card Game
- Jenga Game
- Giant Connect Four Game
- Giant Wooden Four-in-a-Row Game
- Sports equipment (basketballs, cones, and related materials)
- Music equipment (portable speaker and playlist access)
- Art supplies (paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, and coloring materials)

Educators Choice
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CRACKING THE CODE OF COMPREHENSION: USING AI TO TEACH TEXT STRUCTURE

Discover the natural order of teaching text structure through the lens of cognitive science and AI innovation.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: Grades 3-8, (adaptable for K–12 literacy and content-area integration)

Description:

Research shows there is a natural order for teaching text structure that supports how the brain learns to comprehend complex information. This interactive professional learning session blends the cognitive science of reading with Digging Deeper into Text Structure and the power of AI. Participants will explore how tools like ChatGPT, Eduaide.ai, Notebook LM, and Diffit can help teachers design lessons that follow the brain's progression for processing text—moving from description and sequence to cause/effect, compare/contrast, and problem/solution. Grounded in the science of learning, educators will experience how AI can scaffold comprehension, differentiate instruction, and strengthen students' academic language development while aligning with the Florida B.E.S.T. ELA Standards.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Identify and analyze common expository text structures (e.g. chronology, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution, description).
• Use text features and signal words to support comprehension and connect ideas.
• Cite textual evidence and use accountable talk to explain how structure supports meaning.
• Transfer knowledge of structure to improve their own writing organization.
• Summarize, synthesize, and critically engage with text across content areas.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Design reader and writer workshops that align with the Science of Reading and leverage the innovative capabilities of Large Language Models in artificial intelligence. Integrate AI tools to plan standards-aligned reading comprehension lessons focused on text structure.
• Differentiate text complexity, scaffold questions, and offer choice via AI support.
• Implement research-based practices (think-alouds, gradual release, metacognitive questioning) within AI-supported design.
• Align instruction with Florida B.E.S.T. ELA standards for reading, writing, and comprehension.
• Utilize formative assessment and digital tools to monitor student understanding and adjust instruction.

STANDARDS

Reading – Informational Text / Reading Standards
• ELA.3.R.2.1 — Explain how text features contribute to meaning and identify the text structures of chronology, comparison, and cause/effect in texts.
• ELA.4.R.2.1 — Explain how text features contribute to meaning and identify text structures (problem/solution, sequence, description) in texts.
• ELA.5.R.2.1 — Explain how text structures and/or features contribute to the overall meaning of texts.
• (Optional extension for higher grades) ELA.12.R.2.1 — Evaluate the structure(s) and features in texts, identifying how the author could make the text more effective.

Communication / Writing, Conventions, Research
• ELA.K12.C.1.3 — Write arguments, informative/explanatory texts with valid reasoning & evidence per grade-level expectations.
• ELA.K12.C.3.1 / C.4.1 — Research, use information, and present findings in writing or speaking (to support students' use of structure in writing).

MATERIALS

Laptop or tablet with Internet access
AI tools/accounts (ChatGPT, Eduaide.ai, Diffit, Canva Magic Write, etc.)
Grade-level nonfiction and expository texts
Students Journals
Fiction and nonfiction classroom libraries
Graphic organizers (print or digital)
Copies of Digging Deeper into Text Structure excerpts or scaffolded handouts
AI prompt templates aligned to B.E.S.T. standards

ASSURANT®



THE STORYTELLER'S TRIAD©

Teaching Meaning, Critical Thinking, and Communication in the Age of AI

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

"The Storyteller's Triad©" is a cross-disciplinary storytelling framework built on a 30-year mission to prove that the foundations of great storytelling are universal across all mediums. In an age where AI can generate endless content, this workshop asks a deeper question: how do we continue teaching human meaning and critical thinking? Teachers will learn adaptable strategies that strengthen writing, media literacy, ethics, creativity, empathy, and analytical thinking across journalism, film, business, science, visual arts, and emerging technologies. Participants will also explore the T.R.U.T.H. ethics framework for journalism and media literacy while gaining access to Storyteller AI and classroom-ready presentation resources adaptable across grade levels and subject areas.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Storytelling and Communication: Discover how powerful stories reflect the human experience and communicate meaning across different audiences and mediums.
- Media Literacy: Analyze how point of view, bias, and perspective influence the way information is presented in journalism, film, literature, and social media.
- Ethical Reasoning: Apply the T.R.U.T.H. ethics framework to evaluate credibility, identify bias, and make informed judgments about media and information sources.
- Creative Expression: Create original stories, podcasts, multimedia presentations, and AI-assisted projects that demonstrate understanding through multiple forms of communication.
- Cross-Disciplinary Learning: Connect storytelling to history, science, business, technology, and the arts by exploring how narratives help explain complex concepts.
- Empathy and Perspective-Taking: Develop a deeper understanding of diverse experiences, viewpoints, and cultures through the analysis and creation of stories.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Storytelling Across Disciplines: Learn how to use storytelling as a universal framework for teaching communication, meaning-making, and deeper learning across content areas.
- Ethical AI Integration: Explore practical strategies for incorporating AI into instruction while preserving student creativity, originality, and critical thinking.
- Media Literacy and Critical Thinking: Discover techniques for strengthening analytical skills through the study of point of view, bias, perspective, and narrative framing.
- Cross-Curricular Applications: Gain classroom-ready activities that connect storytelling to journalism, science, business, technology, social studies, and the arts.
- Ethical Communication: Learn how to implement the T.R.U.T.H. framework to help students evaluate information, communicate responsibly, and navigate an increasingly complex media landscape.
- Creative Exploration: Utilize Storyteller AI and other tools to support student inquiry, creativity, reflection, and authentic expression.

STANDARDS

ELA.K12.EE.1.1 – Students analyze information and support interpretations using relevant textual and media evidence.
ELA.K12.EE.3.1 – Students interpret meaning, perspective, and implied ideas across multiple forms of communication and media.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1 – Students strengthen communication, discussion, and analytical thinking skills.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1 – Students develop effective communication strategies across written, spoken, and multimedia formats.
TH.5.H.1 – Students explore how narrative and performance shape understanding of identity, society, and human experience.

MATERIALS

- Computer, tablet, or smartphone with internet access
- Projector, smart board, or presentation screen
- Access to Storyteller AI and other free AI and media creation tools
- Storyteller's Triad© templates and classroom presentation materials
- Sample articles, films, advertisements, podcasts, or media clips for analysis
- Student notebooks, journals, or a digital writing platform
- Optional microphones, cameras, or recording devices for podcasting and multimedia storytelling projects



ACT IT OUT! TEACHING GRAMMAR WITH PUPPETS

Inspire a love of grammar through creative puppetry, storytelling, movement, and hands-on learning.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: PreK--5

Description:

Puppetry transforms grammar instruction into an interactive, hands-on literacy experience through puppetry, storytelling, movement, and dramatic play. Participants will create memorable puppet characters such as Nancy Noun and Victor Verb while exploring creative strategies for teaching nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and other parts of speech. Through multisensory activities, teachers will discover how to make grammar concepts more engaging, meaningful, and accessible for diverse learners while promoting vocabulary development, language skills, comprehension, collaboration, and student confidence. The workshop demonstrates how puppetry encourages active participation and helps students remember grammar by acting it out rather than simply memorizing rules. Educators will leave with ready-to-use puppet activities, handcrafted puppets, adaptable lesson ideas, and practical resources that can be implemented immediately across grade levels to increase engagement and make grammar instruction both effective and unforgettable.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Storytelling: Retell stories using puppets while practicing sequencing, character description, and vocabulary in context.
- Grammar in Action: Participate in interactive skits and "Grammar Theater" to recognize and apply parts of speech through dialogue and movement.
- Vocabulary Development: Strengthen vocabulary and language skills through storytelling, conversation, and hands-on literacy activities.
- Reading and Writing: Write simple puppet scripts and dialogues that reinforce sentence structure, grammar, and written expression.
- Literacy Games: Reinforce grammar concepts through engaging activities such as Verb Charades, Noun Hunts, and other interactive language games.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Puppetry-Based Instruction: Learn how to use puppet characters to teach parts of speech through storytelling, role-play, and dramatic play.
- Interactive Grammar Strategies: Discover creative, multisensory approaches that transform traditional grammar lessons into engaging literacy experiences.
- Inclusive Teaching Practices: Explore ways to incorporate movement, speaking, listening, and hands-on learning to support diverse learners and inclusive classrooms.
- Literacy Through Storytelling: Learn how to guide students in creating puppet skits, scripts, and storytelling activities that strengthen vocabulary, comprehension, and written expression.
- Student Engagement: Implement collaborative literacy games and performance-based activities that increase participation, confidence, and communication skills.

STANDARDS

ELA.4.C.3.1 – Participate in collaborative discussions about grade-level topics and texts.
ELA.4.V.1.2 – Apply knowledge of academic vocabulary to demonstrate understanding of words and phrases in grade-level texts.
ELA.4.C.1.4 – Write expository texts about a topic, using appropriate structure and organization.
ELA.4.F.1.3 – Use knowledge of grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills to decode and encode words accurately.
ELD-SI.4-5.1 – English learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

MATERIALS

- Cardstock or Thick Paper
- Pre-Divided Circle (Six Triangular Sections)
- Adhesive Foam Stickers (Variety of Shapes)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Compass
- Protractor
- Printmaking Ink or Acrylic Paint
- Brayers (Rollers)
- Plastic Surface for Paint

ASSURANT®



READING STRATEGIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Discover powerful reading routines that improve comprehension, increase engagement, and build stronger readers in every classroom.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This workshop equips educators with a practical, evidence-based Reading Strategies Toolkit designed to strengthen reading comprehension across grade levels and content areas. Participants will explore structured instructional routines such as purposeful annotation, multi-pass reading, and text-dependent questioning that help students engage more deeply with complex texts and develop stronger analytical thinking skills. These strategies support students in making inferences, analyzing evidence, synthesizing information, and participating in meaningful academic discussions. In addition to improving literacy skills, the toolkit helps build student confidence, motivation, and persistence as readers by providing clear, accessible approaches to tackling challenging texts. Adaptable to any subject area, the strategies can be implemented immediately and integrated into existing curriculum and instruction. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, instructional models, and classroom routines that promote deeper comprehension, critical thinking, and greater student independence as readers and learners.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Purposeful Annotation: Identify key ideas, unfamiliar vocabulary, important details, and areas of confusion while actively engaging with text.
- Close Reading: Use multi-pass reading strategies to build deeper understanding of a text's meaning, structure, and purpose.
- Text Analysis: Analyze author's purpose, tone, claims, evidence, and other literary and informational text features.
- Evidence-Based Reasoning: Support responses and conclusions using specific details, examples, and textual evidence.
- Vocabulary Development: Strengthen academic vocabulary through contextual analysis and discussion of unfamiliar words and phrases.

TEACHERS LEARN

•How to model and teach purposeful annotation strategies that help students track thinking and make meaning while reading
- How to implement multi-pass reading routines that build comprehension, stamina, and deeper text engagement
- How to design and facilitate text-dependent questions that promote critical thinking and evidence-based discussion
- How to scaffold close-reading strategies for different grade levels, content areas, and learner needs
- How to use the Reading Strategies Toolkit to plan lessons, model routines, and support students in becoming more independent, strategic readers

STANDARDS

ELA.3.R.1.2 (Grade 3) – Explain how relevant details support the central idea of a text.
ELA.5.R.2.1 (Grade 5) – Explain how text structures contribute to the meaning and style of a text.
ELA.7.R.3.2 (Grade 7) – Paraphrase content from grade level texts while maintaining meaning and logical order.
ELA.9.R.1.1 (Grade 9) – Analyze how key elements enhance or add layers of meaning within a literary text.
ELA.11.R.2.2 (Grade 11) – Analyze the author's use of rhetorical appeals and text structure in an argument.

MATERIALS

•Printed copies of selected complex texts (novels, articles, short stories, informational passages)
- Annotation tools such as highlighters, sticky notes, and colored pens/pencils
- Graphic organizers for evidence collection, text dependent questioning, and multi pass reading
- Digital or physical copies of the Reading Strategies Toolkit (teacher guides, routine templates, sample lessons)



READING STRATEGIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Discover powerful reading routines that improve comprehension, increase engagement, and build stronger readers in every classroom.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This workshop equips educators with a practical, evidence-based Reading Strategies Toolkit designed to strengthen reading comprehension across grade levels and content areas. Participants will explore structured instructional routines such as purposeful annotation, multi-pass reading, and text-dependent questioning that help students engage more deeply with complex texts and develop stronger analytical thinking skills. These strategies support students in making inferences, analyzing evidence, synthesizing information, and participating in meaningful academic discussions. In addition to improving literacy skills, the toolkit helps build student confidence, motivation, and persistence as readers by providing clear, accessible approaches to tackling challenging texts. Adaptable to any subject area, the strategies can be implemented immediately and integrated into existing curriculum and instruction. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, instructional models, and classroom routines that promote deeper comprehension, critical thinking, and greater student independence as readers and learners.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Purposeful Annotation: Identify key ideas, unfamiliar vocabulary, important details, and areas of confusion while actively engaging with text.
- Close Reading: Use multi-pass reading strategies to build deeper understanding of a text's meaning, structure, and purpose.
- Text Analysis: Analyze author's purpose, tone, claims, evidence, and other literary and informational text features.
- Evidence-Based Reasoning: Support responses and conclusions using specific details, examples, and textual evidence.
- Vocabulary Development: Strengthen academic vocabulary through contextual analysis and discussion of unfamiliar words and phrases.

TEACHERS LEARN

•How to model and teach purposeful annotation strategies that help students track thinking and make meaning while reading
- How to implement multi-pass reading routines that build comprehension, stamina, and deeper text engagement
- How to design and facilitate text-dependent questions that promote critical thinking and evidence-based discussion
- How to scaffold close-reading strategies for different grade levels, content areas, and learner needs
- How to use the Reading Strategies Toolkit to plan lessons, model routines, and support students in becoming more independent, strategic readers

STANDARDS

ELA.3.R.1.2 (Grade 3) – Explain how relevant details support the central idea of a text.
ELA.5.R.2.1 (Grade 5) – Explain how text structures contribute to the meaning and style of a text.
ELA.7.R.3.2 (Grade 7) – Paraphrase content from grade level texts while maintaining meaning and logical order.
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- Graphic organizers for evidence collection, text dependent questioning, and multi pass reading
- Digital or physical copies of the Reading Strategies Toolkit (teacher guides, routine templates, sample lessons)



TAKE NOTE: MASTERING THE 5 W'S AND CORNELL NOTES

From Five Ws to Cornell Notes: Learn engaging techniques that help students capture, organize, and apply what matters most.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

Help students stop writing everything down—and start understanding what they're learning. Students often struggle to move beyond copying information to truly understanding, organizing, and applying what they learn. This collaborative workshop brings together educators across grade levels and content areas to explore strategies that bridge the gap between note-taking and comprehension. Participants will examine how students progress from using the Five Ws to mastering Cornell Notes while developing stronger reading, writing, critical thinking, and organizational skills. Through the sharing of successful classroom practices, common challenges, and practical solutions, educators will gain insights into the skills students need as they transition from one grade level to the next. The session emphasizes vertical alignment, literacy development, and active learning strategies that help students identify, retain, and apply key information. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use, low-cost strategies that can be implemented immediately to improve comprehension, student engagement, and academic achievement across all content areas.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Information Literacy: Identify and organize key information using the Five Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How).
• Reading Comprehension: Distinguish between main ideas, supporting details, evidence, and academic vocabulary across a variety of texts.
• Note-Taking Strategies: Use color-coded highlighting, graphic organizers, and Cornell Notes to improve comprehension and retention.
• Critical Thinking: Analyze information, make connections, and determine the importance and relevance of ideas.
• Written Communication: Respond to prompts and reflections that strengthen critical thinking and support clear, organized writing.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Information Processing: Learn strategies for teaching students how to identify, prioritize, and organize the most important information when reading, listening, discussing, and learning.
• Note-Taking Skills: Explore methods for helping students progress from the Five Ws to more advanced organizational tools, including Cornell Notes and other structured note-taking systems.
• Literacy Across the Curriculum: Discover ways to create a classroom culture that promotes reading, writing, reflection, and critical thinking across all content areas.
• Student Voice and Reflection: Utilize journaling, writing prompts, discussion protocols, and note-taking activities to strengthen comprehension, engagement, and student expression.
• Comprehension Strategies: Implement practical techniques that help students retain information, make meaningful connections, and apply learning in authentic contexts.
• Vertical Alignment: Gain insights into the skills students need at different grade levels and how to support a seamless progression of literacy and organizational skills.

STANDARDS

ELA.6.R.1.1 – Analyze how textual details and information support the central idea(s), implied or explicit.
ELA.6.R.2.2 – Analyze the central idea(s) and how they are developed throughout a text.
ELA.6.R.3.2 – Paraphrase content from grade-level texts to demonstrate comprehension.
ELA.6.C.1.2 – Write arguments to support a claim using logical reasoning, relevant evidence, and elaboration.
ELA.6.C.2.1 – Present information orally, in a logical sequence, using appropriate facts and relevant details to support the main idea.

MATERIALS

•Composition books or journals
- Four-color highlighter sets
- Sticky notes for annotation and reflection activities
- Printed graphic organizers and note-taking templates
- Chart paper and markers for anchor charts
- Classroom library books, articles, and informational texts
- Vocabulary wall materials
- Student folders or binders for organizing notes
- Access to Google Classroom or other digital learning platforms
- Printer paper and copying supplies

THE EDUCATION FUND 40 YEARS

FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Education Fund's Food Forests for Schools

In partnership with M-DCPS' Department of Academics and Department of Food & Nutrition









What is a Food Forest?

The Education Fund is revolutionizing science, math, and nutritional education for students via a first-in-the-nation model, using outdoor eco-labs on school grounds. An array of fruits, vegetables, and herbs in the form of trees, bushes, vines, and ground cover span up to a quarter acre in width. The winding pathways and tree-covered canopies are great for outdoor classrooms, with harvesting always available for cafeteria meals and homebound use.

How Does It Work?

Science and mathematics come alive for students in the Food Forests (FF), resulting in 71% of students increasing their science achievement and 78% increasing their math knowledge. Children are learning about the super-foods we are pioneering, such as the Moringa tree, which provides more calcium and protein than milk, and Barbados Cherries, which give children the vitamin C of 18 oranges in one cherry. They are exposed to 35+ different crops (80% perennial and 20% annual), experiencing the plant life cycle from seed to table in just one school year.

For Students

Students participate in daily or weekly harvests – for the cafeteria and their homes. Since transitioning from gardens to FF beginning in 2014, students have taken home 257,274 Harvest Bags. Students are excited to see plants they have grown added to their cafeteria meals, since 2015 over 6,714 meals have been enhanced with nutritious school-grown produce.

For Teachers

We invest in teachers and teacher training both on – and off-site. Our hands-on science and math modules are aligned with the district's Pacing Guides, which now include our curriculum lessons as recommended for all elementary sciences. We also train cafeteria managers and teachers together so that these nutritious plants grown by children may be used in cafeteria meals. School land that was once unused is now bustling with student activity each day. In fact, our work changed the school district's Wellness Policy, which now recommends all schools establish edible gardens, a precursor to the science recommendation.

The Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation · USDA · THE JORGE M. PÉREZ FAMILY FOUNDATION



CRAFTING CALM: AROMATHERAPY STRESS DOUGH

Boost student focus and self-regulation with hands-on, aromatherapy stress dough.

Subject Area: Health & Wellbeing

Grade Level: K-8

Description:

In this hands-on session, educators will discover how to implement a creative, sensory-rich project that fosters student well-being and academic readiness. Participants will learn how students make and use calming aromatherapy stress dough to practice mindfulness, sensory exploration, and self-regulation. This engaging project beautifully blends tactile learning with creative expression, offering students a functional tool to manage big emotions.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Create: Mix simple ingredients to make calming aromatherapy stress dough.
• Explore: Discover scents like lavender or peppermint and discuss how they affect mood and focus.
• Practice: Utilize mindfulness by squeezing, rolling, and stretching dough during brain breaks.
• Describe: Use descriptive language to explain sensory experiences involving texture, smell, and color.
• Reflect: Consider how sensory tools help to calm down and refocus during learning.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Craft: Learn how to create calming aromatherapy stress dough using simple classroom materials.
• Integrate: Discover strategies for blending sensory tools into social-emotional learning and mindfulness routines.
• Regulate: Explore ways to use stress dough for student brain breaks and self-regulation.
• Connect: Find techniques for linking sensory activities directly to literacy and descriptive writing.
• Manage: Gain practical classroom management tips for implementing sensory tools effectively.

STANDARDS

HE.3.C.1.1 – Identify behaviors that positively affect personal health.
HE.3.B.4.1 – Demonstrate effective coping skills to manage stress and emotions.
ELA.3.C.1.2 – Participate in collaborative conversations about grade-level topics and texts.
ELA.3.V.1.3 – Use context and knowledge of words and phrases to determine the meaning of unknown words.
SC.3.P.8.1 – Observe and describe the properties of materials and objects.

MATERIALS

•Flour
- Vegetable oil
- Essential oils
- Mixing bowls and spoons
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Salt
- Parchment paper
- Food coloring
- Cream of tartar
- Airtight containers or small bags for storage



BEYOND THE TRAY: TRANSFORMING SCHOOL MEALS INTO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES`

Integrating school nutrition programs within cross-curricular learning through mindful eating, environmental stewardship, and wellness.

Subject Area: Health & Wellbeing

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

School lunch programs offer more than just a daily meal because they serve as a powerful, underutilized platform for learning. This workshop explores how food and nutrition can be integrated into academic learning, emotional development, and sustainability in K-12 classrooms. Educators will learn to create nutrition education opportunities using school lunch menus, understand the importance of food and waste reduction through share tables, and enhance social-emotional learning through mindful eating practices. Participants will discover creative ways to turn everyday food experiences into engaging lessons. They will leave with practical resources that can transform the cafeteria into an extension of the classroom, enriching students' minds in multiple ways.

STUDENTS LEARN

TEACHERS LEARN

- How nutrition affects students' focus, mood, and performance.
- Creative ways to teach core subjects using food lessons.
- Collaborating with food service staff for garden to cafeteria.
- Strategies to reduce food waste & create environmental education in the cafeteria.
- How to support student meal choices.

STANDARDS

MATERIALS

- Table
- Smartboard for presentation



FOOD FORESTS FOR SCHOOLS PROGRAM KICKOFF

Begin the School Year with an Exciting Adventure in Outdoor Learning! Discover What's in Store at the Food Forests for Schools Program!

Subject Area: Health & Wellbeing

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

Step outside the classroom and into a world of hands-on learning! Join us for an inspiring Food Forests for Schools workshop designed to spark curiosity, deepen student engagement, and make teaching outdoors easier than ever.

What to Expect:
🌱 Smart Planting Made Simple – Learn how to choose plants that thrive with minimal fuss.
🧤 Maintenance Made Easy – Explore simple strategies and support systems to keep your garden growing strong.
🍓 Harvest with Purpose – Get tips for harvesting that connect students with the full food cycle.
📚 Teach Across Subjects – Discover creative ways to weave math, science, and resiliency into your outdoor lessons.

•Online Tools at Your Fingertips: Access a treasure trove of ready-to-use resources to elevate your lessons beyond the classroom walls.
•Get Hands-On: Roll up your sleeves for a fun, interactive activity that brings food forests to life and leaves you inspired to do the same with your students.
•Curriculum-Aligned and District-Approved: All content supports district pacing guides and integrates seamlessly with your core subjects—no extra planning needed!

Let's grow together.
Join us and discover how food forests can transform your teaching and your students' learning—one plant, one lesson, one season at a time.

STUDENTS LEARN

🌱 Plant Science & Growth Cycles
Understand which plants grow well in our region and how to care for them from seed to harvest.
🧠 Resiliency & Mindfulness Skills
Build emotional awareness and calm through hands-on connection with nature.
📊 Math in the Garden
Apply math skills like measuring, graphing, and estimating in real-life garden scenarios.
🔬 Science in Action
Explore ecosystems, pollination, weather, and soil health through observation and inquiry.
🧩 Cross-Curricular Learning
Connect garden experiences with classroom topics in reading, writing, social studies, and art.
🛠️ Problem Solving & Teamwork
Collaborate to solve challenges in garden care and design, building communication and leadership skills.

TEACHERS LEARN

🌿 How to Select Easy-to-Grow Plants
Discover which plants thrive in your region with minimal upkeep, making your garden more sustainable and successful.
🧰 Garden Maintenance Tips & Support
Learn efficient strategies to manage your food forest year-round—with district support systems to back you up.
🧠 Integrating Resiliency into Lessons
Explore ways to build students' social-emotional skills through nature-based activities.
📚 Curriculum Integration Across Subjects
Find out how to connect garden learning to math, science, ELA, and health using district pacing guides and standards.
💡 Engaging, Hands-On Activities
Participate in ready-to-use outdoor lessons that bring classroom concepts to life.
💻 Access to Online Resources & Tools
Navigate a curated library of digital teaching materials to support your outdoor instruction all year long.
👫 Collaboration & Community Building
Join a network of like-minded educators sharing ideas, inspiration, and success stories from their own school gardens.

STANDARDS

Properties & Classification: Grades 3–5
5.P.8.1: Compare and contrast solids, liquids, and gases using characteristics such as mass, volume, color, texture, and temperature

5.P.8.2: Investigate which materials dissolve in water, and the conditions (e.g. temperature, stirring) that affect the rate of dissolving

5.P.8.3: Demonstrate and explain how mixtures of solids can be separated using observable traits like particle size, shape, color, or magnetic attraction

5.P.8.4: Use atomic theory to recognize that all matter is composed of parts too small to see without magnification

MATERIALS



GREEN SCHOOLS BLUEPRINT: SCHOOL-WIDE ACTION

Launch a student-led sustainability framework on your campus using the GSRP rubric to reduce waste, foster eco-culture, and win district cash prizes!

Subject Area: Health & Wellbeing

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This project provides a step-by-step master roadmap for implementing the M-DCPS Green Schools Recognition Program (GSRP) framework across an entire campus. Instead of viewing sustainability as an isolated science elective, this model establishes it as a school-wide culture driven by student leadership. Teachers learn how to mobilize cross-curricular "Green Teams" to lead school-wide logistics for composting, recycling, and tree canopy restoration. This session breaks down the official GSRP evaluation rubric into manageable monthly milestones, helping schools track metrics and gather documentation seamlessly. The result is an actionable strategy that improves campus resource efficiency, fosters student civic responsibility, and positions the school to secure prestigious district-level recognition and funding. The innovation of this project lies in its systemic, scalable approach to environmental citizenship. Rather than relying on a single teacher's isolated efforts, this blueprint creates a distributed leadership model where students run the campus eco-logistics. This significantly elevates student achievement by developing real-world project management, civic writing, and public speaking skills as students present data to the administration. It solves a massive pain point for teachers: complex award documentation. By providing turnkey tracking templates aligned directly with the GSRP pillars, we make school-wide environmental stewardship achievable and stress-free. Participants walk away with an immediate action plan to boost their campus sustainability metrics, engage their local community, and successfully apply for the M-DCPS Foundation's Green Fund awards, bringing up to $5,000 back to their school sites.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Eco-Logistics Management: Students form a campus Green Committee to manage, monitor, and optimize school-wide recycling and organic composting programs.
- Campus Canopy Mapping: Students audit the school property's green spaces, researching native Florida flora to plan and execute targeted tree-canopy restoration projects.
- The GSRP Portfolio Build: Student leaders collect, curate, and format monthly conservation data and campaign photos into a formal digital portfolio for the GSRP submission.
- School-Wide Awareness Campaigns: Students design and pitch morning announcement segments, interactive assemblies, and media campaigns promoting campus resource conservation habits.
- Civic Action Proposals: Students analyze school waste metrics, draft evidence-based policy changes for the cafeteria or main office, and formally present their findings to school administration.

TEACHERS LEARN

•How to easily break down the multi-tiered GSRP application rubric into simple, month-by-month campus action items.
- Methods for establishing and mentoring an autonomous, student-led Green Team that handles the daily logistics of campus conservation.
- Strategies to integrate composting, recycling data, and botany studies across various subjects, from elementary science to secondary civics.
- Best practices for effortlessly capturing and organizing classroom artifacts to build a high-scoring, competitive GSRP award portfolio.
- How to leverage campus sustainability achievements to apply for supplementary funding.

STANDARDS

SC.912.L.17.20: Predict the impact of individuals on environmental systems and examine how human lifestyles affect sustainability.
SC.4.E.6.6: Identify resources that are renewable and nonrenewable and explain the differences between them.
SS.7.CG.2.2: Evaluate the obligations of citizens to participate in civic and political life at the local, state, and national levels.
SC.7.E.6.6: Identify the impact that humans have had on Earth, such as situations involving plastic pollution, resource depletion, deforestation, and land usage.
LAFS.68.WHST.2.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

MATERIALS

•The official M-DCPS Green Schools Recognition Program digital planning toolkit and comprehensive evaluation rubric.
•Turnkey templates for tracking school-wide composting metrics, recycling volumes, and student volunteer hours.



ENERGYCAP: ROADMAP TO GREEN SCHOOL

Use M-DCPS EnergyCAP data to track school utility savings and build student-led conservation audits that win Green School Program awards. (period)

Subject Area: Health & Wellbeing

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

This project embeds environmental sustainability into core academics by using EnergyCAP—M-DCPS's utility tracking system—as an interactive classroom lab. Teachers will learn how to help students retrieve live, building-level data on electric, water, and gas consumption to audit their school's resource efficiency. By transforming raw utility metrics into actionable conservation goals, students design awareness campaigns, measure resource reductions, and map real energy drops. This curriculum directly builds the evidence portfolio needed for the M-DCPS Green Schools Recognition Program (GSRP) while bridging facility operations with classroom instruction. Utilizing EnergyCAP is completely free and transforms school infrastructure into a living laboratory where students calculate actual resource and financial savings from reducing energy and water consumption. This approach strengthens data literacy, graphing, critical thinking, and environmental responsibility while streamlining the GSRP application process. Participants will leave with turnkey, interdisciplinary lessons and a clear path to improve sustainability metrics, earn recognition, and pursue Green Fund awards and other sustainability funding opportunities.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Campus Resource Audits: Students extract raw electricity and water usage data from EnergyCAP to calculate their school's baseline consumption and compare it across different seasons.
- Building Efficiency Monitoring: Students conduct school-wide energy conservation audits, tracking consumption trends against real-time data to measure the success of low-cost behavioral modifications.
- The GSRP Evidence Portfolio: Students act as environmental consultants, organizing their EnergyCAP consumption graphs, waste-reduction metrics, and conservation reports into multimedia portfolios for the school's annual GSRP award application.
- Phantom Load Investigations: Students track weekend and holiday electricity spikes via interval data dashboards, diagnosing mechanical or behavioral resource waste and proposing shutdown protocols to school administration.

TEACHERS LEARN

•How to access, navigate, and leverage localized EnergyCAP dashboard metrics specifically to track school-site sustainability trends.
- How to crosswalk EnergyCAP consumption and conservation datasets seamlessly with Florida's B.E.S.T. Mathematics and NGSSS Science standards.
- Concrete strategies to map classroom environmental activities directly to the high-scoring rubrics of the Green Schools Recognition Program (GSRP).
- Methods for coaching student-led green teams to initiate data-driven energy and water-saving campaigns that actively reduce utility bills.
- Best practices for compiling student data charts and campaign artifacts into an impactful, award-winning GSRP submission portfolio."

STANDARDS

SC.912.L.17.20: Predict the impact of individuals on environmental systems and examine how human lifestyles affect sustainability.
SC.7.E.6.6: Identify the impact that humans have had on Earth, such as situations involving plastic pollution, resource depletion, deforestation, and land usage.
SC.912.L.17.11: Evaluate the costs and benefits of various alternatives to common behaviors or practices related to the use of renewable and nonrenewable resources.
MA.6.DP.1.2: Explain that data distribution determined by systematic observations or experiments can have a shape, center and spread, and any of these characteristics can be used to describe the data distribution.
MA.7.DP.1.1: Determine an appropriate graphical representation to display a given set of numerical data.

MATERIALS

- Access to the M-DCPS EnergyCAP utility portal
- GSRP Application
- Student-accessible digital devices (laptops or tablets) with basic spreadsheet or data visualization applications.



CARRY ON, CREATIVELY

Design and construct unique artisan satchels and bags using repurposed fabrics, hot glue, and mixed-media techniques.

Subject Area: Visual Arts

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

In this hands-on workshop, participants transform repurposed fabrics, trims, and everyday materials into functional artisan satchels using hot glue construction and mixed-media techniques. The project integrates the elements and principles of art and design while developing creativity, planning, problem-solving, craftsmanship, fine motor skills, and design thinking. Each satchel is created to tell a story, express personal identity, or serve a specific purpose, giving students meaningful ownership of their work. The activity can also connect to literature, history, science, social studies, character education, and other classroom themes, making it a flexible interdisciplinary project. Teachers leave with a completed sample and an affordable, adaptable lesson that promotes sustainability, personal expression, and hands-on learning across a range of grade levels.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Purpose and Meaning: Determine what the satchel will represent or how it will be used, such as a storytelling bag, character satchel, nature pouch, travel bag, or personal identity piece.
- Curriculum Connections: Connect the project to literature, history, science, social studies, geography, or character education through theme-based designs.
- Planning and Design: Create preliminary sketches showing the satchel's shape, size, colors, materials, strap placement, pockets, and embellishments.
- Sustainable Materials: Examine and compare repurposed fabrics, clothing, ribbon, trim, buttons, and other reusable materials for texture, durability, flexibility, and appearance.
- Construction Skills: Measure, fold, layer, attach, and assemble fabric while learning to reinforce edges, create closures, add straps, and construct simple pockets or panels.
- Symbolic Expression: Add fabric collage, appliqué, lettering, painted details, patches, and found objects that communicate personal meaning or classroom content.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Construction Techniques: Demonstrate simple methods for creating durable, functional satchels using hot glue, repurposed fabrics, and mixed-media materials.
- Curriculum Integration: Connect the project to literature, history, science, social studies, character education, and other classroom themes through meaningful design prompts.
- Design Process: Guide students from brainstorming and sketching through material selection, construction, revision, and artistic decision-making.
- Classroom Management: Organize materials, teach safe hot-glue practices, differentiate instruction, and adapt the project for various grade levels and abilities.
- Lesson Implementation: Use classroom-ready lesson plans, assessment strategies, and extension activities that promote creativity, craftsmanship, sustainability, and student ownership while aligning with visual arts standards.

STANDARDS

MATERIALS

- Repurposed fabric
- Hot glue guns, glue sticks, and protective work mats
- Fabric scissors, rulers, and marking pencils
- Trim, ribbon, buttons, patches, and other embellishments
- Webbing, rope, ribbon, or fabric strips for handles and straps
- Velcro, snaps, or other closures
- Sketch paper, pencils, and markers for planning and design
- Lesson plan, rubric, reflection sheet, and sample satchel

ASSURANT®



FROM SKETCH TO SCULPTURE: PAPIER-MÂCHÉ PETS

Transform simple pet drawings into 3-D papier-mâché sculptures while building creativity, spatial reasoning, problem-solving, and engineering skills.

Subject Area: Visual Arts

Grade Level: K-5

Description:

This workshop helps students turn simple drawings of their favorite pets into vibrant 3-D papier-mâché sculptures. Students begin by sketching a pet on paper, then use that drawing as a guide to plan the shapes, forms, and materials needed to build the sculpture. As they assemble body parts with tape and other techniques, students think like structural engineers by creating a sturdy base, joining pieces together, and solving problems when parts do not fit neatly. The forgiving nature of papier-mâché allows students to troubleshoot, revise, and strengthen their work throughout the process. Students learn how shapes connect, how structure supports form, and how creative problem-solving can turn mistakes into design solutions. This project builds creativity, spatial reasoning, engineering thinking, perseverance, and pride as students transform a 2-D concept into a completed 3-D artwork.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Sketching: How to choose a favorite pet, such as a bird, dog, cat, or bunny, and create a drawing to guide the sculpture design.
- Planning: How to identify the materials needed to build the structure of their animal, including bottles, cardboard, sticks, cups, caps, paper, foil, clay, or found objects.
- Armature Building: How to create a strong base and body structure using crumpled paper, masking tape, foil, hot glue, clay models, or recycled materials.
- Layering: How to apply glue-covered paper strips to the armature, overlap layers, and alternate strip direction to strengthen the sculpture.
- Drying: Why papier-mâché must dry completely before moving on to painting and finishing.
- Painting: How to select colors, details, and features that make the sculpture look like a living animal.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Armature Building: How to coach students in building sturdy internal structures using everyday recyclables such as cereal boxes, plastic bottles, newspaper, cardboard, and tape.
- Assembly Techniques: How to help students join legs, bodies, and other animal parts securely so sculptures do not sag, collapse, or cave in under wet papier-mâché.
- Mess Management: How to use glue containers, sponges, and paintbrushes to reduce drips, improve student control, simplify cleanup, and minimize classroom chaos.
- Scaffolding: How to break complex animal forms into simple shapes, such as cylinders, tubes, and boxes, so students of all ability levels can successfully build their sculptures.
- Finishing Techniques: How to use painting, tissue-paper bleeding, faux fur textures, fabric, and collage elements to adapt the project for grades K–8.
- Cross-Curricular Connections: How to connect papier-mâché pet sculptures to science and language arts through animal habitat research, anatomy studies, or creative writing prompts.

STANDARDS

VA.3.S.3.3 / VA.5.S.3.3 (Skills, Techniques, and Processes): Use tools, media, techniques, and processes in a safe and responsible manner.

VA.5.F.1.1 (Innovation, Technology, and the Future): Examine and experiment with traditional or non-traditional uses of media to apply imaginative techniques in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.

VA.4.O.1.1 (Organizational Structure): Use structural elements of art and organizational principles of design to develop content in artwork.

VA.68.F.1.1 (Innovation, Technology, and the Future - Middle School): Use non-traditional thinking and various techniques to create two-, three-, and/or four-dimensional artworks.

VA.3.O.3.1 (Organizational Structure): Use symbols, visual language, and/or structural elements of art to express ideas in artwork.

MATERIALS

- Tray
- Tape
- Scissors
- Glue
- Containers
- Sponges
- Newspaper
- Recycled paper
- Cardboard
- Recycled bottles

ASSURANT®



CREATIVE SYMMETRY

Blend math, art, and design in a hands-on mandala project that reveals the beauty of symmetry and pattern.

Subject Area: Visual Arts

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

Discover how structure can inspire creativity through a hands-on STEAM project that combines geometry, design, and artistic expression. In this workshop, students create striking mandalas by designing six triangular sections that come together to form a symmetrical circular composition. Using adhesive stickers, they explore concepts such as symmetry, repetition, pattern, and radial balance while making individual creative choices within a structured framework. The project naturally integrates mathematics, science, technology, engineering, and art as students investigate geometric relationships, patterns found in nature, material design, and digital color exploration. The use of simple materials makes the activity accessible for learners of all ages and abilities while encouraging precision, creativity, and problem-solving. The final reveal is both surprising and motivating as individual triangles transform into a sophisticated, one-of-a-kind mandala. Participants will leave with an adaptable, high-impact lesson that consistently produces beautiful results across grade levels and skill levels

STUDENTS LEARN

• Design Composition: Create an original design within a single triangular section using adhesive stickers.
• Symmetry and Pattern: Apply symmetry, repetition, and radial balance to develop a cohesive mandala.
• Geometry in Art: Use geometric and organic shapes to build visual interest and complexity.
• Positive and Negative Space: Explore how the placement of shapes creates balance, contrast, and visual impact.
• Mandala Construction: Assemble a complete mandala by repeating and rotating the triangular design.
• Creative Discovery: Experience the "final reveal" as individual sections combine into a unified composition.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Geometry Through Art: Learn how to teach symmetry, pattern, and radial balance through a simple, structured design process.
• Creative Scaffolding: Discover how adhesive stickers can support complex design thinking while making art accessible to all learners.
• Hands-On Mathematics: Explore strategies for making abstract geometry concepts visible through engaging, tactile activities.
• Structured Creativity: Learn how to manage a guided process that encourages both consistency and individual creative expression.
• Digital Color Exploration: Incorporate digital tools to help students experiment with color combinations and make intentional artistic decisions.

STANDARDS

MA.4.GR.1.1 – Classify two-dimensional figures based on the presence or absence of parallel or perpendicular lines, or the presence or absence of angles of a specified size.
MA.4.FR.1.1 – Represent and interpret fractions as parts of a whole and recognize that a fraction can be decomposed into a sum of fractions with the same denominator.
SC.4.N.1.1 – Raise questions about the natural world, use appropriate reference materials to obtain information, conduct investigations, and communicate results.
VA.4.C.1.1 – Apply art concepts and use a variety of sources to create original works of art.
VA.4.O.1.1 – Organize the elements of art to create a unified composition.

MATERIALS

• 3-D Printer (under $300, classroom-safe model)
• Filament (PLA or other kid-safe, biodegradable materials)
• Computer or Tablet (with internet access for each student or group, could be a school computer)
• Tinkercad Account (free, web-based CAD software)
• Access to Free 3-D Model Websites (e.g., Thingiverse, Maker World)
• Project Worksheets / Planning Templates (journal for sketching designs and tracking projects)
• Measuring Tools (rulers or tape measures for scaling designs)
• Printer Maintenance Tools (scraper, nozzle cleaner, etc.)

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THE MIXED MEDIA ARTIST'S BOOK

Turn recycled materials into meaningful mixed media artist's books that showcase creativity, storytelling, and artistic growth.

Subject Area: Visual Arts

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Students create mixed media artist's books that showcase their creativity while exploring printmaking, collage, drawing, painting, journaling, and visual storytelling. Using recycled materials and a variety of artistic techniques, participants design personalized books that reflect their ideas, interests, and artistic growth. The project blends visual arts, literacy, and sustainability while encouraging experimentation with texture, composition, color, and narrative. As students build their books over time, they develop a cohesive body of original artwork that can support applications to visual arts programs, magnet schools, scholarships, and college art programs. The workshop demonstrates how this low-cost, highly adaptable project promotes creative risk-taking, student voice, and authentic artistic expression while supporting diverse learners. Participants will leave with practical strategies for implementing mixed media artist's books that foster creative expression, strengthen technical and conceptual art skills, and result in high-quality work that showcases student growth.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Mixed Media Techniques: Combine collage, printmaking, drawing, painting, and recycled materials to create original works of art.
- Visual Storytelling: Communicate personal experiences, ideas, and themes through sequential artwork and creative journaling.
- Artistic Design: Explore composition, color, texture, layering, and balance while developing cohesive artist's books.
- Creative Sustainability: Transform recycled and found materials into meaningful works of art through environmentally conscious design.
- Portfolio Development: Build a collection of original artwork that showcases artistic growth and can support applications to visual arts programs, magnet schools, and college portfolios.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Artist's Book Construction: Learn how to teach artist's books and junk journals using recycled and found materials.
- Mixed Media Techniques: Explore beginner-friendly printmaking, collage, layering, and bookmaking strategies that encourage creative expression.
- Textile and Embellishment Techniques: Incorporate fabric, beads, buttons, stitching, and other mixed media elements to add texture and dimension.
- Cross-Curricular Connections: Connect visual arts to storytelling, literacy, personal narrative, and environmental sustainability.
- Classroom Implementation: Adapt artist's book projects for diverse learners, varying skill levels, and a wide range of classroom settings.

STANDARDS

VA.68.C.1.2 – Use creative processes and artistic skills to communicate ideas and personal experiences through artmaking.
VA.912.S.1.5 – Experiment with and apply a variety of media, techniques, and processes in creating artworks.
VA.68.O.1.1 – Apply the elements of art and principles of design to create works of art that communicate meaning.
VA.912.H.3.3 – Analyze how works of art reflect cultural identity, history, and personal experience.
ELA.6-12.C.1 – Write to express ideas, develop narratives, and communicate information for a variety of purposes.

MATERIALS

- Old books, magazines, and junk mail (recycled paper sources)
- Cardboard (cereal boxes, packaging) for book covers
- Fabric scraps, lace, and ribbon
- Buttons, beads, and small found objects
- Brown paper bags and handmade paper beads
- Glue sticks and liquid glue
- Scissors and hole punchers
- Staplers, yarn, thread, and needles (for binding/stitching)
- Acrylic paint, tempera paint, or water-based inks
- Foam sheets or recycled materials for stamp making

ASSURANT®



MOTION, MARBLES & INK

Watch creativity roll as students explore force, motion, and cause-and-effect through colorful, marble-powered abstract art.

Subject Area: Visual Arts

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This hands-on STEAM project transforms movement into vibrant works of abstract art using marbles, ink, paint, and gravity. As marbles roll across a surface, they create colorful trails, layered textures, and unexpected patterns, demonstrating how motion, force, and chance influence artistic outcomes. Through experimentation and observation, students investigate cause-and-effect relationships while developing creativity, problem-solving, and critical-thinking skills. The process encourages artistic risk-taking, curiosity, and self-expression as students test variables and predict results. Using inexpensive, readily available materials, this engaging project seamlessly integrates visual arts with STEM concepts and can be adapted across grade levels and content areas. Participants will leave with a ready-to-implement lesson that shows how simple materials can inspire deeper learning, meaningful exploration, and exciting connections between art, science, and creative inquiry.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Creative Expression: Explore color, composition, and artistic decision-making while creating one-of-a-kind abstract artwork.
- Scientific Inquiry: Investigate how motion, force, gravity, friction, and cause-and-effect influence the movement of marbles and the resulting designs.
- Experimentation: Test variables such as marble quantity, ink consistency, color combinations, and tray angles to observe how small changes affect outcomes.
- Observation Skills: Closely examine how movement and environmental factors influence artistic creations and experimental outcomes.
- Problem Solving: Adapt techniques and refine processes based on observations, challenges, and unexpected results.
- STEAM Connections: Discover how art and science intersect through hands-on exploration of physics concepts and creative design.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Classroom Implementation: Learn how to set up and manage a safe, low-cost marble painting station using readily available materials and efficient classroom procedures.
- Inquiry-Based Learning: Explore strategies for guiding student predictions, experimentation, observation, and reflection through hands-on investigation.
- STEAM Integration: Discover how to connect visual arts with science concepts such as force, motion, gravity, friction, and cause-and-effect relationships.
- Experimental Design: Learn how to help students investigate variables, analyze results, and draw conclusions through structured exploration.
- Cross-Curricular Connections: Identify opportunities to integrate art, science, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking into a single engaging learning experience.
- Assessment Strategies: Implement process-based assessment techniques using sketchbooks, reflection prompts, observations, discussions, and student explanations.

STANDARDS

VA.912.C.2.1 – Evaluate and analyze works of art based on elements of art and principles of design to determine how well they communicate ideas and meaning.
VA.912.S.1.7 – Use processes, techniques, media, and materials skillfully and with confidence to communicate ideas in personal works of art.
VA.912.S.3.1 – Develop processes and techniques to create, revise, and refine works of art that reflect personal ideas and intentions.
VA.912.H.1.1 – Analyze how works of art relate to historical, cultural, and contemporary contexts and how they influence meaning.
VA.912.F.3.5 – Use appropriately cited resources to document research and present information on visual culture and creative processes.

MATERIALS

- Watercolor Paper or Mixed Media Paper
- Black Sumi Ink
- Colored Inks or Liquid Watercolors
- Shallow-Walled Trays or Boxes
- Marbles
- Cornstarch
- Markers
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils
- Watercolors



"GLOCAL" STORYTELLER AMBASSADORS

Explore Florida's geography and ecosystems through hands-on STEAM activities that empower students to become "Glocal" storytellers, environmental advocates, and community changemakers.

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Grade Level: 6--12

Description:

The Glocal Social Science Storyteller Ambassadors Project engages students in exploring Florida's geography, ecosystems, and environmental challenges through hands-on, interdisciplinary learning experiences. Using STEAM activities, students investigate the natural and human features that shape Florida while discovering ways to protect and preserve its unique environments. Through research, field studies, technology, storytelling, and creative projects, students document their learning and share their findings as "Glocal" ambassadors—individuals who understand local issues within a global context. The project also connects students with professionals in STEAM-related fields, helping them explore real-world applications of science, technology, and research. By combining social studies, environmental science, and digital storytelling, students develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and technology skills while building agency, civic responsibility, and a deeper understanding of their role in creating positive change within their communities and beyond.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Scientific Inquiry: Participate in hands-on science experiments that explore Florida's geography, ecosystems, and environmental challenges.
• Field Research: Visit national parks and other natural areas to observe ecosystems, collect information, and connect classroom learning to real-world environments.
• Observation and Reflection: Maintain journals to document discoveries, record observations, and reflect on learning experiences.
• Photography: Capture images that document environmental features, wildlife, and field experiences while developing visual storytelling skills.
• Digital Storytelling: Create blogs and vlogs to share research, experiences, and insights with a broader audience.
• Communication: Deliver presentations that showcase research findings, environmental investigations, and proposed solutions to real-world issues.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Florida Geography Instruction: Interactive strategies for teaching Florida's geography, ecosystems, and environmental challenges through engaging, hands-on learning experiences.
• Storytelling and Communication: Techniques for strengthening student storytelling skills through journaling, photography, blogging, vlogging, presentations, and digital media.
• Global and Local Connections: Strategies for helping students become "glocal" thinkers who understand the relationship between local issues and global challenges.
• Global Citizenship: Approaches for developing civic responsibility, cultural awareness, environmental stewardship, and informed decision-making.
• Community Building: Methods for fostering collaboration, leadership, and meaningful connections between students, schools, and their communities.

STANDARDS

SS.912.G.1 Understand how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technology to report information.
SS.912.G.5 Understand how human actions can impact the environment.
SS.912.G.6 Understand how to apply geography to interpret the past and present and plan for the future.
SS.912.H.1 Identify and analyze the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the arts.
SS.912.H.2 Respond critically and aesthetically to various works in the arts.

MATERIALS

- Maps of Florida
- Copy of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- Journals
- Binoculars
- Cameras
- Pens
- National Geographic Magazines





HISTORY BY DESIGN: CONSTRUCTING A MONGOLIAN YURT

Combine history, research, writing, and STEAM as students explore the Mongol Empire through the design and construction of a 3-D yurt.

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

This project-based learning lesson engages students in exploring Mongolian history, culture, geography, and architecture through the design and construction of a 3-D model of a traditional Mongolian yurt. Using class notes and scholarly research sources, students investigate how geography, climate, and cultural traditions influenced the structure and function of yurts. Students apply their learning by creating an accurate model and writing an expository essay explaining the yurt's construction and historical significance. Throughout the project, students develop research, writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills while making decisions about materials, design, and construction methods. The lesson integrates social studies, language arts, and STEAM concepts by combining historical inquiry with engineering and design. By examining architecture as a reflection of culture and daily life, students gain a deeper understanding of history while presenting their learning through multiple modalities, including written analysis and hands-on model building.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Expository Writing: Students write an expository essay explaining the history of the Mongols, the purpose and construction of yurts, and how geography influenced this unique architectural design.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze the relationship between culture, environment, and architecture, gaining a deeper understanding of how people adapt to their surroundings and how history influences daily life.
- Communication: Students create a concise written summary of their research and findings to accompany their model, strengthening their ability to communicate key information clearly and effectively.
- Creativity and Presentation: Students showcase their learning through both a written product and a hands-on 3-D model, allowing them to present information in multiple formats while demonstrating their understanding of historical and cultural concepts.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Project-Based Learning: Gain a deeper understanding of project-based learning, including its key principles, classroom applications, and benefits for student engagement, achievement, and critical thinking.
- Research Skills: Discover strategies for incorporating meaningful, research-based activities that strengthen students' inquiry, information literacy, and analytical skills.
- Expository Writing: Explore techniques for integrating expository writing into the curriculum while helping students develop strong research, organization, and communication skills.
- 3-D Modeling and Simulations: Learn how to use hands-on models and simulations to deepen student understanding of complex concepts and provide opportunities for creative expression and problem-solving.
- STEAM Integration: Examine how to incorporate science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics into interdisciplinary projects that connect academic content to real-world learning experiences.
- Student-Centered Instruction: Leave with practical strategies and adaptable project templates that can be applied across subject areas to promote collaboration, creativity, and deeper learning.

STANDARDS

SS.912.A.1.2 Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.
SS.912.A.1.4 Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.
SS.912.H.1.1 Relate works in the arts (architecture, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) of varying styles and genre according to the periods in which they were created.
SS.6.W.4.11 Explain the rise and expansion of the Mongol empire and its effects on peoples of Asia and Europe including the achievements of Ghengis and Kublai Khan.
ELA.10.C.1.4 Write expository texts to explain and analyze information from multiple sources, using a logical organization, purposeful transitions, and a tone and voice appropriate to the task.

MATERIALS

- Laptops- for research
- Links to research on Mongolian Yurts/Mongolian Culture
- Notebook paper/pencil- to write down research and write down rough draft of expository writing piece
- Building materials (glue gun, glue sticks, popsicle sticks, toothpicks, dowel sticks, fabric, ribbon, yarn, Styrofoam, poster board, cardboard, paint, brushes, markers, scissors, craft knife)
- Index cards - for expository writing attached to model





THE CULTURE COLLECTION

Bring world cultures to life as students create tourism-style advertisements, investigate cultural artifacts, and use technology to build cultural literacy and critical-thinking skills.

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Grade Level: 3-12

Description:

This workshop features two engaging, ready-to-use projects that help students explore world cultures through research, technology, visual design, and storytelling. In the first project, students create an advertisement-style cultural profile highlighting traditions, customs, cuisine, and other unique aspects of a selected country. In the second, students use Google Lens to identify the cultural origin of a mystery doll and create a Canva-based profile examining its cultural significance, regional traditions, and the role of women within that society. Both projects combine research, writing, presentation, and creative design to build cultural literacy while strengthening communication and critical-thinking skills. The hands-on nature of the doll investigation sparks curiosity and engagement, while the visual design component provides an accessible and creative alternative to traditional research assignments. Participants will leave with two standards-aligned projects that can be adapted across grade levels and content areas.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Research and Analysis: Investigate countries, cultures, traditions, and customs using credible sources while synthesizing information into meaningful cultural profiles.
- Cultural Literacy: Develop a deeper understanding of global cultures, beliefs, rituals, traditions, and ways of life through authentic inquiry and exploration.
- Visual Communication: Create engaging Canva designs, infographics, travel brochures, and cultural profiles that effectively communicate information through both text and visuals.
- Inquiry-Based Learning: Use Google Lens and other research tools to identify and investigate cultural artifacts, applying observation and problem-solving skills to uncover their origins and significance.
- Women's History: Explore the roles, traditions, and contributions of women across different cultures and historical periods, connecting cultural artifacts to broader social history.
- Communication: Strengthen oral presentation skills by explaining research findings, cultural insights, and design choices with confidence and clarity.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Inquiry-Based Learning: Learn how to launch student inquiry using physical artifacts and Google Lens to spark curiosity, critical thinking, and independent research.
- Project Design and Management: Gain a step-by-step framework for guiding students through multi-page Canva projects that balance visual design, research, and substantive written content.
- Cultural Studies Integration: Explore strategies for teaching cultural literacy through engaging, student-centered projects that promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding.
- Cross-Curricular Applications: Discover how these projects can be adapted for English Language Arts, Social Studies, History, Hospitality and Tourism, World Languages, and other content areas.
- Technology Integration: Utilize digital tools such as Canva and Google Lens to enhance student engagement, creativity, and inquiry-based learning.
- Authentic Assessment: Explore ways to create meaningful projects that connect classroom learning to real-world audiences and purposes.

STANDARDS

SS.912.CG.2.3 – Analyze the role of civic participation in a democratic society.
ELA.910.C.1.3 – Write to argue, inform/explain, or analyze in response to a text and/or topic, using a suitable format.
ELA.910.R.2.1 – Explain how individual text sections and features convey meaning in grade-level texts across genres.
SS.912.W.1.3 – Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.
ELA.910.SL.1.4 – Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically.

MATERIALS

- Canva (free educator account; student accounts can be created for free)
- Chromebooks, laptops, or tablets with internet access
- Country selection list (teacher-prepared; provided during workshop)
- Project instruction sheets (one per project; provided as handouts or posted digitally)





STRING THEORY: KANDI, PLUR, & THE ART OF CO

Explore how kandi bracelet-making and PLUR values can be adapted into fun, student-centered activities that build belonging, connection, and positive school culture.

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Grade Level: K-512

Description:

String Theory introduces teachers to the art and culture of kandi, handmade beaded bracelets rooted in the rave tradition of PLUR: Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect. In this hands-on workshop, participants learn the history and meaning behind kandi trading, create their own bracelets, and explore how the practice can be adapted for school settings. More than a craft activity, kandi trading is built on intentionality, generosity, and connection, making it a powerful tool for building belonging and positive peer relationships. Teachers will examine ways to use kandi as a club activity, positive behavior incentive, classroom ritual, or schoolwide community-building event. The workshop also connects PLUR values to SEL, restorative practices, and inclusive school culture. Participants leave with a wearable artifact, a practical implementation framework, and a fresh perspective on how youth culture can strengthen relationships, increase student engagement, and create authentic student-centered connection.

STUDENTS LEARN

- History: The cultural origins of PLUR and kandi trading, including its roots in rave and electronic music culture as a youth-driven movement centered on inclusivity and kindness.
- Values: How Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect can be practiced in everyday school interactions and positive peer relationships.
- Design: How to create kandi bracelets using colors, patterns, and letter beads that reflect personal identity, creativity, or a meaningful message.
- Connection: How the PLUR handshake represents respect, kindness, and intentional exchange.
- Community: How participating in a structured kandi trade builds generosity, trust, vulnerability, and a sense of belonging.
- Reflection: How discussion and journaling can help students explore themes of kindness, identity, belonging, and school community.

TEACHERS LEARN

- History: The core values of PLUR and kandi culture, including how to present the material to students in an age-appropriate, engaging, and culturally respectful way.
- Process: How to make kandi bracelets using a step-by-step approach, including materials needed, budget-friendly supply options, and ways to scaffold the craft for different skill levels.
- Ritual: How to model the PLUR handshake and facilitate a structured kandi trade in a classroom, club, or school setting.
- Implementation: How to adapt kandi trading as a club activity, positive behavior incentive, or schoolwide community-building event.
- Resources: How to use discussion prompts, reflection journal starters, materials lists, and sample club meeting agendas to bring the activity directly to students.

STANDARDS

HE.7.R.1.1 - Analyze the relationship between character traits such as honesty, respect, and empathy and their impact on personal and community health and well-being.
HE.7.R.3.2 - Evaluate opportunities to serve and contribute to the school or community through volunteerism and civic engagement.
HE.7.CEH.2.1 - Examine how peers, culture, and social influences affect personal health behaviors and community well-being.
VA.68.S.1.3 - Use ideas from cultural, historical, and artistic references to create personal responses in personal artwork.
VA.68.S.2.1 - Organize the structural elements of art to achieve artistic goals when producing personal works of art.

MATERIALS

- Pony beads (variety of colors)
- Elastic stretch cord or plastic lanyard string
- Scissors
- Letter beads
- Shallow plastic trays or lid organizers (to keep beads from rolling off desks)
- Small cups or containers for sorting bead colors
- Printed bead pattern templates
- Ziplock bags for students to store works-in-progress
- A reference chart of PLUR values and the handshake steps



You're Invited!

BUILDING LEADERSHIP CULTURES







A FIRST LOOK AT M-DCPS' K-12 LEADER IN ME JOURNEY

An exclusive leadership session for principals & school administrators featuring real stories, practical strategies, and pathways to funding.

FEATURING M-DCPS' FIVE LEADER IN ME SCHOOLS

- SWEETWATER ELEMENTARY
- JOELLA C. GOOD ELEMENTARY
- GREYNOLDS PARK ELEMENTARY
- YOUNG MEN'S PREPARATORY ACADEMY
- MIAMI BEACH SENIOR HIGH

DISCOVER HOW TO ACHIEVE MEASURABLE RESULTS IN:

Leadership | Culture | Academics

Highly effective students and adults who are leaders in their school and community.

A high-trust school culture where every person's voice is heard and their potential is affirmed.

Engaged students who are equipped to achieve and entrusted to lead their own learning.

Registration is required.



BUILDING LEADERSHIP CULTURES: THE LEADER IN ME JOURNEY

M-DCPS Principals and Assistant Principals are invited to join FranklinCovey Education/Leader in Me representatives to explore how leadership cultures are being built in district schools and learn about implementation, sponsorship, and grant support. Teachers are welcome, too!

Subject Area: Leadership Culture

Grade Level: PreK-12

Description:

What if every student, educator, and staff member saw themselves as a leader?
Join representatives from FranklinCovey Education/Leader in Me and Miami-Dade County Public Schools for an engaging leadership session designed specifically for MDCPS building principals.
Hear firsthand how Miami-Dade schools are beginning to build leadership cultures through Leader in Me across the K–12 continuum. Through authentic conversations and practical examples, participants will gain a peek into Year 1 implementation, lessons learned, early successes, and key considerations for schools exploring this work.
Whether your school is just beginning to explore leadership development or looking to strengthen an existing culture, you'll leave with a clearer understanding of what implementation looks like, the support available throughout the journey—including guidance from a dedicated Leader in Me implementation coach—and how a strong MDCPS district partnership, combined with FranklinCovey sponsorship opportunities and M-DCPS Ed Fund grant guidance, can help schools identify funding pathways and reduce financial barriers to implementation.

STUDENTS LEARN

Students and staff benefit from:
• Highly effective students and adults who are leaders in their school and community.
• A high-trust school culture where every person's voice is heard and their potential is affirmed.
• Engaged students who are equipped to achieve and entrusted to lead their own learning.

TEACHERS LEARN

• What the K–12 Leader in Me framework is and how it integrates Leadership, Culture, and Academics to support whole-school transformation.
• Practical insights into Year 1 implementation, including leadership team development, professional learning, and building staff ownership.
• Lessons learned and early successes from Miami-Dade schools currently implementing Leader in Me.
• How the MDCPS District Partnership, FranklinCovey sponsorship opportunities, and M-DCPS Ed Fund grant guidance work together to help schools explore funding pathways and support implementation.

STANDARDS

N/A

MATERIALS

Leader in Me Membership includes:
- Live onsite professional learning workshops for staff
- Principal's Academy and ongoing leadership development resources
- PK–8 blended leadership curriculum and high school leadership courses
- Access to a resource library with thousands of classroom-ready materials and videos
- Support from a dedicated certified implementation coach with real-world experience
- Annual planning and progress tracking calls
- Live community learning days to strengthen implementation and results



AGENCY: THE KEY TO ELL SUCCESS

Empowering ELL Students to own their success

Subject Area: ESOL

Grade Level: 9-12

Description:

This project helps English Language Learners build student agency by giving them the knowledge and tools to take ownership of their academic journey. Students learn how the ESOL program works, what is required to move through and exit ESOL levels, and how their current choices connect to graduation, post-secondary opportunities, and long-term success. By making the "hidden curriculum" clear, the project helps students better understand school systems, academic expectations, and the steps needed to advocate for themselves. The intervention supports both cognitive and affective growth by strengthening academic confidence, motivation, self-regulation, and goal-setting. Students begin to see themselves as active participants in their education rather than passive observers. Teachers learn a no-cost, ready-to-use framework that can be adapted for classrooms where students may feel disconnected from their progress or unsure of their options. This project gives ELLs the clarity, confidence, and responsibility they need to thrive in school and beyond.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Hidden Curriculum: The structure of the ESOL program, including what ACCESS levels mean and the ELA FAST assessment score needed to exit the program.
- Self-Regulation: How to monitor their own grades through the student portal and identify which assignments are affecting their GPA.
- Goal Setting: How daily effort connects to long-term opportunities such as college admission, vocational certifications, and future career paths.
- Self-Advocacy: How to ask teachers for clarification, request retakes, and seek additional support in and out of the ESOL classroom.
- Academic Pathways: How to understand the steps from ESOL Level 1 to high school graduation through a visual presentation, often provided in students' home language.
- Career Awareness: How to explore a career of interest and identify the academic requirements needed to reach that goal.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Hidden Curriculum: How to break down ESOL program data, including ACCESS levels, exit criteria, and state testing requirements, into student-friendly visual roadmaps.
- Data Chats: How to guide students through a grade audit so they can identify missing assignments and better understand what is affecting their academic progress.
- Self-Regulation: How to integrate checklists and academic goal-setting tools into existing instruction without sacrificing instructional time.
- Home-Language Support: How to use bilingual surveys and instructional materials to help students understand important school requirements and expectations.
- Career Connections: How to help students connect current classroom tasks to long-term goals such as graduation, college, vocational certification, and career pathways.
- Student Agency: How to shift students from passive compliance to personal investment by helping them understand, monitor, and advocate for their own educational progress.

STANDARDS

ELA.9.C.1.1 – Explain how key elements enhance or support the main idea and message in a multimedia presentation.
ELA.10.C.4.1 – Conduct research to answer a question, refining the scope of the question to align with findings and synthesizing information from multiple sources.
ELA.12.C.1.3 – Write and support a claim using logical reasoning, relevant evidence from sources, elaboration, and a tone appropriate to the task.
ELA.9.C.5.2 – Use digital tools to produce and share writing and to publish and interact with others.
HE.912.R.1.1 – Predict the potential outcomes of making health-related decisions and how they can affect self and others.

MATERIALS

- PowerPoint presentation (provided)



FANTASY VACATION PRESENTATION

Take students on a global adventure as they research, budget, and present their dream vacation while building language, technology, and presentation skills.

Subject Area: ESOL

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

The Fantasy Vacation Presentation is an engaging, project-based learning experience that combines language development, research, mathematics, and technology. Students research and plan an imagined trip to a destination outside their home country, using English to investigate flights, lodging, restaurants, attractions, and travel costs. They then create and present a PowerPoint presentation written in a designated verb tense while developing a realistic travel budget using basic math skills. Built-in differentiation allows all students to participate successfully, with expectations adjusted based on English proficiency and time in U.S. schools. Throughout the project, students strengthen research, note-taking, writing, budgeting, presentation, and digital literacy skills while exploring destinations that interest them personally. The authentic nature of the task increases engagement and confidence, providing meaningful opportunities for language practice and real-world application. Participants will leave with adaptable scaffolds, assessment strategies, and a ready-to-implement project suitable for a wide range of learners.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Language Development: Strengthen English language skills through speaking, listening, reading, and writing in authentic, real-world contexts.
- Grammar and Sentence Structure: Build syntax and sentence formation skills by progressing from simple sentences to more complex sentence structures using time clauses and transitional language.
- Travel Vocabulary: Expand academic and travel-related vocabulary related to transportation, lodging, dining, attractions, budgeting, and tourism.
- Research Skills: Learn how to identify reliable travel websites, gather relevant information, and evaluate sources effectively.
- Academic Literacy: Practice extracting key information, taking notes, and paraphrasing research rather than copying text.
- Budgeting and Financial Literacy: Calculate travel expenses, compare costs, and create realistic vacation budgets using basic math skills.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Differentiated Instruction: Learn how to design a single project with built-in differentiation that allows students at varying English proficiency levels to participate successfully while maintaining high expectations.
- Grammar in Context: Explore strategies for teaching past and future tenses, sentence structure, time clauses, and academic language through authentic writing and communication tasks.
- Research and Academic Literacy: Discover methods for helping students locate reliable sources, take effective notes, paraphrase information, and incorporate real-world data into their work.
- Language Development: Utilize scaffolds that support vocabulary acquisition, language production, reading comprehension, and written communication.
- Technology Integration: Learn how to incorporate Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and other digital tools to strengthen language instruction, presentation skills, and digital literacy.
- Project-Based Learning: Implement engaging, real-world learning experiences that connect language development to meaningful and relevant tasks.

STANDARDS

ELA.612.C.1.2 – Present information orally, using appropriate volume, pacing, and pronunciation.
ELA.612.W.2.2 – Write informative texts that examine a topic and convey ideas through the selection and organization of relevant content.
ELA.612.R.2.5 – Evaluate the credibility and accuracy of sources.
ELA.612.V.1.1 – Use grade-level academic vocabulary in speaking and writing.
MA.6.AR.1.1 – Solve multi-step, real-world problems involving the four operations with whole numbers and decimals.

MATERIALS

- Internet-enabled computers or laptops (classroom and/or media center access)
- Web browser access to English-language travel, airline, hotel, and tourism websites
- Projector or interactive display for modeling and presentations
- Student notebooks or loose-leaf paper for handwritten note taking
- Pens, pencils, and highlighters
- Microsoft Word for drafting and revising written work
- Microsoft PowerPoint for creating presentations
- Access to email or cloud storage (OneDrive/Google Drive) for saving and submitting work
- Teacher-created sentence frames, rubrics, and differentiated requirements by ESOL level
- Vocabulary lists and graphic organizers for research and budgeting



DIFFERENTIATION WITH AI

Work smarter, not harder, by using AI to create engaging, differentiated lessons that meet the needs of every learner.

Subject Area: Technology

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

Differentiation is one of the most powerful instructional practices—and one of the most time-consuming. This hands-on workshop shows educators how to use AI to dramatically reduce planning time while creating meaningful, student-centered learning experiences. Participants will learn how to quickly adapt lessons, assignments, and assessments to meet diverse readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles without creating multiple lessons from scratch. Guided by veteran instructional technology specialist Dr. Tejeda, participants will actively design differentiated materials during the session and explore practical, research-based strategies for personalizing learning. Whether you're new to AI or already experimenting with it, you'll leave with ready-to-use examples, a repeatable planning process, and effective ways to increase student engagement, support diverse learners, and work smarter—not harder.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Students whose teachers participate in this workshop benefit from instruction that is intentionally designed with empathy and tailored to their specific learning needs, not just adjusted at a surface level.

- Students receive materials adapted to their readiness, learning preferences, and language needs, not just leveled by difficulty but designed to help them access and process content in ways that work best for them.
- Students engage in tasks that reflect their interests and strengths, where teachers use AI to quickly generate meaningful options rather than generic choice boards.
- Students experience instruction that anticipates barriers, with supports such as guided questions, models, and structured thinking prompts built in from the start.
- Students work with content that has been intentionally revised by the teacher using AI suggestions, ensuring accuracy, relevance, and alignment to classroom goals.
- Students participate in small group learning that is dynamically adjusted based on ongoing teacher insight, not static grouping.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Teachers in this workshop will learn how to design and implement meaningful, student-centered differentiation using AI in practical and efficient ways.

- How to use AI to quickly generate differentiated materials that align to specific student needs, including readiness, language, and learning preferences.
- How to apply strategies from Differentiation With AI: An Innovative Approach to Designing Student-Centered Learning Experiences to refine AI outputs so they are instructionally sound and aligned to learning goals.
- How to design tasks that move beyond surface-level differentiation by embedding supports, scaffolds, and extensions from the start.
- How to use AI during planning and in real time to adjust instruction based on formative data and student responses.
- How to create student-centered learning experiences that reflect empathy, ensuring materials are meaningful, accessible, and engaging across content areas.

STANDARDS

ELA.K12.EE.1.1 Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning. Use appropriate reasoning and relevant evidence to support claims.
ELA.612.C.1.2 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant evidence.
MA.K12.MTR.2.1 Demonstrate mathematical reasoning by applying concepts and making connections.
SC.K12.N.1.1 Define a problem based on a specific body of knowledge.
SS.912.H.1.3 Evaluate the significance of events, ideas, and individuals in history.

MATERIALS

- Device with internet access for each teacher
- Access to AI tools such as Google Gemini and NotebookLM
- Access to TejedaEDU.com for guided resources and examples
- Copies or excerpts from Differentiation With AI: An Innovative Approach to Designing Student
- Student data or sample student profiles for practice with differentiation
- Projector or interactive display for modeling and demonstrations
- Note-taking tool such as digital document or notebook for planning and reflection

School District Education Foundation Matching Grant Program



GEMINI GEMS FOR EDUCATORS

Build Your AI Teaching Assistant with Gemini Gems.

Subject Area: Technology

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

Move beyond basic AI prompting and learn how to build custom Gemini Gems that work like specialized teaching assistants. In this hands-on workshop, participants will create personalized AI tools designed to support specific classroom tasks such as lesson planning, differentiated instruction, rubric creation, student feedback, and classroom communication. The session demonstrates how to build a Gem from scratch, refine instructions for accurate and consistent results, and share or adapt Gems for collaboration across teams. By creating AI assistants tailored to their own instructional needs, educators can automate routine tasks while maintaining high-quality, personalized instruction. Participants will leave with practical strategies for building a library of reusable Gemini Gems that save time, streamline planning, and increase instructional efficiency. Whether new to AI or looking to deepen existing skills, attendees will gain the confidence to create customized AI tools that enhance teaching and maximize time with students.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Socratic Problem Solving: Work with a Socratic Tutor Gem that guides learning through questions and prompts instead of giving direct answers.
- Historical and Literary Roleplay: Interview AI personas such as historical figures, scientists, or literary characters to deepen understanding through realistic conversations.
- Writing Revision: Use a Writing Coach Gem to receive rubric-based feedback and revise writing through an iterative editing process.
- Research and Inquiry: Explore complex topics with subject-specific Gems while verifying AI-generated information using reliable sources.
- AI Literacy: Evaluate the strengths and limitations of AI responses and learn strategies for using AI responsibly in academic work.
- Custom AI Design: Build and refine personalized Gemini Gems that solve classroom problems, support learning, or organize projects.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Engineering "Safe-Rails" for Inquiry: Learn how to create Gemini Gems with built-in guardrails—such as a "No-Answer" rule—that guide students through questioning and problem solving instead of providing direct answers.
- "Human-in-the-Loop" Verification: Explore strategies for teaching students to fact-check AI-generated responses, identify hallucinations or bias, and verify information using reliable sources.
- Iterative Design Thinking: Guide students through a Build-Test-Refine cycle in which they create, evaluate, and improve Gemini Gems based on performance and instructional goals.
- Collaborative Gem Sharing: Learn how to implement a Classroom Gem Exchange where students and teachers share, adapt, and improve custom Gems to support collaborative learning.

STANDARDS

SC.912.TI.1: Assess the impact of technological advancements.
SC.912.ET.1: Analyze the impact of emerging technologies on daily life.
SC.912.ET.2: Analyze the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications.
SC.912.PE.3: Apply computational thinking to real-world problems.
SC.912.CO.1: Reflect mastery of foundational computer literacy skills.

MATERIALS

- Computer with internet access

School District Education Foundation Matching Grant Program



AI FOR ESE: EMPOWERING DIVERSE LEARNERS

Support ESE students in mastering complex content through NotebookLM's AI-driven personalized scaffolding.

Subject Area: Technology

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This project shows teachers how to use the secured M-DCPS version of NotebookLM to provide more equitable access for ESE students. NotebookLM functions as a personalized learning companion by transforming teacher-provided instructional materials into manageable study guides, simplified summaries, and interactive supports. Because responses are grounded in approved classroom sources, students remain focused on accurate curriculum while receiving support that matches their learning needs. The tool is especially helpful for students with learning disabilities, ADHD, or processing-speed challenges by offering multimodal options such as Audio Overviews and accessible summaries. Students can review complex texts, ask questions, strengthen retention, and build independence in inquiry-based learning. Teachers learn how to use AI not just for efficiency, but for equity, creating a more inclusive digital learning environment that supports academic success, confidence, and student self-esteem.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Multi-Modal Learning: How to use Audio Overviews and simplified summaries to better understand complex reading assignments and improve content retention.
• Comprehension: How listening to conversational explanations can help bridge the gap between decoding challenges and higher-level thinking.
• Research Skills: How to use NotebookLM to organize research materials, identify key dates, figures, and ideas, and stay focused on the most important information.
• Executive Function Support: How AI tools can help reduce the organizational demands of research so students can focus more on understanding and synthesizing content.
• Writing Support: How to use NotebookLM to receive suggestions or critiques on drafts in a supportive, non-judgmental way.
• Confidence: How immediate feedback and accessible study tools can help students refine their ideas, engage with challenging assignments, and build independence as learners.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Scaffolded Supports: How to use NotebookLM to create multi-modal study materials that help students access complex content.
• Source Grounding: How to keep AI responses focused on accurate, teacher-provided materials so ESE students stay on task with reliable information.
• Personalized Feedback: How to use AI tools to provide immediate, individualized support that can reinforce IEP goals and student learning needs.
• Audio Learning: How to convert dense instructional text into conversational audio for students who benefit from auditory support.
• Lesson Integration: How to incorporate AI accessibility tools into existing ESE lesson plans without replacing teacher guidance or curriculum expectations.

STANDARDS

SC.912.ET.1.7 - Describe how technology has changed the way people build and manage organizations and how technology impacts personal life.
SC.8.HS.1.1 - Describe the impacts of the presence of technology and the lack of technology on everyday life.
SC.912.N.1.1 - Define a problem based on a specific body of knowledge... and do the following: Pose questions about the natural world.
G.K12.5.3.3b - Technology - Understand: Demonstrate the ability to propose new uses for current technology.
ELA.K12.EE.04 – Make inferences to support comprehension.

MATERIALS

• Secured M-DCPS Approved AI tool: NotebookLM.
• Hardware: Laptop or Tablet with Internet connection
• Credentials: M-DCPS Microsoft credentials (Employee#@dadeschools.net) to log into Google Chrome

School District Education Foundation Matching Grant Program



READING PATHWAYS IN GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Empower students to take ownership of learning through structured, self-paced reading pathways in Google Classroom.

Subject Area: Technology

Grade Level: K-5
K-8

Description:

Reading Pathways in Google Classroom is a teacher-designed instructional model that transforms reading instruction into a structured, student-centered learning experience. Using self-paced digital pathways, students progress through targeted reading tasks, comprehension checks, and choice-based activities while receiving appropriate supports and feedback along the way. The model promotes differentiation, independence, and mastery of standards by allowing students to move at their own pace while maintaining access to grade-level content. Participants will learn how to design clear instructional sequences that reduce teacher repetition, increase engagement, and provide opportunities for meaningful practice and reflection. Adaptable across grade levels and subject areas, this flexible framework helps teachers create organized, consistent learning experiences that support diverse learners. Attendees will leave with practical tools, implementation strategies, and a ready-to-use pathway that can be immediately applied to strengthen reading comprehension, student ownership, and instructional effectiveness.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Independent Learning: Progress through structured reading pathways at an individualized pace while building responsibility and ownership of learning.
• Reading Comprehension: Complete targeted reading activities and comprehension checks designed to strengthen understanding of grade-level texts.
• Critical Thinking: Analyze texts, make inferences, draw conclusions, and support responses with evidence.
• Choice and Voice: Demonstrate understanding through choice-board activities that allow for multiple ways to show learning.
• Communication Skills: Respond to texts through writing, audio recordings, visual projects, and discussion activities.
• Vocabulary Development: Build academic vocabulary through contextualized reading, interactive practice, and application activities.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Independent Learning: Progress through structured reading pathways at an individualized pace while building responsibility and ownership of learning.
• Reading Comprehension: Complete targeted reading activities and comprehension checks designed to strengthen understanding of grade-level texts.
• Critical Thinking: Analyze texts, make inferences, draw conclusions, and support responses with evidence.
• Choice and Voice: Demonstrate understanding through choice-board activities that allow for multiple ways to show learning.
• Communication Skills: Respond to texts through writing, audio recordings, visual projects, and discussion activities.
• Vocabulary Development: Build academic vocabulary through contextualized reading, interactive practice, and application activities.

STANDARDS

ELA.K.R.2.1 Use text features and illustrations to gather information and support understanding. ELA.2.R.2.2 Identify the central idea and explain how details support it in informational texts. ELA.4.R.1.1 Explain how setting, events, conflict, and character development contribute to the plot in a literary text. ELA.6.R.2.2 Analyze the central idea(s), implied or explicit, and its development throughout a text. ELA.8.C.1.3 Write an argument to support a claim using logical reasoning and relevant evidence from sources.

MATERIALS

- Google Classroom access
- Google Slides templates for pathway design
- Google Forms for assessments
- Sample leveled reading passages
- Choice board templates
- Student tracking/checklist sheets
- Rubrics for mastery and feedback
- Devices (laptops/tablets)



TEACHING TRUNKS ON THE HOLOCAUST

The Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg Provides Free Teaching Trunks Across the State

Subject Area: Holocaust Studies

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

The Florida Holocaust Museum provides free teaching trunks to help teachers meet the Florida Mandate on Holocaust Education. The FHM's dynamic trunk curriculum teaches the lessons of the Holocaust, genocide, and character education with trunks designed to accommodate the needs of one class or a team of teachers. The trunk materials are appropriate for students at each grade level. The focus of each trunk is carefully developed to create a spiraling educational approach that builds upon the previous grade level trunk. The first and second grade trunk is a video-based series on respect and tolerance education. All other trunks contain picture books, class sets of literature, curriculum guides, videos/DVDs, poster sets, and resource materials.

STUDENTS LEARN

The curriculum focuses on integration of Subject Areas, cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, and an emphasis on reading and writing skills. Themes Include:
- Different and the Same for first and second grade
- Creating Community for third and fourth grade
- Beginning Holocaust Studies for fifth grade

TEACHERS LEARN

FURTHER STUDY IS AVAILABLE THROUGH SPECIALIZED TRUNKS
- Arts Trunk for elementary students.
- Human Rights and Genocide Trunk for middle and senior high students.
- Investigating Human Behavior for middle school.
- Historical Perspectives of the Holocaust for high school.

STANDARDS

- SS.1.CG.2.2: Describe the characteristics of citizenship in the school community.
- SS.3.CG.2.1: Describe how citizens demonstrate civility, cooperation, volunteerism, and other civic virtues.
- SS.5.HE.1.1: Define the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.
- SS.68.HE.1.1: Examine the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.
- SS.912.HE.3.4: Explain why it is important for current and future generations to learn from the Holocaust.

MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/learn/for-educators/resources/
https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/learn/

Jack Chester Foundation



RESOURCES FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK

The Florida Holocaust Museum is Dedicated to Teaching Members of all Races and Cultures the Inherent Worth and Dignity of HumanLlife to Prevent Future Genocide

Subject Area: Holocaust Studies

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK: NOVEMBER 4-7, 2025
Throughout the year, The FHM hosts a variety of special live programs, as well as during Holocaust Education Week. Many of their teacher trainings are asynchronous, and educators can view them through the Museum's online library of workshop recordings. After watching a workshop or attending a live training, educators can receive a certificate of completion. Teachers can access primary-source-based curriculums for their classrooms on the free Curriculum Portal and guide students through curriculums based on Museum's exhibitions, historical events, and primary sources. Audiobooks and e-books from their Virtual Teaching Trunks can be checked out by teachers and students on devices or accessed on a smartboard in the classroom. All the resources are free to schools across the state.

STUDENTS LEARN

• Primary-Source Analysis: Examine photographs, documents, testimonies, and other historical sources to develop critical-thinking and inquiry skills.
• Survivor Testimony: Learn from Holocaust survivors and their descendants about persecution, survival, resilience, and the preservation of memory.
• Florida Connections: Explore the experiences of Holocaust survivors who settled in Florida through the Witness to History exhibition.
• Museum Exploration: Engage with live and virtual tours that bring Holocaust history, artifacts, and personal stories into the classroom.
• Reflection and Responsibility: Consider the consequences of prejudice and intolerance while developing empathy and a stronger sense of civic responsibility.

TEACHERS LEARN

• Across Generations: Conversations with Survivors and their Descendants Educators can schedule a virtual meeting with a Holocaust Survivor, second-generation speaker, or third-generation speaker.
• Museum Tours: Live or virtual tours of the Museum bring the historical
and educational resources and the visual experience of the Museum's permanent exhibition to students and educators across the state.
• Traveling Exhibitions: For teachers introducing Holocaust history to their students for the first time or more advanced studies, the "Witness to History" exhibition features stories of Holocaust survivors who live in Florida.

STANDARDS

- SS.912.HE.1.1: Define the Holocaust as the planned and systematic state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945.
- SS.912.HE.2.15: Describe the experience of Holocaust survivors following World War II.
- SS.912.HE.3.4: Explain why it is important for current and future generations to learn from the Holocaust.
- SS.912.HE.3.5: Recognize that antisemitism includes perceptions of Jewish people that may be expressed through hatred or rhetorical and physical acts directed toward individuals, property, community institutions, or religious facilities.
- SS.912.W.1.3: Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.

MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/learn/for-educators/resources/
https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/learn/

Robert Russell
Memorial Foundation



PASSPORT TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Students master budgeting skills by exploring the real-world financial decisions of global travel.

Subject Area: Financial Literacy

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

This interdisciplinary workshop empowers students to explore critical financial literacy concepts through the exciting, globally-minded lens of travel, culture, and entrepreneurship. Recognizing that many middle school students lack exposure to real-world financial systems, this innovative project introduces essential money management skills—including budgeting, saving, banking, credit, investing, and responsible spending—in an engaging and highly motivating format. By actively investigating the true cost of global travel, comparing international currencies, and planning comprehensive educational trips, students immerse themselves in rigorous real-world problem solving. Through these hands-on activities, participants discover how thoughtful financial planning directly impacts their future opportunities, unique experiences, and long-term personal goals. Ultimately, this creative experience builds lasting confidence in managing money responsibly, effectively equipping students with practical financial decision-making skills that prepare them for a successful future.

STUDENTS LEARN

•Budgeting: Students create realistic travel budgets by estimating expenses and allocating funds for transportation, lodging, meals, activities, and other travel costs.
- Financial Literacy: Students learn about banking, savings, interest, and responsible money management while developing strategies for achieving financial goals.
- Economic Decision-Making: Students analyze wants versus needs, compare spending options, and make informed financial choices based on available resources and priorities.
- Mathematics: Students apply mathematical concepts to calculate expenses, compare costs, manage budgets, and evaluate financial scenarios.
- Global Economics: Students explore currency exchange rates and gain an understanding of how international financial systems affect travel and purchasing power.
- Research and Analysis: Students investigate destinations, transportation options, and accommodations, using data to compare alternatives and justify their decisions.

TEACHERS LEARN

•Real-World Learning: Teachers will learn how to design authentic financial literacy experiences that allow students to apply math, reading, writing, and problem-solving skills to real-life situations such as budgeting, saving, and comparison shopping.
- Financial Literacy Instruction: Teachers will explore strategies for helping students develop financial decision-making skills related to spending, saving, careers, and consumer responsibility.
- Cross-Curricular Integration: Teachers will discover how combining language arts, mathematics, social studies, and art can increase student engagement and create meaningful connections across content areas.
- Critical Thinking Development: Teachers will learn techniques for guiding students to analyze advertisements, interpret financial information, evaluate options, and support their decisions with evidence and calculations.
- Differentiated Instruction: Teachers will examine how presentations, posters, graphs, writing assignments, and budgeting activities can support diverse learning styles while fostering student creativity and participation.
- Project-Based Learning: Teachers will leave with a ready-to-implement project that promotes student engagement, financial literacy, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving skills.

STANDARDS

SS.8.FL.2.3 Students describe different payment methods.
SS.8.FL.2.5 Students discuss why budgets may need to change because of unexpected expenses or change in income.
MA.8.AR.1.2 Solve multi step equations and inequalities.
MA.8.AR.2.4 Analyze linear relationships and graphs.
ELA.8.V.1.3 Understand and use grade-level academic vocabulary.

MATERIALS

•Chromebooks/tablet
- Financial Literacy Curriculum Resources
- Poster boards and display materials
- Presentation supplies
- Calculators
- Travel guides and maps
- Currency conversion tools
- Entrepreneurship kits



SMARTPATH TO COLLEGE

Empowering Students with Strategies for Postsecondary Success

Subject Area: College & Career Readiness

Grade Level: 9-12

Description:

College and Career Clubs create a college-bound culture in high schools, empowering low-income and first-generation students with strategies to overcome barriers to higher education. The project covers college and career exploration, navigating applications, ACT/SAT preparation, completing the FAFSA, financial aid, and scholarships. Students gain skills for postsecondary success. The Guide to College Clubs helps schools establish clubs for grades 9-12, offering lessons, tools, and resources on essay writing, test-taking strategies, college research, and improving study skills.

STUDENTS LEARN

- How and what is needed to prepare for college and careers.
- To discuss themes related to resiliency, empathy, and perseverance.
- Planning and preparing to visit universities, review questions and concerns.
- Most effective Plan of Action for college and career readiness.

TEACHERS LEARN

- How and what is needed to prepare for college and careers.
- To discuss themes related to resiliency, empathy, and perseverance.
- Planning and preparing to visit universities, review questions and concerns.
- Most effective Plan of Action for college and career readiness.

STANDARDS

LAFS.1112.L.3.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
LAFS.K12.SL.1.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
G.K12.1.1.2 Use a variety of professional journals, professional databases, and college textbooks to make connections between and/or among fields of discipline.



WRITE, CREATE, PUBLISH: CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM

Turn classroom creativity into published children's books with practical strategies for writing, student collaboration, and self-publishing.

Subject Area: ELA

Grade Level: K-12

Description:

This workshop helps teachers move from the dream of writing a children's book to a clear, practical path for creating and self-publishing one. Participants explore how to begin the writing process, develop an idea into a manuscript, organize classroom or personal stories, and understand the basic steps involved in publishing finished work. The workshop is especially useful for educators who want to write their own children's book, publish student-created work, or build a class book project that gives students a meaningful voice. Teachers learn about available resources, planning tools, and ways to include students in brainstorming, drafting, illustrating, revising, and celebrating a completed book. Students can collaborate as authors, illustrators, editors, or contributors, strengthening creativity, literacy, ownership, and pride. By the end of the workshop, teachers leave motivated and equipped to begin turning ideas into published work.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Creativity: How to use imagination, personal experiences, or classroom themes to create original book content.
- Collaboration: How to work with classmates and the teacher to contribute to a shared classroom book project.
- Illustration: How pictures, design, and layout help bring a children's book to life.
- Revision: How to improve writing through feedback, editing, and revising before publication.
- Publishing: How written work can become a finished book that can be shared, celebrated, and preserved.
- Ownership: How contributing to a published project builds pride, confidence, and a stronger connection to reading and writing.

TEACHERS LEARN

- Writing Process: How to begin writing a children's book by developing ideas, organizing content, and turning a concept into a manuscript.
- Publishing Steps: The basic steps involved in preparing finished work for publication, from drafting and revising to formatting and sharing the final book.
- Resources: How to identify tools, platforms, and supports that can help teachers move through the writing and self-publishing process.
- Student Involvement: How to include students in the project through brainstorming, writing, illustrating, editing, or contributing to a classroom book.
- Classroom Publishing: How to guide students or teachers through creating a finished book that can be published, shared, and celebrated.

STANDARDS

ELA.K12.EE.4.1: Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1: Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1: Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.
ELA.[Grade].C.1.2 — Narrative Writing: Students create personal or fictional narratives using grade-appropriate narrative techniques.
ELA.[Grade].C.1.5 — Improving Writing: Students improve writing through planning, revising, editing, and feedback from adults or peers.
ELA.[Grade].C.3.1 — Conventions: Students apply grade-level grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Computer
- Microsoft word
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Water color paint and brushes



PODCASTING FOR CHANGE

Empower students to create podcasts that inform, inspire, and advocate for environmental conservation.

Subject Area: Podcasting

Grade Level: 6-12

Description:

Help students discover the power of their voices through podcasting. Led by Colin Foord of Coral City Camera, this workshop draws on his work documenting Miami's coral reefs and engaging the public in marine conservation. Participants will learn how students can use podcasting to investigate environmental issues, share compelling stories, interview experts, and advocate for meaningful change. The workshop will also cover affordable equipment, recording techniques, editing tools, and options for publishing and streaming. Educators will leave ready to guide students in creating powerful podcasts that build communication skills, environmental awareness, and civic engagement.Learn about the Coral City Camera, a hybrid art-science project located on an urban coral reef at PortMiami, and how you can incorporate it into your classroom. The CCC is the second longest running livestream on YouTube, continuously operating since February 2020. It builds civic pride through marine biodiversity and connects thousands of people and students to Miami's underwater environment.

STUDENTS LEARN

- Podcast Planning: Develop a clear topic, purpose, audience, and format.
- Environmental Advocacy: Use podcasting to raise awareness and inspire action.
- Research Skills: Investigate coral reefs and other environmental issues using credible sources.
- Storytelling: Create compelling narratives that connect listeners to a cause.
- Interviewing: Prepare thoughtful questions and conduct engaging interviews.
- Audio Production: Record, edit, and publish high-quality podcast episodes.

TEACHERS LEARN

- How to design and facilitate a student podcasting project.
- Strategies for using podcasting to teach environmental conservation and advocacy.
- Affordable tools and equipment for recording and editing podcasts.
- Techniques for helping students research, script, interview, and tell compelling stories.
- Methods for integrating podcasting across grade levels and subject areas.

STANDARDS

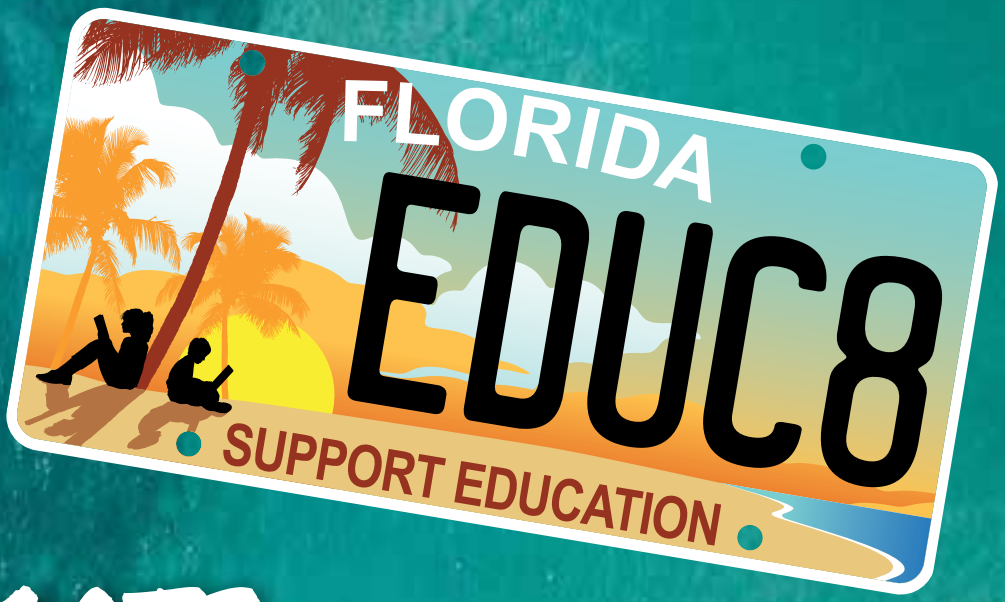
LAFS.1112.RST.3.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

SS.912.CG.2.2 Explain the importance of political and civic participation to the success of the United States' constitutional republic.

SS.912.CG.2.7 Analyze the impact of civic engagement as a means of preserving or reforming institutions.

MATERIALS

- Computer, tablet, or smartphone
- Microphone
- Headphones
- Quiet recording space
- Audio recording and editing software
- Podcast planning and script templates
- Safe platform for publishing and sharing episodes



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[1]GCU is offering a scholarship of up to 25% off tuition when 10 or more admissible students join a cohort. Groups of 10 must meet certain criteria to qualify as a cohort. This scholarship excludes CONHCP's RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing, accelerated BSN (ABSN), RNP and ACNP programs. Certificates are not eligible. Other exceptions may apply. Contact your local GCU university counselor for more information.

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Benefitting The Education Fund's Teacher Programs



The Education Fund is proud to recognize the endowment fund created in honor of longtime board member Lucy Petrey, who had supported the work of The Education Fund in so many ways. Lucy was the perfect board member, one who always lent a hand, and provided leadership without the title, and made people feel better about hard work. She always volunteered to help teachers. Whether it was our annual EXPO giving teachers grant writing workshops, handing out checks at our teacher award ceremonies, or editing teachers' submissions to our Ideas with IMPACT catalog, Lucy was always present.

Lucy also engaged others to support our work in public schools. Her friends were often corralled, with promises of brownies and other delights, to help with our teacher programs. Lucy's husband, Rod, and their daughters, Susan and Sarah, make Lucy's past love of The Education Fund and supporting our public schools a family affair that continues today. Lucy's infectious good humor was combined with a deep intellect and a sharp focus, all of which she brought to bear in numerous activities, including chairing our program committee, introducing new people to the importance of public education, and successfully securing significant funding to support our work with teachers.

Lucy's efforts touched the lives of countless teachers and students, and her indefatigable zest for life and tireless commitment to improving our world were a tremendous inspiration to all. The Education Fund board and staff are privileged to honor Lucy Petrey's memory with The Lucy Petrey Endowment Fund, which will support our public school teachers and their students for many years to come.







