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Resources for Elementary Educators

This issue of the VSTE Edge is for all of our readers who are among the many hard-working teachers, technology integration specialists, and administrators in the Commonwealth's elementary schools. We hope the links listed and described herein are helpful for those searching for ideas and resources to implement in their classrooms.

As always, we encourage your feedback and your input. If you have links to particular resources you would like to share - even to materials you have created yourself - please do not hesitate to send us an e-mail: edge@vste.org

The resources for this issue were found and annotated by future teachers pursuing their masters degree in elementary education through the School of Education at Virginia Tech. We are very grateful for the input of Megan Cotner, Lindsey Ernest, Debra Harris, Cindy Hicks, Jacquie Julien, Lisa Kim, Jackie Koch, Katie Matthews, Maria Munoz, Amy Porter, Tammy Rhee, Kristin Sandoe, Colleen Sweeney, and Crystal Tanyag. Their initials appear next to their submissions.

Articles

"Teaching with Templates"

> This article, "Teaching with Templates," is a good resource for integrating the use of template files for writing in the classroom. Templates are saved documents that are formatted to fit a purpose for the user (for example, a letter). The article explains how templates can promote more efficient and independent computer work for students. In addition, it provides an overview of some instruction to locate template files on both a Macintosh and Windows system. *(CT)*

"Blogging in Elementary Education"

> Have you heard of blogs? It is web logging or basically online journals that many college and high school students use as part of their course work. Did you ever consider blogs for elementary school students? In some areas elementary school students are blogging in many different content areas, the most obvious being language arts. Check out the link below to see ways that you can incorporate blogging into your elementary school classroom! *(JK)*

"Integrating Technology in the Elementary Classroom"

> This article explains how to use technology in the classroom to accommodate the teacher as well as the students. The author suggests things like having a computer center while other students are working at other stations, and also lists tips on how to integrate technology in the classroom. There are links

listed to many activities using the Internet, educational chat rooms, and helpful ideas. *(DH)*

"Instructional Uses of the Internet for Elementary Age Students"

This article contains many useful ideas of how to integrate technology into the classroom. Ideas range from communicating with another class through email, communicating with an expert or significant person, gather data for use in a class project, take an internet excursion for a subject unit, and creating online projects. *(MM)*

"Using Technology in the Elementary Classroom"

This article discussing using technology in an elementary school classroom, specifically with social studies. It discusses the importance of using technology specifically with social studies because of the availability of current information, locally and globally. This article contains an abundance of ideas for incorporating technology into your classroom as well as links to websites and resources found to be very useful. *(CS)*

"Technology Integration in an Elementary Science Classroom: Its Impact on Teaching and Learning"

This article reveals the findings of a study focused on technology integration in elementary science classrooms. The study focused on answering questions such as how the teachers' and students' practices changed as science was integrated into the classroom as well as what "powerful uses" emerged in the science classroom. The article describes several uses of technology in science education such as creating travel brochures for other planets through a publishing program or using different software programs to learn about the solar system. *(CH)*

Lesson Plans

(listed in grade-level order)

"Magic Hat"
Subject: Language Arts
Grade: Kindergarten
SOLs: K.1, K.4, K.7

This lesson helps children practice their phonics skilled in a fun game-like format. Students have to pull a "cat" out of the hat (or any other object to spell) by pulling out the correct letters and sounding them out. *(KS)*

"Will it Float?"
Subject: Science
Grade: Kindergarten
SOLs: K.1, K.4, K.5

In this lesson the students will imagine that they are Christopher Columbus about to start out on a journey. Before they leave they must make sure their boat will float. The students will test different materials to see which one

would make the best boat. After they get the right material, they must then "pack up" the boat for the journey. The students will put pennies in the boat until it sinks. They will experiment with different sizes and shapes to figure out how to carry more cargo. This lesson is fun for students because they are allowed to make their own alterations and test their predictions about which items will sink and which ones will float. Check out other lessons on the Scholastic lesson page as well. *(DH)*

"Recycling"
Subject: Environment
Grade: Kindergarten
SOLs: K.1, K.2, K.4, K.9, K.10

This is a link to a Kindergarten lesson plan about recycling, specifically making recycled paper. This lesson plan is great because it incorporates several science SOLs. The students will gain a better understanding of recycling by taking an active role in the process! *(JK)*

"Symbols of Citizenship"
Subject: Social studies
Grade: 1st
SOL: 1.11

In this lesson, students learn what national symbols are. The students will then create their own symbol, flag, and/or motto. *(JJ)*

"The Seasons"
Subject: Science
Grade: 1st
SOL: 1.7

This first grade lesson focuses on helping students understand the changes in plants and weather that seasonal changes bring. The lesson includes resources to internet sites that tell how and why plants undergo change. *(LK)*

"Animal Camouflage"
Subject: Science
Grade: 2nd
SOL: 2.5, others.

This lesson is a good activity to describe the importance of camouflage in the survival of many animals. The lesson is directed towards 5th grade; however, if all the materials are cut out beforehand, I think the activity would be appropriate for 2nd grade as well. In the lesson, the children play a game picking up paper animals: some with patterns and some not. They are asked to determine which one is easier to pick up and see. It gives a very detailed description of the activity and names many examples of animals that use camouflage. *(CT)*

"Life Cycles of Butterflies"
Subject: Science
Grade: 2nd
SOL: Science 2.4; Language Arts 2.11

In this lesson children learn the meaning of the metamorphosis, recognize the stages in a butterfly's life cycle, classify butterflies by type, color, and food, and learn to ask questions to further their knowledge. *(TR)*

"Economics & Literature"
Subject: (same)
Grade: 3rd
SOL: 3.7

This covers the topics of producers and consumers as well as human, natural, and capital resources. It teaches these concepts through reading the story The Goat in the Rug, a story about a Navajo weaver. Students will read the story and discuss the economics concepts listed above. After discussing, students play a game where they identify the type of resource used by the Navajo weaver to make rugs. *(AP)*

"Weather Patterns and Severe Weather Planning"
Subject: Weather
Grade: 4th
SOL: 4.6

Goals: Students will understand document weather patterns associated with the region where they live. Students will understand severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes, and how to prepare accordingly for each. Objectives: To collect weather data during the course of this lesson (and the entire weather unit). To explain warning signs and conditions associated with severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. To create severe weather safety preparations charts for severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. *(KM)*

"Doorbell Division"
Subject: Math
Grade: 3-4
SOL: 3.9, 3.10; 4.8

This lesson combines mathematics, technology, and language arts for the third and fourth grades. The students will listen to the story When the Doorbell Rang and then play a game in which they will divide multiples of 12 "cookies" as more friends arrive at the door. This can be used to practice division of other numbers as well. The students will then create their own stories of when the doorbell rang. The Kid Pix™ program is recommended for story creation and problem solving after drafting. *(MC)*

"Introducing The Most Heavenly Bodies In The Solar System"
Subject: Science
Grade: 4th
SOL: 4.7

The lesson plan is designed to be an introduction to a unit on Mars. However, there is great room for modification if you don't plan to emphasize Mars. The lesson plan is an interactive way for the students to infer what the unit will be about through an interactive and fun activity. It is very well planned out as to what questions should be asked at what point of the activity as well as how much time should be devoted to each section. The first part of the activity introduces major parts of the solar system. Children are divided into groups and are given time to research specific aspects of their assigned part of the solar system. The students then present the information to the class. The emphasis on Mars comes in to play when students are asked to compare and contrast Earth and Mars. *(MM)*

"Does Air Have Mass?"
Subject: Science
Grade: 5th
SOL: 5.4

Students often have trouble understanding that air is matter and therefore has mass. Through this activity of weighing an empty balloon and a blown up balloon, student's understanding of air having mass can increase. It also incorporates math by weighing the balloon. *(CS)*

Software

(listed by price)

Bingo
Cost: Free
Other: WinZip or other file expansion program needed (Zip file)

The division problems match with the fourth grade SOL 4.8. The software is free for the uses stated above. This software is a bingo game to help with division. I have recently encountered second graders enthusiastically engaged in a traditional style multiplication bingo game. This software would probably produce the same enthusiasm among the students and possibly more because of the technological aspect. This is great review for students as well as a resource for early finishers in the class. Students may compete to see who answers the most or who gets bingo the fastest. *(MC)*

MegaMaps
Cost: Free

Other: PC (Windows 3.1 to 98); Printer

This program allows you to print out maps of the United States in any size you want. This is helpful for teaching second graders the basic geography of the United States as well as map skills. You can show them where major rivers, lakes, and mountain ranges are. Students can trace journeys across the United States. It can also be used to teach students their states and state capitals. This program also has a feature to print a world map that can be useful. *(AP)*

USA Puzzle
Cost: Free download
Other: Windows-based

This software specifically deals with maps of the United States. It is an interactive program that has various levels of difficulty. This program allows students to place the states in the correct places, as well as the capitals to add more difficulty. The harder the level the more precise the student has to be when working with the program. It is completely free for anyone to download and use. It also contains music and other features to make the program more interesting for those using it. *(LE)*

Big Math Attack!
Cost: $12.95
Other: PC with VGA or SVGA graphics. Runs in Windows or in DOS.

This program is designed to increase math skills as well as typing, spelling, and metric conversion skills. The main idea of the program is that students are trying to save their city by protecting it from falling meteorites. The meteorites are the falling math problems that need to be solved in order to disappear. *(MM)*

Math Basics
Cost: Free for 10 trials, then $14.95
Other: PC with VGA or SVGA graphics. Runs in Windows or in DOS.

This software consists of fifteen programs aimed at Grades 1 through 6. The programs help teach the four basic arithmetic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division for whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. *(CS)*

Animated Alphabet
Cost: $16.00
Other: Versions for any Windows operating system

It is a game that teaches upper and lower case letters as well as letter sounds for preschool and kindergarten students. The software can be downloaded to use on all versions of Windows. *(CH)*

Animated States and Capitals
Cost: $18.00
Other: MS Windows-based software

In this software, upper elementary students label states and capitals in the United States. As they label the map correctly, part of an animation is revealed. When the entire map is complete, a funny animation plays for the student. There are several different ways to label the map and a variety of difficulty levels for a classroom with diverse abilities. Any software downloaded from this website runs on and version of Microsoft Windows. *(JJ)*

Ray's Spelling and Word Games
Cost: Free 30 day trial, then from $18 to $68 (depending on number of users).
Other: Windows 95 - XP

This software allows students to practice spelling and take spelling tests. It seems to be very helpful because it gives a list of the words the student got wrong after you practice them. When the student completes a test, s/he also get a certificate that can be printed out. This is motivational and fun for students in the classroom or at home. *(DH)*

ABC Spelling Games and Math Games 3.0
Cost: Free trial; $24.00
Other: Windows 95 - XP

A spelling game, math game and quiz that lets teachers put their own spelling and math lists into the game. Interactive characters teach spelling, math, geography, history, and science. Characters address kids by name. Enter homework into the game. *(KM)*

The Oregon Trail 5th Edition
Cost: School edition starts at $48.
Other: Windows 95 - XP (other specifications listed on website)

This well-known program simulates a journey along the Oregon Trail for children. They are responsible for managing their wagon party, supplies, and making important decisions. The children learn about the trials that real-life emigrants faced. For grades four-eight. *(LK)*

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