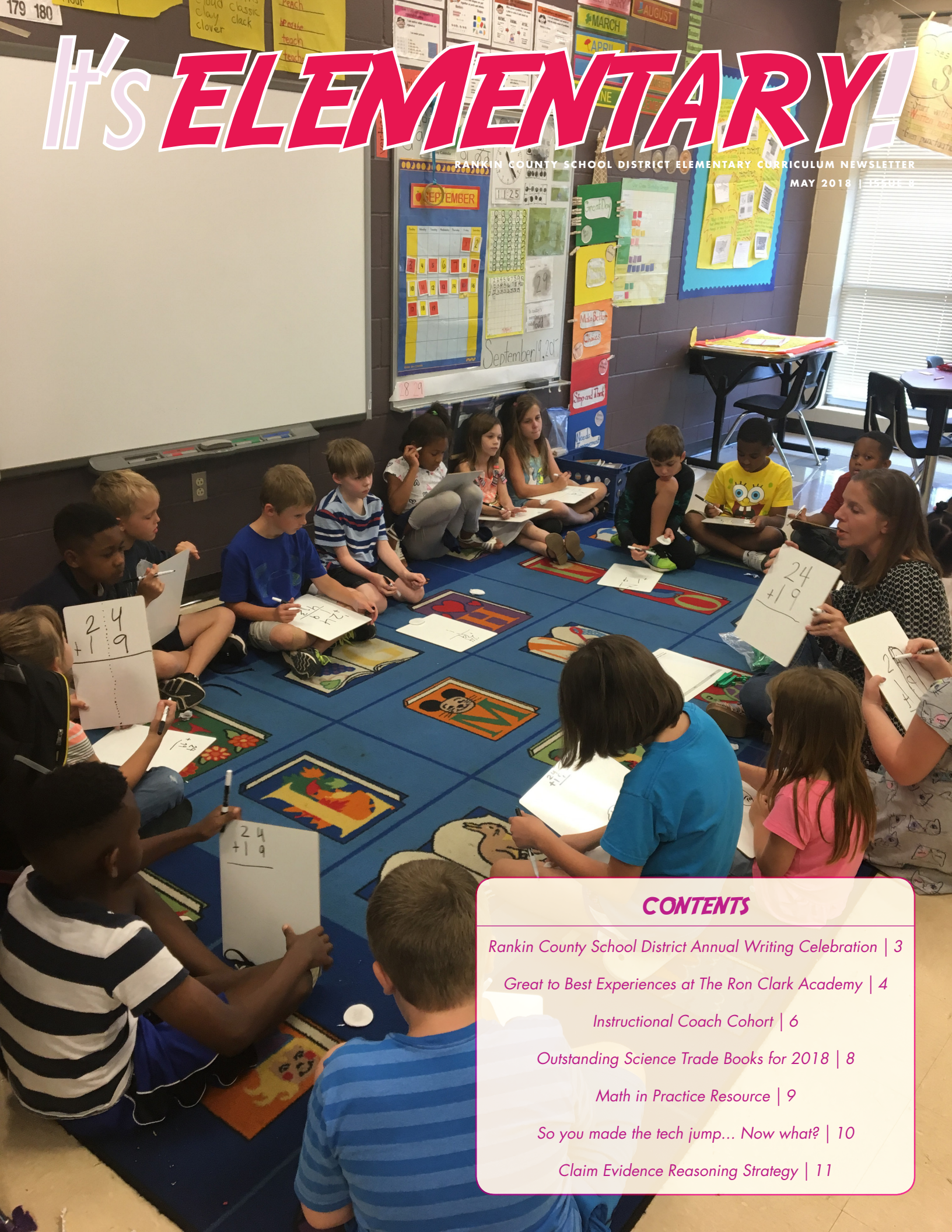

It's ELEMENTARY!

RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM NEWSLETTER
MAY 2018 | [illegible]

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RCSD ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM DEPARTMENT

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Mindy Stevens

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RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2018 K-12 1ST ANNUAL WRITING CELEBRATION

BY CASSIE WEAVER

The writing celebration was an idea sparked by the interest and dedication of Rankin County English - Language Arts Specialists. The celebration focused on a variety of writing emphasizing the lifelong process of learning to write. It gave students the opportunity to show what they know and express themselves through a writing piece that they self-selected.

Students are taught to write for different purposes, audiences, and occasions while learning from the writing of others. They are encouraged to be creative while utilizing different modalities and technologies in their writing.

Great to Best Experiences at The Ron Clark Academy

The Ron Clark Academy was an incredible and unforgettable experience. We got to hear amazing, motivational speakers such as Kim Bearden, Hope and Wade King, and of course "The Ron Clark!!" We were given the privilege to step inside some of the most energetic and creative classrooms to learn from the teachers and the students. We were encouraged to make connections, ask questions, and join in a teaching revolution- to bring PASSION back to our classrooms.

I believe my biggest take away from the experience was to not be afraid to make learning different and my style. I learned that it is important to keep kids on their toes with songs, chants, activities, and classroom transformations. I want my students to want to come to school and to constantly be wondering, "What will she do next?" I learned that through shaking up my classroom, I will not only become a better teacher, but I will make my classroom a more engaging place for my kids. Classroom engagement is the key to learning.

Rachel Murphy, Northwest Rankin Elementary, 3rd Grade

It would be easy to look at the Ron Clark Academy and think "There is no way I can teach like that!" or "Our school could never be that cool!" However, the teachers at RCA made it clear that if you took away the giant dragon skeleton and the extravagantly themed classrooms, at the core of the RCA are three simple things: passion, relationships, and rigor. Those are things that any teacher at any school in any grade can work to change. Teach with enthusiasm and a smile on your face even when you may not feel like it. Build relationships with your students and their families so they know you care about them and their success. With these things in place, your students will be willing to work hard to reach higher, more rigorous expectations. My trip to RCA taught me that I, the teacher, am the only one who has the power to make school a place where students want to be. I am going to strive to make my classroom a place where students get excited to enter. I have never had a professional experience that has impacted me as much as my trip to the Ron Clark Academy. Thank you RCSD for the opportunity!

Stephanie Baine, Richland Elementary, 1st Grade

Passion is a word I thought I fully understood until last week. My two-day experience at the Ron Clark Academy can be summed up in the small, yet powerful word - passion. We were welcomed with songs, smiles, and conversations, not just from the RCA staff, but also from their students. It wasn't hard to see they loved their campus, each other, and took pride in their hard work! As I watched each lesson, I saw these students encourage and help one another, while taking the conversation to a higher level. It was such a strong reminder of what the 48 amazing faces I was going to soon return back to at Florence Elementary could do. Passion isn't just enjoying something. It is loving it enough to take pride in it, digging even deeper than you have to, and wanting to share it with others, so they love it as well. I hope upon returning back, that I can spark that passion in each one of my students' lives, no matter their learning styles,or what's going on at home, and that they know they're loved each day at FES. As their teachers, it's up to us to foster a love and excitement for school in our students, help them take pride in what they and their peers accomplish, and ensure that learning takes place every single day they walk through our doors.

Alison Campbell, Florence Elementary, 5th Grade

When I left for the Ron Clark Academy (RCA), I had high expectations for learning new strategies and being inspired by amazing teachers. Not only were my expectations met, they were far exceeded. While it is hard to put into words how this trip impacted me, one word does come to my mind, atmosphere. From the moment you stepped foot into RCA, the atmosphere was amazing. From encouragement to high expectations and rigor, you could not help but be swept away and pulled into the learning experience. Students were fully engaged and showed the utmost respect for their teachers because of the atmosphere the teachers had created. Students were excited to see and participate in what teachers had prepared for them. I had the privilege of spending time with some of the students who attend RCA. I asked each student, "What is the best thing about your teachers? What is something I need to take back to make me a better teacher?" Each child responded that they participated and took constructive criticism from their teachers because they knew they cared about them. The teachers spent a lot of time making each lesson unique and exciting

for the students. What I hope to take back to my classroom is an atmosphere students cannot wait to be apart of. I am so thankful for this experience and the wonderful new friends I have made across the district.

Kylie Evans, Florence Elementary, 3rd grade

My takeaway word from the Ron Clark Academy was energy! Even as we stood across the street and waited for the gates to open, you could feel the energy. The teachers, staff, students and alumni that I had the pleasure of meeting were all exuding so much energy! I plan to bring that energy and enthusiasm back to my school and my classroom.

I have already created some digital breakouts, written song lyrics and have begun planning a classroom transformation for MAAP review. I intend to make 4th grade Math more engaging so that students are excited to come to school. Thank you so much for the opportunity to see RCA in person. It has already had such an impact on me personally and professionally.

Michelle Land, Pisgah Elementary, 4th grade

On March 8, 2018, I, along with nine of my fellow colleagues, embarked on two days of the most rigorous, engaging teaching workshops we have ever experienced. As I entered the doors of the Ron Clark Academy, I was welcomed by dancing, smiling students and teachers. Throughout the two days, I was impressed with how challenging the curriculum was, how polite the students were, and how involved parents and community were. There was a sense of family among teachers, parents, and students. Everyone was responsible for each child's learning, not just the teacher or the student. There was also collaboration among the teachers on the four grade levels (4th-8th), not just with a single grade level.

I am so grateful for this experience. I plan on implementing several ideas and takeaways from this academy. I will teach to the advanced students, make eye contact while teaching, use more cheers and chants when implementing new concepts, and develop a sense of family by using my own version of the house system. I not only took away new teaching practices, but I also made lifelong teaching friends in the process.

Stephanie Goad, Steen's Creek Elementary, 1st grade

The first day at Ron Clark Academy was a little overwhelming. Lights, dragons, music, and dancing is a lot to take in all at once. I had never seen anything like it! After adjusting to the unbelievable atmosphere, we entered the classrooms. I was blown away by how well spoken all the students were. Teachers stood back and let students do the talking. I enjoyed listening to all the rich discussions and debates. I want to see my own students get more practice with this type of discussion and debate. When I get back to my classroom, I plan on standing back more and letting my students do the teaching and talking!

April Massingill, Steen's Creek Elementary, Kindergarten

Every teacher hopes that their students are engaged during each lesson. We put our time and effort into lessons and expect them to be engaged and learn the material. At the Ron Clark Academy (RCA), I saw students that were truly excited about learning because of the focus on engagement. Some lessons were over the top with "controlled chaos" while dancing on desks and massive group projects while others were calm, cool, and collected. Each teacher used his/her own personal teaching style to truly engage the students. In my own classroom, I am incorporating more engaging activities. For example, while learning strategies for context clues, we made it into a "Word Nerd" activity where the classroom entrance has a "Word Nerd" banner and students could tape newly learned words on their clothes. I also did a classroom transformation into a crime scene for a reading detective activity in which the students had to infer to solve the "crime." As Dr. Townsend would say, the trip to RCA "lit a fire in my belly!" My passion for teaching has been exponentially increased, and I cannot wait to create more engaging lessons for my students.

Leigh Jackson, Flowood Elementary, 2nd Grade

Upon entering the Ron Clark Academy, you are greeted with music, cheers, and high fives. The feeling is truly magical! This continues throughout their building and into each classroom in many different ways. Some classrooms are filled with high energy, music, and dancing on desks, while others are more subdued with deep intentional debates and discussions. Placing a high emphasis on manners and school culture, I was very impressed with the student hospitality and passion for their school. I am excited to bring back their passion for learning through room transformations, chants, and games. I feel so grateful to have been apart of this journey with nine amazing new friends!

Sarah McClellan, Northshore Elementary, Kindergarten

INSTRUCTIONAL COACH COHORT 2017-2018

by Carmen Frantom

We believe that we have the BEST teachers in the state serving the students in Rankin County School District. Over the summer of 2017, a conversation started about training our own teachers in K-6 curriculum. From this conversation, the idea of developing a 2017-2018 Instructional Coach Cohort began.

The application process was rigorous. There were many that applied to be in the cohort. From all the applicants, ten teachers qualified to become members of the first Instructional Coach Cohort.

The cohort members have been through extensive training in language arts, math, science, and technology curricular resources K-6. They've heard from Curriculum Specialists and current Instructional Coaches about the newest and upcoming resources that can support our teachers in Rankin County.

Our hope is to have an Instructional Coach Cohort for the 2018-2019 school year. Begin thinking if this is a program you would like to be a part of next year. Applications will be sent out again after the upcoming school year is settled in.

We are confident in our teachers in Rankin County. Providing such curriculum training in all subject areas and grade levels will help us continue on the successful path of moving from great to BEST.

Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™

by Mindy Stevens

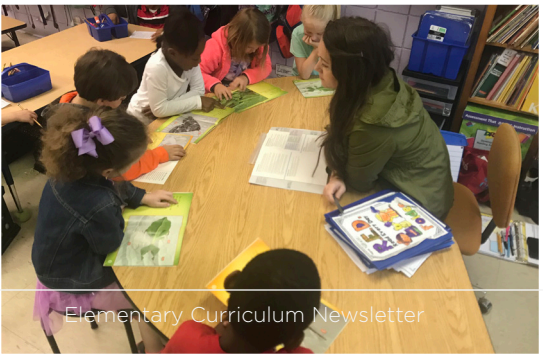
Teachers and students in K-2 classrooms across our district have been engaged in high quality classroom-based literacy instruction with the implementation of the new Fountas and Pinnell Classroom collections. Fountas and Pinnell Classroom is a cohesive approach to literacy instruction designed to support whole group, small-group, and independent learning opportunities. Through Interactive Read-Aloud, Shared Reading, and Guided Reading students are engaged authentic, meaningful learning experiences and grow as thoughtful users of literacy.

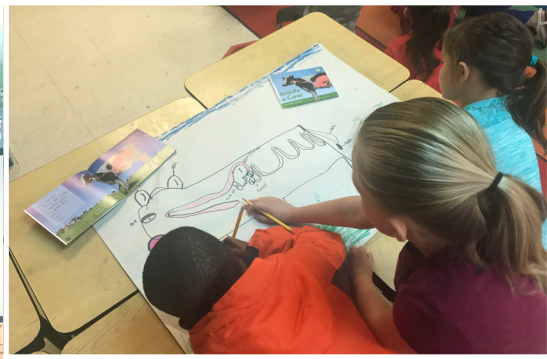
The Fountas & Pinnell Classroom Interactive Read-Aloud Collection is organized into 25 text sets that reflect a global perspective with a diversity of characters, settings, and topics that promote the joy of reading, expand vocabulary, and foster the ability to think, talk, and write about texts that fully engage students' interest. During interactive read-aloud, the teacher reads aloud a book occasionally pausing for conversation. Through text-based discussion students are provided opportunities to share their thinking, construct meaning, and make connections.

The Fountas & Pinnell Classroom Shared Reading texts are an exquisite collection of original big books in a variety of genres that provide students an opportunity to enjoy reading and learning critical concepts of how texts work. During whole group literacy instruction the teacher and children read aloud a large version of engaging texts and shared poetry charts that provide early experiences with print, promote the development of reading processes, and lead to shared and interactive writing. Six copies of each book are also provided in a small size for children to revisit and enjoy during independent reading.

The Fountas & Pinnell Classroom Guided Reading Collection includes hundreds of new, original titles of various text levels. Guided Reading is implemented in a small group setting where teaching is responsive to individual students' strengths and needs. As children read in small groups, the teacher provides explicit teaching and support for fluently reading and comprehending increasingly challenging texts.

www.fountasandpinnell.com/fpc



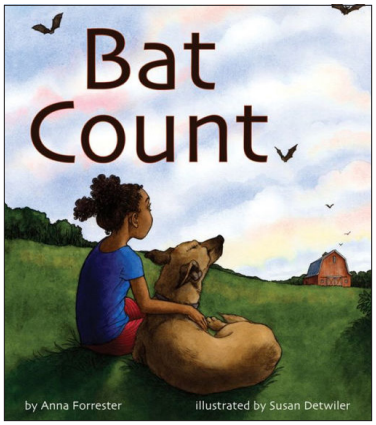


Outstanding Science Trade Books for 2018

by Lorie Yates

The National Science Teacher Association has released their annual list of "Outstanding Science Trade Books" for 2018. In the list of award-winning books, you'll find not only traditional science content but also elements of engineering and design. I highlighted a few of my favorites below. For the entire list, go to OUTSTANDING SCIENCE TRADE BOOKS FOR STUDENTS K–12.

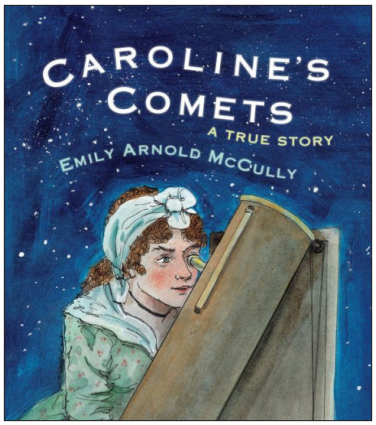
Happy Reading!



Bat Count: A Citizen Science Story

by Anna Forrester

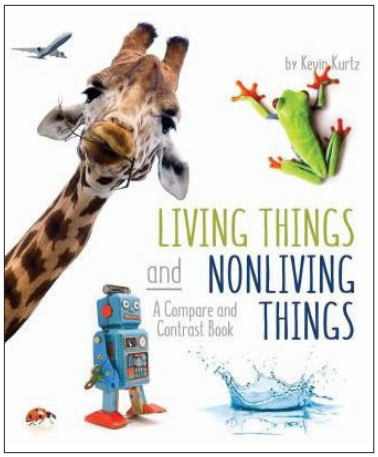
A beautifully told story about two families: Jojo's family and the bat family. Take your reader through this journey to understand the importance of bats and their recovery in nature.



Caroline's Comets

by Emily Arnold McCully

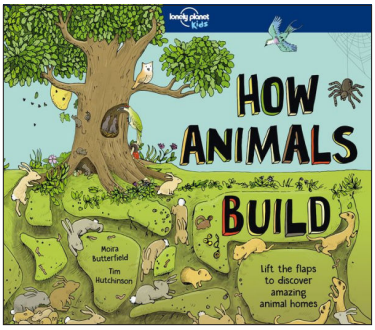
This book is filled with beautiful illustrations and narrates the inspirational story of Caroline Herschel. She overcame struggles to become the first woman to discover a comet and first-ever woman to get paid for her scientific research.



Living Things and Nonliving Things: A Compare and Contrast Book

by Kevin Kurtz

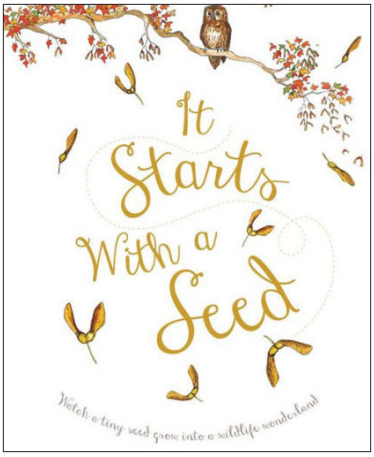
Provides a simple and accurate comparison of living and nonliving things, accompanied by beautiful photographs and questions that promote critical thinking.



How Animals Build

by Moira Butterfield and Tim Hutchinson

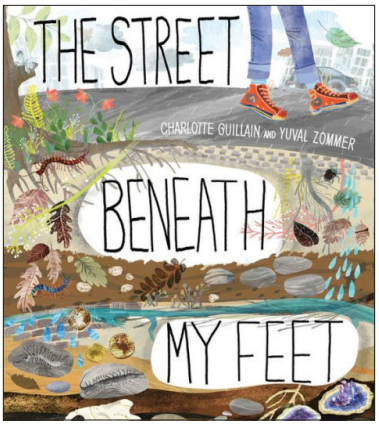
Fold out pages and lift flaps to discover the extraordinary diversity of animal homes and how they are built.



It Starts With a Seed

by Laura Knowles

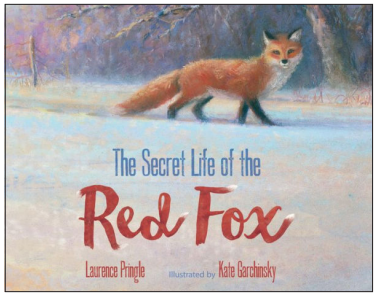
The life cycle of a tree told through poetic text with beautiful illustrations and supplemented by an informative endnote about the sycamore tree.



The Street Beneath My Feet

by Charlotte Guillain

Explore the world that exists beneath our feet, all the way to the inner core of Earth, as this book literally unfolds to 8 feet (2.4 meters)! Packed as thick as soil, Street will capture the imagination of any young scientist.



The Secret Life of the Red Fox

by Laurence Pringle

Travel alongside the red fox as this book takes the reader through its the amazing life, season by season. Fun read and great informational text.

MATH IN PRACTICE RESOURCE

by Angie Abernathy & Marcoe Walker

"In reading, we recognize that basic skills alone do not make a reader and with out comprehension calling out words is a rote process." (O'Connell, 2016) Just as in mathematics "teaching facts and procedures and hoping understanding happens on its own makes about as much sense as teaching phonics with out attention to comprehension." Math is more than memorizing facts and performing basic computations. It is more than just procedures but conceptually understanding big ideas and how they are connected. The Math in Practice series supports teachers in making sense of mathematics. It specifically explains what we want our students to be able to do: develop a strong sense of numbers, create models, communicate math ideas and solve a variety of math problems. Through these steps students can justify why they think the way they do and explain their thinking to others. As a mathematics teacher effective teaching should be a non-negotiable.

We should continually strive to acquire new strategies to improve math instruction for our students. We want every child to be mathematically proficient. So as you incorporate this wonderful resource into your daily planning and instruction we would like you to reflect on a couple of questions:

1. How do our past experiences as math students affect our math teaching?

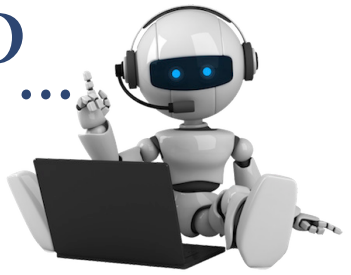
2 In what ways have you changed your math teaching in recent years to reflect today's student?

O'Connell, S. Math in Practice: A Guide for Teachers. Portsmouth. Heinemann. 2016

Helpful video introduction to Math in Practice.

SO YOU MADE THE TECH JUMP... NOW WHAT?

by Stephanie Cotnam



We heard for years that Common Core was coming. We didn't know when, but administration and trainers would say, "Be prepared...it's coming!" So, it came, it arrived, it appeared….and what happened? Testing changed, classroom practices became more genuine, standards evolved and writing became more uniform across curriculum. However, did you ever sit back and wonder to what level you took Common Core in your classroom? Were you preparing authentic lessons that took it to the next level? Were you really changing the way you taught to create learners that were active participants in the process?

All of this relates to our current trend to more technology in the classroom. There are numerous apps, programs, platforms, and ideas coming our way. Technology is no longer coming our way... it is here! Many of us are jumping in head first into the technology pool, while some may be dipping their toes in the shallow end trying an app here or there. Still, others are wearing floaties praying the internet won't go down for their techie lesson plan. We cannot deny that our classrooms and practices are evolving to encompass this new ideal; just like we did with Common Core. However, this can leave us saying, " Now what?"

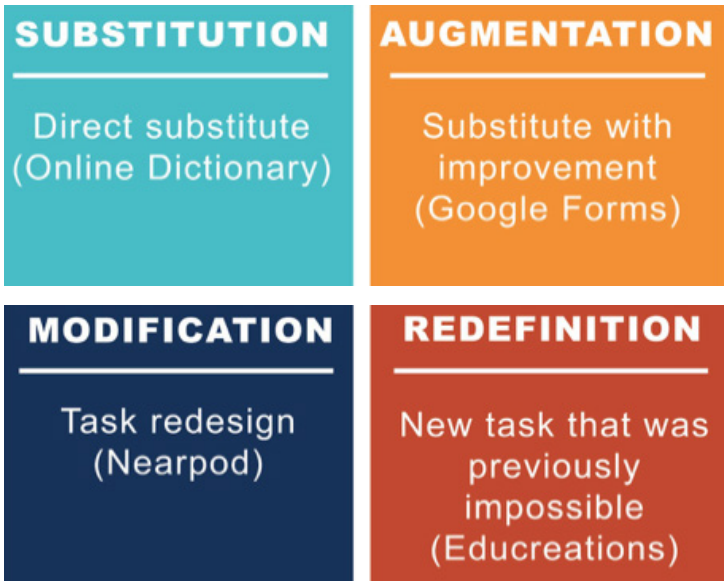
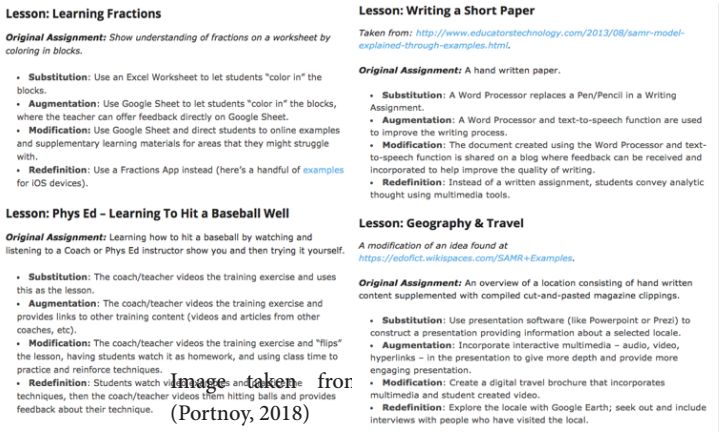


Image taken from (Portnoy, 2018)

Teachers have the training, the materials, the ideas, but what are we supposed to do now. Now is the HARD part! That's right, the hard part. You just thought learning how to use a chromebook or implement that game on the SMART board was hard...nope! It's not even close. The true test of your tech ability comes to self-analyzing your lessons to see if learners are truly benefiting from that new great tech tool. How can we do this? Well, I am sure you have heard us talk about SAMR. Just in case you missed it, here is a little reminder. Ruben Peuntedura introduced his model in 2006 to assist schools reflect on technology integration in the classroom (Portnoy, 2018). His theory was divided into two main areas technology enhancement and technology transformation. In the enhancement process, teachers substituted or augmented current lessons to incorporate the use of technology. While in the transformation process, teachers create assignments that are modified or redefined with the use of technology.

This chart includes examples of each area of SAMR. RCSDS's goal is to go beyond the level of substitution and augmentation in the classroom. While these are great first steps, we need to move beyond the surface and dig deep. With this in mind, I wanted to give you a few ideas to help you implement technology with modification and redefinition in mind.



Lesson: Learning Fractions

Original Assignment: *Show understanding of fractions on a worksheet by coloring in blocks.*

- **Substitution**: Use an Excel Worksheet to let students "color in" the blocks.
- **Augmentation**: Use Google Sheet to let students "color in" the blocks, where the teacher can offer feedback directly on Google Sheet.
- **Modification:** Use Google Sheet and direct students to online examples and supplementary learning materials for areas that they might struggle with.
- **Redefinition**: Use a Fractions App instead (here's a handful of examples for iOS devices).

Lesson: Phys Ed – Learning To Hit a Baseball Well

Original Assignment: Learning how to hit a baseball by watching and listening to a Coach or Phys Ed instructor show you and then trying it yourself.

- **Substitution**: The coach/teacher videos the training exercise and uses this as the lesson.
- **Augmentation**: The coach/teacher videos the training exercise and provides links to other training content (videos and articles from other coaches, etc).
- **Modification:** The coach/teacher videos the training exercise and "flips" the lesson, having students watch it as homework, and using class time to practice and reinforce techniques.
- **Redefinition**: Students watch videos and [illegible] techniques, then the coach/teacher videos them hitting balls and provides feedback about their technique.

Lesson: Writing a Short Paper

Taken from: http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/08/samr-model-explained-through-examples.html.

Original Assignment: A hand written paper.

- **Substitution**: A Word Processor replaces a Pen/Pencil in a Writing Assignment.
- **Augmentation**: A Word Processor and text-to-speech function are used to improve the writing process.
- **Modification**: The document created using the Word Processor and text-to-speech function is shared on a blog where feedback can be received and incorporated to help improve the quality of writing.
- **Redefinition**: Instead of a written assignment, students convey analytic thought using multimedia tools.

Lesson: Geography & Travel

A modification of an idea found at https://edofict.wikispaces.com/SAMR+Examples.

Original Assignment: An overview of a location consisting of hand written content supplemented with compiled cut-and-pasted magazine clippings.

- **Substitution**: Use presentation software (like Powerpoint or Prezi) to construct a presentation providing information about a selected locale.
- **Augmentation**: Incorporate interactive multimedia – audio, video, hyperlinks – in the presentation to give more depth and provide more engaging presentation.
- **Modification**: Create a digital travel brochure that incorporates multimedia and student created video.
- **Redefinition**: Explore the locale with Google Earth; seek out and include interviews with people who have visited the local.

Image taken from (Portnoy, 2018)

With these ideas in mind, you can take the next steps to technology implementation in your classroom. If you need any ideas or assistance, please feel free to contact me or book me.

END OF YEAR REMINDERS

- Don't forget to turn off your computer weekly and before every type of online quiz or test
- Don't forget MAYhem! We will be switching out your Macbooks for new ones. Be sure to backup your stuff.
- If you leave the district at the end of your contract your email/account will be disabled after your last working day (6/30/18 for teachers). Please move any accounts (iTunes, banking accounts, other such personal stuff) to another email address prior to your last working day

Portnoy, L. (2018, February 01). How SAMR and Tech Can Help Teachers Truly Transform Assessment - EdSurge News. Retrieved March 05, 2018, from https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-02-01-how-samr-and-tech-can-help-teachers-truly-transform-assessment

Walsh, K. (2016, September 17). Kelly Walsh. Retrieved March 06, 2018, from http://www.emergingedtech.com/2015/04/examples-of-transforming-lessons-through-samr/

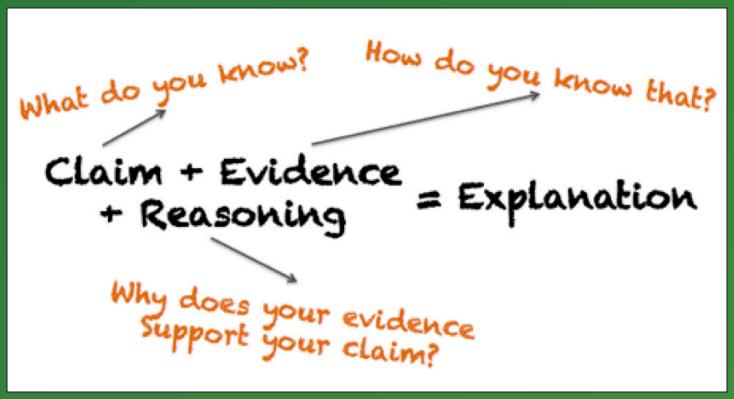
Using the Claim Evidence Reasoning (CER) Strategy to Help Students Construct Scientific Explanations

by Lorie Yates

The Science and Engineering Practices are woven in to the new performance objectives of the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Science. The Science and Engineering Practices Reference Sheet is a great resource when trying to determine what the practices should look like in K-12 science classrooms.

We know that students come to us at all grade levels with varying degrees of science content knowledge, skill sets, and experiences with scientific investigations. Since one of the key practices that shows up in many of the MS CCRS for Science performance objectives is "Constructing Explanations" and "Engaging in Argument from Evidence", it is crucial that we provide students structured scaffolding in order for them to practice, refine, and ultimately master these skills.

Scientific explanations include three components: a claim, evidence, and reasoning (CER). Claims are statements about the results of an investigation that answer an original question or solve the original problem. Evidence is the scientific data that supports the claim. Reasoning ties together the claim and the evidence by using scientific principles to justify how or why the data support the claim.



This CER Scaffolding Tool can be used to support students' writing of evidence-based explanations.

You can start off allowing students to work together in small groups using this tool. As students develop the skills needed to construct explanations, you can gradually release the scaffolding and allow students to construct explanations on their own.

To see part of a science lesson using the CER strategy, check out this Teaching Channel video.

Another Teaching Channel video, "Making Claims from Evidence", demonstrates a lesson on using scientific investigation and the engineering design process to gather evidence to support a claim.

Designing Science Inquiry with the CER strategy provides two great ideas on how to model the CER connection: one with the Mars rover Curiosity and another using an Audi commercial.

RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

GREAT TO BEST