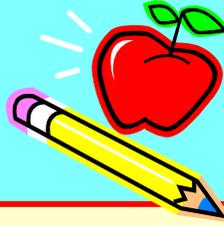




READING COUNTS



America Reads
America Counts

Newsletter: Spring 2012

America Reads/America Counts

Rationale for Relevancy

By: Nicole Swift
Geneseo Reading Tutor

Reader, reflect on your previous school experiences and estimate the number of times you have questioned "When am I ever going to use this?" when investigating new material. For many of you, this phrase has been uttered dozens of times. One reason for the disconnection between a student and new material is that the material seems irrelevant; the student does not see how or when this concept will be used in his or her life. To make new concepts more accessible to all students, teachers should strive to make concepts relatable.

To make material more applicable to all students, the teacher or tutor must know each student in the class very well. To learn about each student as an individual, interest surveys or broad questionnaires can be utilized. Explore each student's likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests; the more you know, the more information you have at your disposal. Once the surveys or questionnaires have been completed, take note of any trends or patterns. For example, if you find that seventy-five percent of the students in the class play a sport, you may be able to integrate this information into a future writing assignment or math exploration.

(Continued on page 4)

Using iPads to Teach Reading and Writing

By: Carolyn Schaus
Geneseo Reading Tutor

Most people in today's world are dependent on technology. We can't leave our house in the morning without our cell phones. If by chance we do, we are sure to turn around and drive home to get it. Some may say that our society has an unhealthy addiction to technology. But who would have thought these electronics would help our youth learn to effectively read and write?

Using technology in the classroom has become a critical component in education. My tutoring opportunity has allowed me to work with students ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. No matter what the age, the students love to use the iPads!

One of the perks of using this type of technology is that teachers can provide individualized attention to students while others are participating in meaningful activities on the iPad. The "reading room" at Geneseo Elementary has completely utilized this resource this year. Students are able to improve their phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and sight words through apps on iPads.

(Continued on page 2)

iPads, continued

Below are a few iPad apps that can be used in your classroom!

-**WordMagic**: spelling app that shows kids a picture of an object and gives them some of the letters of the word for it. They have to choose the letters that are missing by touching the screen. Based on each student's ability, they can fill in the beginning, middle or ending sound.

-**abc POCKET PHONICS**: abc Pocket Phonics is designed to help young students with early literacy and penmanship skills. The app focuses on phonics, both the sounds of individual letters and the sounds that are made when certain letters are combined. This makes it a great app for beginning readers! In addition, the letter-writing section visually demonstrates how to write a letter.

-**ABC Phonics Word Family**: This app uses the Montessori method for children to practice their phonics and spelling. It will help students to develop their skills in listening, learning, spelling and pronunciation of words. In this app, students will begin to recognize common word patterns and work with initial, middle and ending sounds.

-**iAnagram**: This app can be used for students of all ages. Letters that spell vocabulary words are scattered on a piece of paper. Students need to arrange the letters to correctly spell the words. This is a great app because students can explore what letters sound like in different situations.



Great Math Tool for Tutors

Try "Pizza Fraction Fun". I used this math game in my classroom to help four of my students who were struggling with math, specifically fractions. This game was great because you could use the pieces as manipulatives when teaching how to add and subtract fractions, and then use them for the game after. The visual really help the students understand the idea of parts of a whole, and the pizza game was a great motivation for the students to get through the lesson. Having the game available for choice time also creates an opportunity for the students to practice their skills throughout the year!

- Jordan Monteleone, Tutor at Geneseo Central

Multisensory Learning

By Mariah Marienfeld
Geneseo Reading tutor

We have all heard how people learn best by doing. When you explore a new concept with the use of hands-on materials, you are better able to grasp a full understanding of that concept. For students with disabilities, multisensory learning is critical. Many students with disabilities learn best when they are presented with new material in a variety of ways. They can try their hand at various strategies, and see which works best for them. During my time in a self-contained 8:1:1 classroom for students in grades K-2, I saw multisensory learning being implemented on a daily basis. Here are a few multisensory activities and programs used in my classroom:

Lily Pads: a large sheet of blue paper becomes the "river" that students have to get across. On green paper cutouts of lily pads, write the numbers the students are learning. [The students in my class were working on counting by 5s, 10s, and 20s. So when the students practice counting by 5s, the lily pads are labeled 5, 10, 15, 20, 25] Place the lily pads on the river, and have students hop to each one in order, counting as they hop. This strategy is great because while students are learning the numbers through repetition, seeing visual representations of the numbers, and hearing them as they say them aloud.

Hand-Clapping Game: This is very similar to the Lily Pad game, but students clap each time the numbers are said. Students are put in pairs, either with another student or with the teacher. They start with the first number, and clap their hands with their partner's hands as the two say the number aloud (5.) Then both partners clap their own hands together, saying nothing. The partners clap their hands together again, and say the second number (10.) Repeat these steps for as long as necessary.

Starfall: Starfall is a website that teachers can subscribe to, that offers over 120 different educational games. The target age group is preschool through second grade, special education students, homeschool students, and English Language Learners. Students can practice number identification, math problems, phonics, calendar skills, shapes and colors, and even read books and sing songs. Starfall is intended for use on the SMARTboard, meaning that when student tap and drag numbers and letters, they are truly interacting with the game. Starfall uses a multitude of colors, melodies, and interactive characters to keep the games exciting for students. Visit starfall.com for more details.

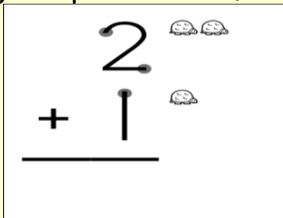


Continued on page 4

The Palm

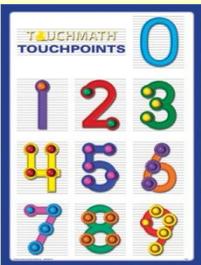
Multisensory (continued)

TouchMath: TouchMath is a program that uses multisensory learning to teach math in a new and interactive way. Each number has a certain amount of "touch points." For example, the number 4 has four touch points, while the number 7 has seven touch points. When students are working on number identification, they are instructed to tap each touch point on the number as they count aloud. When students progress to addition and subtraction, they use the touch points along with images. For example, if a student is performing the problem $2+1$, it is


$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ + 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

written out like this:

Students first identify each number by counting the touch points, and then add up the total number of images, in this case the ladybugs. Using this program, students are applying visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning processes to get the fullest learning experience possible. The TouchMath program is made use in Pre-K through third grade, special education, and early intervention settings. Visit touchmath.com for more details.



By incorporating every learning style into instruction and providing students with a variety of learning methods, students can immerse themselves in the education process and take more away from the experience.

Relevancy (continued)

Whenever possible, teachers and tutors should try to make learning as personal as possible. If a child who enjoys soccer comes across a math problem that requires the mean number of goals a player scored in a season to be calculated, he or she will be more invested in finding a solution. It is important to note that not every concept will have a direct connection to each student; in this case, teachers and tutors should try to emphasize themes. For example, a student may not see how the Civil War relates to him or her personally, but he or she may understand what it is like for brothers to fight against one another. Teachers and tutors should try to highlight a new concept's versatility; with a little creativity, each student can see the relevancy of what is being taught.

Tutors Needed for Fall!

Thank you to all of the wonderful tutors in 2011-2012. We are losing many tutors to graduation and student teaching. Please have friends contact me who may be interested. If you know someone who may be eligible, but doesn't have a car, I am happy to try to coordinate you to travel together if schedules allow. Please email Andrea DiGiorgio at digiorgi@geneseo.edu to learn more.