NEWS & NOTES

from Elementary Instructional Technology

common sense
media

A Valuable Resource for Parents & Educators

Have you ever wondered if a new movie, book, app, or video game was appropriate for your child and if its content aligned with your family values? **Common Sense Media** is a non-profit organization that provides parents and teachers with information and reviews on the latest popular culture media. They make recommendations for age groups and every review includes a helpful "what parents need to know" graphic that rates the amount of questionable content that may be found in the media. You can also read and contribute your own reviews to the site. Sign up for your free account today to take advantage of the wealth of resources Common Sense Media provides to families!

www.commonsensemedia.org

Communicating in a Digital World

Students in grades 3-6 have been working to strengthen their digital communication and collaboration skills through the use of Google Apps for Education's suite of tools, namely Google Docs (word processing, presentation, and spreadsheet applications). All third-sixth graders recently used Google Docs to compose their February writing sample, and many teachers are incorporating the use of Google Docs into everyday classroom writing activities and project work. Students are becoming fluent in creating, organizing, and sharing work with collaborators. Teachers and peer reviewers are able to offer quick and easy feedback on student work through the co-editing and commenting features. There are countless ways this tool can support our students' work in the classroom. Google Research tools are integrated into Google Docs to help students learn to successfully navigate our digital world and support their learning endeavors.
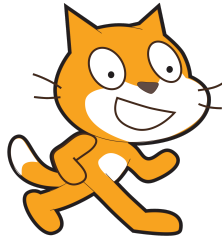
The Hour of Code Activities include...

Code.org

- Use programming to help pop culture characters such as the Angry Bird and Plants v. Zombies successfully navigate through a series of mazes

Scratch

- Code your own interactive games, stories, animations, and more

Tynker

- 8 fun activities to solve simple puzzles, build games, or create math art

Light-bot

- Learn core programming logic: how to sequence commands, identify patterns, use procedures, and utilize loops!

The Hour of Code

This winter, students in grades 2-6 worked through various activities designed to help introduce and promote computer programming skills. These activities, part of **The Hour of Code**, were organized to celebrate Computer Science Education Week and help raise awareness about the importance of learning skills related to programming, coding, and computer science. Over 2 million students worldwide participated in The Hour of Code, and we continue to engage students in working through the activities during computer lab special time. We also use "pair programming" strategies to allow your student to work collaboratively with a peer during the activities. Your children can feel free to complete activities at home as well. We saw a high level of engagement while students worked to problem solve, build, and successfully complete programming modules in programs such as Scratch, Tynker, and Light-bot.

To learn more, visit http://hourofcode.org and sign up to create your own account. You can work through the programming activities alongside your child!

If your child has a tablet device, many programming and coding apps are available. Try Kodable, Beebot, Daisy the Dinosaur, Move the Turtle, and Light-bot! Happy coding!

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