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Leveling Up

Earn CE certificates via many of these free and low-cost webinars, courses, and seminars. See edWeb.net, [Kent County ISDs PD Hub](http://KentCountyISDsPDHub.com), and ADDitudemag.com for additional instruction.

- **Meet the Makers: Makerspace Tips and Trends**, Wed., Oct. 5 at 3 p.m. on edWeb.net.
- **What's the Fuss All About? Bringing Social Media into the Classroom**, Wed., Oct. 5 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **ADHD Myths and**

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Teaching digital citizenship

by Ann Kohler

Akohler@forsyth.k12.ga.us

More and more, preparation for the start of a new school year includes curriculum dedicated to good digital citizenship for our students. As the "Technology Teacher" at an elementary school this year, one of the first areas of instruction I was tasked with providing was lessons on digital citizenship and "netiquette". In addition to the introductory curriculum, I will spend a week working with the counselors to introduce another level of lessons which go more in depth on the subject, with lessons differentiated for each grade level from K-5.

Teaching all students, beginning in kindergarten, how to not cyberbully, how to protect their personal information, and basically how to learn to live,

Please see [Digital citizenship on page 5](#)



Ann Kohler

Building STEM skills into structured homework assignments

by Carmen Watts Clayton

cwattsclayton@gmail.com

Students of all abilities learn well when "doing" is "understanding". Project-based learning is not a new theory in the classroom, but sometimes seems difficult to apply to the special needs classroom. But project-based learning assignments can bring heart and soul to making homework assignments more interesting and more likely to get done. Students with different abilities are not an exception.

When giving project-based home assignments, it may be important to do some intervening, planning, and collaboration.



Please see [STEM skills on page 6](#)

Leveling Up, continued from [page 1](#)

the Stigmas They Perpetuate: A Guide to Overcoming Shame, Thurs., Oct. 6, at 1 p.m. EST on ADDitudemag.com.

- **Teaching Academic Vocabulary with Words With Friends EDU**, Mon., Oct. 10, at 2 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Fostering Understanding, Empathy and Dialogue in Our Students**, Mon., Oct. 10 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **“What Are You Saying?” Auditory Processing Disorder in Children**, Thurs., Oct. 13 at 1 p.m. EST on ADDitudemag.com.
- **From Minigrants to Major Grants: Stan Levenson’s Tips for Success**, Thurs, Oct. 13 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **The New Identity of Adaptive Math**, Mon., Oct. 17 at 3 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Leading for Writing Fluency: Language and Basic Skills Fluency for Argumentation and Editing**, Mon., Oct. 17 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Security, Privacy, and Risk: How to Avoid Becoming a Headline**, Tues., Oct. 18 at 2 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Free Lesson Plans: K-6 Character Education Curriculum Now Online**, Tues., Oct. 18 at 3 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Making the Leap from Textbooks to Digital Curriculum**, Tues., Oct. 18 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Getting Your Year off to a Great Start -- Tips for New Teachers**, Tues., Oct. 18 at 5 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Student-Led Game Making and Learning**, Wed., Oct. 19 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Dr. Jean: Brain Breaks to Help Students Move and Learn**, Thurs., Oct. 20 at 2 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Pack More Relevancy and Engagement into Social Studies!**, Tues., Oct. 25 at 3 p.m. EST on

About Special Ed Tech / Subscriptions

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We welcome your questions and article suggestions. Direct all queries and subscription issues to editor Becky Palmer-Scott at SpecialEdTechEditor@gmail.com.

edWeb.net.

- **Building Bridges from Concrete to Abstract Part 2: Multiplication & Division of Whole Numbers**, Tues., Oct. 25 at 4 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Jump into Literacy, Math, & Science: Active Learning for Preschool Children**, Wed., Oct. 26 at 2 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Principles of Reinforcement for Students with Autism**, Wed., Oct. 26 at 3 p.m. EST on edWeb.net.
- **Positive Parenting Strategies: How to Build Confidence in Your Child with ADHD**, Thurs., Oct. 27 at 1 p.m. EST on ADDitudemag.com.

#TalkingAAC conference set for Nov. 9-11, 2016

Register now for the #Talking AAC conference, formerly known as Michigan AAC Conference, to be November 9 -11 at Kellogg Conference Center, East Lansing, Mich. Session highlights include Peer Modeling in AAC; Making an Impact with Core Vocabulary; Language, Literacy, and AAC; AAC in the IEP; and more!

Registration closes on October 28, 2016, and costs \$50 for pre-conference, \$75 for conference. [See details here.](#)

Math Tech: Understanding students ModMath g(Math)

by Kate Fanelli



Kate Fanelli



At a glance

App: ModMath

Cost: Free

Platform: iPad

Topic: Math: basic arithmetic to algebraic equations, for students with dyslexia and dysgraphia

At the “Alt+Shift Summer Institute: Rethink Possibilities” conference this summer, I had the pleasure of hearing 16 TED-style talks over two days, from people who are asking themselves what they can do to make education accessible to all learners.

General and special education teachers, therapists, consultants, parents of students with disabilities, and agency directors talked on what seemed to be a diverse array of topics (literacy, math, instruction, alternative communication, assistive technology, systems), but as the two days unfolded, what became increasingly obvious was that these speakers were actually all talking about the same thing: our students are not that different than we are. Our students want to have an impact on their world, they have hopes and dreams, their lives are enriched through education, and they are served best by adults who take the time to listen to them and get to know them.

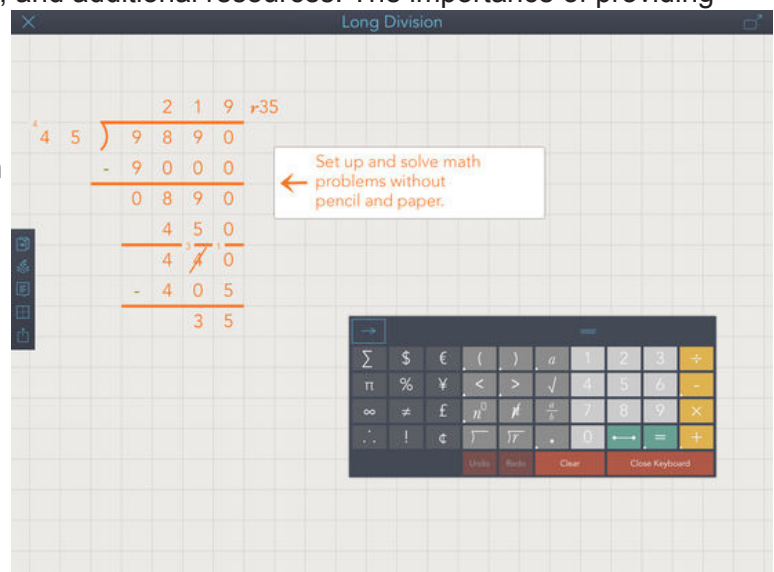
Although not directly stated, and not intentionally designed, this was the underlying theme of all of the presentations. Speaker after speaker came to the stage and shared their stories about how they came to understand what more they could be doing for students because they themselves could empathize with their students, or found they or someone they cared about had something in common with their students. The speakers then went on to talk about how that positively impacted not just their students, but themselves as people and as professionals.

I came away thinking about the correlation between educators who are innovators helping students to be more engaged academically and socially, and their tendency to be people who are curious about other their students, who find what they have in common, and who listen and get to know them.

[PBS Misunderstood Minds](#) shows how and why students struggle with mathematics, what impact that has, and what we can do about it through simulations, research, and additional resources. The importance of providing each of these students with educators who are invested in who they are and who they can become cannot be overstated.

[ModMath](#) is a free app for iPad, designed specifically for people with dysgraphia and dyslexia, that allows students to do basic math problem

Our students want to have an impact on their world, they have hopes and dreams, their lives are enriched through education, and they are served best by adults who take the time to listen to them and get to know them.



Please see **MathTech** on next page

MathTech, continued from previous page**At a glance****App:** g(Math)**Cost:** Free**Platform:** Web/Google Docs add-on**Topic:** Math for all levels

solving, use virtual graph paper to set up math problems legibly, and print/email work. This app was designed by a parent whose child is dyslexic, and is a great example of what kind of support can be provided when adults are listening to students.

[g\(Math\)](#) is a free Google Add-on for Google Docs and Sheets that allow users to include mathematical equations, figures, graphs and statistical displays within a document or spreadsheet. With many schools using Google Classroom, and Google apps, this is another way that students who have difficulty writing or keeping notation organized on a page may be able to demonstrate mathematics knowledge, and work through problems. Access to tools such as this through any computer with a connection to the web increases flexibility and opportunity to

learn.

Follow (Mi)2 on Facebook (www.facebook.com/mi2.page) and/or Alt+Shift on Twitter (@AltShiftEd). Contact Kate at kate.fanelli@AltShift.education.

Digital citizenship, continued from [page 1](#)

work, and play in a digital age is now a responsibility of all teachers. Luckily, we have some incredible tools and options out there to help us.

The one website that you could use as a “one stop shop” for instruction of digital citizenship is Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org). Once on the homepage just click on the drop-down menu “For Educators”. Here you will find extensive information not just on digital citizenship but other areas too. When I opened the site today it had a listing of “Cool STEM books for kids who love science”. When you go to the Educators area and click on “Digital Citizenship” you will see a drop-down menu with extensive lessons, blogs, and distinct areas for different grade levels. For those of you who use Nearpod they even have Nearpod lessons now.

[Digital Passport](#) has a series of games, videos, and other activities for grades 1-7 and [Digital Compass](#) has lessons for grades 6-8. There are many tools within Common Sense Media for teachers, including short videos, games, and FAQs.

For my upcoming lessons, I am combining a lot of the sites and tools listed at these two sites:

- <https://list.ly/list/1KH-digital-citizenship-resources-for-elem-and-up> and
- http://www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=34991#anchor

I like to start out class with a short video, move to a discussion, and then present some sort of interactive lesson or game.

Here are the lessons and games I will be using in my upcoming classes.

- Kindergarten — [Netsmartzkids](#) and [Common Sense Media “Going Places Safely”](#).
- First Grade — [A short video from “Click Safe”](#) and a game at [Surfswell Island by Disney](#).
 - Second Grade — [Phineas and Ferb “Rules of Cyberspace Road”](#) and games at [“Privacy Pirates”](#).
 - Third Grade — [“Smart Crew” video](#), [interactive “Cyber Pigs” games](#), and something from a new FBI site called [“Cyber Surf Island”](#).
 - Fourth Grade — [“Websafe” video](#) and [Digital Passport “Search Shark” interactive](#).
 - Fifth Grade — [“Digital Footprint” lessons](#) from Common Sense Media, a video called [“Tracking Teresa”](#) and Brainpop’s Game-Up [“Search Shark”](#).

I also want to give a quick shout out to my friends at [WordsWithFriends EDU](#). After over a year of beta testing and

getting the bugs worked out, they have released their education version of Words With Friends. It is a Scrabble-type word game where students can play with each other. Students construct a word and “send” it to whomever they are playing with. That student then makes a word off of their word, just like in Scrabble, and sends it back. My older students always get a kick playing against me, the teacher, and trying to send me hard words. It’s a quick, fun way to have students use literacy skills while having fun. Try it for yourself at <https://wordswithfriendsedu.com/>. There will be an edWeb.net webinar on using Words With Friends EDU on Oct. 10 at 2 p.m. EST. [Register here](#).

Ann Kohler has spent the last nine years as a special education teacher at the high school level and is now teaching technology to K-5 elementary students in Forsyth County Georgia. ✍️

**At a glance**

Game: Digital Passport

Cost: Free

Platform: Web

Topic: Digital citizenship for grades 1-7

 common sense
digital compass™

**At a glance**

Game: Digital Compass

Cost: Free

Platform: Web

Topic: Digital citizenship for grades 6-8

STEM skills, continued from [page 1](#)


Here are some tips for success:

- **Write an authentic task.** One based firmly within the student's interests and prior knowledge from school lessons. One where the student is likely to demonstrate their proficiencies.
- **Listen to your learners.** Analyze their present level of independence. Design a project with enough support in coaching, materials, tools, and support to meet the student's real needs.
- **Collaborate** with parents, other students, and community resources to help build the student's confidence and likeliness of completion.
- **Design tasks that are easily accessible** to the student, if possible with no barriers to the project being student-centered.
- **Stress the scientific observation process**, collection of information, measurement, recording data, analyzing, and predicting future events. The process is more important than the products in most cases. By practicing a "process" independently we master skills more fully.

Allowing students to tie their interests from outside the classroom more effectively to the processes of the classroom will grow interest and enthusiasm for other lessons. Involving family members and caregivers to join the process will strengthen family ties to the learning process at school. Make it a fun and self-directed task for the student to the greatest degree possible. Give the collaborators clear directions about the process and ways to ask you for help during the process of completing a project at home. And don't forget to provide time in class for the student to share what they have done and show peers and other members of the school campus what they have been learning!

Some assignment products could include

- An idea or prediction about what might happen in the future
- An argument for or against the results of their project
- A new policy or direction
- A presentation in a familiar medium: visual, Prezi, PowerPoint, audio
- Some written product or data set turned into a graph or table
- A poster showing their process and/or results.

Make sure your student receives abundant praise and recognition for completing a homework project. Both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and recognition play an important role in building self-esteem and independence in the learner. 

Allowing students to tie their interests from outside the classroom more effectively to the processes of the classroom will grow interest and enthusiasm for other lessons.
