Why Every Math Teacher Should Be Familiar with Virtual Manipulatives by Jim Wheelin

Article published on December 6th 2011 | Education

Being a teacher is a rewarding job, as youâ€™re playing an active role in the shaping of students as they move along the education system. Teaching math is rewarding but challenging, as the concepts learned are ones that are continually being built on. If a student doesnâ€™t understand one lesson, he or she wonâ€™t be able to grasp the others. That is why math teachers must continually evaluate where their students fall on the learning spectrum and ensure that all students are at the same point in the curriculum.

Being a math teacher, you understand that children learn in a variety of ways, and each one is perfectly acceptable yet needs to be encouraged. It can be difficult to foster all the learning styles in the classroom, which is why many math teachers are choosing to integrate online virtual manipulatives into their daily grind. The math lesson can be taught as you normally would, and virtual manipulatives can be added to further enhance the material.

Incorporating Virtual Manipulatives into Lessons Plans

Online math puzzles and games are an excellent way to build on the material being taught, especially when they accompany the lesson. When looking for educational virtual manipulatives, choose those that are offered through adaptive learning programs. Although the program may cost a fee, virtual learning tools are often included for teachers at no cost. These tools bring math to life, adding new appeal to traditional teacher-led discussions.Â

A math teacher can use these virtual manipulatives during instructional lessons by hooking up the computer to a projector or interactive white board. This makes it easy for all the students to see the lesson and be active participants. Depending on the material, you may find that the tools are enough to supplement an entire lesson or are better used to enhance the material. Either way, itâ€™s great to have these manipulatives on hand if students are struggling to learn a particular concept or you need to fill out a lesson with additional visuals.Â

Using Virtual Manipulatives for Group Work

Not only can the virtual tools be used in instructional settings, but also in group settings. You can break students off into small or large groups and use the virtual manipulatives to create games that encourage active participation. Of course, the interactive puzzles will vary depending on the grade you teach, but they do offer comprehensive learning tools that get students thinking outside the box.

As a math teacher, youâ€™ll feel confident that youâ€™re expanding on the material in a fun and innovati way, and kids wonâ€™t realize theyâ€™re learning something while having fun. Donâ€™t think that the vi tools are just for use during lessons either. They also serve as effective mini lessons that can be implemented before or after lunch or recess. This gets the classroom in the right mindset, eases difficult transitional periods and continues to exercise the math concepts learned in class.Â

Choosing the Best Virtual Manipulatives

Although there are a variety of free online tools, be sure you choose those that are offered through a credible educational website. The tools should bring the lessons to life and create engaging exercises for students to practice their math skills. Examples of virtual manipulatives include match-n-make lessons that provide opportunities for students to practice number patterns, number

relationships and computation strategies.Â

Once you become familiar with the dynamics of the lessons, you can adjust them accordingly to meet the needs of your students. These virtual manipulatives offer real value in the classroom and will enhance your program in a fun, rewarding way, even if youâ€™re planning at the last minute.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/education-articles/why-every-math-teacher-should-be-familiar-with-virtual-manipulatives.htm - Article Side

Jim Wheelin - About Author:
Jim Wheelin writes about many different educational topics for parents and teachers. He is always keeping an eye out for the latest teaching techniques and tools, such as games that the average elementarya math teacher could implement in his/her lesson. Jim also likes to test out-of-the-box educational resources including http://www.dreambox.com/teachertools-match-n-make

Article Keywords:
Education, elementary education, math

You can find more free articles on Article Side. Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!