

Educator Update

Keeping Huron County Educators Informed

October, 2019

This Educator Update includes:



1. [Strategies for Students with Scattered Minds](#) – Builds on the August Executive Functioning Training
2. [Surprising Findings on Student Attendance Awards](#) – Planning to send out awards at the end of the marking period? Read this Marshall Memo article first.
3. [Finding the Best Free Online Open Educational Resources](#) – Including CKLA Materials
4. [The 5 BEST FREE Michigan Electronic Library Resources](#)

1. Strategies for Students with Scattered Minds from Edutopia

Building on the August Countywide presentation by Sarah Ward, this article in Edutopia offers concrete strategies for improving Educative Function skills. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/strategies-students-scattered-minds-donna-wilson-marcus-conyers>. These strategies can help students with “workouts” focused on pausing, prioritizing, improving working memory, and mapping options.

2. Surprising Findings on Student Attendance Awards (From Marshall Memo #794)

In this Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes paper, Carly Robinson (Harvard Graduate School of Education), Jana Gallus (UCLA), Monica Lee (Stanford University), and Todd Rogers (Harvard Kennedy School) report on their study of awards for students with excellent attendance in 14 California school districts. (The state has emphasized the importance of attendance and encouraged schools to use awards as incentives.) The awards were symbolic (non-monetary) and non-competitive – that is, any student could win if he or she had very good attendance. Attendance awards are very common in schools because research has linked good attendance to a number of positive outcomes and, say the authors, because of a “simple and intuitive belief” that “recognizing effort and performance will result in continued or even improved positive performance.”

So what did the study show? The researchers noticed two distinct ways schools rewarded outstanding attendance:

- Prospective awards – These were “if-then” rewards; students knew the criteria in advance – that they could win if they had excellent attendance. The researchers were surprised to find that these awards, on average, had no effect on older students’ attendance, and only a small positive effect on younger students.
- Retrospective awards – These recognized excellent attendance after the fact – “now-that” rewards. In the schools studied, the awards were given at the end of a marking period or year. The theory is that this kind of award is motivating because it expresses appreciation for doing something that is important and difficult and that the winners might not have thought they could accomplish. Again, the researchers were surprised by the result: after-the-fact awards demotivated students: after they won, they had worse attendance than students in the control group, missing 8 percent more days in the month following the award. The negative effect was most pronounced among academically low-performing students.

Why these discouraging and counterintuitive results? Robinson, Gallus, Lee, and Rogers suggest three explanations:

First, the researchers hypothesize that the school culture may be one in which “the social costs of being singled out outweigh the benefits of the distinction.” Being given an award “could trigger negative consequences if people desire to avoid the peer social sanctions associated with being someone who tries too hard on a dimension such as attendance...” (The peer attitude might be quite different with high achievement with sports.) This negative effect could be mitigated by sending attendance awards home rather than giving awards in front of peers.

Second, giving awards may send an unintended signal about the school’s intent and expectations – that the award recipients were outliers, that they had attended more than the school expected, say the researchers, “thus licensing them to miss more school in the future.” The research on “licensing,” they say, “suggests that when people feel that they have fulfilled their obligations to behave in socially desirable ways, they may subsequently become less likely to perform the socially desirable behavior.” This would be especially true of underperforming students for whom the award was a surprise and out of line with other feedback the school had been giving them.

Third, award winners’ thought process might be that they were outperforming their peers, which, say the authors, could “lead them to reduce their effort, particularly if the behavior is inconsequential and not a reflection of the recipients’ abilities and achievements on an important performance dimension.”

There was another finding: when the attendance awards were no longer given, there was a significant decrease in student attendance. Why? The researchers believe that “the mere introduction of awards seems to have signaled that perfect attendance was neither the norm nor expected, thus crowding out existing motivations to exert effort and attend school.”

“The Demotivating Effect (and Unintended Message) of Awards” by Carly Robinson, Jana Gallus, Monica Lee, and Todd Rogers, February 13, 2019, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2L6PmmH>; Robinson can be reached at carlyrobinson@g.harvard.edu, Gallus at jana.gallus@anderson.ucla.edu, Rogers at todd_rogers@hks.harvard.edu.

3. Finding the Best Free Online Open Educational Resources

Never have educators had more access to FREE online curricular materials and never has the quality of those resources been more apparent. Unfortunately, access to POOR QUALITY materials is equally accessible. Open Educational Resources (OERs) can be reviewed at the U.S. Department of Education’s site <https://tech.ed.gov/open/districts/launch/>. These teaching, learning, and research resources are considered “public domain” and may be used, reused, modified, and shared with others.

If you don’t have time to wade through all the information yourself, others have done the reviewing for you. One of the best sites to use is **EdReports** <https://edreports.org>, a nonprofit that evaluates the quality of instructional materials. There are also two platforms that review and rate supplemental resources:

- **Amazon Inspire** – <https://www.amazoninspire.com>
- **Knovation** – <https://www.knovationlearning.com>

For materials at the curriculum-level end of the matrix, they recommend:

- **EL Education Language Arts** – <https://bit.ly/2XXJO8J>
- **Core Knowledge Language Arts** – <https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/language-arts/>
- **Eureka Math** – <https://greatminds.org/math>
- **Open Up Resources Math** – <https://openupresources.org/math-curriculum/>

Core Knowledge Language Arts is the FREE version of the ELA program, CKLA by Amplify, which Ubly, Caseville, North Huron and Owendale-Gagetown are piloting in their schools. The published version is easier to use and includes print materials such as student books, but the majority of the student readers, activity pages, and lessons are the same.

Article Referenced: "A Closer Look at Open Educational Resources" by Jennifer Gonzalez and Karen Vaites in The Cult of Pedagogy, June 18, 2019, <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/open-educational-resources/>

4. Here are the Top 5 student and teacher support resources available at Michigan Electronic Library (MeL) in EBSCO Connect: (taken from the 8/12/19 MEL Newsletter)

1. [Lesson Plans](#)

Are you supporting teachers in your community with library material connections to curriculum? Look for dozens of lesson plans for a variety of subjects. To support students and teachers in high school check out the information literacy lesson plan [Spotting Fake News and Images on the Web](#).

2. [Scavenger Hunts](#)

Explore features, discover research topics and conduct searches with scavenger hunts.

3. **Tutorials**

Learn about content, features and how eResources work with dozens of video tutorials. Here are links to a few:

- [Explora for Elementary School](#)
- [Explora for Middle School](#)
- [Explora for High School](#)
- [History Reference Center](#)
- [Literary Reference Center](#)
- [Points of View Reference Center](#)
- [Science Reference Center](#)

4. [Research and Writing Tips for Students](#)

Support students conducting research. These tips can help them organize information, develop search strategies, and more.

5. [Google Classroom Quick Start Guide for Educators](#)

Are you or the teachers in your community using Google Classroom? Explora and EBSCOhost are compatible with Google Classroom, making it easier for teachers to share articles with students. This guide shows you how to share content in Google Classroom. There is also a tutorial on [Using Google Classroom and Google Drive in Explora](#).

To find other support and training materials for MeL eResources, be sure to visit the Library Staff section on [MeL.org](#). Look for [eResources training](#) where you will find links to additional video tutorials, FAQs, and other documentation to help you make MeL work for you!

For more information, visit our website at www.huronisd.org or email curriekm@huronisd.org for suggestions about future topics, questions, or comments. We welcome your feedback.