

Focus on Learning

My Upcoming Schedule:

I am available this week: Thursday, Jan 5 – Park Rapids
Friday, Jan 6 – Park Rapids

I am available next week: Tuesday, Jan 10 – Park Rapids
Wednesday, Jan 11 – Park Rapids
Thursday, Jan 12 – Park Rapids

Please feel free to contact me at any time via my cell phone (320-241-6150), my home email (lconzemius@gmail.com) or my Park Rapids email (lconzemius@parkrapids.k12.mn.us). My schedule is flexible and we can always find a time to meet, including dates not listed above. If it works for you I'll try to make it fit into my schedule. ☺

Scheduled Classes:

I am putting together a new schedule of classes for February and March. I have a brief survey for you so that you can give me your suggestions for topics, your availability for dates, and other information. The survey is located at: <https://goo.gl/forms/K9ZPQ19Q8JzUmTwW2>

Presidential Inauguration 2017

In January I have the incredible opportunity to fly to Washington DC to take in all of the events leading up to and including the Presidential Inauguration 2017. I serve on the board of directors for ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education). In previous inaugural years we have sent only the chair of our board, but recently edtech organizations have been sending several staff members and their entire boards to these events. This is where some exciting conversations regarding the future of education in our country take place. I am thrilled to be able to participate, and can't wait to share our northern Minnesota issues with those I meet! I will be in DC Monday, Jan 16–Sunday, Jan 22.

I will be back in school Monday and Tuesday, Jan 23–24, but am leaving on the 25th for a winter getaway. This one includes sandy beaches and ocean views, and does not include internet access, so I will be off the grid from Jan 25th until Feb 6th.

"Photos for Class" Images

Do you sometimes find that Google Image Search doesn't provide the images you and your students are seeking? The people at Storyboard have created a new photo search engine called Photos for Class (www.photosforclass.com). It helps you locate age appropriate images with automatic citations that are creative commons licensed.

I did a few searches in this search engine and was easily able to find good quality images of animals, people, historic events, and the like. I tried typing in a few words that in Google would bring up inappropriate images, and was surprised to find that these results switched to "photos of adorable dog", rather than the words I had used. This is the perfect search engine for pictures in the classroom! Try it out today.

Google Tip: Grading short answer questions

Recently I learned that Google Forms, with the Add-On called Flubaroo, is a solution for grading short answer questions! Open your Google Forms spreadsheet (the one that is created when you start the new form). Go to Add-ons and add Flubaroo (if you haven't already done so). Using Flubaroo you can create your answer sheet with the correct short answer responses and they will automatically be corrected.

Using this tip it is very easy to create spelling quizzes and other fill-in-the-blank quizzes and have them corrected quickly and easily. Let me know if you're interested in trying this out with a quiz today. I'd love to assist!

Love to read?

Join the 2017 Goodreads reading challenge today at <https://www.goodreads.com/challenges/5493-2017-reading-challenge>. Over 550,000 people have challenged themselves to read over 27 million total books this year!

Goodreads is a free website for book lovers. Imagine it as a large library that you can wander through and see everyone's bookshelves, their reviews, and their ratings. You can also post your own reviews and catalog what you have read, are currently reading, and plan to read in the future. It's the ultimate online bookclub, or, if nothing else, a great way to record the books you have read.

The Ten Most-Read Discovery Education Stories of 2016

Check out <http://blog.discoveryeducation.com> to read what teachers were reading about as the year came to a close. Articles on Pokemon Go in the classroom, Strategies for using primary source documents, math achievement, student engagement, and STEM education are just a few of the top stories.

Thinking about Motivation... as 2017 begins?

I have often thought that January and February are the best "learning months" of the whole school year. I loved hearing Larry Ferlazzo recently share his words of wisdom about unleashing student motivation. Here are his four key elements:

- Autonomy (having a voice in what is being done)

- Relationship (building a relationship with someone they like/respect)

- Relevance (that what they're learning connects to their hopes and dreams)

- Competence (that they are capable of doing what they're being asked to do)

Want to hear more? Play the podcast at: <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/4-ways-cultivate-motivation-students/>

Wonderopolis: <http://wonderopolis.org>

Want to increase the questioning in your classroom? Wonderopolis is a website that brings a daily "wonder" to your classroom (or search through them all and choose one that interests you on their website). An example: Wonder of the Day #1821 is "Why do Drink Lids have Extra Holes? You can check out related vocabulary words, learn some history, try an experiment or two, and even watch a neat, short video or listen to a brief podcast. And if your students are wondering about things that aren't listed yet, you can submit your question! Wonderopolis has been helping people answer (and ask) questions for years! Check it out today!