CHEAT SHEET: GET STARTED WITH CODING

Want to learn more?

Check out our Teaching Strategies pages:

http://bit.ly/teaching_strategies

3 GREAT WAYS TO
GET STUDENTS
CODING
1:10

What Is It?

Learning to code is more popular than ever, and it's never been easier for teachers to get started. But does every student need to become a coder? No -- but code is everywhere in our world, and even a little bit of coding literacy can take kids a long way.

Beyond digital literacy, the process of learning to code can support skills that are valuable across a variety of subjects, from problem-solving and logic to collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. What's more, ensuring that all students get an introduction to coding can open up opportunities for more women and minorities to pursue computer science careers.

Three Essential Strategies:

1. Learn along with your students.

Even without coding experience, just about any teacher can lead beginning-level lessons. Many of the best tools use visual, drag-and-drop games and puzzles. Regardless of your expertise, use learn-to-code lessons as an opportunity to model a growth mindset and to show students how you learn something new.

2. Help students become the experts.

Everyone's bound to work at their own pace, so promote collaboration with a student-led knowledge base. It could be as simple as a physical bulletin board in your classroom or even an online class FAQ. Kids who work ahead can offer support and reinforce their own learning.

3. Let students' own interests drive their learning.

Tapping into kids' intrinsic motivation is a great way to get them engaged, and it helps them persevere as they meet challenges along the way. When kids become producers and not just consumers of digital content, they'll be even more motivated to figure out how it's all made.

Suggested Tools:

- Code.org

Popular games, big names get kids and teachers pumped to program

https://www.commonsense.org/education/website/codeorg

- Scratch

Jump-start future programmers with adaptive sandbox tool

https://www.commonsense.org/education/website/scratch

- Made With Code

Inspirational videos and fun projects entice girls to start coding

https://www.commonsense.org/education/website/made-with-code

Did you try these tips? Let us know how it went. We may even incorporate your ideas into future resources. Email us at: edurequests@commonsense.org

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