THE EDUCATION FUND

FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2018-2019

Ideas with IMPACT

idea packet

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ASSURANT

Alexa in the Classroom

Alexa in the Classroom

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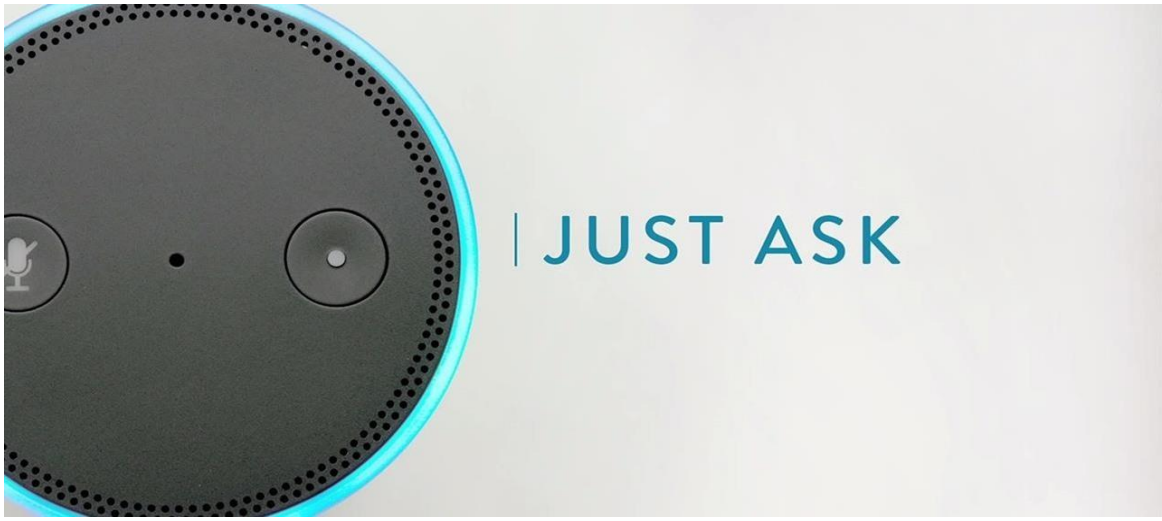


Goals and Objectives

The source of my idea came from the need to help my ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students independently find answers to their questions during our daily differentiated instructional center time. During this time, I meet with each of my three leveled student groups differentiating their instruction to better meet their academic needs. I found myself having to interrupt the group I was meeting with to continually answer general grammar and translation questions. Many times, I had one or more students come and ask me simple questions such as: how do you spell “friends?”; or how do you say a specific word in English? At first, I would place an English/Spanish dictionary in the Writing Center, but these newly arrived second graders lack the skill to properly search the word. This would lead to frustration and giving up on the writing prompt all together. But what if there was a way that they could simply ask a question without having to continually come to me? It’s at this point where every teacher wishes they had a teacher’s assistant to help those students with questions while not interrupting the differentiated instructional center time during the Teacher Led Center. Since M-DCPS (Miami-Dade County Public Schools) does not have the budget to hire a teacher’s assistant, the Amazon Echo becomes a valuable educational tool in just about every type of classroom setting.

Florida Common Core Standards

LAFS.2.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LAFS.2.L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LAFS.2.L.2.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LAFS.2.L.3.5 Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
LAFS.2.L.3.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe thoughts and ideas.
LAFS.2.W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
LAFS.2.W.3.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
LAFS.K12.L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Introduction

The Amazon Echo Plus uses Alexa as a stand-alone Siri. It is a voice-controlled search device that can be asked just about anything. The Echo Dot is awaked by saying "Alexa…" then speaking a command or question. Even though the Amazon Echo was not created for the classroom, it can still provide much needed educational support by answering student questions and helping them become confident, independent individuals, who will not only succeed in school but in the real world.

According to a recent article written by Dr. Bruce Ellis (2017) in the tcea digital website, Alexa can help teachers in the classroom within a wide variety of content areas such as, reading, spelling, writing, math, social studies, and science. For example, students will be able to support their literacy by asking Alexa how to spell a specific word, provide a definition, or suggest a synonym. During math, students can use Alexa to check their work or have Alexa say how much a quarter is worth. Exploring alternative methods of instructions for our ESOL and low performing students is crucial to their understanding and grasping of educational lessons. In essence, the teacher now has a teaching assistant helping students with regular academic questions and helping the ESOL student acquire the English language.

Course Outline and Overview

There are basically only two things to keep in mind when setting up the Amazon Echo: a power source and WIFI connection. Depending on each particular classroom setting, size, and student needs, teachers can use several Echo dots in their small group centers. The closest device to the person asking the question is the device which answers. This means several devices can be running at the same time without interrupting the other small group centers.

I can have one main Echo Plus at my Teacher Led Center, and three more Echo Dot's in all the other Centers. Alexa has made a huge difference in helping my ESOL students not just acquiring the English language, but also to feel confident in writing their thoughts and ideas while increasing their vocabulary. I have been able to concentrate on my Teacher Led Center knowing that the Writing, Reading, and Word Work center is being assisted by Alexa. Using the Amazon's Echo with Alexa has truly provided my ESOL students the extra edge they need to reduce the achievement gap and help them achieve academic success.

Alexa is one of the reasons my students have become better writers, speakers and listeners. And she does this in a non-judgmental, fun, and interactive way. I have found that Alexa encourages students to become more knowledgeable about a wide variety of subjects. They love taking turns asking her questions and getting her response. Using Alexa as a teaching assistant has been instrumental in the overall academic and social aspect of my classroom environment as well as student achievement. If I had to evaluate her performance, she would definitely be given a rating of Highly Effective!

Sample Lesson

I always began the day by stating, “Alexa, good morning.” Alexa then responds by telling me a random fact related to that day in history with a funny pun or saying. It’s no wonder Alexa has become America’s favorite artificial intelligence voice. One of the main reasons why students feel comfortable and able to ask Alexa questions is because she has a sense of humor. She doesn’t question why you keep asking the same thing day after day, or why you do not know how to spell a simple word. This is why she is the perfect teacher’s assistant.

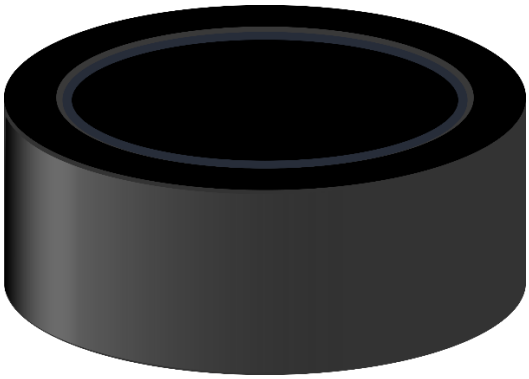
The Echo Dot is activated by saying “Alexa…” then speaking a command or question. You know she is “listening” when the device flashes blue after saying her name. She is “thinking” after you state your command or question if she continues to light up the blue green ring. In my Teacher Led Center (TLC), I worked with each of my three student groups based on their iReady (District mandated reading and math assessment and intervention program) Reading assessment scores. Differentiated instruction is then planned on a weekly basis to help each group of students advance academically. An Amazon Echo device was located in each of my four student work centers. The Amazon Echo Dot located in my TLC helped students translate, spell, or give examples of that week’s grammar targeted skill such as prefixes, suffixes, inflectional ending, singular or plural nouns and so forth. The possibilities are endless!

Within the independent student center such as the writing, word work, reading, or math students will not have to get up to ask me how to spell a word, or find the translation of a word from Spanish to English, while Alexa is with them. She will be there in every independent student center to help students with any academic questions they may have. This is actually a great habit for students and can help address speaking and listening standards in the classroom in an authentic way. Alexa encourages students to become more knowledgeable about a wide variety of subjects. Again, the possibilities are endless!

Since Alexa keeps a record of all searches, students must know that proper use of Alexa questions will be strictly enforced. Any student using inappropriate or off-topic questions will be given consequences including not being able to utilize Alexa.

These are some example of how to use Alexa in your classroom:

- Checking Mathematical Computations
- Math Conversions
- Timers
- Flip A Coin
- Search Facts
- How to Spell A Word
- Play Music
- Current Events/News Briefing
- Weather Report
- Translating Words/Phrases
- Tell A Joke
- Similes
- Antonyms/Synonyms
- This Day in History Fact
- Fact Vs. Opinion
- Play Educational Games Such as Finding State Capitals
- Finding Definitions



Alexa Rules

1. Only one person at a time can ask Alexa a question.
2. Use Alexa as a classroom tool and not a toy.
3. Think first about the question you want answered.
4. Speak clearly using school friendly words.
5. Stay on topic.
6. Remember to always say, "Alexa" in order to wake her up.

Created by Zeny Ulloa

ALEXA can help by...

- spelling words correctly
- setting a timer
- playing ambient noises
- picking a random #
- playing music for behavior reward
- being a research aid
- telling you the weather
- giving cooking instructions
- setting a reminder
- playing an audiobook
- reading Wikipedia
- reading recent news
- adding student profiles
- only responding to one voice
- solving math problems
- Ordering classroom supplies
- brewing coffee
- telling sport's game scores
- playing NPR
- giving traffic details
- playing bingo
- counting calories
- translating different languages
- discussing your calendar
- playing Simon says
- playing Jeopardy
- rolling the dice
- telling jokes
- responding to life questions
- locating your phone

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100 BEST Alexa skills

Just say "Alexa..."

ENTERTAINMENT

1. Open the Tonight Show.
2. What movies are playing nearby?
3. Find me a nearby sushi restaurant.
4. What is the IMDB rating for Breaking Bad?
5. Who stars in the TV show Justified?
6. Did the Diamondbacks win?
7. Give me my sports update.
8. Open StubHub for upcoming events.
9. Ask Fantasy Football nerd for headlines.
10. Ask TV Guide what time the Price is Right is on.

LEARNING

1. Tell me a dog fact.
2. Play the Dave Ramsey Show.
3. What's in the news?
4. Play my audio book.
5. What's 12 times 24?
6. Tell me a Chuck Norris Fact.
7. Open on this day.
8. Ask Aurora for Northern Lights forecast.
9. Open translator. Translate "bathroom" in Chinese.
10. Alexa, open the Bible. Read Genesis 1.

SMART HOME

1. Turn on Christmas tree.
2. Turn family room lights blue.
3. Tell Harmony to turn on the TV.
4. Ask Trackr to find my phone.
5. Tell Rachio to water the lawn for 15 minutes.
6. Lock the front door.
7. Set the thermostat to 70.
8. Tell Garageio to close my garage door.
9. Arm away mode in my security system.
10. Turn on the family room fan.

KITCHEN

1. How many quarts are in a gallon?
2. How many calories are in a cheeseburger?
3. Start a timer for 10 minutes.
4. Open AllRecipes. (guides you through recipes)
5. Open Campbell's Kitchen skill.
6. Reorder Life cereal.
7. Add milk to my shopping list.
8. Ask Wine Buddy what I should pair with chicken.
9. Open Bartender. Ask how to make a White Russian.
10. Open meat thermometer.

GAMES

1. Play rock, paper, scissors
2. Play 20 questions.
3. Play Jeopardy!
4. Open bingo.
5. Open the name game.
6. Open the magic door.
7. Open amazing word master.
8. Play guess the animal.
9. Open bean jar.
10. Launch crystal ball.

EASTER EGGS

1. Where do babies come from?
2. Where is Carmen San Diego?
3. Self-destruct.
4. Ask fortune cookie.
5. Magic trick.
6. Start meow skill.
7. Ask boo. (can also ask applause)
8. Open demotivate me.
9. Who you gonna call?
10. Use the force.

KIDS

1. Open bedtime story.
2. How many days until Christmas?
3. Ask my world capitals.
4. Open animals sounds.
5. Open knock knock jokes.
6. Ask math mania to play.
7. Sing happy birthday.
8. Ask PokeyFinder to find Charizard.
9. Start sheep count.
10. Ask for a fart.

HOBBIES

1. Open metronome.
2. Open acoustic tuner.
3. Start 7-minute workout.
4. Open today's horoscopes.
5. Ask FitBit my step count.
6. Open yoga trainer.
7. Open Potterhead.
8. Wikipedia Lin-Manuel Miranda.
9. Launch stock exchange.
10. Open NASA Mars.

ORDERING

1. Open Starbucks.
2. Open Pizza Hut.
3. Open Dominos.
4. Ask 1-800-Flowers for an order.
5. Add an iPhone case to my cart.
6. Where's my package?
7. Ask Uber to request a ride.
8. What are your deals?
9. Ask Kayak for flights.
10. Open Capital One.

CONVENIENCE

1. What's traffic like?
2. Play thunderstorm.
3. Start white noise.
4. Calendar.
5. Remind me to take out the trash.
6. What time is it in Shanghai?
7. Ask area code.
8. Set an alarm for 8 am.
9. How old is someone born June 12, 1987?
10. Ask Kayak to track a flight.

Smart Home Solver

ask alexa...

- ✧ What's the weather like today?
- ✧ How do you spell _____?
- ✧ Tell me a story.
- ✧ What is the definition of _____?
- ✧ What is a synonym/antonym for _____?
- ✧ Set a timer for _____ mins./seconds
- ✧ Pick a number between ___ and ____.
- ✧ What is ___ + ____?
- ✧ What is ___ - ____?
- ✧ What is ___ x ____?
- ✧ What is ___ / ____?

Don't forget! You MUST say "Alexa" first and wait for the blue light so you know she's listening! 😁

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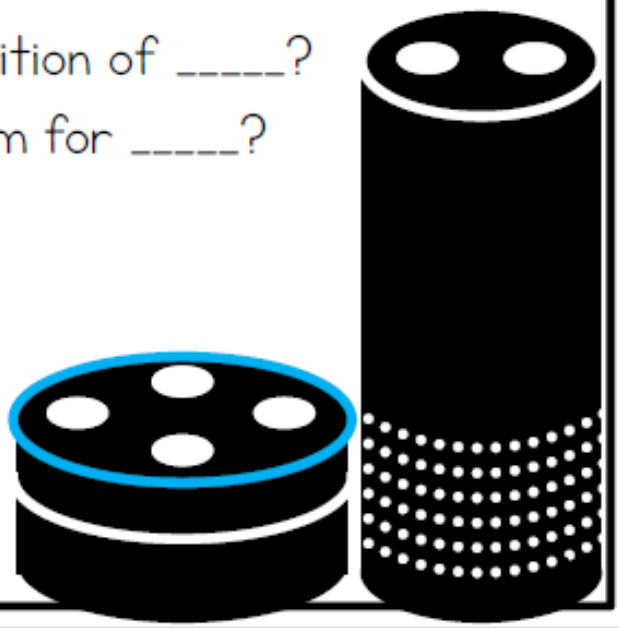
ASK ALEXA

- Alexa, how do you spell _____?
- Alexa, what is the weather today?
- Alexa, pick a number between _____ and _____.
- Alexa, set a timer for _____.
- Alexa, rock, paper, scissors.
- Alexa, Simon Says _____.
- Alexa, what is _____ + _____?
- Alexa, what is _____ - _____?
- Alexa, what is _____ x _____?
- Alexa, what is _____ ÷ _____?
- Alexa, what is the definition of _____?
- Alexa, what is a synonym for _____?
- Alexa, roll the dice.
- Alexa, pick a card.
- Alexa, flip a coin.



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Easter Eggs

As I mentioned before, Alexa has quite a sense of humor. She comes with something called Easter eggs and amusing sayings. The Ester eggs are hidden features and amusing things to ask Alexa Although most are from the most famous movies of all time others are just simply hilarious. Here is a list of some of the most popular commands that prompt an amusing or funny response:

- Alexa, inconceivable
- Alexa, give me an Easter egg
- Alexa, may the force be with you
- Alexa, who you gonna call
- Alexa, surely you can’t be serious
- Alexa, tell me a joke
- Alexa, beam me up
- Alexa, set phasers to kill
- Alexa. Tea, Earl Grey, Hot
- Alexa, my name is Inigo Montoya
- Alexa, I want the truth
- Alexa, party on, Wayne
- Alexa, show me the money
- Alexa, what's the first rule of Fight Club
- Alexa, surely you can't be serious
- Alexa, are you SkyNet
- Alexa, party time
- Alexa, open the pod bay doors
- Alexa, what is your quest
- Alexa, nice to see you, to see you...
- Alexa, don't mention the war
- Alexa, this is a dead parrot
- Alexa, what is your cunning plan

Internet Resource Sites:

Erin*tegration: https://www.erintegration.com/2016/12/26/amazon-echo-dot-and-alexa-in-the-classroom/

Teaching on Less: https://kaysemorris.com/30-ways-use-alexa-classroom/

Teacher Pay Teachers: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/

Digital Trends: https://www.digitaltrends.com/home/best-amazon-echo-easter-eggs/

Smart Home Solver: https://smarthomesolver.com/reviews/100-best-alexa-skills/

The Ambient: https://www.the-ambient.com/guides/best-alexa-easter-eggs-167

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FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Apply for an Ideas with IMPACT Adapter Grant!

All Miami-Dade County public school teachers, media specialists, counselors, or assistant principals may request funds to implement any project idea, teaching strategy, or project from the 2018 Idea EXPO workshops and/or curriculum ideas profiled annually in the ***Ideas with IMPACT*** catalogs from 1990 to the current year, 2018-19. Most catalogs can be viewed on The Education Fund's website at educationfund.org under "Ideas with IMPACT Catalog Publications."

- Open to all K-12 M-DCPS teachers, counselors, media specialists
- Quick and easy reporting requirements
- Grants range from $150 - $400
- Grant recipients recognized at an Awards Reception

To apply, you must contact the teacher who developed the idea before submitting your application. Contact can be made by attending a workshop given by the Disseminator, communicating via email or telephone, by visiting the Disseminator in their classroom, or by having the Disseminator visit your classroom.

Project funds are to be spent within the current school year or an extension may be requested. An expense report with receipts is required by Monday, June 3, 2019.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
December 13, 2018

Apply online at educationfund.org

For more information, contact:
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