CodeHS Case Study

Bring your Computer Science Passion to the Classroom

Zach Huffman, Middle School Computer Science Teacher at Busan Foreign School in Busan, South Korea

A lifelong gamer, Zach began his coding education at Macalester College in 2009 and four years later graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science.

> "The reason I got into the computer science is because I'm a huge gamer."

He worked as a software developer in Minneapolis, Minnesota for two years, before changing gears to travel and pursue teaching. Prior to Busan Foreign School Zach had no formal teaching experience, but throughout his career he had many "teaching moments" where he developed a strong interest in education.

With a perfect sequence of networking, crazy coincidences, and a little risk taking, Zach landed a computer science teaching role at BFS after the school principal overhead him sharing his knowledge and passion for computer science with another teacher. From there, it didn't take long before Zach was committed to moving to South Korea and teaching the first computer science class at BFS!

But where do you start? Teaching is a whole new realm. Zach knew how to code and understood computer science like the back of his hand, but he never had to teach.

The idea of developing curriculum from scratch, setting up an easy submission system, and grading code were daunting tasks. Where do start? What's the best way to break down the basics of programming? How will students learn best? Like many new teachers, the questions kept coming.
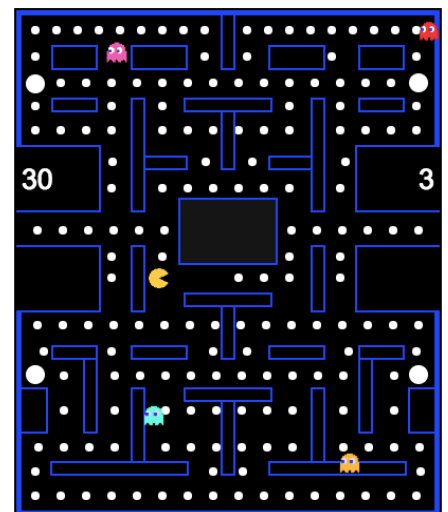
Before Zach spent hundreds of hours developing his own curriculum, the BFS principal introduced him to CodeHS. He recommended that Zach utilize the platform as a base, while he develops his own curriculum. With the extensive CodeHS teacher tools and resources like the Create Tool, Zach was able to seamlessly set up his classroom and customize the curriculum to fit the needs of his student.

What is one piece of advice you would give a new computer science teacher?

"Bring your passion into the classroom! Kids pick up on your energy and they know when you're excited to teach."

Zach will be the first to tell you, how extremely focused and hardworking his students are at BFS. "These kids are such good students. It's ridiculous!"

But at the end of the day, anyone can see the passion and commitment Zach has in teaching his students computer science! Two years in and a long way from his hometown in Tennessee, Zach is still more enthused about teaching computer science at BFS.

A student program created on CodeHS in Zach Huffman's class