

Technology Tips

Multimedia and Classroom Management

The Do's and Don'ts of using computers in the Classroom

I suppose that there are many ways that I could start off this article, however, I think that the best way to actually get the deed done is to quote JK Rowling.

One of the teachers that Harry Potter has during his time at Hogwarts was a man named Alastor "Mad Eye"

Moody. He was a semi-retired Auror (dark wizard catcher) and only came out of retirement at the personal request of Dumbledore. You'd think that it might scare kids a bit to have the kind of guy Moody is as a teacher (he's a pretty gruesome looking fella), it does.

In any case, it's his job to teach the students of Hogwarts to rec-

ognize and deal with the types of situations that Lord Voldemort (the bad guy) might put them in. The main bit of advice he gives them in his low and very gravelly growl is, "CONSTANT VIGILANCE". The only thing I'd add to what Moody might say is, "Clear expectations" and "have a definitive goal".

You see, without detailed planning, you have chaos in your classroom. Classroom management is really a matter of how prepared you are for the unexpected. If you realize early on that the unexpected is very likely to be most common in any classroom situation, you'll probably have quite a bit fewer incidents of whatever pandemonium students can get up to in the

space of a block period. That's not to say that you'll eliminate the occurrences of your average student creating anarchy in some manner, shape, or form at all. Rather, I'm saying that it will help you shift gears when the spirit of chaos infects your room and subsequently all your plans for the use of the laptops, or a lab are dashed on the rocks of confusion and bewilderment.



"Mad Eye" Moody

Things that are available to us...part two...

Web pages for classroom purposes...

Were you aware of the fact that you can have your own pages right along with the High School of Commerce website? You can!!! You can even update it and manage it yourself if you're so inclined.

Many folks are saying that this is only one more thing for teachers to do in an already overburdened workday.

I think you know that I'm going to say that much of what you can do with your HSC web pages will cut down your work substantially. By cutting down the amount of time you have to explain make up homework assignments, what has been done for the last several weeks of class and your contractually obligated expectations letter,

you can showcase your vision for your class within the framework of the Springfield Public Schools, more specifically The High School of Commerce!

See me in B155!!!



STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

ALL THE FOLLOWING
ARE AVAILABLE IN
B155 WITH MR.
MUSIAK:

- *I am available to co-plan, co-teach, and work out just about any other method for the integration of technology in your classroom. I am a good resource for ideas and inspiration when you find yourself in a bind trying to find an activity that will make the most appropriate connection with a lesson.*
- *The GradeKeeper registration key.*
- *Schedule a time to get trained for laptop cart. No training = No laptop cart use.*
- *E-mail accounts sign up*
- *Information on school based technology mini-workshops.*
- *If you'd like to start your own area on the HSC web pages, please set up an appointment with me to find out the particulars for posting and some of the really nifty ideas you can use for creating a viable educational presence on the web.*

On-line opportunities...

One of the more impressive opportunities that students here in Springfield have is the use of on-line coursework. There are a number of

ways to become involved (many of which we'll be discussing here in the "Tech Tips" newsletter throughout the year) and they, the on-line experiences, are not specifically for just the student body either.

While it is an excellent way of indi-

vidualizing and specializing a course of study in a specific discipline at the college level, it is also a really cool way of keeping up with classes 24/7 if a teacher uses an on-line platform to deliver make up work and class supplements. In my experience with both night school and working at Springfield High School, it can mean the difference between a pass and a fail for some folks in really discouraging circumstances.

We have several different options open to us here at the good ol' HS of C. We can use several different avenues to provide the

opportunities for our students beyond the traditional school room. They are: the Manhattan Virtual Classroom, MassOne, and the use of our very own website to deliver rigorous academic coursework. See me in B155 for more information.



Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

- Mark Twain

Laptop Cart Tips! Part 1-The Beginning

The first thing that you obviously have to do is plan for your lessons and the reason **why**

you need the laptop carts. Once you've finished off all that, and you have your lesson plan, hopefully you've included two things with it.

The first of which is your plan for storing the data. Every student has a folder on the HSC server

they access automatically when they log in as themselves (SASI id# is their username and their birthday [061590 is an example of their password]). However, you'll probably want to have a copy of the work for yourself so you can grade it. The easiest way to do this is a flash drive.

They don't cost all that much money (you can find ads for them in most electronics store ads

in the Sunday papers. They're generally about \$10 to \$15 at Circuit City, Best Buy, or CompUSA. It's well worth the investment if for no other reason than the nifty lanyard they give you so you don't lose it.



"Planbook Pages" on the Learning Center

Hey all!!! There were quite a few additions to our collective "bag 'o tricks" as it were over the summer. Many content area folks will notice that a fairly significant amount of material (Instructional Guides, Pacing Guides, and a number of other resources) has been put up on the **SPS Learning Center** on the **INTRANET** for our use.

The first thing that folks will notice, and probably get a little miffed about, is the fact that all of this material is accessible **ONLY** through the

SPS network and not from home. This has been remedied to a certain degree by the ELA department's use of their web pages on the SPS site to display their Pacing Guides, Instructional Protocols, and some Planbook Page FAQ's. Additionally, the Technology Department's Resource Page is exceptionally comprehensive as it includes a veritable cornucopia of tutorials and informational materials in numerous formats.

All that being said, **The Learning Center** is still relatively

new and as such, has a great deal to do to reach the potential of the initial idea in order to meet needs of the teachers of the Springfield Public Schools. As of this writing, there's an awful lot of material that's been uploaded to the **Center** and, if things go as planned, a great deal more will be put up over the course of the year. Teachers interested in contributing to their content area's section of the **Center**, should keep an eye peeled for the postings

And so gentle readers. . .

Last night, I sat up in bed listening to the gentle sound of my wonderful wife sleeping happily while Kellan our yellow lab puppy's foot twitched as she dreamed puppy dreams. Our chocolate lab, Odie, was downstairs in the living room sleeping on the couch and Andrea, my step-daughter slept in her room. After a great Patriots victory over San Diego, the house was silent.

How often is it when we have these moments these days? With the proliferation of the "device age", we seem to be losing the appreciation for, not only the simpler things in life, but the quieter too. We've gotten to be a very busy and noisy society and technology has taken us there.

We tend to think of the gadgets we use as things that are as indispensable as our left arms are. Look at the furor over the "ban" on cell phones in the schools that was made effective last year. I'm not going to argue either the pro side or the con. Suffice it to say, the entire question would be moot if people actually paid more attention to *why and what* they're communicating rather than what they're communicating *with*.

How about the iPod's that are used in the hallways pumping the eardrums of our youths with a bass end thump that rivals the old Godzilla versus Megalon movies. This was when you could "show" how loud the footstep was by focusing a camera on a puddle of water in the road to illustrate it rather than do a "Jurassic Park 37", move your small intestine and make you ears bleed with a THX surround sound digital mega-panoramic audio explosion right next to your seat in the theater (although, I will say that the seats that they've come up with in theaters these days are infinitely better than they were 30 odd years ago).

Now, I'll bet you're wonder-

ing about the fact that I sound like a luddite on a crusade to save the world from the likes of Steve Jobs and Bill Gates. "Why are you not lampooning the high and mighty? Better still, why aren't you lampooning yourself?"

I'll tell you folks, just looking up and down the halls here at the good ol' HS of C, I see the use of technology proliferating at an ever increasing rate. I think that's a good thing on many levels. However, I also think that I'd rather stick a white hot poker through my head than have to actually try to read some of the thousands of text messages that are transmitted down these beloved hallways on a daily basis despite the fact that there is the aforementioned ban on actually having cell phones in school. If we are to take for granted that students will in point of fact have them, it is naïve in the extreme to think that the kids and staff aren't going to use them. And with that use comes the complete and utter devastation of anything even remotely resembling grammar. Of course, that may just be because they're using "text speak" the numbers/letters are so blessed small they take lots of folks (myself included) 10 minutes to respond if you don't want to be there for a couple hours.

"But Ed,..." you say with a flush creeping up your cheeks that means either it's a bit warm in here (which, since this is school AND early September isn't beyond the realm of possibility considering it's not winter) or you're about to have a conniption fit. "You still haven't answered the

question!!!!"

Really? Try to put it all into perspective. I'm a technology guy. Yet, I don't advocate the unrestricted use of technology in every facet of everyday life. I don't want students (or staff for that matter) to say that there's an "emergency" and whip out their chocolate razor multi-functional media phone and call up mom because they forgot their lunch money and they want her to bring in Chinese food (with extra duck sauce) for lunch.

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first."

Mark Twain

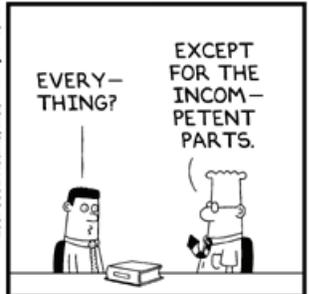
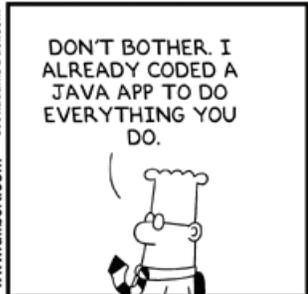
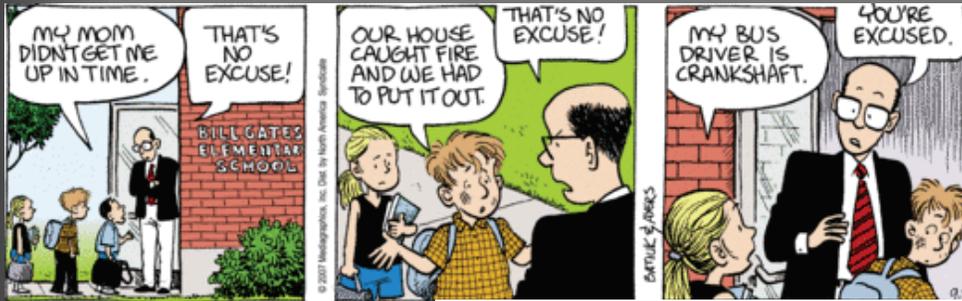
I can't see the reasoning in wanting to make your grey matter grey goo by pumping up the volume so much that there's little trickle of blood coming from under a student's earphones splattering other folks as they bob their head looking like Beavis and Butthead on Ritalin. Even though I'm a musician, I wouldn't want to see that even if they were listening to my latest.

Suffice it to say, I'm an advocate for the use of stuff that's going to make life easier on all involved if, and only if, the word responsibility comes into play somewhere while the words massive hemorrhage and extreme migraine do not

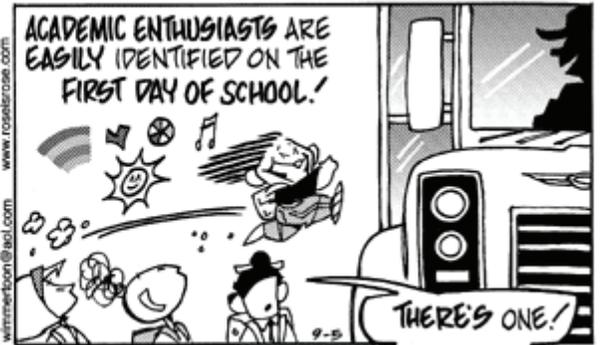


Ed Musiak

Life Lessons in Comics



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