

# Technology Tips

VOLUME 2, EDITION 6

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

## Multimedia and Classroom Management

*"Safety and some of the rules of the road"...or... "What use is common sense?"*

You know, over the last several weeks I've noticed a number of things that I'm sure all of us are finding somewhat troubling. I understand that I told you all I'd be speaking about the uses of video in the classroom and the "instructional block" this week (you can skip ahead to page 2, but I think this is going to be something you'll want to know as well). I haven't forgotten. I just made the decision to speak about safety and securing the contents of your rooms as best you can.

One of the things we have to realize is, if we don't have anything thieves will value, they won't be around. Conversely, when we do have something of value, they'll be sniffing around like Homer on a doughnut.

For the most part, the machines we have in our rooms (my office is certainly an exception) are

junk and we couldn't even pay the thieves to take them away. However, bring in a laptop, even one that isn't necessarily state of the art, and you'll notice that there is a reason for folks, some of whom have never been in your class before, to show up. You now have something of value. Additionally, you'll notice people paying more attention to where you put your valuables (pocketbook, coat, briefcase, that sort of thing). Sound a bit paranoid? Not really. Considering the incidents that have occurred in the past several weeks, I don't think so.

Now that I've got you thinking, what can we do about it? Quite a bit really. Here are a few tips to get us all started:

1. The most important thing that we can do is something we can do for each other. **Be aware of what's going on around you.** Keep your eyes and ears open not only for your own benefit, but the folks around you as well. The more we take care of each other, the safer and more secure things will be for everyone. It's kind of hard to

go running away with a laptop, or any of the other equipment that might be valuable, when "there's eyes everywhere".

2. Make certain that anything of value is secured **at all times.** If you don't have a lock for your laptop (if you're using your personal machine), **GET ONE!** They only cost about ten bucks and you can find them at Staples, Best Buy, CompUSA, Circuit City, Radio Shack, and just about any place where computers are sold. If you're using an SPS laptop, the tech department gives you one when they issue your laptop. Make sure you use it. If you need help with it, let me know.
3. Students should **NEVER:**
  - be in a room unsupervised
  - be allowed to use teacher's keys to enter rooms w/o a teacher present
  - cross between rooms through connecting doors

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## 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 is currently unavailable until further notice per Director of Technology*
- *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.*

## Things that are available to us...part five...To blog or not to blog

The last time we were together, I was talking about blogs and what some of the rules of the road might be for your students. This time I'm actually going to let you in on some of the uses for blogs in the classroom.

One of the main points for using blogs is the ability to use what would be called **Type 2** writing in the *John Collins Writing* method. Granted, blogging shouldn't

be about assessment, nor should it be about anything more than responding to a question in a thoughtful and well reasoned way.

Using blogs is all about the fostering of critical thinking and the uses to which a student's knowledge or opinion based on the assumption of knowledge can be used. They are a method of communication for students to give more reflective responses to ques-

tions that might require more than just a hand raised in a classroom of hands raised. It is through the use of a blog where students can be "heard" in whatever manner they wish with whatever care they take making their "voice" known.

In our next issue we'll get down to the nuts and bolts of setting up a class blog and getting things running on the technical end of the spectrum.



## Technology opportunities...

Perhaps the most vital use of the opportunities that video opens up for us in our “instructional block” comes in the form of the mini-lesson. The use of video is a noteworthy supplement to the methods by which we introduce, demonstrate and then illustrate further the requirements of the Curriculum Framework of any one of

the content areas we currently offer. Let’s establish this point a bit further.

In an ELA class where the instructor is discussing the use of imagery as symbolism in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, he or she might show clips from the Robin Williams film *What Dreams May Come* to illustrate direct quotes from Hamlet’s soliloquy as an explanation of some of what was going through Hamlet’s mind during that moment of the play. It’s also a wonderful way of

demonstrating the timeless nature of the words themselves when taken into context of the situations of both characters (Chris Nielson/Robin Williams and Hamlet/Laurence Olivier) as well as the comparisons and contrasts between the movies as well.

Using both of these videos to illustrate situational techniques is an obvious choice, but by expanding the parameters of our questioning and expectations, we can also use the very same examples to demonstrate the visual techniques in “getting” the points raised by the use of the situational techniques already discussed.

A specific example of this might be in comparing the scene in *WDMC* where Williams recognizes the fact that he’s dead and his dreams are his reality with Hamlet ruminating on what happens after committing suicide in the soliloquy by saying, “For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come”. The use of both scenes will certainly help to emphasize the importance and meaning of

the words Hamlet uses and the spiritual revelation on the part of William’s character.

There are many more areas where we could make comparisons and contrasts, where we could use the imagery of the

movie to illustrate the symbolism of the words, and where we could also compare and contrast visual techniques with situational techniques. The use of video technology during a min-lesson in the ELA classroom in this manner is a fine example of using video clips to illustrate a point or to demonstrate a teacher



discusses.

*In our next issue we’ll talk about how video technology can be used in the social studies classroom to supplement the instructional block in that area.*

*“Educate your children to self-control, to the habit of holding passion and prejudice and evil tendencies subject to an upright and reasoning will, and you have done much to abolish misery from their future and crimes from society.”*

*Benjamin Franklin*

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- be allowed to work on a teacher’s workstation without **DIRECT** teacher supervision.

Some of these might seem to be a bit restrictive, but the fact is, they’re just common sense. That’s the most important thing we can utilize in trying to make our classrooms secure as we bring more technology (and other valuables) into our teaching.

One of the main reasons this article is being written is because of several incidents that have happened over the last few weeks. Were these incidents preventable? I don’t know. I don’t think we should be putting blame on anyone but the individual (s) who are criminals.

What I do think we can do is make things much more difficult for people who are inclined to take vital tools away from the programs and people who are trying to do an already difficult job.

The suggestions I’ve made here are only a beginning. We all need to step up to the plate and work toward making our school a place where we can be secure in the knowledge that we can come to this building and have people looking out for us just like we look out for them.

For those of you who think that you might have a better answer, suggest a way. I’m listening. Consider it a challenge if you’d like. If it makes sense, involves everyone who’s a stakeholder in this school community, then let’s see if we

can try it. Who knows? You may just have the right idea at the right time. Let’s work together.



## And so gentle readers. . .

Folks, it's the beginning of the holiday season again and I just want to say that I wish you all a very safe and healthy Thanksgiving.

Well, now that that's out of the way, let's get down to business. I don't know about any of you, but this is coming into my favorite time of the year. Oh, please don't get confused here folks, I love the holidays and all that goes along with them. BUT... I'm really speaking about the race to the football playoffs. It's the second half of the season and the Patriots have gotten past one of the major hurdles of the last year and beaten the Indianapolis Colts.

Satan Manning and his cronies will be wondering (just like we were last January) where the "in the bag victory" they had went for a long time. I mean they scored first blood in the game and did all the other stuff that they needed to do during 3 3/4 of the game. They played reasonably well despite many injuries and led the Pats for most of the game. They were the recipients of some wonderful non-penalties (I'm still wondering who the refs were looking at for the interference calls but...) and they had Satan Manning in the driver's seat. Of course it's right about this time when Fate always seems to take a hand and all hell breaks loose.

They called it a battle between good and evil and it was right around the fourth quarter with about 9 minutes or so to go that the heavenly hosts

opened up a can of whoop-donkey (think of another name for donkey please... don't say it, just insert it where it's appropriate when you're reading). Tom Brady led his team down the field twice in a matter of four minutes to score two touchdowns, giving the Patriots the 24-20 lead they kept for the rest of the game. But... that's not really what I wanted to talk

*"Laws alone can not secure freedom of expression; in order that every man present his views without penalty there must be spirit of tolerance in the entire population."*

*Albert Einstein*

about at all...

I'm very happy and thankful for so many things it would be churlish of me not to mention some of the things that I think get forgotten by quite a few people around this time of year.

I'm not going to mention the stuff that would be the most obvious because simply by virtue of it being obvious, I thank my lucky stars everyday for those things and people in my life. This is all about what doesn't get mentioned every day by most people. I'm just going to put it in a list form so that I can cut down on the extraneous baloney. So, here we go:

1. Being able to get up every morn-

ing. What a great start to the day don't you think?

2. Having a nice place to wake up every morning. So many people don't even though they work just as hard as I do. I'm lucky I guess.

3. Being able to talk about whether or not I'm going to get a turkey fryer setup or an upright propane smoker. It's nice not to have to worry too much about trying to decide whether to buy food, medicine, or heating oil (I still do though. I remember not so long ago when this was very real for me and my family).

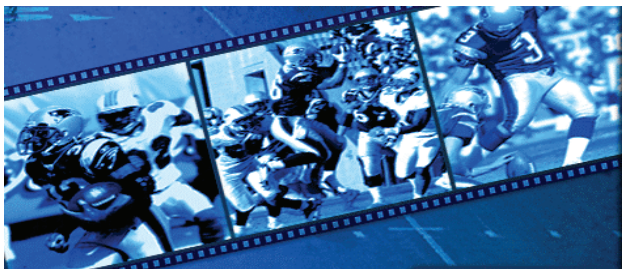
4. Having a great job where, even though I don't make the best money and lots of other stuff, I still get to give back to the community that gave me so much throughout my life so far. AND, I get to have fun while I'm doing it. How's that for job satisfac-

tion? *Yeah that's right. I'm a product of the Springfield Public Schools and lived here all my life. I'm still proud of my hometown even though some folks are continually knocking it and trying to bring it down. My family's been in Springfield for the better part of a hundred years and I'm still here too. Go figure.*

5. Having the ability and the right to create this newsletter and make it the communication tool I want, and you need, it to be. There are so many people around the world these days who can't go off and say the sorts of things we do here in the USA (or even use the same sorts of language). This is something we obviously take for granted when we allow our children to use terms that less than a generation ago would have gotten them killed for using so liberally in public conversations. At the very least had parents use copious amounts of Ivory soap in oral cavities.

Until next time...

Have a great holiday



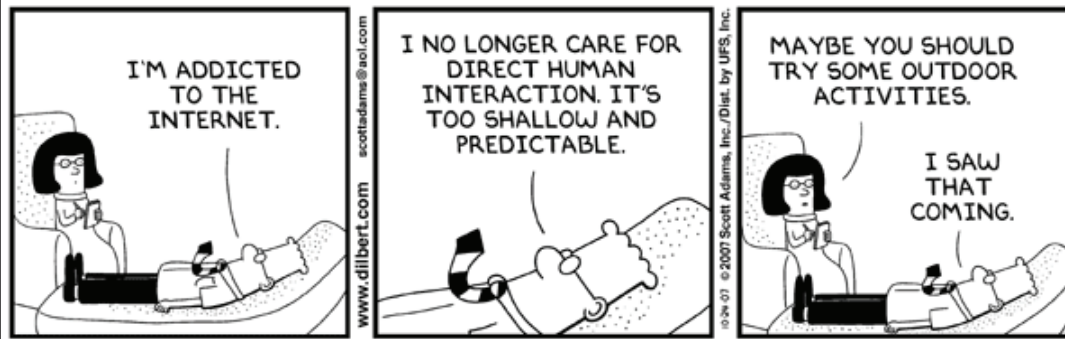
*Ed Musiak*



# Life Lessons in Comics



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