

Technology Tips

VOLUME 2, EDITION 8

JANUARY 14, 2008

Frustration and Technology

Are they hand in hand?

You know folks, technology is only as good as, well... there are a bunch of things that it can **only** be as good as. Things like software, hardware, infrastructure, and a whole host of other things that make or break the use of technology in our classrooms. I believe that the most important thing that technology can “*only be as good as...*” is very simply, the user. Yes, that’s right. Us.

The most important piece of the means for using technology is the one that actually: collects and disseminates, operates, sets up, boots up, downloads, uploads, validates, troubleshoots, and a whole host of other activities related to making sure that the lessons we’ve set up and planned go smoothly. We can’t let our frustration with having something go wrong with one of the seemingly millions of circuits change us from pro-

viding the very best experience with “*21st Century Skills*” for our students.

Understandably, many of the frustrations we run into have to do with the fact that our equipment is woefully out of date and inadequate to meet the standards that we and the students are being



asked to meet. That being said, it’s a long shot to get in the requirements, but it can be done.

I mean, think about it. The reality is this, we can expect that much of our current technology equipment will break down.

And...if Murphy’s Law is a truism, it will happen at the least convenient time. Subsequently, since we all happen to be teachers (and as such, college grads), we have to be prepared for that eventuality. The best way to be prepared for it is by planning. Yes, he says for the six hundred and fifty seven thousandth time, **planning**. The more well prepared we are with the alternatives for our technology lessons to be successful, the less the technology will let us down by failing. We cannot let Murphy and his laws get one over on us because we’re unprepared.

An example of this is, using an LCD projector. If we get the projector to the room and it does not work (for whatever reason), then using the TV monitor to display the presentation is a viable alternative in many of our classrooms. Additionally, if that is not available, there are other solutions that are, maybe not as simple and quick, available to suit the needs of the class. Please contact me in B155 and I’m glad to help when I can.

“The good that men do is oft interred with their bones...”

For the last several issues I’ve been talking about blogs and what the purpose for having one in an educational institution would be. I’ve pointed out the number of fine and wonderful ideas for that have been proposed and acted on by educators and their students all around the country (and world for that matter). In this issue, I’m going to use this space to make a blog entry on behalf of the High School of Com-

merce that does something that is of vital importance to this community of fine students and teachers after having been ignored for so long.

The High School of Commerce

Throughout this year there have been many instances

where people throughout the city have been introduced to the ills of the Springfield Public Schools and specifically with the ills of the teachers and the students of the High School of Commerce. No one is denying there are issues, but the fact is, the students and staff of the High School of Commerce are getting the short end of the stick.

The headline of this article makes reference to the Shakespearean play “Julius Caesar” and the fact

(Continued on page 2)

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 Director of Technology has indicated to the HS Commerce that the district policy is to not to load any software that there is not a license on file for and as HS Commerce has not been able to find the license for GRADEKEEPER the software should not be loaded on machines until it has been found or replaced.*
- *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.*



Technology opportunities...Teaching and Learning with Web 2.0

This course is being offered **FOR FREE** through a grant with the **AT&T Foundation** and facilitated by Ed Musiak, the Instructional Technology Specialist at The High School of Commerce.



Space is available on a **first come, first served** basis to any teacher or administrator currently employed by the Springfield Public Schools.

A six week online experience with 24/7 access to the course through ETLO's Moodle Learning Platform, "Teaching and Learning with

Web 2.0 Tools" is a practical and down to earth look at the usefulness of these emerging technologies and techniques. We'll be studying and promoting the use of ; wiki's, podcasting, blogging and many other tools being used in classrooms across the country to enhance the educational mastery of 21st Century skills.

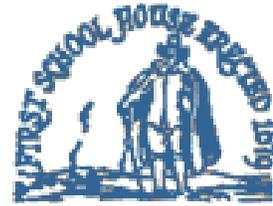
Get in touch with me and I will be more than glad to give

you all the details about the course that you'd ever want. Just think folks, a course that you can take online, at home with your bunny slippers on and a hot cocoa on the table alongside your chocolate chip cookies. And ... on top of all that... you can get 30 PDP's toward your recertification. It's a

great way to meet the technology requirements of HOUSSE and learn some really cool stuff as well.

Just let me know. It's going to begin right after the February break and go

for six weeks. The really cool thing (as if there aren't loads of cool stuff about this offering already) is that I'm the facilitator. You've got me right here if you need help. How cool is that?



**Springfield
Public Schools**

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

Will Rogers

"The good that men do is oft interred with their bones..."

(Continued from page 1)

that we never hear of the tremendous good that someone does even after they're long dead and gone. I can't let that happen any longer. It's not fair that people only see one side of the coin, and the bad side at that. People are always sensationalizing the news to play to the lowest common denominator. I say, let's tell "the whole truth". Here are a few examples of the things that positively affect/portray the students, staff, and general community of the High School of Commerce.

- ◆ The Key Club has been raising money for various charities throughout the year to the tune of thousands (yes, you heard right, that was

THOUSANDS) of dollars. That's not to mention the blood drives they've done and have planned for the rest of the year in addition to the recycling and other projects going on. You didn't see that mentioned on the front page of the newspaper did you?

- ◆ Recently a student had an epileptic seizure during the change of class right in the hallway nearest the airwalk. As anyone who has ever been to Commerce knows, that is one of the highest traffic areas of hallway in the school. Seeing a potentially dangerous situation for one of their own, several students surrounded the individual having the episode and protected the student from harm until help in the form of the school nurse

and the Quebec team members arrived. When the officers and the nurse directed the students to return to class, the cooperation was immediate. It is this type of action that defines character in a community and I can only say that this isn't the only instance of this I see here.

- ◆ The JROTC has been, and continues to be, recognized as an "Honor Unit With Distinction" by the United States Army. This is the highest classification for JROTC units given. I'm told that, since its inception here at Commerce, the JROTC unit has consistently achieved this designation. People hear, every day I might add, how we should support our troops. By supporting the discipline, traditions, and

“The good that men do is oft interred with their bones...”

curriculum approved by the military and passing it on to our students who have volunteered for that path, Captain Koziara, Sergeant Major Gilmore, and the newest member of the ROTC staff, Master Sergeant Manning have consistently done an excellent job with students here at the High School of Commerce.

- ◆ The HSofC has an International Baccalaureate certified diploma program which is every bit as rigorous academically as any of the AP courses of study being given today. Since the school year beginning in September of 2000, 14 areas of study have been taught by staff trained in the methods and techniques of the IB curriculum. Considering the focus of Commerce is, and always has been, the academic growth of students who choose our programs, this program of studies is a perfect fit for us and our affiliation with the IBO has only grown stronger over nearly 8 years.

- ◆ As a result of an increased Internet presence, the performances of the various vocal groups and show bands here at Commerce have been showcased online. Additionally, student Art Shows have been presented on the web pages of the instructors throughout the Fine Arts Department.

The presence of HSofC students and faculty in the community has

high academic achievement. It is a sad thing that there are people that could comment more on the fine things that occur on a daily basis at the High School of Commerce don't. However, the same folks who could see the glass as being half full aren't even thirsty enough to know there's a glass.

I've said all along that this school has more going for it in many ways than any other school in the district. This is a fact. We have one of the most aesthetically pleasing school buildings in the city (consider our auditorium, our library, and our "A" building), taking into account the history behind the architecture and the fact that it was designed with the long term goals of Springfield in mind. Our staff is an exceptionally well balanced mix of veteran teachers and enthusiastic newcomers to the profession. And...I'm learning as I work with more and more of you, outside of the fact that we're professionals, a damn fine bunch of folks...

“Habit is habit and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed downstairs a step at a time.”

Mark Twain

been and (once again) continues to be seen in a positive light through public service projects, art exhibits, fund raisers, blood drives, and most importantly,



And so gentle readers. . . .

It's playoff time again folks!!! The Patriots are in the Championship game against the San Diego Chargers and it's all going down in Foxboro on Sunday afternoon. What's this got to do with technology? Well, everything!!!

I've been talking about blogs, wiki's, podcasting, and all sorts of Web 2.0 tools for the last few issues. There's been a reason for all that of course!!! You have to be able to keep up with all the smack talk that's been going on between the teams for the last year (since their playoff meeting last year) simply because it's so entertaining to hear people insult each other in new and different ways if nothing else.

I mean really. Looking at the ways that grown people are treating each other in cyberspace over what is (allegedly) "only a game", I have to wonder where their priorities are in real life.

All that being said, I have to get a few things straight for those of you who are about to dismiss my comments on this particular issue as being not worth the pixels they're printed on.

1. The NFL and all of the associated media outlets that work with them are responsible for BILLIONS of dollars in revenue in airtime, merchandise, and advertising.
2. When we look at the programs that have the largest viewing audiences over the course of any one calendar year, the one that almost always makes the top 5 is the Super Bowl. Again, BILLIONS of people watch this event over the course of a few years and, here's the real kicker, the kind of money that's involved in this program that's "only a game" is just short of obscene.
3. The online versions of many newspapers and television news media

are now (or will be soon) out here in cybersville. This means that the advertising dollars they collect will be used to create all those funky pop-ups that you see every time you surf the net and hit your news outlet's forums

4. Have you noticed all the nifty new ways that they're using various media to produce the adverts? Think about music, CGI, other animation, and all the retro images they're using to lure people in?

Mind you this is what they're thinking. This is where people's priorities are. It's a media event that we are all a party to. I know I am. Especially when the Patriots are going 19-0!!!! Bring on the chicken wings!!! Chips and dip!!! WoooHooo!!!

Have a great weekend everyone!

Ed Musiak

Life Lessons in Comics

