

Technology Tips

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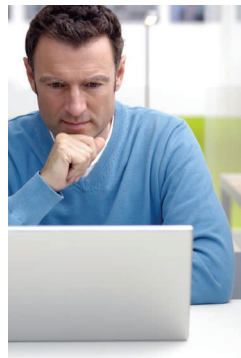
The Teacher's Self Assessment Tool

One of the methods of understanding technology needs, in terms of PD and the offerings that we can put out for the staff of the SPS, we employ comes directly from the DOE. The TSAT (Teacher's Self Assessment Tool) is a comprehensive series of questions designed to find out understanding and skill level using technology. It's certainly the first step in the process anyway.

What we have to do here at the High School of Commerce (and every other school in the city) is get 100% staff participation in this survey (I know that there are some here who have taken the survey already, but your skill levels have changed since you took it last haven't they?). There is no, "Let's get most of the folks and consider it a job well done". We need to dot all the I's and connect all the T's. Here are the reasons in a nutshell:

1. By 2012, every one of our students needs to be technically proficient in the use of technology (Most of the programs in the MS Office Suite we have in the SPS qualify) to meet federally mandated standards with regard to computers and multimedia presentation.

2. The city standard for the integration of an online component of a class as a requirement for graduation is in effect for students beginning in 2010. The information on the requirement can be found in the District's Technology Plan available on the SPS website.



3. Considering the amount of money being discussed by the Federal Government in President-Elect Obama's plans, it's a good bet that Springfield is going to apply for a substantial piece of that any pie that's available. The data that

backs up the reasoning for the technology/tools section of the any application has to be incontrovertible. Subsequently the whole "dot the i's and cross the t's" thing is more important than ever. As that would be a part of the State formula for funding as well, the data you and I provide is that much more important when we look for State monies in these short economic times.

4. While there isn't a specific requirement for technology as of yet in the recertification process, you can count on one being added in the near future. Teachers will have individual instructional technology goals to complete as part of their IPDP (depending on their content area I'm sure). By completing the TSAT, you (as well as everyone involved in trying to create greater understanding and success in this district) will have a better understanding of your needs based on the responses you give.

Credit Recovery and Today's Teacher

One of the main goals of the Superintendent (notice I'm not calling him the NEW Super, he's been here long enough now to skip all that) is to bring about a "Renaissance" in the SPS. I couldn't agree more about the necessity or the timing. The main part of what we'll be doing at first (and hopefully only on a limited basis once folks get used to high expectations and exceptional performance) will be working with credit recovery.

I've said for quite some time now that there are any number of ways that we can facilitate the ability of students to "make up" or "recover" credits that, for whatever reason, they haven't

been able to earn under traditional circumstances. Some of these are: Teacher Web Pages, Web 2.0 tools (blogs, podcasts, etc...), and the use of online Learning Management Systems (MassOne, Manhattan, Moodle, BlackBoard, etc...). The use of the teacher web page and the LMS is what we'll be discussing over the next few issues.

The Teacher Web Page

For a long time now, I've used my web page as a supplement to the classroom environment and offered things like: expectations, rubrics, quizzes, finals, homework assignments, syllabi, and all sorts of other classroom materials in order to offer the most opportuni-

ties I could think of for my students to be successful in any of the classes I taught.

Just for the record here folks, I've taught everything from English 9-12 to Technology (Multimedia Presentation). In each of those classes, I've used the technology assets that were available to me at the time and made the most of them. Of course, I certainly had a good deal of resources to draw from when Springfield High School moved into the fully renovated Van Sickle building.

Coming back here to Commerce has been something of

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Stuff To Know

ALL THE FOLLOWING ARE AVAILABLE IN B155

- *If you need help with getting on MassOne and taking the TSAT, please come on down to B155. We need 100% participation!!!*
- *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.*
- *Schedule a time to get trained for the use of the laptop carts.*

No training = No laptop cart use.

- *The Springfield Public Schools has a district license for...*

GradeKeeper

Please stop by B155 for details

- *E-mail and MassOne accounts are a necessary part of what we do these days. If you don't have either one, please stop by B155 and sign up for them.*

Tech Tips-The Handbook... Part Four

Planning and Prioritizing

There are so many different ways of planning these days it's hard to decide which method to use. Should I use this way or that? Let me give you a bit of advice on the whole "planning method" issue. It doesn't matter.

I understand that there are a number of people who, upon reading my last statement, want to have me boiled in oil and other not very nice things. The fact is that any of the planning methods we've been given as "the" template to use, are all pretty good. What matters is that you understand **what** you're doing, **when** you're doing it, **how** you're doing it, and **why** you need to pay attention to the first three so that you can understand the **products** of the students from the lesson and then take the next appropriate step.

Let's take an example of one of the things we all need to cover a good deal more directly from all of our content standards. Somewhere we all have something that relates to the citation of sources for material students have used in explaining their point of view. It's certainly something our students have a hard time with

wouldn't you say? Here's what the Planbook Page might look like in ELA (based on Standard 24.5)

Objective: Students will document sources in a consistent and standard format as well as present research.

Instructional Block

Activator: Document all the source information (e.g. author, publisher, date published, city published, etc...) from at least 3 on-line sources of information for *Lord of the Flies*

Mini lesson: The Instructor will demonstrate the proper use of the "Son of Citation Machine" web site by creating several examples of varied types of online source material using the MLA format.

Learning Activity:

Students will, with their processing partner, take the information from the Activator and, using "Son of Citation Machine", create the citations in proper MLA format on a Word document.

Wrap Up: Students will e-mail their preliminary "Works Cited" Page to the instructor by attaching the Word document to the correspondence.

Homework:

Create several more references based on research being done for a multimedia project that will contain information from varied sources as well as varied file formats.

Now, I can hear you thinking from here in my Fortress of Cyberville. "We can't do something like that because it's not written into the Planbook Pages for English 12"! It's not written into your Pacing Guides either, but it needs to be done just the same. Using the same format as your Pacing Guides and Planbook Pages, you can certainly create the lessons in whatever format you feel is necessary to address the curricular need in your subject area.

At this point, the High School of Commerce has been told, in no uncertain terms that we need to be following the District protocols. With that said, we also need to be working toward creating and utilizing MYP Units and Plans. The confusion this has caused has hampered our efforts to promote the MYP in some ways I suppose, but I believe (and others as well) that we can take district and MYP protocols (since they're both essentially standards based and say the same things) and merge them to meet the needs of both.

In our next issue we'll discuss using your computer time with as much added value as we can give it.



"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act."

Anatole France

Credit Recovery and Today's Teacher...

(Continued from page 1)

a challenge in terms of the amount of technology we have available, but I know ways to move around deficiencies like ours.

The First Step

The most important thing that you can do is to have an idea of what you're going to create a page for. I know this sounds a bit simplistic, but it's really the point at which everything else flows from. Once you have an idea what you want to do, then you can get to the meat of the matter and start to create the sorts of things you want to have to get your message across.

Let's just assume for a moment that you want to create your site/page as an online version of your classroom. I'd say that's a great start. Then you know the sorts of stuff you'll need to have, considering it's a reflection of the things you do everyday.

Here are some of the things that I would be looking for if I were a student go-

ing to your site

1. Banner identifying the page (your name/class, that sort of thing).
2. Clearly linked documents that contain: class assignments, expectations, rubrics, readings, and other academic materials digitized to meet the needs of informing and enhancing student opportunity (these "documents" are the easiest things to keep updated so students always have access to anything they might have missed).
3. Your school contact information (your email and school phone number are public knowledge anyway, so putting them on your page isn't really violating any perceived privacy).
4. A personal note (you can update this to



reflect the passage of time throughout the school year) that discusses topical information as well as offer praise and encouragement to students (without identifying them by name!!!!)

Make it a point to meet with the Webmaster at the school (right now, it's little ol' me here at the High School of Commerce) and get your page set up and ready to go. Once you're ready to upload everything, drop off a short note with me that has your name, district username and password. Please put it in a sealed envelope to maintain your privacy. I'll then direct it to Peter Zurlino the District webmaster so that he can make sure you have the permissions you need to maintain/update your page (s).

This is just the first step on the road for us to offer every opportunity we can for students to be successful. It's not a panacea for all student credit issues in our classes, but it is a start.. Using the technology we have at hand (yes, even as little as that may be), we can still make the communication between our classrooms and our students a bit more open with regard to 21st century tools.

Planning for Classroom Management-Part V

The last time we talked about classroom management (before the holidays-Volume 3 Issue 6), we were discussing “questioning techniques” with regard to the *Activator* section of the Instructional Block. In this issue we’ll be talking about the “Mini Lesson” or “Teacher Guided Instruction”.

According to most of the Instructional Guides the “Mini Lesson/Instructor Guided Instruction” is (From the *SPS ELA Instructional Guide*):

MINI LESSON

Definition: *A mini lesson is teacher-directed instruction on the objective of the day, the standard being studied, what students need to know and be able to do during the learning activity.*

- standards based lesson
- whole class instruction

• application and connections to language, reading and literature, and/or composition

Mini lessons might be

• Review the definition and provide examples of conflicts, writing these on the board, overhead, or easel, confirming the students’ understanding by discussing their examples.

- * Give an overview of nonfiction organizational features, providing examples of chronological order, cause and effect, and compare/contrast.

Generally I tend to look at all of the various IGs, as I need to keep up with what’s going on before I go into a class or talk with a teacher about a content area and how we can

integrate technology into the curriculum and make it meaningful for student understanding and retention during the lesson. What makes my job easy is (From the *Technology Instructional Guides*):

Teacher Guided Instruction

15 minutes

During this time, the teacher’s instruction has a clearly stated mastery objective.

Purpose/Focus: *to inform and instruct students in targeted learning outcome (s) and connections*

between the content area and technology

Mode: *teacher directed, teacher modeling*

Could include:

- * extension of the activator as it relates to the learning outcomes
- * model use of visual aides to help understanding of targeted learning outcome
- * introduce a new concept embedded in an application problem or an investigation

You’ll notice the fact that the ELA Instructional Guide and the Technology Instructional Guide are saying (gasp!) the same thing. While there are some very picayune differences, the “Mini Lesson/Instructor Guided Instruction” is essentially the same throughout all the content areas.

Knowing all this, we have to assume that planning for what we lecture about, demonstrate, model, or otherwise “teach” during this section of the instructional block is going to be fixed with regard to the time we can devote to “Teacher Guided Instruction”. Subsequently, we have to make certain that we take into account things like: set up, explaining **BOTH** the content material and the relating technology supplements to the traditional lesson, student questions, and equipment malfunctions.

In the next issue, we’ll begin to talk (figuratively speaking of course) about all that we need to actually do during the “Mini Lesson”.

“A person can learn a lot from a dog, even a loopy one like ours. Marley taught me about living each day with unbridled exuberance and joy, about seizing the moment and following your heart. He taught me to appreciate the simple things - a walk in the woods, a fresh snowfall, a nap in a shaft of winter sunlight. And as he grew old and achy, he taught me about optimism in the face of adversity. Mostly, he taught me about friendship and selflessness and, above all else, unwavering loyalty.”

John Grogan

And so gentle readers...

Hey folks!!! Football season is winding down and...let’s face it, this year is the year of the underachiever. Arizona had a terrible record going into the playoffs, the first seeded New York Football Giants got bumped off by a Philadelphia team that only got in because they had Lord Voldemort (the bad guy from the Harry Potter novels) put a full body bind curse on most of the rest of the NFC.

The fact that the Patriots were the first team since 1985, and only the second team in NFL history, to finish with an 11-5 record for the regular season and not make the playoffs in the AFC while a team like San Diego gets in with an 8-8 record just makes you say, “huh???”.

Of course, that’s not what I wanted to talk to you about. I’d like

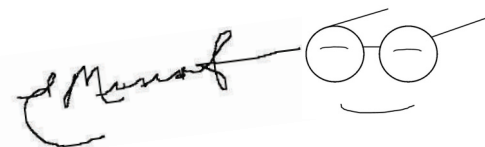
to ask a favor of you. This weekend is a long one because of the celebration of Dr. King’s birthday. Right when we get back, surprisingly enough, is Inauguration Day. It’s a historical event at any time, but this inauguration is different. The first president African-American descent is taking the Oath of Office. Whether you voted for him or not, that makes this pretty special.

The favor that I’d like to ask you is to make sure that you and your students (if you have them at that time) watch the inauguration and speech. Then, when it’s done, ask your students the following question:

“Dr. King once said, ‘I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character’.

What does the Inauguration of President Obama make you believe about your role in making that dream come true?”?

Let’s make this moment more personal and real for our students. I will post their responses (minus the identifying characteristics like names or photos of themselves) on a special page of the HSofC website. They can be written essays, multimedia projects, anything that I can digitize to put out their opinions and make them (even more than we already try to) the focus of our historical perspective. Let’s create our own slant on teachable and historical moments



Life Lessons in Imagery

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own. “

John F. Kennedy



So far this year we’ve looked at images that have shaken the world for one reason or another. Hopefully you’ve had occasion to use these “teachable moments” to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding of issues that have affected, and will affect, us as citizens of the world.

This issue will focus on imagery that has to do with American History, specifically Presidential Inaugurations.

Ed Musiak

“In this outward and physical ceremony we attest once again to the inner and spiritual strength of our Nation. As my high school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman, used to say: “We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles.”

Here before me is the Bible used in the inauguration of our first President, in 1789, and I have just taken the oath of office on the Bible my mother gave me a few years ago, opened to a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah:

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” (Micah 6:8) “

James Earl “Jimmy” Carter



“We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding—we are going to begin to act, beginning today.

The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we, as Americans, have the capacity now, as we have had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom.

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem.

From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price”

Ronald Reagan



“Now, for the third time, a new century is upon us, and another time to choose. We began the 19th century with a choice, to spread our nation from coast to coast. We began the 20th century with a choice, to harness the Industrial Revolution to our values of free enterprise, conservation, and human decency. Those choices made all the difference. At the dawn of the 21st century a free people must now choose to shape the forces of the Information Age and the global society, to unleash the limitless potential of all our people, and, yes, to form a more perfect union.”

William Jefferson “Bill” Clinton

