

Technology Tips

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 9

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

The Teacher's worst enemy...

Apathy

[-ap-uh-thee] –noun, plural -thies.

1. absence or suppression of passion, emotion, or excitement.
2. lack of interest in or concern for things that others find moving or exciting.
3. Stoicism. freedom from emotion of any kind.

Origin:

1595–1605; (<F) < L apathia < Gk apatheia insensibility to suffering,

apathy. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Retrieved February 03, 2009, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/apathy>

The main thing that we, as educators, have to consistently fight against in our classrooms, schools, and communities is apathy.

Look at what's happened in the last six months folks. We've elected the first African American as the President of the United States. We have a new Superintendent here in Springfield. And...we have the greatest challenges of the last 80 years with respect to rebuilding our country pretty

much from the ground up. We have no time for apathy.

Yes, I'm very aware that this is a newsletter designed with the specific intent of offering technology tips to the High School of Commerce staff (although it's grown a bit since I started it). However, the fact remains that it is the **staff** of this school (as well as any others who may read this) that utilizes technology, in



ways that adapt teaching practices to motivate, inform, and enhance the educational experience for our students. The apathy of the past has no place here.

We have deteriorated, outdated, and pretty

much unusable equipment to work with for the most part. Sure, there's occasionally new equipment that comes in to replace some of the gear that's in the worst shape, but that's kinda like putting a band-aid on a bomb crater. Even with all of that being said, seen and done, we can still make things happen. We can still use curiosity, ingenuity, patience, and teamwork to meet and, dare I say it, exceed our own expectations.

The Superintendent is calling for a renaissance. I say let's show him (and the world) the Da Vinci's, Michelangelo's, Botticelli's, Galileo's, Copernicus's, Martin Luther's, and even the Machiavelli's in our schools. Let's put an "R" on our Renaissance.

If we can't work through it, let's work around it. Let's shape the obstacles we face to suit our will. The world expects results from us, not excuses.

E-Mail- Some maintenance tips...

Maintaining your SPS e-mail account is becoming more and more of a priority these days considering more and more of our communications are being handled electronically instead of the whole "print a forest worth of copies and waste paper and ink resources to send messages that could be sent for nothing over the net". Here are just a few suggestions for folks to consider:

1. Delete messages when they are no longer useful. There's no need to be a

"cyber-pack rat".

2. Make sure you clean out your "deleted items" folder. Items you delete from your in-box aren't removed/gone completely from your account storage until you do this.
3. Please be aware that you should also clear out your "sent items" and then clean the "deleted items" for the same reasons as mentioned above.
4. Please be aware that while there are some serious bene-

- fits to having an SPS e-mail account, doing work that isn't related to your position as a member of the staff isn't one of them. This account is for school business.
5. I know that you may have heard what I'm about to say before, but PLEASE take it seriously. Your account is **NOT** private!!!! Anything that is transmitted by this exchange server becomes public record and is archived and stored. For

(Continued on page 2)

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 Five

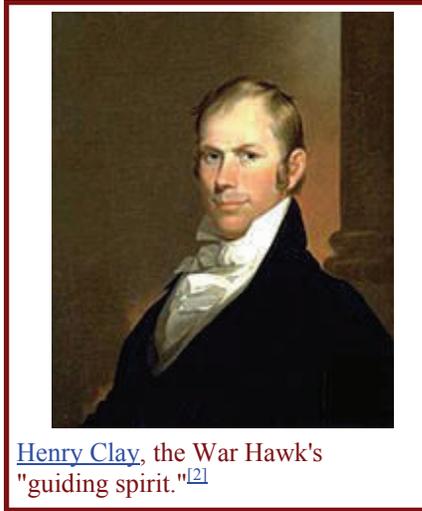
Making it Meaningful...

One very important part of teaching of any lesson lies in our ability to recognize the affect or value a lesson has for our students. There have been many times where we've all discussed our students and whether they're engaged in the learning because it will lead them personalize and retain information better. Of course those conversations can't really get down to the real reason why students actually learn something. The fact is, engagement is only one piece of the puzzle.

You and I know that the most important lessons we learn are not only engaging, but also have meaning and value beyond the purely academic. That means we have to make absolutely certain that each and every time we use a technology tool like the Internet, it has to mean something other than the purely academic.

An excellent example of this comes to us from our exploration of the instructional block of the last several issues. Looking at the defined roles each of the areas has, we

can certainly say that there isn't a great deal of room for guesswork. We have to make sure that not only are standards aligned, expectations posted, students engaged, but actual



Henry Clay, the War Hawk's "guiding spirit."^[2]

learning occurs. This can only come from making **each** of the lesson's constituent parts meaningful to the whole. Let's take a look at a Social Studies lesson and check one of the constituent pieces to see if we can make it more meaningful than it is already by integrating technology.

Grade: 10 Unit # 6 Title: Political Democratization, Westward Expansion, and Diplomatic Developments, 1790-1860

"To repeat what others have said, requires education; to challenge it, requires brains."

Mary Pettibone Poole,

(Original as it's posted on the "Learning Center")

Teacher Directed Activity:

Identify the War Hawks.

Identify the goals of the War Hawks.

Here are some of the things that could be done to enhance this "Teacher Directed Activity".

Teacher Directed Activity:

The Instructor will identify the "War Hawks" as a political force and demonstrate the impact of their goals on the early development of the United States and it's expansion. To facilitate this, the instructor will put on display (using an LCD projector) images of the topics discussed using source documents culled from content specific web sites contained in a TrackStar track that will be made available to students.

There are several different levels of tech usage going on here that will (having used them myself in numerous classes) add to the learning experience. The first these being the ability to show the students images of the people, places and things they're learning about. The second (and perhaps more important) is an interactive web quest in a relatively contained area. Both of these supplements to the "Teacher Directed" activity lend themselves to making a lecture (Sage On A Stage) a much more interactive and directed experience (Guide On The Side). for student learning as well as engagement.

E-Mail- Some maintenance tips...

(Continued from page 1)

those of you who might be a little unsure of what this actually means, let me explain. Very simply put, your communications are kept/archived, by law, as public records. The rules are complex (and I know I don't understand them all by any stretch of the imagination), however I can certainly say that there will be Federal guidelines that regulate the variances soon.

6. There are a number of you that want to archive your e-mail rather than delete it. For anyone who would like to do this, here's the most direct method (please be aware that this particular technique only works with MS Outlook **AND NOT** the web-based Outlook Express)

- Create a folder on your desktop (or on a disk drive) so your "files" (each e-

mail is a file) will have a place to exist once you take them off of the Exchange server.

- Open MS Outlook and highlight the email files you'd like to copy to the folder you've created.



- Click and drag the files you've highlighted to the folder you've created. I would make sure that I had created an organizational structure to keep things

separated in an order that I understood before I started "migrating" materials

Very Important!!!

- Once you've completed this process, please **check the folder to make sure that everything has "made the trip" in fine working order.** Once you've verified it, then go back to your MS Outlook folder (e.g. the in-box) and delete the files that you've moved.

Please keep in mind that this is only one way of meeting a need for archiving. If you have suggestions, send them along to me, or... better still, write an article and I'll put it in the "Tech Tips".

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Planning for Classroom Management-Part VI

“The Mini Lesson”

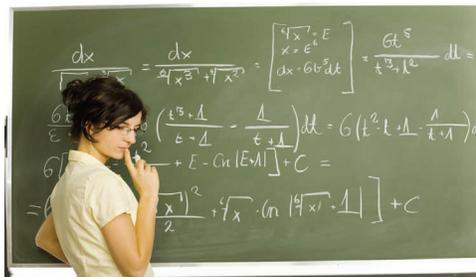
In our last issue, we spoke about the “Mini-Lesson” in terms of what it is and how to plan for it. Right now we’re going to get into the nuts and bolts of what we, as instructors, will actually be **doing** during this time.

While each content area has its own quirks and idiosyncrasies, the actual teaching of lessons is basically the same. We teach, students learn. Pretty simple huh? Not really when you get right down to it. If it were that easy, anyone could do this job. Of course, the fact is (as you and I are fully aware) it is not “just anyone” who can walk into a smelly, muddy, and altogether wet swamp showing students how to take samples of soil and water for examination as well as recording of data points, and make biology come alive for those (now smelly, dirty and wet) students.

Everyday, every period, with every class, and for every student we make efforts to bring subjects out of the dry and dusty corridors of academia (unless you happen to be in the aforementioned class above) and bring our content to life. In doing so, we make the seemingly irrelevant, life altering.

This small chunk (the mini block) of the “instructional block” is the most im-

portant area of our time with our students. It’s where the initial transfer of knowledge occurs and the wheels start to turn in student hearts and minds. For anyone who might doubt that this happens in a far more frequent manner than anybody ever really gives teachers credit for, ask a student about their favor-



ite teacher. Then ask the student why the teacher was his/her favorite. The final question would be, what was it that Mr./Mrs. X taught you? You will invariably get an answer that will let you know that there are lessons taught that stay with people for far longer than the final exam.

What does this have to do with tech-

nology? A great deal actually. In the lead article on page two of this newsletter, we identify an example of a teacher directed activity that could benefit from the integration of technology.

In that article’s example, one of the ways that we improved the plan itself was by clearing up the expectations and stating plainly what the instructor would do to begin the process by which the students would become active participants in acquiring knowledge. The ideas and direction were initially there, but the focus itself was somewhat cloudy. In using technology supplements like TrackStar and projecting images with an LCD, we can make an already good lesson even better.

Throughout all content areas there are opportunities for the integration of simple technologies to further student understanding. While traditional teaching techniques we use in our classes are certainly good, we can make them better by taking them and infusing them with 21st century tools (in appropriate circumstances) with some careful planning and execution in our “Teacher Led Activities”, or “Mini Lessons”.

“That which we persist in doing becomes easier, not that the task itself has become easier, but that our ability to perform it has improved.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

And so gentle readers...

I suppose that folks who aren’t musicians wouldn’t care all that much about the fact that 50 years ago three of the pioneering members of Rock and Roll’s elite died in a plane crash on a frigid night in an Iowa field. We tend to forget the celebrities that burn so brightly for a time when they no longer play for us. It’s a shame that if we asked some of our students today, they wouldn’t have any idea who Ritchie Valens, JP Richardson (the Big Bopper), or Buddy Holly were.

I remember the first time I heard “La Bamba” and said “Man what a groove that guy’s got”. Then Ritchie sang “Come on, let’s go”. I was hooked then and there. I wanted more. But there wouldn’t be any more. I found out that Ritchie Valens was dead. He was only a couple years older than me when he

died. 17 is far too young to go.

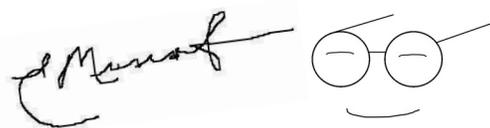
While I was not as big a fan of JP Richardson, I always liked the technique he used to sing “Chantilly Lace” It was so cool listening in to his conversation with his girl (at least from his side of the call).

As much as I liked those two guys, I was always a little in awe of Buddy Holly. He influenced The Beatles, the Stones, and just about anyone else I tried to emulate when I played. The coolest thing was, he looked just as much like a goof as I did. Of course, I was heavy and he was thin, but that didn’t matter. He wore those horn rimmed glasses, played guitar, and wrote songs that moved me and millions of other folks

I thought of him as being the kind of rock star I wanted to be. The thing was I didn’t know that he was married

only six months to the woman he wrote “True Love Ways” for when he passed away. When I found that out, it made him even more human and his loss even more tragic. Not for me of course. Not for the millions of musicians he inspired with recording techniques he helped pioneer. It was for the woman he loved and sang that song for.

It’s been 50 years since they died on that cold night, but the legacy of their music; the sounds, the techniques, the soul, was what made me believe that more than the fact that rock and roll lives forever, singing a song to the one woman you love is eternal as well. Ask Terry about “Hey Mizz T”, maybe she’ll tell you about it.



Life Lessons in Imagery

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.

Charles Hardin Holley, known professionally as Buddy Holly

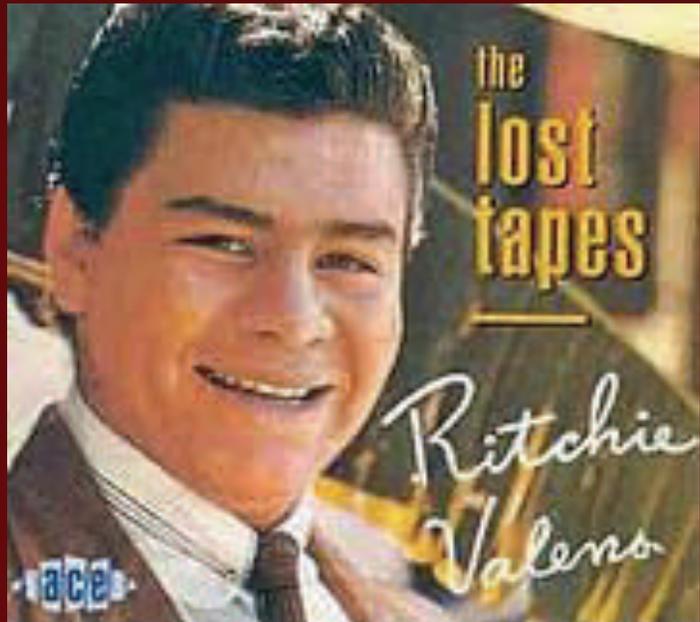
(September 7, 1936 - February 3, 1959)



This issue we'll take a look at a moment in time that would shape much of the world from then until now. February 3, 1959 was, as Don McLean would so eloquently say in his 1971 megahit "American Pie", "the day the music died". Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "Big Bopper" Richardson died in a plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa after having finished a show at a venue called the Surf Ballroom.

While I wasn't born until more than three years later, as a musician and songwriter, I have been influenced by the work of Holly throughout my writing and playing. The techniques he pioneered in his short career have influenced generations of musicians, recording engineers, producers, and other innovators in the field of recorded sound technology. I'm no exception.

Ed Musiak



Richard Steven Valenzuela (Ritchie Valens)

May 13, 1941 - February 3, 1959)



Jiles Perry "The Big Bopper" Richardson, Jr.

October 24, 1930 - February 3, 1959