

Technology Tips

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A scholarly article on Podcasting



According to the article on "Wikipedia" a podcast is "a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and downloaded through web syndication. The mode of delivery differentiates podcasts from other ways of accessing media files over the Internet, such as simple download or streamed webcasts: special client software applications known as podcatchers (e.g., iTunes, Zune, Juice, and Winamp) are used to automatically identify and download new files in a series when they are released, by accessing a centrally-maintained web feed that lists all files associated with the series. New files are thus downloaded automatically and stored locally on the user's computer or other device for offline use, giving simpler access to episodic content."

"Podcast." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 12 Nov 2009, 18:59 UTC. 13 Nov 2009 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Podcast&oldid=325479616>>.

I was helping a very nice teacher from SABIS the other day with some questions she had on the value of Podcasting, (as well as some of my colleagues in the Instructional Tech Specialists every-other-Friday-tech-guru-PD meet-

ing) and she stated that there were very few "scholarly articles on the use of podcasting in classrooms. Well, after having looked into it, I found quite a few (lots actually) articles on the subject. I read a few, scanned some more and came to the conclusion that what I had been doing for a number of years constituted the same thing. I don't think it had anything to do with me being "scholarly". I believe it was more like practical if you want to know the truth. Let me explain.

As teachers, we're always trying to find different ways of making sure that our students can truly use the skills for retention and recall that we blister their minds with every day. The problem that arises from this need of ours is the existence of different learning styles. I'm not going to get into the different modalities, I'll leave that for college Education courses. What I will say

however is, if we really want our students to be able to communicate in as many different formats as possible (considering the nature of 21st Century skills), we absolutely have to make certain that they are familiar with creating the aspects of a podcast.

Now, let's be clear on this, there are some people who are good at speaking, some who are good at writing, and some who are good at working with technology tools. Since we know this to be the case, why shouldn't students work in collaborative groups on some things to create projects (another one of the 21st century skills in greatest demand by employers) within that framework? To clearly define the roles within a group and make sure those roles are fulfilled is as much of a desired outcome these days for



Heading into the Holidays!!!

Who woulda thunk it? We're almost to the holiday season already!!! Well...that can mean only one thing for us dear readers. That's right...the HSofC Tech Tips Holiday Gift suggestion article for 2009!!! Let me tell you, there are some really cool things this year too. Stuff priced from just a few dollars to well... probably more than any of us can afford, but it's always nice to dream isn't it? Anyway...

1. For about \$25, you can get a 4 GB Designer Flash drive from a company called MIMOBOT in the shape of C3PO from Star Wars. It's hardly what I would call sensible, but then I have a life sized Chewbacca, Yoda,

and Homer Simpson in my office. Who am I to say?



2. HP DreamScreen 100 Internet touch screen-Wow! This seems like the alarm clock I've always wanted but could never have because, well...they hadn't been invented yet. There are 2 ver-

sions of this little beauty (10 and 13 inch versions) that do everything from show you weather forecasts and keeping up with your Facebook Wall, to displaying pictures of your cat Spot with that silly looking fuzzy collar you got him last year and the dogs sleeping on top of the doghouse.

3. A Touch Screen PC- Why would I want one of those? Well, I think the elimination of a tower would be nice, in addition to the whole NCIS Los Angeles-tactile-move-the-images-and-direct-your-screen-without-a-mouse-thing. Very cool tech-

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Stuff To Know

ALL THE FOLLOWING ARE AVAILABLE IN B-010

- 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.
- If you're planning on the use of lap top carts, please reserve one as early as you can. Also, please be considerate of the needs of your colleagues when planning the length of time you'll need the cart you'll be using.



A scholarly article on Podcasting

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any content area as any other standard we set. Podcasting is ideally suited for this.

Let's look at this from the perspective of an ELA classroom (yes, I'm using ELA to help my new friend at SABIS get a better understanding of some of the possibilities). If you're working on Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and trying to work out the different types of symbolism and how they play a part in the allegory, well... using a series of podcasts produced by the students that might include the following:

1. A reading of the poem by the students. You can do this in a "round robin" way where you split the students into groups that read and record different pieces of the poem then edit them together (even supplying sound effects mixed in for a bit of color for the folks using multi tracking).
2. Class discussions that are moderated by students concerning the different literary techniques used by Coleridge throughout the poem. In this way, you can even get in some

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but to reveal to him his own."

Benjamin Disraeli

Heading into the Holidays!!!

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nology that's becoming more commonplace as we move into an age where human-computer interfaces are the norm. Lots of companies are producing them right now so you have your preference. Depending on your needs you can get these little buggers starting at about \$500 bucks (more or less) up to about \$3,000 (for the techno-geek near and dear to your heart)..

4. Get the computer fearing teacher on your floor training in all the aspects of integrating technology into the classroom by setting up a time with your friendly neighborhood Instructional Technology Specialist! O.K., so it's my job, I have to make a plug somewhere you know. The really cool thing is, it doesn't cost anything!!!
5. The latest phase of mobile technology is the advent of the notebook computer. Some vendors are calling them **ultraportables** or **netbooks** (although there is, according to the Wikipedia article I found on laptops, a slight

practice with open response questioning techniques as well as their answering techniques.

3. Specifically moderated oral commentaries where students discuss different aspects of the poetry on an individual basis. This could be very similar to what might occur in the "Oral Commentary" assessment for IB Diploma students so that they might be better prepared for it.



Now, I can hear you thinking even as I'm typing this, "I haven't got the software to do that Ed!" Au contraire mon ami. You certainly do. [Audacity](#) is a free, open source software for recording and editing sounds. Just click that link and you'll go to the site where you can download a copy. If you're more interested in the sorts of tools that the pros use, then you can go to Sound Forge (for their latest editing suite you can expect to pay about \$400) or Logic Pro (again expect to pay around \$500) and get to working with multi-tracking and doing some really cool work there.

Sites to check out

[The High School of Commerce](#)

We're going to be 100 years old on November 25th, 2010! The next year is going to be an exciting time to be a Red Raider! Even if you're not a staff member here at the good ol' HSofC, there are going to be interesting things happening on our site. Here's an excerpt from a history of the Springfield Public Schools

"In 1898, a commercial department was formally organized at the new Central High School with one room for two teachers and 37 pupils. By 1906, the department had grown to nine teachers and three hundred ten pupils and was transferred to the new Technical High School. On Nov. 25, 1910, the growing commercial department was established as a separate school to be known as the Commerce High School. Only one month after it was established, its name was changed to the High School of Commerce. Until a new school could be built, classes were held during the afternoons, once again at the Central High School."

"Springfield Public Schools-Students Look At The Past. 1. 1. Springfield, MA: Mass Mutual, 1986. Print."



loaded backpacks that are allegedly making the practices of chiropractors who specialize in children's injuries boom (I wonder if we could get more funding for technology if we said it was our way of contributing to health-care reform. JUST KIDDING FOLKS!!!!). You can get these machines from a variety of different vendors for anywhere from \$199 to about \$899, depending on what you get it for.

In the next issue, we'll talk about the fairly inexpensive techie gifts you can get for the folks on your list. As it stands right now, there are so many out there, I have to actually try and decide which ones I'd like to check out myself (all in the name of research, I swear Terry) so I can give you an informed opinion.

difference in applications). Anyway you slice or dice it, these babies are going to be huge in their applicability to academic situations. Designed for their uses in mobile situations and versatility, they have the capability of being a significant contributing factor in the demise of the over-

Research- What it is & how to use it Part III

In our last issue, I left off with the statement, *"In order for the facilitation of improved research practices for our students to improve without lower standards, we have to develop our own questioning techniques in order to support leading the development of critical thinking skills"*. I understand that, for many people, I'm preaching to the choir here. However, when we think about it, just where do we think the issue with students being able to think critically through a problem begins?

While this is certainly by no means written in stone, we are (in the academic world we reside in) the sole arbiters of that issue. I mean think about it, where is it that our students learn the skills that are required for them to live "in the real world". **Right here with us.** It's as simple as that. For 180 days of every year and 7 1/2 hours of every one of those days, we work with them in a very intense environment. Since it is imperative that they learn the means by which they can "get it right" according to the standards set by the State DESE (not to mention the "real world"), it is our responsibility to make sure that the questions by which we stimulate inquiry and assess retention of skills are created to do just that.

While it is indeed necessary for there to be the occasional "trick question", this doesn't mean that every question should look like one to the student reading it. What I mean to say is, while *we may understand* what we're asking, does the student? That's not to say that we should intentionally "dumb down" our questions, but rather ask them in a manner which not only makes it's intent clear, but stimulates an inclination to-

ward further study and deeper understanding. That's the "sell" that we have to make.

Let's look at the example of a question from the 2007 ELA MCAS Grade 10. This particular question is perhaps one of the better examples of a straight-ahead OR question.

"In the poem, a shift occurs at the end of line 4.

a. Explain what happens before and after the shift.

b. Explain what causes the shift.

Use relevant and specific information from the poem to support your answer."

All it asks for is a simple opinion /answer based on the student's understanding (prior knowledge) of an author's intent supported by examples found in the text that deal with a change in tone. Easy right?

The problems this question causes with our students revolve around the fact that our students don't see the relationship between the different parts of the question itself and the way that they have to answer based on that. In other words, what they do is almost always based on one part or another when they answer (if they answer at all). Their answers are always incomplete as they do not focus on the "big picture".

In the case of this question, many of the students that I've seen answers from have almost always re-stated

what they believe the question to be and then proceeded to discuss **what** happened before and after the "shift" occurred. What they don't do is discuss **why** it happened because they don't "see" what the author feels. Are there a thousand and one reasons for this? Yes, of course.

One of these is because they aren't asked to think this way nearly often enough here at school. Our students are certainly capable enough. They do that sort of critical thinking and inference in their own lives every day. We've just got to make them understand that what they already do in their lives is just as applicable in the academic world as well. Once we have that bit licked, then we just have to make them understand that the reasons they think the way they do are exceptionally important too and they need to include that reasoning to make us understand as well. And thus we have the beginning of the "inclination" toward the study and retention of research.

Of course that could all be baloney. You tell me, I'd love to hear what you think.

"One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

And so gentle readers...

Every year at this time we stop and give thanks for the things we've been given over the course of the last year. I'd like to give you all my short list of things that I'm grateful for.

1. Tom Brady being back from his knee injury and having enough go-juice to stomp the be-jezus out of the New York Jets this past Sunday.
2. Wes Welker being only 5'9", 185 pounds and still able to do the job against guys that are a foot taller and a hundred pounds heavier. The guy's incredible.
3. Randy Moss for being ...well... Randy Moss.
4. The entire Patriots defense for doing such a great job when the game could have gotten out of hand.
5. The ability to watch these games in a warm home, a cold seat in the stadium, or from anywhere where there are people who'll have me (a shockingly large number I'm proud and humbled to admit).
6. The means by which I can offer to have people I care dearly about come to my home and have

appetizers and/or dinner whilst shouting rude things at the screen when the opposing team makes a good (depending on your perspective) play.

7. A large Patriots blanket to throw on the bed when my other two girls (Odie and Kellan) start hogging the covers.
8. Having found a wonderful woman who really does like to watch football on Sundays.
9. A rocking chair my ever loving wife (mentioned above) feels comfortable in when said "other girls" from above crowd up the couch on game day.
10. The sense to realize that, for whatever reason, I've fallen into a pot o' gold as I've said on any number of occasions.

The fact is folks, I have soooo much to be thankful for this year it's almost embarrassing. And...believe it or not, much of that in my professional life at school involves each and every one of you who reads this newsletter.

You think I'm kissin' backsides here!!!!?? Ah...I don't think so. Let's look at some of the reasons...and this isn't a slight to any of the other very cool people I've worked with over the last year, I'm

just recalling things here folks:

1. Meeting or exceeding every goal set for me as an ITS person here at Commerce. You folks and others throughout the district are as much responsible as I am.
2. Being a generally outstanding group of folks to work with in terms of attitude and enthusiasm. I know that may sound a bit "hinky", but I wouldn't say it if it weren't true. It's not my style.

Hell, I could probably come up with a thousand reasons to be thankful off the top of my head. But... let's face it, it all works out to the fact that I've got a wife and family I love dearly and a job/career where I can truly say each and every morning, "I really do love my job". Every time I think "It can't a whole lot better than that folks"...it does

That's why I'm thankful. How about you?



Life Lessons in Imagery

Those of you who've been following this section of the "Tech Tips" over the last several years are fully aware that I've been showing that images we see everyday in newspapers and all sorts of other media are snapshots of life and that the comics we see are certainly excellent examples of this. Every day there are teachable moments to be found throughout the articles in the newspaper, and yet, somehow we neglect to include the gentle humor of Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" or the sometimes not-so-gentle reminders of our "common humanity" from artists like Tom Batuik and Gary Trudeau. I'll be mixing it up this year by giving you as much as we can without violating the "fair use" tenets of copyright laws as they apply in educational situations. Enjoy and share!!!

Ed Musiak

The Brilliant Mind Of Edison Lee-John Hambrock



Two ends of the R & D spectrum these days???

Doonesbury-Gary Trudeau

