



Instructional Technology Newsletter

Developing 21st Century Skills One Byte at a Time

21st Century Writing - Engagement with new forms of publishing

The transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 has had an immediate impact on teaching and student learning. Never before have there been so many alternative avenues for student writing and publishing. Websites like [schooltube](#), [voice threads](#), [Glogster](#), [Google Docs](#), [Wikispaces](#) and [Wordpress](#) have provided students with new avenues for publishing.

The web has simplified the process of publishing student work. We have opened the door to new forms of writing and expression. The most notable in education is Digital Storytelling.

Digital storytelling involves the use of images, narration, music and sometimes video clips. Students produce a multimedia production that can be published online or shared electronically.

The ability to express understanding of a

topic or transform a written work into an entirely different medium has an astounding impact on student learning.

The number one observation that I have experienced is that students who create digital stories develop an excitement about writing. The prospect of taking a traditional narrative and adding their personal creativity, animation, design and technology is engaging.

I have also observed that students become better writers. The recording and narration step forces students to listen to what they have written. The repercussions of this are more sophisticated proofreading and better writing.

By publishing these digital works we are providing an authentic experience for our students. They are no longer writing for just the teacher or his/her classmates. They are now writing for the world to see and hear.

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Smartboard Lessons Made Easy !!

Have you visited the [Smart Exchange](#)? If you have not I recommend you take a look. The Smart Exchange is a collaborative social website for smartboard users around the world. On this site teachers share smart notebook lessons that they have made with the rest of the world.

Lessons are searchable by grade, subject, and topic. You can also search for images and interactive websites. This is a fantastic resource for anyone using an interactive whiteboard. One feature that I really like

is the ability to preview the lesson without having to download it. Each lesson is fully customizable by you once you download it.

This resource is an incredible time saver. Before you build your own lesson from scratch search the [Smart Exchange](#). You will probably find one to use right away or one that requires only a few edits to fit your lesson.

<http://exchange.smarttech.com>

Jefferson Township
Public Schools



January /February 2010

Points of Interest

- ⌚ Digital Storytelling- Engagement with new forms of publishing.
- ⌚ Co-Inventor of Fiber Optics speaks to middle school students via video conferencing.
- ⌚ Connecting Classrooms around the world with Wiki's.

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Connecting Subject Area Experts with Our Students

The students in Mrs. Larson's Middle School science class took part in a very non-traditional lesson during the month of January. The students were about to start on new unit on the study of light.

Mrs. Larson and Mr. Walker decided to introduce the unit with a subject area expert. They contacted a Professor of Physics from Rutgers University, Dr. Robert Nahory. They asked Dr. Nahory to introduce the topic of Light to each of Mrs. Larson's classes via a video conference connection.

Dr. Nahory currently is a professor

of physics with Rutgers University. Previous to his position at Rutgers he spent several years working for Bell Labs as a physicist.

Dr. Nahory has had a number of accomplishments in the field of physics. His focus is on Light and Lasers. He is credited with creating the laser that is used to push data over wire today. This technology is known today as fiber optics.

Dr. Nahory spent time speaking to



We used our dedicated Verizon video conference network and polycom camera..

each class via video conferencing. His entire presentation was directed by student questioning. He discussed how light is created, where it goes, as well as the science behind seeing color and lasers.

The entire day was a success. The students are entering the unit with a high level of interest and engagement. They have many questions to answer thanks to this experience.

Connecting Global Classrooms with Technology

The students in Mr. MacDermid's Global Issues courses are utilizing web 2.0 resources to extend their classroom beyond the four walls. Throughout the year each class has been collaborating on a class wiki.

Mr. MacDermid setup the class wikis using [Wikispaces](#). Wikispaces is a free service that will provide a wiki to anyone. If you are a teacher using it

with students they will remove any advertisements and upgrade you to a plus plan.

The students have been adding content to the wiki which has a page for each topic of discussion including: terrorism, pandemics, environment, human rights, and globalization.

Mr. MacDermid and Mr. Walker decided to use this technology to con-

nect with a class over seas. They have made a connection with a grade 6 class in England. The two classes will be collaborating on a wiki in which they will discuss global health issues. The students are currently getting to know more about each other by utilizing the discussion boards in the wiki. You can view their work here:

<http://globalhealthissues.wikispaces.com>

Holiday Card Exchange Project—An Interdisciplinary Opportunity

The students in Mrs. Mallatrat's grade 3 class in Stanlick School took part in a [holiday card exchange project](#). This project was organized by [Jenuine Tech](#). The project pairs 25 classrooms together around the world. Each class creates one holiday card to send to each of the schools they are connected with. The students then receive 25 cards which

represent the various holiday traditions for each class.

Mrs. Mallatrat took advantage of the opportunity to connect with 25 global classrooms. She was able to retrieve a number of [Skype](#) accounts for some of the schools. Mr. Walker and Mrs.



Mallatrat are working to provide video conferencing opportunities between our class and one or more of the classes who took part in the project.

Mrs. Mallatrat integrated a social studies unit on urban, suburban and rural communities.

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Digital Storytelling can be used at all grade levels. Some project ideas include:

1. Students create a story that explains how something happens.
2. Student write a narrative in the first person. Example: Character Journal from a book or point in history
3. Student's can write and narrate poetry
4. Student's can explain a scientific process.
5. Student's can write and produce a personal narrative
6. Students can publish an informative piece on their school, culture and activities to share with a class over seas.

There are many possible uses of digital storytelling. In the lower grades it is common for a class to create one story as a group. Each student contributes one slide with a picture and narration. In the middle and upper grades it becomes more manageable for stories to be written and produced by small groups of students or individually.



The typical steps in the middle and upper grades involve:

1. Students research a topic and write a narrative.
2. The faculty member sets up a

shared folder for each class and group for students to organize the pictures they find online for their story.

3. Students are given time to find and save pictures.
4. MS Photostory is introduced to the students. They are given time to work together to put their stories together.
5. Each group or individual student compiles his or her story in MS Photostory.
6. The stories are published and reviewed by the class.

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She is using Google Earth to have students find each of the schools that they connected with for the project. Utilizing the navigation features as well as the street views the students are identifying the types of communities that these schools are located in. We are still in the planning stages regarding the video conferencing activities. Some ideas include:

- A discussion or cultural difference and school environment.
- A collaborative book talk.
- Sharing of digital stories on a topic

There are a number of options when utilizing these technologies. Skype is a free web conferencing software. It can be installed on any computer in

our district. Collaboration can occur on a common wiki or blog. This can be setup by Mr. Walker.

If you are interested in starting a project of your own and would like

Google Earth can be used to take students on a virtual fieldtrip around the world.

Websites of Interest

Glogster—Create Online Posters

www.glogster.com

Stay tuned for more information and workshops regarding Glogster.

Earth Cams

This site contains links to web cams located around the world

<http://www.earthcam.com/>

Wolfram Alpha

Enter your question or calculation and Wolfram Alpha uses its built-in algorithms and a growing collection of data to compute the answer.

www.wolframalpha.com

Visit the site and watch the video to see this amazing tool.

