



Instructional Technology Newsletter

Developing 21st Century Skills One Byte at a Time

21 Century Posters— Using Glogster A New Look for a Traditional Project K-12

There is a new Web 2.0 site that I am excited to introduce. It is called Glogster EDU. It can be accessed at <http://edu.glogster.com>. Glogster is a free web tool that allows members to create an online poster called a Glog. A Glog is a single poster-like webpage.

A Glog may contain pictures, text, hyperlinks to other websites, video and audio, graphics and various design features. Students and teachers can create interactive web-based posters. The finished posters can be viewed online through the Glogster EDU site or embedded into a blog, webpage or wiki.

What makes Glogster EDU unique from its parent site Glogster are the management tools available for teachers. When a teacher creates an account, he or she can create up to 100 student accounts. These accounts are organized and managed directly from the teacher dashboard. All

Glogs can be kept viewable by only the student and teacher via the dashboard. The teacher can monitor student work and assess it in one single place. Upon completion of the Glog it can be made public for the world to view.

There are a number of uses for such a tool. The most typical use is for students to create a poster that informs the viewer about a topic. This could be a poster describing how quadratic equations are solved, what is Ben Franklin famous for, what are the steps of photosynthesis, or a review of a book or event.

Some teachers have created Glogs to be accessed by students to learn a new skill or review a topic. I have created a page on my wiki with Glogster resources. There you will find links to sample Glogs. It can be found at <http://edunology.wikispaces.com/glogster>

Workshops on Glogster are currently being offered in all schools.

Network Upgrade Planned for 2010-2011

The technology department is happy to announce that we have entered into two new contracts for the 2010- 2011 school year. We will be purchasing our Internet Bandwidth from Cablevision. Our internet pipe will be updated from 10mbps to 50mbps. Our connection between the high school and all of our grade 1-5 schools will be increased from 1.5 mbps to 10 mbps. Our Kindergarten schools will upgrade from 1.5 to 3 mbps.

This upgrade of connection both to our wide area network and our internet connection will result in a significant increase of available bandwidth for all of our users in each location. This will positively impact the use of the internet, multimedia, and web 2.0 tools in instruction.

Our current internet pipe operates in the 85 to 95% utilization each day. The planned increase in bandwidth will significantly reduce this percentage.

Jefferson Township
Public Schools



March 2010

Points of Interest

- ☺ 21st Century Posters
- 🕒 Internet Bandwidth upgrade planned.
- 🕒 How to plan a technology infused assessment
- 🕒 New Copyright Licensing
- 🕒 A new twist on literature and history learning guides
- 🕒 Computational Search Engines

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A New Approach to Assessments

The integration of technology into instructional areas is a phrase that by now, many teachers are tired of hearing. We hear it in curriculum meetings, department meetings, PD workshops and monthly in this publication!

There are many interpretations of technology integration. There are also many opinions as to the extent, necessity, and feasibility. Where do you stand? How have you decided to begin this process? Do you have a plan?

I recently read a book authored by Heidi Hayes Jacobs titled "Curriculum 21". While there were many excellent points and opinions expressed in this book it is a topic in chapter 2 that stood out. A simple way to begin the process of technology integration is to develop a plan using the following steps.

1. **Develop a pool or list of assess-**

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ment replacements. What type of products do professionals in your area of study typically produce (i.e. documentaries, podcasts, blogs, websites).

2. **Identify the tools and resources that are available to you and your students.** (i.e. computers, digital story software, Glogster, Moodle, wikis, blogs, video conferences)
3. **Replace a dated assessment with a modern one.** Attempt to replace one assessment per marking period if possible.
4. **Share the assessment upgrades with colleagues via team, faculty, or department meetings.**

Technology assessments are a terrific

way to differentiate. As students are aware of each available tool they should be provided with choices for a

final assessment. This will allow the student to select the medium that fits best for them. The return will be a high level of engagement and a significant impact on student learning.

While this is a deviation from traditional instructional methods, it is the present state of our economy, the transition of the workplace, and global competition that demand our students exhibit

creativity, innovation, individuality and collaboration skills. We must provide them with avenues of expression that are non-traditional to prepare them for the workplace they will be entering.

Alternative assessment options allow for creativity, innovation, and collaboration. These skills are a requirement to be successful in our Global Economy

Creative Commons— Copyright—www.creativecommons.org

There is a new organization that has formed with the purpose to create a universally accepted license standard for digital materials. It is called Creative Commons. Their website is www.creativecommons.org. You will be seeing their licensing on many images, videos, and text documents. Creative Commons licensing is used to identify digital content that can be used for commercial and non commercial purposes without copyright infringement.

You can easily search for CC licensed images by accessing the links on their search page found at <http://search.creativecommons.org>.

Most of the major search engines have the ability to limit search results to creative commons licensed work. These settings can be found in the advanced search settings.

When working on digital story projects, Glogster posters, PowerPoints or any other multimedia project I encourage you to discuss this licensing with students. Have students search for images using the creative commons search features. It is important that our students are familiar with the copyright laws that pertain

to images, videos, music and text. A discussion about creative commons and copyright should be a part of every technology infused project.



Computational Search Engine—Wolfram Alpha www.wolframalpha.com

Wolfram Alpha is the next generation in search engines. I have found this site to be one of the most useful tools available on the Internet. It is a computational search engine.

What this means is that this search engine can compute just about anything. The program is so sophisticated that it can query almost any computation using natural language. You can "just ask a question". You will not only get your answer, but you will see the steps to solve it as well as all other pertinent or relevant information related to your question.



Does this sound confusing. The best way to learn about the power of this website is to watch this demo video made by its creator.

[Sit back and enjoy this clip.](#) I am confident you will be amazed!

Wolfram Alpha can be used quite extensively in Education. Math and Science students can use the engine to help solve math problems, learn the step to solve a problem, and gather data for research.

This search engine separates itself from **GOOGLE** in that it delivers the answers and data you are looking for. It does not just list a page of search results that you sift through to find what you are looking for.

As I mentioned, it is a computational search engine. That means it has access to endless amounts of data to pair with its algorithms. At the bottom of all of your search results you will find a link to sources. These are the sources that are used to complete the computations. Whether it is historical weather data or us census numbers, the sources of data are right at your fingertips. [Take a look at the video](#) and start exploring.

Shmoop— A new take on learning guides for literature and history

[Shmoop](#) is a website created and authored by Ph.D. and Master's graduates from some of the world's top universities. Its focus is History and Language Arts.

[Shmoop](#) contains guides for some of the great works of literature that are covered in high school and middle school course. These learning guides contain summary information, theme information, quotes, character information, in-depth analysis, study questions, a collection of relevant web links and teaching guides.

Topics in US History, Civics and Biographies also include introductions, summary and analysis, timelines, peo-

ple, facts, relevant websites and test reviews.

This is a direct quote from their website.

"Shmoop provides lively Learning Guides and Teaching Resources lovingly written by educators and doctorate students at top universities (primarily Stanford, Harvard, and UC Berkeley). Our guides have a deep, fun approach that hits students in the intellectual and cultural gut. We provide

"Shmoop's expert writers strike the right chord with our students by blending intellectual rigor, wit, passion, and pop culture. Rather than hunting the Internet for trustworthy resources, our teachers and students can now turn to Shmoop."

multiple points of view and we hope to provoke, spark, and inspire students as they come up with original ideas. We dig deep into pop-culture, current events, and the Internet to bring these budding researchers face to face with the relevance of what they study. As a result, you'll find at Shmoop some truly dynamic, lively, and entertaining guides that will help you make the classroom live and breathe."