

INSTRUCTIONAL TECH NEWSLETTER

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FALL IS IN FULL SWING!

Well the fall is in full swing. Classrooms are buzzing. We have been helping folks get projects going. We are here to help so take advantage of it!

Remember we meet on Tuesdays now. We are meeting at Harriet Gibbons as usual. HOW-EVER..there are other meeting at times in the library. If we aren't in the library please come to Room

102. You can work on anything you would like. All we ask is that you send us an email to let us know you are coming.

Here are the dates for October: October 2,9,16,23,30. In November we don't have organized dates because of the holidays. However, just email us and we will be there!

If you would like to

attend, please just email Sandy at Saratoga35@aol.com or call 441-5605



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TEACHADE

TeachAde, is the first social networking website designed specifically for educators. At TeachAde, you can access and contribute class re-

sources, as well as start or join group blogs. You also have a private desktop page where you can see at a glance your most-used tools in-

cluding your resources, calendar, messages, colleagues and groups. **TeachAde is free for teachers** - from pre-Kindergarten to college professors, <http://www.teachade.com/>

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PODCASTS

So, you are wondering what these things called podcasts are? You are sure that they are only something that students use and there is no educational value? Well guess again!! Podcasting is becoming very main stream. In fact, many educational institutions are using them for instructional purposes. Often professors will record lectures and turn them into podcasts so students can listen to them any time.

Foreign language teachers have taken to using them for vocabulary lessons and pronunciation practice. The possibilities are endless.

Podcasting is the new phenomenon in the creation and distribution of radio. It can be done by anyone. It is basically an audio file (recording) that is created in a talk show format and then distributed across the internet as a downloadable MP3 file.

You can listen to these podcasts on the go via your [IPOD](#) or when you're sitting at your computer with [ITUNES](#). You can make your own or you can subscribe to these podcasts.

This site will help you get started:

<http://students.umf.maine.edu/~tarallja/index.html?AX1408>

However, if you are not quite ready to make your own, National Geographic has some great ones. You can download the latest nature and science news, eye-opening photographs, travel guides, video clips, world music, and wild animal adventures....and it's all FREE!

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/podcasts/>



PAGEFLAKES

Pageflakes, a community-driven personalized home page founded last year, is using Web 2.0 technology to revolutionize how schools and others use the internet through a process known as "pagecasting." Teachers and students have found it a fast and easy way to set up an online learning environment without any pro-

gramming skills and at no cost. Using Pageflakes, educators arrange "Flakes"—small, movable versions of popular web sites, interactive research tools, and education-specific applications—on a customized web page. Educators then can use Pageflakes' innovative pagecasting capability to share their page privately

with their students, classes, and administrators, or publish it to the web so anyone can see it.

<http://www.pageflakes.com>



21ST CENTURY SKILLS

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/showstoryts.cfm?Articleid=7434>

In yet another sign that momentum is building for the teaching of so-called "21st-century skills" in the nation's classrooms, results of a new poll indicate that voters overwhelmingly agree: The skills students need to succeed in the workplace of today are notably different from what they needed 20 years ago.

Americans are deeply concerned that the United States is not preparing students with the skills they need to compete in the new global economy, according to the poll. Eighty-eight percent of voters say they believe schools can, and should, incorporate 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, communication and self-direction, and computer and technology skills into the curriculum. What's more, 66 percent of voters say they believe students need more than just the basics of reading, writing, and math; schools also need to incorporate a broader range of skills, Americans say. The findings come as candidates for public office are ratcheting up their campaigns for the 2008 elections. Advocates of educational technology hope the poll results will mobilize candidates to talk more about the need for 21st-century instruction.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), which commissioned the survey, released its findings at a National Press Club event Oct. 10.

"Voters generally are not happy with the direction our schools are headed with respect to ensuring we have the skills to compete," said the report's authors, Bill McInturff with Public Opinion Strategies and Geoff Garin with the Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

"Ten to 15 years ago, America was in a back-to-basics mode, meaning focusing strictly on math, science, and reading. The pendulum might have swung too far in one direction. This survey represents a change in the country's attitudes," explained Garin.

Administered during a three-day period in September, the survey asked 800 registered voters for their opinions about how well their schools

are performing. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus three-and-a-half percentage points.

According to the report, when asked how they would rate the schools in their district, 53 percent of voters rated their schools an "A" or a "B." However, when asked to rate their schools in comparison to other leading countries' schools, such as China's or India's, grades dropped to "C" and "D," with only 13 percent of voters agreeing that the U.S. is doing a better job than other countries.

"That's less than one in seven," said Garin. "That's startling."

Although voters believe their schools are doing a good job of teaching computer literacy and technology skills, 80 percent say students need to learn different things than what they learned 20 years ago, such as focusing more on collaboration, communication, and cultural knowledge. In fact, only 38 percent of voters say schools are doing a good job of keeping pace with changing educational needs. Three out of five believe schools are doing a "fair" or "poor" job.

McInturff said the survey reveals that voters believe students are not workforce-ready, don't have the breadth of skills needed to succeed in today's world, and are not well-rounded enough. "They believe students need more knowledge of problem-solving skills, [need] to learn different languages, and [need to] know the cultural history of various countries," he said. Voters' opinions mirror those of employers, based on a separate poll conducted last year. In that poll, sponsored by P21 along with the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management, business leaders reported that while the three "Rs" are still fundamental to every employee's ability to do the job, applied skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and communication also are essential for success.

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CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY



Community Technology Initiative

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently launched what it says is the first government-sponsored, earth-science "island" on the popular virtual world of Second Life.

<http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/outreach/sl/>



It's important to note," said McInturff, "that people don't want to replace core skills, they just want to build around them." Two-thirds of the voters polled said schools need to teach more than just reading, math, and writing, and three-quarters of voters want there to be at least equal emphasis on 21st-century skills.

Eighty percent of voters agreed that critical thinking and problem solving are important, yet only 18 percent thought schools were doing a good job of teaching these skills. Seventy-seven percent of voters think oral communi-

cation skills are important, while only 16 percent believe they are being well taught. Three-fourths of voters said ethics and social responsibility are important, while only 15 percent think these are being well taught.

"We believe that people see these skills not only in terms of what constitutes a good employee, but also what constitutes a good citizen—both roles that will help lead our country into a bright future," said Garin.

Why the shift in attitudes from 20 years ago? McInturff attributes the change in voter perspective to a "huge eco-

nomics anxiety right below the surface." He believes that, with China and India making great strides in education and workforce development, Americans are worried. "By making education an issue, we can start a discussion about how to solve our anxiety," he said.

An astonishing number of poll participants, 99 percent, said they believe students' 21st-century skills will be critical to the future success of the nation's economy.

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/showstoryts.cfm?ArticleID=7434&page=1>