INSTRUCTIONAL TECH NEWSLETTER

JUST COME FOR A LITTLE WHILE!

We know the weather is breaking and it's getting nice, however we are still here! You may have a project you want to work on. W are available on Wednesdays from 3:30-7PM for extra help. This is the one time that the content is controlled by you. You can tell us what you need to work on.

We are available to help you each week. We have great pro-jects that have been developed with teachers throughout the year.

You don't have to stay the entire time. If you let us know you are coming, someone can be there by 3:30. The students at Gibbons are dismissed at 3:15, so we start after they leave.

It's also a good time to start planning a summer project if you are coming to summer training.

A flyer will be arriv-ing shortly but here are the dates so you can plan ahead:

- August 11-13 Session 1
- August 17-18 For those maintaining building web pages
- August 19-21 Session 2
- First priority to Middle School and High School teachers

WHAT IS WEB 2.0 ANYWAY?

We have had ques-tions about what Web 2.0 really is. It sounds like an whole new internet. In real-ity it is tools that are often web based, free and created and maintained by a community of users.

 This site is a vocabu-lary list of all the lat-est Web 2.0 jargon.

http://heartlandscience.pbwiki.com/Web%202%20Definitions

WORLD HISTORY

We are keeping with the history theme we started last month and compiled a list of World History Sites you may find useful!

Middle Ages
http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cphome.stm
a database of Arthurian texts, images, bibliographies, and basic information

http://www.castlesontheweb.com/
a beautiful site which links the castle resources on the Internet including history and photographs

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html

Medieval Sources
http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/labyrinth-home.html
The Labyrinth provides free, organized access to electronic resources in medieval studies

http://www.learner.org/interactives/middleages/
Amazing Resources

http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/18th/
a scholarly collection of items on the Internet related to 18th century history

Renaissance
http://www.learner.org/interactives/renaissance/
Always a good source

Columbus
http://www.columbusnavigation.com/
page that examines the history, navigation, and landfall of Christopher Columbus

Holocaust
http://remember.org/
a guide to the Holocaust including teaching materials and eyewitness accounts

http://www.ushmm.org/
Holocaust Memorial Museum

All World History Topics
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/worldhis.html
curriculum tie-ins with the programs, vocabulary, and lessons to support the teaching of world history units

http://www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html
HyperHistory is an expanding scientific project presenting 3,000 years of world history with an interactive combination of synchronoptic lifelines, timelines, and maps.

http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/index.html
Huge hot list of every world history topic imaginable

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

There is nothing that lends itself to podcasting better than language. I have been using free podcasts to try (not very successfully I might add!) and teach myself Spanish. Here are some sites and what the iTunes podcast site looks like. And they are FREE! You don't need an ipod for them to work they work right on your computer! I am including a site with workshops on teaching foreign language as well!

http://www.learner.org/resources/series201.html
A video workshop for K–12 teachers; 8 half-hour video programs, workshop guide, and Web site; graduate credit available
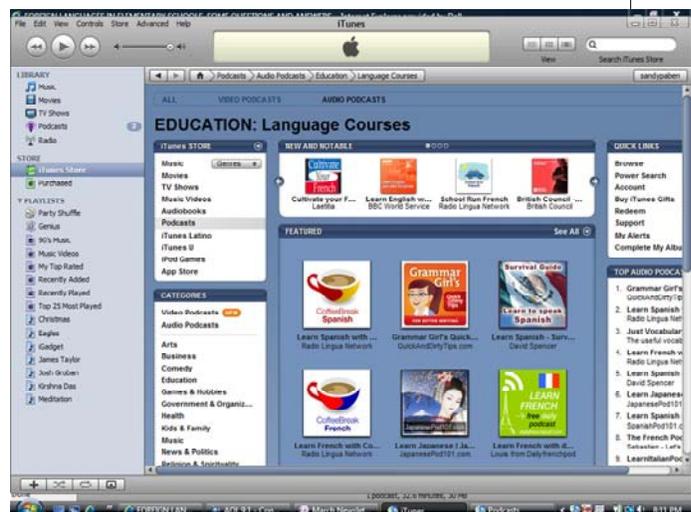
Five Ways Schools Can Kill Learning
By John D. McNeil

Those of you who have read the newsletter for the past seven years know that the big article is usually one that has evoked some emotional response from me when I read it. This one is one of those that does that as well! I edited the article to fit but click on the link to read the article in its entirety.

1. *Placing students of a given age together in a classroom, and sequencing classes by age as grade levels.* The false assumption that there is a common age for various developmental stages, and thus there should be common expectations for achievement within a grade, has negative consequences for both the slow and the fast learner. As recent payment-for-results programs have revealed, teachers in graded classrooms tend to focus on the middle learners, whom they see as more likely to gain from instruction. They know that the bright students already are performing at or above grade-level proficiency, and that effort with those who are lagging will not bring results commensurate with the instructional investment. The range of abilities within a 3rd grade classroom is likely to be as great as the range of abilities in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades combined. Further, the concept of "grade level" has multiple ambiguities. Measures to determine grade-level performance presume that the learner knows what is being asked of him or her, as well as what would count as an acceptable answer. Placement is subject to the variation in whatever achievement test has been chosen to measure a narrow band of expectancy.

2. *Limiting opportunities for students to receive help from their peers and teachers in how to make their work better.*
Constructive feedback is especially important in the early phases of learning something, when the novice is trying to understand in order to learn. Harm is done, especially for those most unfamiliar with relevant content and behavior, when school policies and practices expose novices to competitive practices—ranking, letter grades (on the curve), unclear criteria for defining and judging learning tasks and student work

3. *Forming homogeneous groups of students in which individual competition dominates.* Bright students placed in classes made up of equally bright students, and expected to learn under competitive conditions, will not achieve as well as they would as members of heterogeneous groups with a normal spectrum of students engaging in cooperative learning; that is, in a group that follows the proverbial "Alpine climbing rules," where all advance or none advance, and where all share ideas and explanations in a helpful manner.

4. *Limiting local teachers' authority for content selection, and for deciding how that content will be presented to students.* Prescribed textbooks that are oriented to 50 different sets of often-questionable state content standards, together with weak teacher preparation in subject matter, make it difficult for teachers to exercise intellectual authority. Such authority includes both the ability to identify the powerful knowledge worth centering on and the freedom to exercise a variety of pedagogical skills in making the key concepts of that knowledge meaningful to particular students.

5. *Stifling the transfer of common-use high-level thinking.* When they are in out-of-school situations, most students use high-level skills of argumentation naturally. They demand logic, evidence, and convincing explanation as they debate with friends or family members the events and influences in their everyday lives—sports, fashion, media, politics. Yet in many math, science, social studies, and other classes, students are not raising questions or applying their critical skills. Learning is suppressed, because there are few opportunities to pursue problems that invite multiple solutions, or to engage in the kind of discourse that enhances their understanding. Exploring an academic subject's uncertain answers to important questions in their own lives might make these learners want to continue its study. But that chance is lost in most directed classrooms.

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY

JOURNALISM

Community Technology Initiative

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http://www.jprof.com/
A site that includes all the skills necessary

http://www.webenglishteacher.com/journ.html
This has resources for any teacher who teaches an English Course including journalism

http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/journalism/j-schools.html
This one has simulations as well as links to other sites.

http://mindymcadams.com/tojou/
This one talks about online journalism and the differences between it and print.

http://rconversation.blogs.com/rconversation/2008/06/teaching-journa.html
An article talking about teaching journalism through wikis, blogs and Web 2.0 tools

http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/unit_mytharticle_books.htm
Always a good site for teachers.

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http://www.mrdonn.org/ancienthistory.html
Many, many links to use

Egypt and Ancient Cultures

http://www.greatscott.com/hiero/index.html
a well-arranged site with explanations, resources, and links all about hieroglyphs

http://academic.memphis.edu/egypt//

Egyptian Art and Archeology

http://www.multcolib.org/homework/anchsthc.html
Covers most ancient cultures

http://www.roman-emperors.org/

Roman Emperors
http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/
Mapping Project of Ancient Tombs

Titanic
http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/
a site which includes personal information about the crew and passengers aboard the Titanic

http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/OCEAN_PLANET/HTML/titanic.html
Shows where the Titanic went down

World War I
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/10/98/world_war_i/197437.stm
World War I resources from the BBC

World War II
http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

World History Archives