

INSTRUCTIONAL TECH NEWSLETTER

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WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON TUESDAYS?

We think you ought to come visit us!

Every Tuesday we are at Harriet Gibbons to offer whatever help you need.

During the summer we are limited as to the types of projects you can work on. However, on Tuesdays you can work on whatever you would like.

Would you like to build a webpage for

your classroom? How about working on a project to use in your classroom? Would you like to learn what Google docs are?

You can decide what you need. The only thing we ask is that if it is something out of the ordinary you let us know so we make sure we have the resources you need.

In addition, please just send us an email

letting us know you are coming. Every now and then we have a meeting and can't make it. However, it is very infrequently.

So, please think about joining us and working on what you want. You can stay as long as you want. Come for an hour or only a half hour. We work with your schedule.

Inside this issue:

Hispanic Heritage Month	2
Literacy	2
Online Learning	3
Parent Communication	4



WRITING WITH WRITERS

Students work with actual authors in these online activities to hone their writing skills.

Rodman Philbrick

talks about writing tips and writing challenges and how to revise. Jane Yolen teaches how to write myths.

There is even a section on journalism!

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/index.html?eml=OT/20090902/>

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

These resources are not comprehensive by any means. However, there is a great deal here. If you only have time for a couple of stops hit the Smithsonian and Scholastic first. Both are amazing sites with extensive resources.

Smithsonian

http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/hispanic_resources.html

Hispanic Resources

This site starts with a definition of what is a Hispanic? Where do they live? What are their contributions?



<http://govdocs.evergreen.edu/hotopics/hispanicheritage/>

Scholastic

Scholastic's site on Hispanic Heritage Month.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hispanic/index.htm>

Famous Hispanics in the World and History

<http://coloquio.com/famosos/alpha.htm>

History Channel

The resources created by the History Channel.

<http://www.history.com/classroom/hhm/teaching.html>

Significant Events in Hispanic American History

http://www.gale.cengage.com/free_resources/chh/timeline/index.htm

Classroom Activities

http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson023.shtml

LIFE SPAN LITERACY MATRIX

Over the years literacy has taken its place at the forefront of education.

However, with the sagging economy many large corporations that previously supported efforts have pulled away. One of the exceptions is Verizon. They have created and supported efforts for literacy across all age groups. They have created a literacy network.

Thousands of literacy instructors, tutors, teachers, librarians and educators use Thinkfinity Literacy Network to improve their knowledge and performance and expand their skills in literacy instruction. Here's why:

- Free, top-quality materials
- Best practices for life-long literacy development and learning
- Hundreds of resources

that are accessible and easy to use

- Content created by trusted experts and leading educators

<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/TLN/>



Study Finds That Online Education Beats the Classroom

By [Steve Lohr](#)

<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/19/study-finds-that-online-education-beats-the-classroom/>

Those of you who have read this section for the past few years know I often put articles here that make me stop and think. This month is no exception.

A recent [93-page report on online education, conducted by SRI International for the Department of Education](#), has a starchy academic title, but a most intriguing conclusion: “On average, students in online learning conditions performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction.”

Noah Berger for The New York Times Tyler Kennedy, 9, searches the Web at home in California. The report examined the comparative research on online versus traditional classroom teaching from 1996 to 2008. Some of it was in K-12 settings, but most of the comparative studies were done in colleges and adult continuing-education programs of various kinds, from medical training to the military.

Over the 12-year span, the report found 99 studies in which there were quantitative comparisons of online and classroom performance for the same courses. The analysis for the Department of Education found that, on average, students doing some or all of the course online would rank in the 59th percentile in tested performance, compared with the average classroom student scoring in the 50th percentile. That is a modest but statistically meaningful difference.

“The study’s major significance lies in demonstrating that online learning today is not just better than nothing — it actually tends to be better than conventional instruction,” said Barbara Means, the study’s lead author and an educational psychologist at SRI International.

This hardly means that we’ll be saying good-bye to classrooms. But the report does suggest that online education could be set to expand sharply over the next few years, as evidence mounts of its value. Until fairly recently, online education amounted to little more than electronic versions of the old-line correspondence courses. That has really changed with arrival of Web-based video, instant messaging and collaboration tools.

The real promise of online education, experts say, is providing learning experiences that are more tai-

lored to individual students than is possible in classrooms. That enables more “learning by doing,” which many students find more engaging and useful.

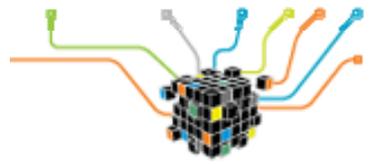
“We are at an inflection point in online education,” said Philip R. Regier, the dean of Arizona State University’s Online and Extended Campus program.

The biggest near-term growth, Mr. Regier predicts, will be in continuing education programs. Today, Arizona State has 5,000 students in its continuing education programs, both through in-person classes and online. In three to five years, he estimates, that number could triple, with nearly all the growth coming online.

But Mr. Regier also thinks online education will continue to make further inroads in transforming college campuses as well. Universities — and many K-12 schools — now widely use online learning management systems, like [Blackboard](#) or the open-source [Moodle](#). But that is mostly for posting assignments, reading lists, and class schedules and hosting some Web discussion boards.

Mr. Regier sees things evolving fairly rapidly, accelerated by the increasing use of social networking technology. More and more, students will help and teach each other, he said. For example, it will be assumed that college students know the basics of calculus, and the classroom time will focus on applying the math to real-world problems — perhaps in exploring the physics of climate change or modeling trends in stock prices, he said.

“The technology will be used to create learning communities among students in new ways,” Mr. Regier said. “People are correct when they say online education will take things out the classroom. But they are wrong, I think, when they assume it will make learning an independent, personal activity. Learning has to occur in a community.”



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PARENT COMMUNICATION

Communication between school and home is the very foundation of a program's success. At the beginning of each new school year, communication often goes smoothly. Occasionally, parents may resist your efforts, but you can still win their interest with determination and creativity. The challenge is to make sure that communication is ongoing and not just a beginning-of-the-year effort.

Maintain Your Momentum

No doubt your goal is a yearlong exchange with all the important adults in a child's family. This ongoing communication will benefit the child and family in several ways. It will:

- create feelings of acceptance and partnership
- create trust
- build confidence
- foster appreciation of teachers and caregivers
- lay the groundwork for resolving issues

When families are actively engaged in frequent conversations, it's much easier to talk about the ups and downs of the child's development. Parents need, and want, to feel part of their child's daily school lives. Even when they trust and value your teaching, they know they are missing things that

happen each hour they are not there.

Investigate Contact Options

Positive, respectful listening and communication can draw families in. Communication can be verbal, in person, on the telephone, through the Internet, and via e-mail and voicemail. Because families are unique, each will have communication preferences. Ask them to tell you their favorite method. Be prepared for some to request e-mail or calls to their cell phones as well as personal discussions in the evenings. Remember, communication must be easy and effective for both parties. Don't feel you have to give up evenings with your own family to satisfy a parent.

Open Lines of Communication

To open communication lines, relationships must be:

Respectful, a process of listening as well as talking

Reciprocal, a give-and-take that includes all family members

Inclusive of all family needs (Spanish, Chinese, written, verbal)

Thoughtful, including detailed information about the child

Planned, so it doesn't get forgotten in our "hurried" world

For more ideas: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3746069>