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Theme:
New Uses of
Technology
in Schools

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Oregon English Journal is published twice annually, in the spring and fall, by the Oregon Council of Teachers of English. Membership fee, including annual subscription, \$15.00 per year. Single copy \$10.00, including handling.

The *Oregon English Journal* is a peer-reviewed journal which serves to reflect current content, theory, research and practice in the teaching of the language arts at all levels, elementary through college. The magazine also publishes original poetry, drama and fiction. The journal is a forum for the open discussion of ideas. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not necessarily reflect or imply endorsement by the Council, its officers or members.

The spring issue of *OEJ* is generally devoted to a specific theme which is announced a year prior to publication. Recent topics have included Teachers Matter, Ecological Literacy, Increasing Instruction in Nonfiction, Retrospectives on William Stafford, Beverly Cleary, and Walt Morey, and Teaching the Language Arts to Gifted and Talented Students. In all instances, the journal's content focuses on theory, research, and teaching practices.

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Contributions: Send potential manuscripts for review to the Editor of Oregon English Journal. Submit two hard copies (with no author identification on them), with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for correspondence. A digital copy must also be submitted in Word (.doc) format. Deadlines are February 1 for the spring issue and September 1 for the fall issue.

All manuscripts must be typed, on standard paper, double-spaced throughout, with generous margins. All questions of style concerning punctuation, capitalization, and bibliography may be answered by consulting the MLA Style Manual (Modern Language Association of America). Authors should obtain all necessary permissions for quoted materials.

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No specific manuscript length is prescribed; however, concise presentations with interest-capturing titles are valued. Articles are judged primarily for originality of ideas, freshness of approach, pertinence of topics treated, straightforwardness of style, and appropriateness to the audience. Selection also depends on usefulness and timeliness for the readers and editorial determination of cohesiveness and overall balance of content in the journal.

Varied manuscript formats are welcomed, including debates, interviews, position papers, letters, point-counterpoint, satires, classroom ideas, program descriptions, reviews, and original poetry and fiction.

The Editor reserves the right to revise all accepted manuscripts for clarity, excessive length and offensive (e.g., sexist) language. Upon publication, two complimentary copies of the issue are sent to the authors. Manuscripts and correspondence regarding editorial matters should be addressed to:

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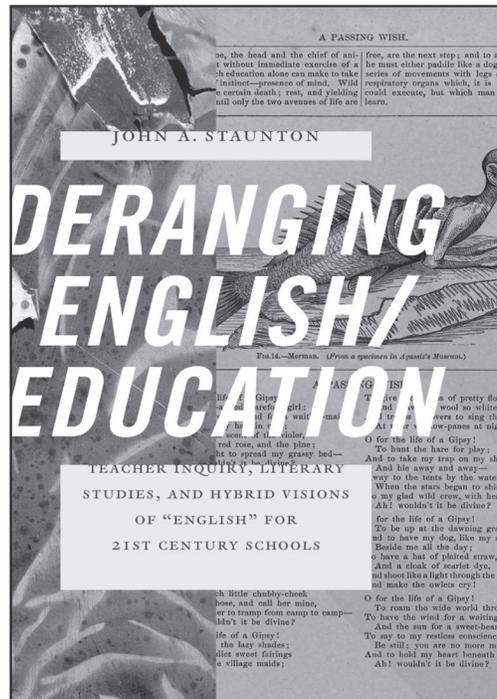
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Deranging English/ Education

Teacher Inquiry, Literary Studies, and Hybrid Visions of "English" for 21st Century Schools

John A. Staunton

A 19th-century merman, a 17th-century poet and nun, an aspiring magician with a box cutter poised over a classic of 20th-century poetry, and a group of inquiring teachers turned classroom researchers join together with an assortment of textual and classroom artifacts to offer a vision of what "English" can be for 21st-century schools. *Deranging English/Education* brings these and other hybrid figures to bear on the troubling institutional and theoretical divisions between the fields of English studies and English teacher education. In a series of case studies drawn from his own experiences as a professor of English education and American literature, John Staunton shows us what can happen when we "derange" traditional perspectives on research, teaching, and the curriculum. Throughout this journey, Staunton continually invites us to see the enterprise of English/Education from the range of subject positions with stakes in the future of English. Preservice teachers, classroom teachers, teacher-researchers, and teacher educators all get a chance to speak to what it means to live and work on that border between English and Education. 229 pp. 2008. College. ISBN 978-0-8141-1083-6. *Refiguring English Studies Series*.



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Crossing the Digital Divide to Integrate Technology in the Classroom

Debra Franciosi



As teachers in the 21st Century, we cannot escape the technology revolution that's changing our world. People are connecting in meaningful—and not so meaningful—new technological ways on a global scale, and *not* to incorporate this new social interaction into education is folly. Students are consuming social media whether we teach with them or not; thus, it makes sense for us to exert a little critical thinking into the mix. But where to start?

The fact is, there is no way to keep up with all of the technological innovations occurring and find ways to thoughtfully implement them into our classroom instruction. What we can do is reach out, tinker, explore, and use our collective intelligence as educators to tap into the power of tech.

We have an amazing resource to assist us in the process: our students! It's almost a cliché to say our students can be the tech experts, but the fact is, *we cannot do everything*. Even more important in this high-stress era of misguided accountability measures, we, as teachers, *should not try*.

The world of Web 2.0 (or 3.0, depending on where you sit on the tech-savvy spectrum) provides us with an amazing assortment of tools we can use to make our jobs easier. So, for those of you who dabble some in your personal time but have yet to cross the digital divide in your classrooms, it's time to take a few steps on the bridge. Cloud computing is free, (mostly) easy to use, and waiting for you.

TERRIFIED NOVICE, STEP 1

In 2006, Mishra and Koehler introduced a model for thinking about integrating technology into K–12

classroom instruction called TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). In a nutshell, they argued for thoughtful integration of technology as a logical last step in lesson design. Identify goals and learning activities first, then look at the available technology. Harris and Hofer (2009) contributed to this work with the development of Activity Types matrices—tools to guide teachers in the process. The Activity Types, broken into content area disciplines, identify the various kinds of activities students do in the classroom and suggest possible tech tools to integrate into the lesson. (Access the Activity Types at <http://activitytypes.wmwikis.net/>)

The matrices, while cumbersome to the most tech-savvy super-users, gently point the novice teacher in the right direction. Identifying appropriate learning activities to meet learning goals takes a high level of pedagogical competence all teachers should have. This isn't mindless lesson scripting. The matrices validate the professional knowledge and experience of effective teachers, and they provide a starting point for thoughtful technology integration. From this foundation, the anxiety of bridging the digital divide can come down a few notches.

INTERMEDIATE DABBLER, NOVICE STEP 2

There are thousands of free applications (apps) available online—and it's to the point where enough of them are of a good enough quality to negate spending scarce education dollars on expensive software. Even the prized (and cursed) Microsoft applications have free substitutes available at OpenOffice.org. Caveat: these programs have fewer bells and whistles, but are free.

To make sense of the multitude of resources, a variety of people and organizations are graciously doing the initial legwork for us by creating compendia of ed-

education-appropriate Web 2.0 applications. Many index the types of applications much like the Activity Type matrices; you can find lists of online collaboration tools, illustration tools, presentation tools, and so on. The better sites describe and rate or review the tools, too. Here are some places to start:

- <http://cooltoolsforschools.wikispaces.com>
- <http://www.gotoweb2o.net>
- <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrock-guide/edtools.html>
- <http://my-ecoach.com/online/webresourcelist.php>
- <http://mashable.com/2011/01/07/online-education-websites/>
- www.iste-community.org
- www.englishcompanion.ning.com (search for tech-related topics)

SERIOUS USER, NOVICE STEP 3

In the rapidly changing world of technology, it's hard to call anyone an expert. In education circles, what you find is a category of serious technology junkies who look at Web

What happens will never be perfect, but ours is a human enterprise, and we are all learning as we go.

2.0 tools and come up with creative ways to use them to facilitate learning. These innovators are no different from the rest of us—beyond their willingness to take a running leap across the digital divide. They don't need a bridge; they build it.

Because of these innovators, we find examples of student work all over the web. Because of these teachers, I know the following tools have amazing applications in content area classrooms. English language arts and literature classrooms—where creative thinking, personal expression, and deep, critical thinking facilitate exploration of technology integration—are the perfect venues for innovation. There are far too many effective tools to cover in this brief introduction, but I encourage you to start your adventure with any of the following:

- <http://www.glogster.com> allows users to create digital posters and collages that incorporate pictures, web links, video, etc.
- <http://www.prezi.com> is a nonlinear presentation tool that, while limited in its graphic fonts, etc. (maybe a good thing for students?), allows the presenter to refer to the visual elements in any order, link to video, zoom in and out, etc.

- <http://www.wikispaces.com> gives you a privacy-controlled site to post content, assignments, discussion questions, student reflections, etc. Invite participants via email to read and/or contribute to content of various pages. Wikis offer great flexibility for classroom use.
- <http://docs.google.com> is Google's launch site for its collaborative tools for composing documents, spreadsheets, drawings, and presentations. Students can work collaboratively from anywhere in real time or asynchronously. These tools raise group projects to a new level.
- <http://www.twitter.com> Create an account for yourself as a teacher, and have your students tweet questions, reflections, answers to questions, etc. This tool has matured into an amazing educational resource. It's also a great way to follow the ideas of education organizations, bloggers, and colleagues.
- <http://www.tweetdeck.com> This tool allows you to collect your students' tweets on one simple interface. Get real-time feedback and questions from students and project them for the whole class to see. Why buy expensive "clickers" when your students already have phones?

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Don't be put off by those sites that require registration. The creators use registration to weed out spammers. Given all the apps I've signed up for over the last few years, none has resulted in spam. Some send occasional emails about updates and new apps, but even most of these require that you choose to receive them. And, frankly, the free use of these tools is worth the occasional email to me.

Many of these tools have paid services. Many of the most popular ones also have K–12 education versions that help you screen out the negative aspects of the global community.

It does take some time to set things up, but not as much as you'd think. Check out the tools, look at classroom examples online and in your neighboring classrooms, look for advice from those who have crossed the digital divide before you, and then give the technology a try. What happens will never be perfect, but ours is a human enterprise, and we are all learning as we go.

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■

The Educational Technology Front in 2011

Jo Meyertons

Today's K–20 educators are more adept at using technology resources than at any time in the past.



Simultaneously, educators are ever more wary about technology resources because of the risk that the technology may fail at some critical moment in class, the risk that privacy issues may cause problems for their students, and the risk of unintended consequences for teachers

who experiment with new technologies. For example, asking students to use some of the many new free or low-cost applications means that educators must be aware of advertisements for products that may be offensive or distracting, information that may be misleading, and malware that may compromise school or student computers. Further, part of the reason educators are able to enjoy so many of these resources is because they have been available free or for low-cost, but the promise of continued availability of these resources is tenuous at best.

Despite these potential hazards, educators who are willing (along with their students) to undergo some risk can be richly rewarded in wonderful new class activities that are engaging, rich in meaning to individuals, and potentially life-changing. Let's look at some of these rich

new technologies that are currently in use and some of the new technologies that likely will soon be available to educators.

CURRENT TECHNOLOGIES

Educators make use of desktop and laptop computers in the classroom that may be connected and configured to work with SmartBoards (<http://smarttech.com/>) and other interactive white boards, “clicker” systems for just-in-time formative feedback, document cameras for high-quality 3D image projection, and countless other hardware resources. These technologies can improve visualization techniques while also expanding opportunities to create interactive lesson plans and otherwise enhance student engagement with learning materials. Further, many of these activities can be recorded real-time and saved for distribution and examination later. For example, many document cameras now come with software that allows instructors to record audio and video directly to computers attached to the document camera. This audio and video content can be shared with the class at a later time for review. Educators are also becoming adept at using free video conferencing tools such as Skype (<http://skype.com>).

ers, but also through Android tablets and Android mobile phones. Similar resources are available for Apple, Palm, HP WebOS and other platforms on computers, tablets, and mobile phones.

- Simple mobile apps—Evernote (<http://blog.evernote.com/2011/02/16/evernote-and-ideapaint-turning-simple-walls-into-intelligent-writing-surfaces/>): Simple image capture, link and note sharing apps can be downloaded onto many of today's cell phones and used to share information quickly with other students. In this case, Evernote is used in combination with Ideapaint, which is white board paint that can be applied to many surfaces to broaden and enhance the availability of learning spaces. Another popular similar app is Catch (<https://catch.com/>).

TECHNOLOGIES ON THE VERGE OF WIDESPREAD ADOPTION

In addition to the many resources already listed that are available to educators now, educators will soon be able to use new technology resources that may revolutionize the way we communicate and share data for learning. For example, as mentioned, data visualization techniques will allow for creative new ways to shape and morph data, providing us with the ability to see new patterns and connections. Many of these techniques already exist but are either too expensive or too complex for everyday use at present, but these inhibitors are quickly changing. This section outlines a few of these key developments.

New Hardware Capabilities/Challenges

The Horizon Report (<http://wp.nmc.org/horizon2010/>), a collaboratively produced annual report on learning trends, suggests that new technologies will provide us with new capabilities very soon. Two primary areas include gesture-based computing and mobile learning, both dependent on newly emerging hardware. New mobile capabilities mean that students and faculty will be able to find, create, and share data visually, dynamically, intuitively, and ubiquitously. While they may look very promising, we will need to beware of vendors who will attempt to force too-early adoption of hardware technology tools that are more flash than substance. Mobile technologies can't be fully adopted by students unless

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NCTE PRESENTS...

Adolescents and Digital Literacies Learning Alongside Our Students

Sara Kajder

This book isn't about technology. It's about the teaching practices that technology enables.

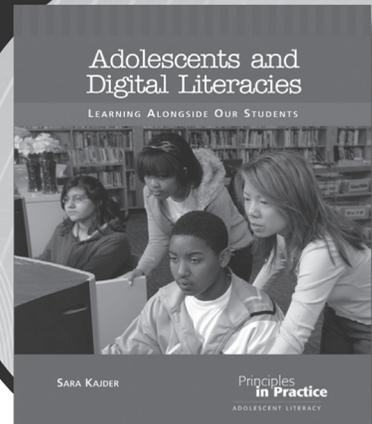
Instead of focusing on where to point and click, this book addresses the ways in which teachers and students work together to navigate continuous change and what it means to read, write, view, listen, and communicate in the twenty-first century.

Sara Kajder recognizes that students are reading and writing every day in their "real lives." Drawing on ideas found in *Adolescent Literacy: An NCTE Policy Research Brief*, Kajder offers solutions for connecting these activities with the literacy practices required by classroom curricula.

As part of the Principles in Practice imprint, this book offers critical consideration of students' in-school and out-of-school digital literacy practices in a practical, friendly, and easily approachable manner.

119 pp. 2010. Grades 9–12. ISBN 978-0-8141-5299-7.

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we are sure our students all use fairly high-end, data-capable mobile cellphone devices (or we are willing to subsidize them) that are similar enough for faculty to prepare standard mobile course materials at reasonable costs for them. Gesture-based devices, popularized first in the gaming industry through products such as the Wii and Kinect, enable users to interact with computers without using special input hardware such as keyboards or mice, removing yet another hurdle for access to and control of data while also providing nuanced new ways to shape human-computer interactions.

Using a combination of these new capabilities, one can envision a classroom in which instructors can guide groups of students through the process of questioning and researching using very large touch screens, shared tablets, or some combination of both, that allow for collective information pattern construction. For example, an instructor might ask students to answer a question that has special meaning and relevance for the class, such as where tap water comes from. The class could work to-

gether to gather information from the Internet, collect it in a shared virtual space, and create a story based on this newly gathered information. The class might include authentic resources from anywhere in the world, including direct contact with people outside of class. Individually, students could use blogs or tools like Twitter to reflect and share thoughts and ideas that could be folded into the story as the process evolves. The story could be in the form of text but may include image, audio, and video files as well, and once the project is done, it could be shared with others around the world. Because of the affordances of technology, the story need not end at the end of the class; it could continue as long as the participants wanted and become an ongoing thread in a student's life.

The Semantic Web—Students as Bricolear Learners

Even now, educators and their students often need to work closely with information literacy experts to ensure that students understand how to search for and evaluate resources that are credible and relevant. Students tend to fulfill their

research paper requirements in the simplest and quickest way possible—“bricoleur,” grab whatever information is immediately handy—which often means that they are not searching literature rigorously or creatively enough to satisfy faculty expectations (Donohoe, 2000). This is due in no small part to the ease of access to a preponderance of resources, good and bad, on the Internet. For their part, faculty do not always model methods for digging more deeply below the surface for good resources, and they tend to be overly suspicious of online and/or multimedia resources. For example, some faculty will accept only books as source materials, even when the identical material is available in digital form online as a PDF. We need better methods for enabling faculty and students to find and evaluate sources. For this reason, we need a better version of the Internet in which sources are easier to identify and are also identified in a nuanced context that can be identified, saved, and shared by users. Many are calling this re-envisioning of the Internet “the semantic web” (Berners-Lee et al., 2001).

Social Learning

Second Life, Facebook, Twitter, and other social applications are beginning to be used as a means by which learners can connect with one another to share ideas and resources more easily. Educators are already using blogs, wikis, and dozens of other web-based applications that allow students to work individually or in groups to create or gather resources available wherever students find them. One of the primary benefits is that these social apps allow instructors and students to track one another’s progress easily and often, at no direct cost. Educators will want to pay close attention to the next iteration of social learning in the form of entrepreneurial, “just-in-time” social learning networks. These ventures may challenge educators to defend traditional face-to-face learning modes while simultaneously encouraging us to adapt to a more flexible, less schedule-dependent, life-long hybrid learning mode. One exciting example is the work done on “fab labs” (fabrication labs) at MIT’s CBA, or Center for Bits and Atoms (<http://cba.mit.edu/>), which describes a program in which users of any age, location, or background can use a lab complete with the materials and instructions they need to create inventions quickly and easily. CBA director Neil Gershenfeld frequently describes examples involving enthusiastic eight-year-old

girls from locations such as Kenya using these CB-created fab labs to create simple, useful inventions that they can use immediately—no expensive years of classroom theory required, no barriers to access needed.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, educators face an amazing new world of educational possibilities thanks to new technologies. As we have seen, many of these tools rely on new advances in hardware and especially on new advances in web apps which have been designed for mobile devices. These web apps have the potential for replacing many of the expensive (and therefore out-of-reach) desktop applications that have made activities like image and digital video editing possible. Further, they can make it far easier for students to share multimedia and many other kinds of learning artifacts with others inexpensively and securely. The technology is coming. Will educators be prepared to take advantage of it, and if so, how effectively?

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Harnessing the Power of Social Networks for Teaching and Learning

Susan Payne



Whether you use it or not, you have to admit that Facebook is not just a passing fad. With more than 500 million active users, Facebook, the largest social network on the web, has expanded its reach from an initial existence on college campuses to what is now a ubiquitous presence in American culture. Social networks have become an integral part of our students' lives, and many teachers are looking for ways to harness the power of this new medium to enhance teaching and learning in the traditional classroom.

In early October, Dustin O'Donnell, a first-year language arts teacher at Tualatin High School, created a Facebook group for his sophomores and juniors. O'Donnell posts updates about assignments, and he can generate event reminders for upcoming tests and projects. Ideally, he hopes his class Facebook groups will be a place where students can post relevant links and discuss issues connected with what they are learning in class. "I'm trying to get them to think beyond 'school' and to generate their own topics," he says.

Giving students increased ownership and choice when it comes to their learning was a key factor in my

own decision to incorporate social networking in my Creative Writing class by creating a class Ning. I had seen the power of this medium in action as a member of the English Companion Ning, a social networking site for English teachers (see sidebar). Ning has many Facebook-like features that make the interface user-friendly while also providing students with searchable, threaded discussions and a space to maintain their own blog. I was fortunate to be teaching in a room where students had regular access to computers during class time, but I also wanted my students to see the Ning as an extension of our classroom and to embrace the concept that their learning and interaction need not be limited by the constraints of a specific place and time.

Students use the TuHS Creative Writing Ning to post their writing and to provide each other with constructive feedback. It is a place where they can discuss topics related to writing which are both teacher- and student-generated. The Ning also includes a resource section with links to helpful websites and a class calendar accompanied by a short narrative of what we did in class each day along with downloadable handouts. Because Ning has a variety of features to choose from, teachers can set up their sites to meet the needs of their

25 Years Ago in *OEJ*

There are countless ways in which language arts teachers can work to foster a new mode of thinking, a mode of thinking that can divert us from drifting towards the [atomic] catastrophe Einstein warned us about 40 years ago.

—from "The Language Arts Classroom in the Nuclear Age,"
by Barbara Ruben, *Oregon English*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1986).

own students and to best support the structures that are already in place in their classrooms.

Last year, Tualatin High School student Peter Oliver used Ning in his IB Modern World History class, and the experience inspired him to write an editorial about it in the school newspaper, *The Wolf*. According to Oliver, “The benefits of a system like this are undeniable: absentees can still participate and find make-up work; kids who are shy can share their opinions without a class of forty peers staring at them; massive amounts of paper can be saved; discussions which were cut off in class can be finished, and all of this can fit into any student’s schedule because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere.”

Along with these significant benefits, using social networking sites like Facebook or Ning does bring a new set of challenges. Issues having to do with access, appropriate student behavior, and acceptable use of language are all things I have had to deal with to some extent. It is important to emphasize continually the educational objectives you have for using a particular social networking tool with your students. For many of them, using these tools to enhance their formal education is a new and unfamiliar experience. The use of a gradual release of responsibility model for generating content along with explicit modeling of appropriate online behavior helps students understand how to utilize social media platforms for collaborative work.

The reality is that most of the digital natives we teach spend a considerable amount of their time online, so when we meet them where they already are, we increase the relevancy of the content and gain increased buy-in. Ultimately, we can harness the power of social media in order to create opportunities for interactions that are no longer constrained by bells or classroom walls and that serve to both empower students and enhance their learning.

■
Susan Payne works as a language arts teacher and instructional coach at Tualatin High School, Oregon. She is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership and Policy at Portland State University.
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Ning Offers Teachers Opportunities for Professional Learning

Ning’s potential for enhancing learning is not limited to student application; there are many Nings that have been created to help teachers learn, too. One of the best examples of a thriving online professional learning community is the English Companion Ning, which was launched by acclaimed English teacher and author Jim Burke in December of 2008. Billed as a place “where English teachers go to help each other,” the EC Ning is more than 20,000 members strong and the winner of a 2010 Edublog award for “Best Use of a Social Network.” Along with general Forum Discussions on a wide variety of topics, the EC Ning also has a space for Groups where discussions take place on specific topics such as “Teaching Reading,” “Teaching Writing,” and “Teaching with Technology.” There are also groups created specifically for elementary and middle school teachers and even a group for literacy coaches. The EC Ning sponsors ongoing book club discussions led by authors* who are leaders in the fields of literacy, writing, and English education; in addition, some other high profile members, such as author Alan Sitomer (*Teaching Teens and Reaping Results*) maintain blogs on the site. Last summer, members of the EC Ning facilitated an interactive professional development Webstite titled “English 2.0: Teaching and Learning in a Digital Age” and in January, a second Webstite, “Work with Me: The Essence of Authentic Collaboration,” took place. Materials and discussions from both Webstitutes are archived and searchable on the EC Ning.

*In March 2011, Tim Gillespie led the discussion around his recent book, *Doing Literary Criticism: Helping Students Engage with Challenging Texts* (Stenhouse, 2010).

A Digital Elementary Classroom

Jody Bean



The classroom of the 21st Century needs to be a place of dynamic, anytime-and-anywhere learning where every child receives differentiated instruction to maximize his or her learning potential. With the economic outlook for education bleaker each year, I feared that I could not continue to meet the needs of my students and offer them a learning environment that my previous students were given.

Educators are faced with technology progressing at an exponential rate. There is a technology skills gap between student learners and their teachers. I have witnessed it at every class level. Students are “powering down” to enter the classroom. My goal is to recognize the use of technology in everyday life and to make technology transparent in the classroom in order to be successful in raising student achievement. A classroom must be rigorous and enriching with every opportunity to reach all learners with whatever tools I can provide.

Thirty-five or more students is the new norm in my school district. Last year I had thirty-eight. How can I teach them all? How can I make a difference? My goal

was to find a way to promote student interaction without every student vying for individual time.

Having been involved with technology in the Oregon City School District for many years, I brought it into the classroom by implementing the first Digital Classroom. It was exciting. All my sixth grade students came to school with laptops. My teaching evolved with

my students. Their thirst to make authentic experiences in class was relevant. I realized that they wanted to be heard. They wanted an audience. “Old school” was that

students wrote their stories, projects, and assignments, and the teacher graded them and returned them with a score. Done. Forgotten. Where’s the relevancy?

I soon created a podcast program in which digital files can be released episodically and downloaded through web syndication. Each student could become a “Celebrity Reader.” They wrote scripts to children’s books and added some literary elements such as characterization details for the reader to look for while reading the book. They used their computers to podcast the book and script. The finished podcast went onto my webpage or, as a class, we would present all of our Celebrity Reader podcasts as a gift to a younger grade level. My students realized they had an audience, and they wanted more. They were focusing on all the literacies: Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and technology. A paradigm shift was created that focused on developing and modeling technology for various subjects that reinforced student learning.

Four years later, technology has continued to advance. Hand-held devices have entered the classroom. I continue to use laptops, but my focus is using iPod touches because it is more economical. Podcasts have become an integral part of teaching in order to reach students, faculty, parents, and community.

What are the advantages of podcasts? They provide an audience for my students. They find relevancy for classroom work, knowing that they will be sharing with others. They are more invested in quality work. Podcasting allows students to practice their oral reading fluency. Oral language sampling with the iPod is more accurate than a formal assessment, and students agree it’s less stressful—that means they can deliver. After students record their voices on the iPod touch, they can then listen and identify reading strategies such as expression, accuracy, and good pacing. They are able to do self-reflection, and the power of the iPod touch

A classroom must be rigorous and enriching with every opportunity to reach all learners with whatever tools I can provide.

is that they are able to delete and try again. Once they have succeeded in an oral fluency sample, it can easily be imported into iTunes and be shared with a parent or stored for assessment and growth.

An additional advantage of using iPod touch is that it allows students to develop literacy skills by writing scripts or stories, researching information, setting up interviews, and establishing an audience. It allows students to practice both listening and speaking skills.

There are both teacher-created and student-created podcasts in my classroom. The teacher-created ones are centered on specific subjects and topics that I feel are pertinent. I create podcasts for spelling, math, social studies, language arts, and parent communication. They are skill-based along with information that the student needs. For example, in the spelling program I have sentence dictations during which students write what I say verbatim. Some students are naturally slow processors. They need more time, which I don't have with 35 students in the classroom. However, I give students an iPod touch that has the sentence dictation on it, and students can listen at their own pace. They may pause, rewind, and play again until they have completed the assignment. This use of technology has allowed students to not feel rushed and to be able to listen to the assignment over and over again at their own pace. This breeds success.

Another example of teacher-created podcasting is in math. A Math Standard in sixth grade is Number Sense. Students are encouraged to identify numbers and how we use them in everyday activities. I took on the challenge and podcasted numbers that are important to me in everyday life. I wanted students to use their number sense and make a reasonable guess at what my numbers might represent. For example, $\frac{1}{3}$ and 5317 are important numbers to me. These numbers identify me in some way. Students listen to all my numbers on the iPod touch and guess what each number *might* represent. After they have used the Voice Memo on the iPod touches to record their guesses, I reveal my numbers' identity. One third is a number that represents me within my family. I am one of three siblings. 5317 is the number on my house and identifies where I live. After students listen to my Numbers and Me podcast, they create their own examples and identify the numbers that represent them. This process is inviting to students, and it increases their

motivation and attitude on how information can be communicated.

Student podcasts generate the ability to allow differentiated instruction in the classroom. All learners from English Language Learners to Talented and Gifted Learners can succeed when using iPod touches in the classroom. I have a student in my class who is identified as ELL and special education. He loves to read but cannot write. His skills are very basic. He is an enthusiast of history and biography. Getting this student to write down what he has learned is extremely difficult. Getting any paper turned in with just his name on it is a miracle. How do I know he is learning? We had weekly conferences during which we tried to think of topics he would be interested in writing about. Every week he left feeling excited to get a story on paper, but it didn't materialize. After many weeks of his failed attempts at writing, I decided that together we would create a script of an outline of the story he has had in his head for weeks. I gave him an iPod touch to record his story. Amazingly enough, it had a title: *The Egyptians and the Slaves*. He recorded his story with fluency as if he were reading a book. He voiced expressions of the characters and revealed their moods when the family was captured and taken as slaves. The story was brilliant! We shared his podcast with the class, and he got a standing ovation for his work.

iPods in the classroom make it possible to deliver high quantities of lessons by text, auditory, or visual media that create a differentiated learning environment. Capturing the attention of students with hand-held devices creates another way to engage them. The iPod touch apps component allows students to be enriched or helps provide the needed interventions. Using the educational applications from iTunes App Store enables me to individualize each student's learning. I can harness the use of iPod touches and enrich my classroom. Students have discovered their favorite apps, and we have an ongoing App Party at lunch where we peruse the iTunes App Store and look for educational apps that would further benefit our class.

This use of technology has allowed students to not feel rushed and to be able to listen to the assignment over and over again at their own pace. This breeds success.

Students play an active role in my classroom. They demonstrate that they care about learning. Each student can create, organize, and publish. Technology brings a new excitement and dimension to my classroom. It is a place of dynamic, anytime-and-anywhere learning where all students receive differentiated instruction to maximize their learning potential.

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Jody Bean has been a leader of technology for the Oregon City School District for more than ten years and has been a pioneer in bringing a Digital One to One Classroom to the district. She is a presenter at northwest conferences, training teachers how to make technology transparent in the classroom.
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Integrating Literacy and Technology in an Elementary Classroom

Susan Landreth

Finding ways to keep students motivated and engaged in literacy can be a struggle for teachers. In my classroom of twenty-nine third graders, I have experienced that challenge. The abilities of students to read or write, and to remain focused and independent, vary greatly.



This year, I began experimenting with integrating technology into my

Reading/Language Arts block. I wanted to see if using technology would enhance the students' reading and writing abilities as well as keep them engaged in a variety of texts. So far, the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Students are using technology in my classroom for reading to themselves with greater comprehension, fluency, and accuracy; listening to themselves read; doing the word work of spelling, and working on their writing through publishing stories.

I have six laptops for students to use in a variety of ways. A "Tech Team" of trained students sets up the computers every morning. Laptops are available if a student wants to publish a story that he or she has written. There are also specific sites that are bookmarked for students to go to. Students may read short stories, non-fiction articles, poetry, or play a spelling game. It

is not uncommon to hear them say to each other, "Did you read the wonder for today? I learned how cowboy hats are made" (Wonderopolis.com). They also have conversations about the latest article they have read on Tweentribune. Student-initiated discussions about something they've read are exciting!

I also have one iPod nano and two iPod touches. The iPod nano is primarily used for students to practice reading fluency and accuracy. A student reads into the nano, recording a few pages or a short chapter. Next, the student listens to the recording and follows the text, focusing on accuracy and fluency (reading with expression at an appropriate pace and articulating the punctuation). The students tally their errors and re-record the text to try to improve their accuracy.

I have downloaded spelling and reading apps on the iPod touch. By selecting a variety of apps, I can differentiate skill practice for students. Some may need extra practice with common sight words. Others may need to increase their vocabulary with more challenging games. I can also come alongside a student with an iPod touch and reinforce a spelling lesson using an app called "Doodlebuddy." One boy needed practice with "Magic E" words (the "e" makes the vowel say its name). We did a five-minute review using Doodlebuddy, and then he

went on to a spelling game. The wide range of student needs can be reached by using a variety of apps.

Teaching the procedures for using these devices has been vital. Students have twenty minutes of technology time. When the timer rings, they know how to “invite” another student to use the laptop or iPod. Students may accept the invitation or not. If the invitation is rejected, another child is invited. As with anything in an elementary classroom, specific expectations are taught, practiced, and reinforced.

A few of our favorite websites are:

- tweentribune.com
High interest news stories
- starfall.com
Great for beginning readers
- kidsnewsroom.org
Non-fiction articles
- <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/children>
A variety of short stories
- Storylineonline.net
Picture books read by actors from the Screen Actors Guild
- <http://gardenofsong.com/kidzpage/>
Poetry site
- <http://www.funbrain.com/scramble/>
Spelling games
- wonderopolis.org
Non-fiction Wonder of the Day
- <http://www.factmonster.com/>
Variety of topics, such as world events, people, sports

Some of our favorite spelling/vocabulary apps are:

- Textropolis
- Text Twist
- Word Drop
- Word Target
- Four Letter Words
- Spell Blocks
- Word Magic
- Doodlebuddy

So, if you were to walk into my classroom, you might see students reading books of their choice, sitting around the room. There would be students using laptops and iPods. You would see me conferring with individual students or meeting with small groups. If you were to ask students why they like using technology, you would get responses like this:

“It’s good for learning. Our teacher picks out games and stories that are good for learning.”

“I think it’s cool and good for our class. It helps us learn more about the world.” “Using the nano helps me keep my brain in the book.”

If kids are engaged and learning, then I’m sold on technology in the classroom!

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Susan Landreth has been teaching in the Parkrose School District, Portland, Oregon, for twenty-four years. She is currently teaching second and third graders at Russell Academy of Academic Achievement.

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BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Did you know that the Oregon Council of Teachers of English was organized on December 23, 1913, in Salem—just two years after NCTE was formed in Chicago?

Initiating members were Rosa B. Parrott, head of English Department, Monmouth Normal School (now WOU); Edward A. Thurber, head of Rhetoric Department, University of Oregon; and Edwin T. Reed, college editor, State Agricultural College (now OSU).

Watch for special programs OCTE is presenting leading up to our centennial celebration during 2013–2014!

Promoting Media Literacy in the Digital Age

Luke Rodesiler



Placing popular labels such as “digital natives” (Prensky 1) on today’s students implies that they are somehow predisposed to navigate digital spaces effectively and use critical-thinking skills that are vital to engaging with the copious amounts of digital media they face on a daily basis. However, Renee Hobbs suggests that we “not confuse just owning technology with having the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to be successful in the 21st century” (para. 19). English language arts teachers can avoid such confusion by engaging students with activities that assist them in developing skills that allow them to read critically and to make thoughtful meaning of the multimodal media messages that permeate the digital spaces they inhabit.

Following calls for effective educational approaches that address the multimodal texts today’s students frequently consume (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English, 2005), this article explores four student-centered classroom activities that promote media literacy effectively by providing students with opportunities to participate in the close, critical reading and thoughtful expression of digital media messages.

ANNOTATING DIGITAL VIDEOS

Writing-to-learn strategies, as Roen describes them, “encourage people to use writing as a tool for learning—for making sense of the world” (225). Teachers can employ writing-to-learn strategies to facilitate reflection on and exploration of course content (Roen 225). One such strategy—annotation—has long been advocated for use with print texts. Annotating a text can raise students’ awareness of personal connections, questions, and challenges to the text as they read actively (Goble 6). The benefits of annotating print texts can just as easily apply to the annotation of digital videos. In the style of VH1’s

Pop-Up Video, a television show airing in the late ‘90s and early ‘00s that “popped-up” bubbles of information, commentary, and critique during featured music videos, students can analyze and annotate digital videos using BubblePLY, an application available online at <http://www.bubbleply.com>. Supporting a host of video-sharing websites, including YouTube, Google Videos, and CNN, BubblePLY allows users to enter the URL of a video available online and annotate it using animated bubbles, subtitles, and even user-uploaded images. Users can set annotations to appear at specific points during the video and then share a link to the fully annotated video or embed it in a webpage for others to view.

Annotating digital videos, as with more traditional writing-to-learn strategies, can assist students in uncovering connections with a text that help foster rich literary experiences. Whether investigating political campaign ads, making sense of short films, or critically analyzing music videos, students can use digital video annotations to enrich the text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections that literacy scholars like Tovani (69) advocate for enhancing comprehension.

COLLABORATIVELY ANALYZING DIGITAL MEDIA TEXTS

While digital annotations may help students organize their thinking about multimodal media, collaborative analyses allow students to extend their thinking as they consider alternative perspectives and views held by others that may challenge their own. Teachers can engage students in a collaborative analysis of digital media using VoiceThread at <http://voicethread.com>, an online application for holding conversations around uploaded media files. With five ways to comment—providing commentary via desktop microphone, uploading audio files of pre-recorded comments, recording comments with a webcam, calling in comments by telephone, or

typing comments as text—users can easily collaborate on and discuss digital media texts. Students could potentially analyze a wide range of media messages since VoiceThread supports digital video files, images, PDFs, and Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files. “The Doodler,” a tool that allows users to draw on top of uploaded media files while commenting, further extends the capacity of VoiceThread as an application for digital media analysis. Users can supplement their commentaries by drawing connections between elements of a text, highlighting key features, or noting points of contention. Also, a single VoiceThread can host comments from an entire classroom of students, and these comments may be shared via hyperlink or by embedding them into external websites for others to view.

In my own work as a teacher, I have designed activities that prompt students to read digital media closely and to conduct analyses via VoiceThread. Whether centering on visual literacy and making meaning of visual elements manipulated in digital images of popular album artwork (Rodesiler, “Symbolic Analysis”), applying the National Association of Media Literacy Education’s “Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages,” or exploring core concepts of media literacy prominently on display in contemporary short films, VoiceThread has proven to be an effective vehicle for facilitating collaborative analyses of digital media. Using VoiceThread, students post their own commentaries before working to extend, challenge, or support the analyses of their peers. Such dialogic classroom activities promote and embrace multiple perspectives.

SCREENCASTING THINK-ALoud WEBSITE EVALUATIONS

As composing on the Web has become more accessible to a greater number of people, the skills required to evaluate effectively the validity and reliability of information and sources have never been more valuable. Using Jing, free screencasting software available online at <http://www.jingproject.com>, students can demonstrate their media literacy skills by recording their efforts to evaluate the credibility and authenticity of any website they encounter. Applying Ostenson’s approach to website evaluation, students might record a

think-aloud screencast that captures their process of examining a site’s initial markers, corroborating the site’s information with verifiably trustworthy sources, and establishing the author’s intent to detect authorial bias (55). A student’s think-aloud screencast might also showcase his or her use of *easyWhois* at <http://www.easywhois.com> to determine the owner of a domain name and his or her exploration of a site’s history via the *Internet Archive Wayback Machine* at <http://www.archive.org> to aid in understanding the evolution of a site over time. Regardless of the strategies used, a student can use free screencasting software to capture a running visual of the sites referenced in an evaluation, to record up to five minutes of a think-aloud that clarifies the processes used to judge a site’s credibility, and to easily share the finished screencast with the teacher.

A number of websites featuring misleading information or promoting fictional organizations lend themselves to screencasting think-aloud website evaluations. When exploring information literacy and evaluating the authenticity and reliability of websites in my own classroom, students used *easyWhois* and the *Wayback Machine* to assist them in evaluating *Martin Luther King, Jr.—A True Historical Examination* at <http://martinlutherking.org>, a site maintained by Stormfront, a proclaimed “White Nationalist Community,” that represents Dr. King negatively. Other misleading sites that may be useful for such an activity include *Dream-Tech International* at <http://www.d-b.net/dti>, a site claiming to offer reproductive cloning, and *RYT Hospital-Dwayne Medical Center* at <http://www.rythospital.com/2008>, a seemingly professional site linking to pages that boast outlandish claims of genetic manipulation of unborn children and male pregnancies (Rodesiler, “Online Resources” 32). Recording screencasts that capture students’ think-aloud evaluations of such websites offers students additional opportunities to apply their media literacy skills while providing teachers with a clear picture of precisely how students are making sense of the information they encounter in digital spaces.

Annotating digital videos, as with more traditional writing-to-learn strategies, can assist students in uncovering connections with a text that help foster rich literary experiences.

EXPLORING MOVIE-MAKING TECHNIQUES

The aforementioned activities are heavy on the analysis of media messages. Yet the National Association for Media Literacy Education suggests in its core principles, that effective media literacy education prominently features both the analysis and the production of media. By engaging students in the construction of digital movies via Xtranormal, a free text-to-movie service available online at <http://www.xtranormal.com>, teachers can provide opportunities to explore core media literacy concepts and non-verbal meaning-making techniques that feature distinct camera angles, select shots, unique settings, purposeful gestures, and meaningful positioning as commonly recommended by experts in the field (e.g., Golden, 2001; Masterman, 1990). Moreover, even at its most basic level, movie-making can support visioning, problem solving, and analytical skills as students work to determine what will be included and what will be left out while bringing their visions to life for public consumption (Theodosakis 34).

Initially, some teachers may be quick to dismiss movie-making in the classroom because of its apparent complexity and the amount of time required to complete such activities. Xtranormal's simplicity, however, is truly captured in the application's tagline: "If you can type, you can make movies." Without expensive equipment and the challenges of supervision that often come with traditional in-school movie-making projects, teachers can still engage students in the critical consideration of common movie-making techniques and offer opportunities to negotiate the process of basic media production.

When exploring movie-making with Xtranormal, students are not limited to composing original movies strictly from scratch. I have worked with students who used Xtranormal to shoot what Buckingham calls "translations" (77). Challenged to translate or adapt a prominent monologue, speech, or exchange of dialogue from a piece of literature of their choosing to an Xtranormal movie, students were compelled to read print-based texts closely to discern context, emotion, and meaning before thinking carefully about how such elements might be preserved and conveyed through an alternative digital medium. Students then composed a reflective explanation of the choices they made to convey meaning in the digital short. Such activities draw atten-

tion to the codes and conventions of media production while highlighting both the limitations and the potential of each medium (Buckingham 78). With a greater understanding of the process of media construction, students are better prepared actively to engage with the digital media texts they regularly consume.

OWNING A COMPUTER IS NOT ENOUGH

As Hobbs so clearly states, "Simply owning a computer doesn't make you smart" (para. 3). Rather, by supporting students through activities that foster critical thinking skills as they navigate the Web, create their own digital media messages, and engage with complex, multimodal texts, English language arts teachers can assist students in becoming autonomous consumers and producers of media. They can then apply their skills and understandings to any and all media they encounter, digital or otherwise.

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The following themed issues of the *Oregon English Journal* have been selected by NCTE for national promotion and distribution:

- 1988 Whole Language
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Common Core State Standards: Goals for Yesterday

John Golden



Born in 1968, I readily admit that my experience with the 1950s is based mostly on *Happy Days* reruns and old Elvis movies, but I contend that the upcoming national Common Core State Standards would be more relevant to the characters of *Leave it to Beaver* than to the contemporary ones of *Gossip Girl*. In an effort to raise achievement levels of students nationwide, the developers and proponents of these new standards have willfully and puzzlingly ignored the reality of our students' lives today.

With so many educational initiatives coming out unceasingly, readers should be forgiven if they need a little background about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); I know that for a long while I pretended that these too would go away like so many other initiatives of the past, but with all the money and clout behind them, this is unlikely.

Released in final form in June 2010 after months of development and public feedback, the CCSS are the result of “a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO),” according to its website, and which were developed in “collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.” As of this writing, forty-one states have formally adopted the CCSS in Language Arts and Mathematics, which will replace their existing state standards, and most have entered into one of two consortiums of states that will develop what essentially will be national assessments.

Though in general I am a supporter of clearly articulated standards that can help facilitate a coherent

learning experience for students and provide a framework for teacher dialogue and curriculum development, I have many concerns about the CCSS. There was an element of secrecy in its initial drafting and a small window for public feedback, during which an organization like the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), with over 100 years of expertise in our discipline, had less than two months during the summer of 2009 to respond to the initial draft of the College and Career Readiness Standards. I also think that there has been an aspect of federal coercion associated with these standards: only those states that agreed to adopt them would be considered for Race to the Top funding, and there are indications that non-adopting states may be denied other federal funds in the future. I worry also about an even greater emphasis being put on assessments at the expense of instruction.

But my real concern, especially with the focus on technology in this issue of the *Oregon English Journal*, is that these standards developed in the second decade of the 21st century—incredibly—include little explicit mention of visual and media literacy. Frank Baker, a media literacy expert who maintains the Media Literacy Clearinghouse, writes, “The fact that the Common Core ELA standards virtually ignore the way young people learn today is regrettable. Media are also texts—designed to be read, analyzed, deconstructed and created. Visual and media literacy skills, so needed by all students, are nowhere to be found in the Core ELA document.” Now, to be fair, the word “visual” does appear in the document, but most often only as a list of possibilities, such as when the standards suggest that students need to interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally). While it is good that this is one of the ways that students can demonstrate this skill, it certainly would not help to develop the visually literate citizen that Baker and others envision.

I worry also about an even greater emphasis being put on assessments at the expense of instruction.

Even though the CCSSO's mission statement claims that with these standards, "American students [will be] fully prepared for the future, [and] our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy," let's consider the kinds of texts that today's students are expected to read and produce as compared to those of earlier generations.

When Potsie and Richie hang out together with the Fonz at Arnold's Drive In, the only mass media they encounter is the jukebox and an occasional issue of the school newspaper. Think about today's students hanging around at the mall surrounded by print advertising, logos, music videos, commercials disguised as tweets. And all that's just what's on the smart phones they carry! Visual, audio, and print texts surround them, bombarding them with information, competing for attention and meaning.

Maybe even more important, let's think about the kinds of work the *Happy Days* kids might have been asked to do at Jefferson High School. (Yeah, it's pretty sad that I know the name of a fictitious school.) Let's say Ralph Malph was assigned to research the causes and effects of The Korean War. His main difficulty would be in locating information; he would probably use something called the card catalogue and encyclopedias, eventually settling on four or five authoritative texts that he would need to read and synthesize for his report. By contrast, Google just gave me 7,500,000 results before I even typed the final "r" in Korean War. So, locating information is not the problem anymore, but determining value, credibility, and relevance certainly are. In addition to print texts, students will be expected to sift through photographs, documentary films, audio clips, many coming at students in multiple streams simultaneously. Students face a much more daunting task today because they need to read the texts they encounter critically in order to identify bias in a way that Ralph Malph, who would have worked almost exclusively with print texts, never would have had to do. As a result, the kinds of work that students need to be doing in school today is not simply *finding* information, but *using* information in meaningful and appropriate ways.

So, this brings us back to the new Common Core State Standards and how they are more appropriate for Joannie and Chachi than for a student in my third pe-

riod. One assignment I liked to give my juniors was to analyze a current or historical event through the ways the media represented that event. If students chose, say, the L.A. riots after the Rodney King verdict, they might look at various television news broadcasts, poetry, police department press releases, rap videos, newspaper editorials, audio of 911 calls, the play by Anna Deveare Smith, photo essays, and so on. All of this information, by the way, I located in .0002 seconds on Google, so the real work begins as students have to read and analyze critically a minimum of six different modes of communication appearing in print, visual, and audio forms. To demonstrate their knowledge, students then had to produce a short documentary film that included visual, audio, and text tracks, while presenting a clear point of view or tone toward the event. This is the kind of information synthesis and media creation skills that the student of the 21st Century requires, the same student the developers of the CCSS would claim they are preparing. And yet, as I look through the CCSS, the best connection to this assignment I can find within the high school standards is:

[T]he kinds of work that students need to be doing in school today is not simply *finding* information, but *using* information in meaningful and appropriate ways.

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Notice that the developers of the standards do not specifically identify the kinds of media or format, only that they are "different." So, this could refer simply to two different print texts. The "e.g." that points to non-print texts is not enough to ensure that it would be likely to appear on an assessment of this standard. I also pulled this from a section on "Informational Texts"; no similar standard appears for the literature standards, so the poetry, drama, and rap videos my students found from the L.A. riots wouldn't be covered.

What about the documentary film that the students create in the assignment? The closest I can find in the CCSS within the high school writing standards is:

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Again, the developers pay what I consider to be lip service to the new literacies by describing some of the features that real multimedia presentations, such as documentaries, have, but notice that using simply the word "technology" means that students could demonstrate this standard with some flashy fonts on their word processors. The use of the word "writing products" clearly limits and privileges print texts over other types of composing.

Okay, you might say, the type of activity I described might be valuable, but it really can't be captured within standards, so the CCSS shouldn't be faulted for not quite catching up to the 21st Century. But this simply is not true. There are many states and other countries that have worked hard over the past decades to include meaningful visual and media literacy skills in their state standards.

Look at Montana:

Evaluate the origin, authority, accuracy, bias and distortion of information, and ideas in media.

Look at Texas:

Analyze how messages in media are conveyed through visual and sound techniques (e.g., editing, reaction shots, sequencing, background music).

Or, Massachusetts:

Create media presentations that effectively use graphics, images, and/or sound to present a distinctive point of view on a topic.

Even our own Oregon standards would be far more applicable than the CCSS:

Compare and contrast the ways in which media genres (e.g., televised news, news magazines, documentaries, online information) cover the same event.

Look at what The College Board has identified as part of their Standards for College Success:

To be successful in college and in the workplace and to participate effectively in a global society, students are expected to understand the nature of media; to interpret, analyze, and evaluate the media messages they encounter daily; and to create media that express a point of view and influence others. These skills are relevant to all subject areas, where students may be asked to evaluate media coverage of research, trends, and issues.

NCTE has said that 21st Century students need to possess the ability to:

Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information. Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multi-media texts.

So with all of these states and organizations promoting (and in some cases, assessing) students' abilities to create and evaluate the media that surround us, why are we seemingly moving backward with the Common Core State Standards? Respected organizations such as the National Association for Media Literacy Education and individuals such as Frank Baker and Richard Beach, acknowledged experts in the media literacy field, attempted to influence the CCSS developers to include a specific viewing and representing strand to the standards with no success. Honestly, I cannot explain the dismantling of state standards that emphasize these skills or the apparent disregard of various organizations with expertise in this field. I suspect that perhaps the developers were more concerned about how the standards might be assessed on an objective exam than about giving students real-life reading and composing experiences.

Some readers may say that this doesn't really matter because teachers will teach what they feel is important,

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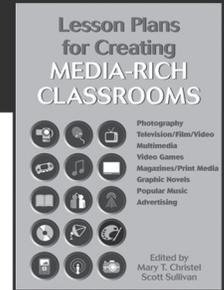
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regardless of the standards. And when I was in the classroom, I probably would have agreed. Truthfully, I never really knew what the standards were; I taught what I thought my students needed to know. But now, after three years out of the classroom sitting in a cubicle at the central office, I say that standards do matter. Everything I want to do with teachers—curriculum writing, professional development, coaching support—has to be based on standards if there's going to be any money to pay for it. So, I am concerned that without the explicit visual and media literacy elements in the standards, we will lose what gains we have been able to make, and we won't have the funding to do much about it.

While the requirements of the Common Core Standards stipulate that they are to be adopted word for word, there is a provision that allows for states to add up to 15 percent of additional content. There are efforts underway in some states to ensure that media literacy standards are included, and I hope we will be able to generate a similar discussion here in Oregon.

Richie Cunningham: So how did you do on that social studies test?

Potsie Weber: I missed that question on Alaska. I hear they want to make it a state now.

Richie Cunningham: That'll never happen.

The joke, of course, comes only because we know something now about Alaska that the characters didn't know in the mid 1950s. I hope that we won't find ourselves similarly laughed at in a few decades because of what we should have known about what students need to learn. According to UCLA professor Ernest Morrell, the changes that we are seeing now in digital communications technologies are among the most dramatic and rapid developments that we have seen since the invention of the Gutenberg Press in the 15th Century. Surely then we ought to have standards that reflect the 600 years in between.

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■

You Are What You Media

Vanessa Hughes

"I'll give you a hundred bucks if you give me back my laptop." Maya pleads with her sister. There is an edge of desperation in her voice.



"No way. Not 'till tomorrow morning." With folded arms her sister is defiant and loyal. After all, it was Maya who requested, not ten hours earlier, that in no circumstances should she have access to her laptop for twenty-four hours.

Back in the classroom Maya tells the rest of her story. "Yeah, but it didn't stop me from trying to get it later. I waited 'till she was asleep then tried to break the lock, but I woke her up."

I asked Maya what was so compelling, what was motivating her to such actions.

"Facebook. I just had to get on Facebook."

This funny, if slightly disturbing, story is the result of our Unplug Yourself Day: a twenty-four-hour period when I ask my high school students to unplug from all forms of mass media and all electronic devices. It is an exercise in awareness of ourselves, our actions, and our immediate world view, and it is part of a much larger

framework encapsulated by the phrase "you are what you media."

MEDIA AND SOCIETY

I teach a course called Media and Society at Cleveland High School in Portland, Oregon. The course is a year-long general elective open to ninth through twelfth grade. It's fun to teach, popular with students, homework-light (depending on how one wants to teach it), and connects with every other class at Cleveland. This fact alone can make it a rather daunting class to teach. There is no facet of our 21st Century lives that is not in some way impacted by the media. Hence, the sheer volume of material really needed to cover all aspects of mass media is impossible. It's like trying to teach World History in a year or American Literature in a year. Oh, wait. We already try to do that.

For the purposes of our course, mass media is defined in two ways: communication (messages or stories) that is created by the few for the consumption of many; communication that is either one-way or very difficult to talk back to. It's hard to talk back to a t-shirt, or a news

broadcast, or a billboard. The latest data show adolescent media consumption at almost 7.5 hours a day, and it's increasing year by year (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2009). Between the ages of five and eighteen, the average American spends 18,000 hours with media and 13,000 hours with education (Chen, 1994).

JUST SAY NO (TO SAYING NO)

In spite of these statistics (or, perhaps, because of them), media literacy is not anti-media. I've been teaching and presenting media literacy content for more than a dozen years, and too often the conversations take a nose dive straight into the quagmire of negativity. To talk about media use and control is challenging, but I intentionally keep the focus away from the "just say no" realm of ostrich-ism. When the conversation turns to hackneyed phrases like, "It's all about greed and selling something," or, "Media is the opiate of the masses," credibility is lost and the walls come down. Let's not forget that mass media is simply a tool of communication; as with any other tool, our role as educators is to examine how and why that tool is being used. Who is wielding the tool and for what purpose? Who doesn't have access to the tool at all?

GENERATION NEXT

The primary goal of the course is to develop skills for full participation in the media landscape of American culture (increasingly a global culture). To do this, students must become active, discerning consumers of media; they must understand the values and economic implications of the media, and they must become producers of media content. It is through the latter—media production—that the most powerful learning takes place and provides the most evidence for evaluating the efficacy of media literacy education.

I divide the year into units based on the different media we encounter: visual literacy, design/photography, film and television, advertising/consumerism, journalism/news, the internet, and music.

I strongly suggest beginning the year with front-loading the vocabulary of visual literacy. So much of our media landscape is highly produced, highly stylized visual media. As we learn the skills of reading text and subtext, students need the vocabulary to discuss what

they see. We focus on the language of basic design and photography: depth of field, framing, lighting, color, the use of space, text. All of these definitions and their applications are available on the web with excellent visual examples.

Each unit starts with essential questions. The unit on music, for example, revolves around the question of identity: How does music both connect us and divide us? How does music create cultural and personal identity, which can serve to unite and divide us? The unit on advertising and consumerism is propelled by the themes of personal and cultural identity. How does commercial realism (advertising) represent gender? What do we want versus what do we need? How does commercial realism impact our expectations (real versus fantasy)?

The unplug day is part of this unit. I used to call it a "media free" day, but it was too limiting and students rationalized their lack of participation with the fact that they were destined to fail. Their argument, and rightly so, is that unless you're going to check into a sensory deprivation tank for the day, you cannot avoid the passive consumption of media. The main reason for the assignment, though, is to ask students to detach from their media and electronic devices for a day. A media fast, if you will.

So, for one, twenty-four hour period we (yes, I do it as well) unplug and avoid all active participation with media: no reading, no television, no music, no radio, no movies, no computer use (unless it is necessary for homework), and (cue the *Jaws* music theme) no cell phones. It's tough. My greatest pleasure in the early morning is a quiet house before everyone is awake, a cup of tea and something to read. Nope. Not even reading is allowed for one day. Print media is mass media, so even books and newspapers are verboten.

Clearly, groundwork is necessary. During the week prior to their "day of torture," the students keep a journal of their media consumption. We define active and passive participation with media, and they keep a small diary for seven days with the purpose of becoming wit-

Let's not forget that mass media is simply a tool of communication; as with any other tool, our role as educators is to examine how and why that tool is being used. Who is wielding the tool and for what purpose? Who doesn't have access to the tool at all?

ness to their own behavior. It is imperative that judgment be avoided. Once again, media literacy is not anti-media. We are not defining good nor bad media, nor are we defining good or bad media consumption. Students are likely to be defensive and protective of their personal (and family) habits, so it's important to establish a tone of social anthropologist rather than judge and jury.

I also send a note home asking parents and families to join us and, please, respect that the experiment is only for a day. You should find great support from families who are acutely aware of and anxious about their child's media habits. Last year I had a whole family agree to participate, and they all turned off their phones for a day. This process is certainly one of the most interesting social experiments we do, and it generates wonderful stories like Maya's desperate attempts to reclaim her laptop.

THE MONKEY ON YOUR BACK

The breadth of subjects and curricula associated with a media literacy course can be intimidating, yet don't be intimidated. One of the most powerful arrows in my

Media literacy gets at the heart of our culture—or so it should if done well, which invariably brings up challenging conversations. Students often want more information, and teachers need support beyond their classroom walls.

quiver is the expertise right here in my building; I cannot emphasize strongly enough this piece of advice: ask lots of questions, use your colleagues' and the students' expertise, and don't try to be the expert. I have a background in film and photography, but I'm not a musician. I'm not a journalist and know very little about radio production. Whenever possible bring in outside resources. Last year I brought in a professional photographer (friend) who gave a lesson on portraiture. A woman who works in our site-based health clinic also has a radio show on our local community radio. She came in, along with the

Director of Programming, to discuss media ownership and showcase opportunities for youth voices on our local station.

A further example of collaboration centers on music. Last year I felt that the unit on music was weak. The student evaluations confirmed that they wanted more time and more information. This year we are starting with a

bang—literally. Thanks to some amazing collaboration with two anthropology colleagues and the support of PTA funding, we're inviting a master drummer from Ghana, Obo Addy, to teach a drumming workshop that connects the students to beginnings of musical language and the beginnings of culture. Each student will have a drum for an entire block period (90 minutes) and practice the art of speaking with drums.

On the heels of this dramatic beginning, I've cajoled another colleague with a background in music theory to teach a lesson or two on the structure of music: the basic, mathematical structure of all music. For two regular periods we will combine her math classes and my media classes, though each will have a different product for assessing their understanding.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Every school in America should be teaching media literacy, and this should no longer be a debate. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, The National Education Association have all written policy statements indicating a real and measured need for media literacy education. Most industrialized nations have been mandating this for years, with the governments of Canada and the United Kingdom funding K-12 media literacy for more than a decade. Nearly two years ago the United Nations launched an online tool for media literacy education—a kind of clearing house—through its Alliance of Civilizations. Seriously, we're so far past the debate it's like trying to say that smoking isn't harmful, yet across the nation state standards are eliminating the language requiring media literacy skills for students. Really? Media literacy is literacy.

THE LITTLE PICTURE

In spite of this devolution, media literacy is beginning to find a home in classrooms across the country. Sometimes, like at Cleveland High School, there is a specific course. The support for this course comes exclusively from administration and staff. Without the initial enthusiasm from the principal and the approval of site council, the course would not exist. It is more likely, however, that media literacy is peppered into curriculum by educators who are passionate about the subject

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matter. While this is a fine start, the disadvantage of this system is that content may be ill defined or poorly articulated. Most importantly, though, is that media educators are often isolated from professional development, collaboration and resources. Media literacy gets at the heart of our culture—or so it should if done well, which invariably brings up challenging conversations. Students often want more information, and teachers need support beyond their classroom walls. “Push-in” curriculum—even if it’s voluntary—rarely gets the attention it needs or deserves given the overwhelming material already mandated for an academic year.

JUST DO IT

Media deconstruction is important; knowing how to evaluate a text—even if there are no words—and the subtext is an essential skill. You can measure for this with written evaluations and oral presentations, but the very best and most effective evaluation is to have students become producers of media content. Nowhere are the persuasive tools and biases of our media landscape more apparent than in the pieces of media students produce. What is empowering for them is that they recognize the power of persuasiveness; they see how they are being influenced when they have to make editorial choices in their own work.

By mid October, on the heels of our visual literacy vocabulary, students produce their first piece of media: a photo essay. They have to tell a story with seven to nine frames using no text whatsoever—no symbols, no text. Their stories reveal much about their relationship with media.

Catrina told a love story replete with a sentimental finale showing the lovers gazing into each other’s eyes backlit by a starburst sunset. Joel’s birthday party images were straight out of a food magazine with their style and structure. Many students used friends as actors and their poses are straight from the pages of fashion magazines. Melissa asked her eight-year-old sister to participate, and with very little guidance photographed her posing with her favorite things. The images are disturbingly suggestive. By using their own work as fodder for deconstruction, students begin to see the connection between the media they consume and the stories they tell.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

We must teach people how to read their culture! This was a key lesson in the early women’s movement. Women who felt lacking in self-esteem blamed themselves until they discovered all the cultural forces influencing and channeling them. Until you realize how cultural forces operate on you, your efforts to change are next to pointless. Who we are is not just a result of how our parents treated us. Who we are depends on the society we live in (Andrews, p. 113).

And I would continue Andrews’ argument with this: the society we live in depends on us—its citizens—being informed, conscious, active participants in the stories that shape our culture. Mass media is our current mechanism for telling stories. Therefore, an informed citizenry—the cornerstone of democracy—must be capable of reading those stories. Surely, the least we can do as educators is to help students understand the world around them.

*All students’ names have been changed for this article.

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A teacher, artist, and former documentary filmmaker, Vanessa Hughes has more than twelve years experience in communications, public relations, and media. She received her MAT from Lewis & Clark, her film degree from Columbia College in Chicago, where she worked in the advertising and commercial film industry. She is a founding board member of MediaThink.org and teaches high school for Portland Public Schools.

■

Glitteringly Direct: A Framework for the Integration of Media Studies

Jenny Gapp



Raunchy ice cubes, fallacies, glittering generalities. During AP English my junior year of high school, the infamous Mr. Hogan assigned a media studies project. Students collected 50 examples of ads from popular culture and labeled them with their corresponding appeals, from the subliminal to the direct. As I recall, the task was seamlessly integrated into the curriculum with an elegance befitting the legendary teacher's style. Scaffolding, justification, and respect for his position had us scrambling for old glossies and a new interest in the nightly news—or at least for the ads that came on in between. Conspicuously absent from our projects were samples of internet, e-mail, and viral advertising. By the time I graduated in 1998, the internet was still an up and coming digital tool. While it wasn't solely that assignment junior year that makes me an annoying person to watch TV with, it nonetheless had a huge impact in how I consume media in my adult life. Are your students receiving instruction in how to consume media? You too can influence a generation to roll their eyes at straw men and shout with scorn at infomercials.

PLAIN FOLKS

I'm an educator just like you. When I professed an interest in journalism, Mr. Hogan suggested to me that I would make a better librarian. At the time I thought librarianship overly predictable for my introverted leanings; I yearned for the glamour of the go-getters, the investigators, the critics. It wasn't until later that I realized these attributes also described librarians. Glamour, it turns out, has a tendency to distract one from the truth. Media pervades our lives with a "look-at-me!" urgency. "Being literate in the media age requires critical

thinking skills that empower us as we make decisions" (National Association for Media Literacy Education); but while we're worrying about whether or not to purchase an eReader (Ooh! Glittery!), the real investigation of media gets neglected. Skills of media consumerism *are* being taught in our classrooms but not with the same intensity needed to parry the frenetic Flash animation, the neon bandwagon at large, and the "was this ad relevant to you?" interactivity of the web. What follows is a framework for increasing the amount of critical inquiry directed toward media-saturated educational content and pop culture. It is up to us to shape our students into scholars of integrity and socially responsible consumers. Language (visual, textual, aural) continues to act as the primary agent of media, so it is fitting that language arts teachers set the example for other disciplines in how to go about handling the technology in which educational content is increasingly delivered.

DEMONIZING THE ENEMY

The glitz of high technology—15 years after its initial boom—is still seducing teachers as much as students. For all of electronica's glittering promises, issues of use, infrastructure, and content pose challenging polemics. Superior pedagogy and best practices have always been grounded in inquiry. Now, however, the inquiry seems driven by, "What type of media should I use?" rather than, "What questions do I have about this information?" Effective media should be invisible. As we navigate the changing landscape, it is essential not to lose sight of the forest for the trees. New media may require slightly nuanced dissection, but the basic skills for tapping into the core of the message remain unchanged. The glitter on the package may blind educators to the fact that media does what it has always done: it informs

New media may require slightly nuanced dissection, but the basic skills for tapping into the core of the message remain unchanged. The glitter on the package may blind educators to the fact that media does what it has always done: it informs well or it informs badly.

well or it informs badly. That being said, lesson plans need room for close examination of the format itself: Why does the internet misinform more often than books do? What could the Kindle learn from the “behavior” of a traditional book? Did TV kill the radio star? Did the printing press kill oral storytelling tradition? Will handheld devices kill the desktop? Having these conversations in the classroom will enlighten and empower students and teachers alike. Media studies are not add-on curricula; they are an integral part of understanding how information in any discipline is diffused in the 21st century. Wade and Moje make a case for “unsanctioned texts,” expanding the definition of text in the classroom to include ephemera and non-traditional objects “such as notes to friends, comic books, popular magazines, and graffiti.” Some argue that the inclusion of such materials “dumbs down” the curriculum, but if we are to educate the whole student, it is dangerous to ignore the media which permeate such a significant part of their lives. The most recent Kaiser Family Foundation study on daily media use among children and teens reports, “The amount of time spent with media increased by an hour and seventeen minutes a day over the past five years, from 6:21 in 2004 to 7:38 today [2010]. And because of media multitasking, the total amount of media content consumed during that period has increased from 8:33 in 2004 to 10:45 today.” We do our students a disservice if we ignore this statistic and write-off media studies as superfluous.

FLAG-WAVING LOGIC

Library science inhabits a unique position primed to examine information transfer across the disciplines. Note the use of “library science.” The semantic debate over media centers versus libraries is counterproductive. Stringing together “library media center,” or “library media teacher,” is redundant. In the words of educator, philosopher, and librarian (a redundant title), S. R. Ranganathan, the fifth law of library science is that “The library is a growing organism.” Libraries have

encompassed and will encompass all forms of media—past, present, and future. Furthermore, *scientia*, literally “knowledge” in Latin, implies prescriptive practice, systematic questioning. Library science is, by definition, synonymous with media studies. At the root of media studies, or literacy (used interchangeably), is critical thinking. Multiple literacies have also provided semantic distraction masquerading at one time or another as information literacy, visual literacy, digital literacy, among others, but “the overlap between the competencies...is so close that their differences have more to do with constituencies than anything else” (Tyner 104). Informative media have always pervaded each discipline, and while the paradigm has shifted for how we consume and produce media, the platform for that performance has not shifted at all. The library then, a place of rigorous inquiry, is a leader in examining the loaded formats of our day. I think of a benevolent octopus, tentacles in multiple curricula. In particular, language arts possesses the most well-muscled arm for teaching media literacy in context. Usually the star users of a school library, English teachers challenge their students to deconstruct messages. Literary criticism is not, and should not be, the sole product of that deconstruction.

TRANSFER

While working as a school librarian for a K–8 magnet school, I conducted with fourth graders a unit on interpreting architecture. I saw them once a week for a full hour over the span of about six weeks. Using 40 pre-selected buildings, I drafted skeleton bios for each along with rudimentary research questions. Knowing all about plain folk appeal, I shared about my grandfather, a Pulitzer Prize winning architecture critic for *The Chicago Tribune*; but the ultimate buy-in was the critic part...everyone’s a critic, fourth graders no less. They immediately started brainstorming how they could improve the architecture of their classrooms: candy dispensers in their desks, laptops for everyone, more space (they were housed in modulars). We discussed the difference between constructive criticism, and negative criticism and the fact that, while personal candy dispensers weren’t realistic, the ability to identify missing information, holes in the fabric of constructs, and, yes, wants unrealized, was valuable. We evolved into meta-analyses: interpreting websites and interpret-

ing buildings. Earlier in the year we had used my favorite unreliable website on the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus to install appropriate scaffolds for looking critically at content. Deconstructing websites, in the context of looking at architecture, can be universally applied and mashed up to engage any combination of medium and subject. Examples include using podcasts to critique grammar and slang in *Huckleberry Finn*, blogs for reader's advisory, or digital storytelling as persuasive essay, to name a few.

DIRECT ORDER

While media continues to morph into new forms, the process for critically engaging media remains the same. In 1987, when Eisenberg and Berkowitz published *The Big Six* research cycle, I was not surfing the internet in my first-grade classroom. However, I was introduced to reading comprehension—understanding and interpreting texts. It befuddles me that students today are somehow convinced that using the internet does not involve reading, let alone comprehension. When presented with traditional print text (in book form), they complain it is “too hard” and yet willingly navigate the contents of an eBook or electronic encyclopedia. Fine. If electronic text media motivates reading over “the book,” so be it. As teachers and librarians, how can we complain about that...as long as that electronic text is from an authoritative and timely source? It is our job to teach them what that looks like.

Teaching in tandem enriches curriculum, increases insight, and reduces the teacher-to-student ratio. Fight tooth and nail for it. While I toy with the idea of proposing a Media Studies class to teach on my own—from cuneiform to cell phone apps—it would not preclude ongoing collaborations with teachers. This collaboration may involve creating an electronic pathfinder for a particular project, direct instruction in database use, or one-on-one conferencing with students on how to cite sources for a particular media format. Solicit your librarian for additional expertise on frustrating technology; librarians are teachers, too.

Whether you write out your lesson plans in detail, on a napkin, or keep them in your head, start inserting a line dedicated to media awareness. Make this insertion as natural as having those pencils sharpened. Your investigation of media does not have to involve a huge project; it can be as simple as a conversation with your

students. Include media more prominently in your SW-BATs (students will be able to):

- Judge whether the medium used was appropriate for the purpose
- Develop content synthesized from multiple and varied media formats
- Detect when the medium *is* the message and when the medium makes a seamless delivery
- Diagram how the media delivers its content and identify media bias, and so on.

Require students to use web evaluation checklists frequently until you deem that they have made the criteria second nature—this may be apparent when they start yelling at the screen, “Really? Another pop-up?” Or, “C’mon, about.com, you’re really lame compared to this primary source example at Virtual Museum X” (Volume and phrasing will vary according to age and ability).

In summation, follow these guidelines:

- Beware the glamour.
- Do what you have always done. Practice inquiry-driven instruction.
- Use your school library as a dynamic platform for media education, a growing organism with many tentacles.
- Deconstruct varied media in context—strip away the glitter, examine it momentarily, then focus on the content.
- Use research cycles for the process of deconstruction.
- Teach in tandem whenever possible (especially with your school librarian).
- Incorporate media awareness and activities into your lesson plans (from the simple to the complex).

REPETITION

Whether you use a Kindle to access literary criticism, *Adbusters* for a Mr. Hogan-style inquest, or an old-fashioned picture book in your media studies lessons, keep Marshall McLuhan's *The Medium Is the Massage* in mind. In the spirit of how particular media formats embed themselves in the messages they deliver, this landmark text famously published in 1967 with a printing error—the original title was meant to be *The Medium Is*

the Message—graphically illustrates our fevered perplexity over the missives and icons infesting and informing our lives. Your lesson plan is a medium with possibilities and messages yet undiscovered.

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■

Facebook in the Classroom

Sonya Grace Saad



Language arts educators in our high-speed society can capitalize on non-traditional technology in the classroom. Not only can new technology increase student engagement and understanding, it can be a vehicle for covering state standards with a fresh twist.

As a master of arts in teaching student teacher at a small-town high school on the Oregon Coast, I had the opportunity to integrate a technology that is on the tip of everyone’s tongue—Facebook—into my lessons on William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. The use of Facebook increased student interest and comprehension and

helped develop the concepts of characterization and plot, while modernizing an otherwise difficult play to read. The ninth graders became immediately engaged. I want to offer an introduction to Facebook’s technology and features, an overview of my unit and sample lesson plans, ways to overcome technological limitations, and creative ideas for using Facebook’s technology in the language arts classroom.

AN INTRODUCTION TO FACEBOOK

The term “social networking” has been used for decades, but it became a buzzword with the development of websites like MySpace, Twitter, and Facebook, which

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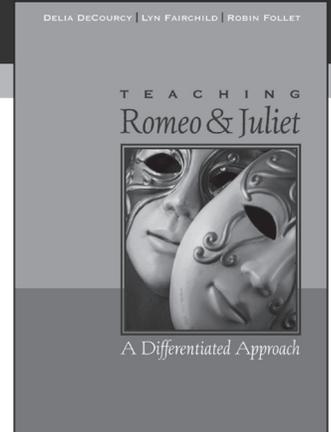
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make it possible for interested parties to connect online. Facebook is a social network that allows users to connect with friends and family, share photos, play online games, and chat with one other.

The technology lets users create personal web pages where they can share information through a profile with biographical data, photos of themselves and their friends, explanations of their involvement with clubs and groups, and even favorite quotations, movies, books, and music. Users can also include information about their relationships with others, political and religious affiliations, where they go to school or work, and almost anything else you can think of. On this profile page, friends can write messages that all other friends can see by using the “wall” feature.

Facebook also offers a “status update” feature where users can provide the world with minute-by-minute accounts of their lives. People can also upload videos, links to websites, and photos in their statuses. Whenever users

modify their page or post a status update, their friends can see information in something called the “news feed” on the Facebook platform.

Facebook is an engaging technology for teens because it offers instant access to their friends and unlimited media options. The blog Digital Buzz claims that more than 70 percent of American internet users are on Facebook an average of fifty-five minutes per day, including teens (“Facebook: Statistics...,” 2011). And why wouldn't teens be enthralled by this technology? It's an instant hormone mill and gossip factory—teens can create their own photo albums and “tag” (label) their friends in each picture, let everyone know how they really feel about a teacher, parent, or friend, and keep all their friends abreast of their latest relationship crises.

“This is the kind of drama that high-schoolers crave,” according to *Washingtonian Magazine*. “They used to have to wait for the grapevine to bring such juicy news. Now they find out right away. Facebook...

is a place where everybody knows everything about everybody else” (Rich, 2007).

While sharing this volume of information with the entire Facebook community might sound shocking to some, don’t be discouraged. Users can set their profiles to private, so that only their friends have access to their page. Facebook privacy and safe internet usage are very important issues to discuss, especially in the unit proposed below.

FACEBOOK IN THE CLASSROOM:

Romeo and Juliet

My recent use of Facebook in the classroom to increase engagement in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* was met with bewilderment by the students. “We’re really going to do Facebook in class?” Students were shocked. Building upon this interest and energy, we propelled into the unit that helped increase interest in the difficult text. After completing the text and watching two film versions of the play, students created mock Facebook profiles for characters in the play on paper and then followed up by creating online profiles that could be shared with the entire class.

Standards Addressed:

- EL.HS.LI.03 Identify and/or summarize sequence of events, main ideas, and supporting details in literary selections.
- EL.HS.LI.05 Analyze interactions between characters in a literary text (e.g., internal and external conflicts, motivations, relationships, influences) and how these interactions affect the plot.

Before the Unit:

Before attempting a project like this, it is important to familiarize yourself with the Facebook platform. If you do not already have a Facebook page, go on to the site and create one. Learn about each function that you will ask students to use. If you plan to require students to complete an online page in addition to the paper page, create a class page. Title the page appropriately for the unit. In this case, the title of the class page was *Romeo and Juliet* Unit Project—English 9A, Seaside High School. Create a business page profile using your personal email account and post a profile picture, the directions, your

contact information, and any other information you find useful. I posted links to videos of the play, fun school projects that students created online, links to sites that would help students create their profiles, and discussions so that students could ask questions.

Next, contact the Facebook administrators and let them know that you will be doing a class project using Facebook. You can email the administrators at info@facebook.com with information about your project. It may take a while for a response, so complete this step well ahead of time. Facebook has laws against creating fake profile pages, but these laws are mostly to guard against people creating fake profiles for profit or misrepresenting others, so contacting the administrators is your safest bet.

Finally, make a mock Facebook page template on paper for a character of your choosing to give students an idea of what the project should look like. I chose to create a character page from a book we read previously in the term.

You can have students create online Facebook pages using the paper templates they created in your classroom. If you choose to complete this step, read carefully the *Overcoming Complications* section below and be sure to make arrangements early on for those students who do not have internet access at home. Students will need to read the instructions for creating an online version very carefully, as there are many steps that must be taken in order for you to grade the project.

Anticipatory Set:

I began the Facebook unit by talking about the upcoming project with students and discussing what they already knew about characterization and plot. We brainstormed on the board, writing down all of the students’ previous knowledge of characterization and how authors develop characters in literary works. We completed the same activity in a discussion of the elements of plot. Then we drew a mountain on the board, and the students helped label the mountain with plot elements (the base of the mountain would be the exposition, the rise in elevation would be the rising action, the peak would be the climax, and so on).

Next, we launched into a discussion on Facebook. All of the students had at the very least heard of Face-

Facebook Project

Directions for Paper Page:

1. Write all information in your profile FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR CHARACTER.
2. Create a mock Facebook page using your chosen character's name. Type all of your information (see below) and print your pictures from the internet—make sure to label each piece of information so that it is easy for me to find (For example: Status Update #1—I'm totally in love with Rosaline.). When you are finished typing information and gathering photos, print them and cut and paste them onto your paper page.
3. YOU MUST INCLUDE:
 - a. At least 5 pictures (you can use photos of your friends, photos you get from the internet, or drawings, as long as they are APPROPRIATE). Think of your own FB page—you have photos of your buddies, parties that you've attended, activities you are involved in—get as creative as you want. Tag your friends. There is no limit to how many photos you include, as long as you meet all the other requirements. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A PROFILE PICTURE.
 - b. Hometown
 - c. Age
 - d. Relationship status
 - e. A bio telling us a little about your character
 - f. At least 3 likes and at least 3 dislikes (include these in your BIO)
 - g. At least three favorite quotations (these can be from your character to others, from other characters to you, or quotations you think your character would like)
 - h. At least 10 status updates that follow the action of the story in order AND include elements from the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution as applicable to your character
 - i. Any other information you wish (think about music your character would like, books he or she would read)
4. Do not worry about where this information goes on your profile. Just make sure your profile picture is in the appropriate place and MAKE SURE TO LABEL the other information. You can place this information anywhere on the profile, regardless of the symbols on the template.
5. REMEMBER TO KEEP ALL CONTENT APPROPRIATE FOR SCHOOL!
6. You have until the end of day _____ to complete the paper version of this page.

book, and more than 90 percent of the students had their own Facebook page. You can also share a few of the interesting statistics from the *Helpful Links* section below.

After this, we talked about the link between characterization, plot elements, and Facebook. For example, a Facebook profile page is a user's way of describing himself

The use of Facebook increased student interest and comprehension and helped develop the concepts of characterization and plot, while modernizing an otherwise difficult play to read.

to his audience, in this case, his friends. This led to a discussion on how individual students described themselves on Facebook, in order to get students thinking about what Facebook is used for. We then talked about status updates and how they are like the mountain diagram—people use status updates to provide others with information about what is going on in their lives. If status updates followed the mountain diagram in *Romeo and Juliet*, what might they look like? We discussed status up-

dates that characters in *Romeo and Juliet* might write and how they might correspond to the mountain diagram.

After a short description of the upcoming project, we watched the videos found at the links below. You can access these videos via the internet and use a projector connected to a laptop or school computer to show them.

Note: Review these videos before you play them to determine your comfort level with the content.

- Video 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrlSk-UoTFLs> (Play entire video.)
- Video 2: <http://www.5min.com/Video/Facebook-What-They-Really-Have-On-You-6650212> (Play until 1:51.)

After Video 2, we discussed Facebook privacy and the importance of internet safety. See the *Helpful Links* section below for more information. These are important topics to understand for students in this digital age, especially when taking on an assignment that deals directly with Facebook, and these videos present heavy concepts in engaging ways.

Students then launched into the creation of their Facebook pages. This project took several days, and students needed additional time to create their online version. Each student was required to include at least three likes and dislikes, three favorite quotations, a short

character biography, at least five photographs, and the relationship status, hometown, and age of the character in their mock Facebook profile.

In addition to these stipulations, perhaps the most important portion of the assignment was the status update requirements. Students were required to accurately create at least ten status updates that followed the action of the play in order, including elements from the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. This portion of the assignment not only helped develop student understanding of plot elements in general, but it also helped them to analyze important pieces of the play. Their analysis was thus applied in a modern way, creating a tangible link to the text.

If you decide to require the online version, give students at least one week, if not two, to complete the assignment. This will allow many technological difficulties to be overcome and plenty of time to offer alternatives to those students who do not have internet access at home.

Assessment:

The main assessment method was evaluating the graphic organizer and the paper Facebook page against the directions/rubric given to the student. Secondly, I used observation during discussions to check for understanding of the standards and objectives.

If students completed all or most of the requirements on the rubric and participated actively in the discussions of characterization and plot, I considered this a demonstration of their achievement of all objectives.

Adaptations (Students with Special Needs):

Teachers using this lesson can provide students with specialized instruction based upon their IEPs. Some simple adaptations include giving additional time and more one-on-one help during computer lab time for students with special needs. Computer access often helps with grammar and spelling, but make sure to spend time carefully reviewing and mapping out the directions for special-needs students. You might label a mock template, so students have a clear direction about information placement.

Extensions (for Gifted Students):

This project offers various opportunities for creativity and additional work. Gifted students could use informa-

tion about movies, books, or music that their character would like, based on their analysis of the characterization. They might include information about relationship links to other characters by creating a “group” for the Montagues or Capulets. Many other extensions are possible; just use your imagination.

Overcoming Complications

The foremost complications with using Facebook in the classroom are technological limitations. Many schools block access to Facebook, and often even teacher pass codes will not bypass this firewall. If this is the case, you might have students complete only the paper page. Students might complete the online version of the page outside class, but technological difficulties may arise, and student access to internet at home may be limited. For students who cannot complete an online version at home because of access issues, provide an alternative, such as writing a paragraph about Shakespeare’s use of characterization to develop their chosen character and the elements of plot that this characterization effects. Even for students with access, there will be problems following directions, creating alternative email addresses, and connecting with the class page. For these problems, offer students your email address and allow them to contact you with issues as they arise. If you feel comfortable with it, you can also offer students your home or cell phone number. I solved several student problems via text message, so this is a viable alternative.

Parents may also have reservations regarding Facebook use for such a project. Many parents do not want younger teens to use Facebook at all, or they are concerned with their children creating a fake profile page with the legalities involved. To overcome parent reservations, send a letter home at the beginning of the unit explaining the project and its requirements. Offer parents the option to have an alternative assignment to the online version of the page, but let them know that students will still be required to create the paper page template.

Other Creative Uses for Facebook in the Classroom

Facebook’s technology can be used in a variety of other creative ways to facilitate student learning. For example,

teachers might create a class page on which students can find information about homework assignments, ask for extra help outside of school, and post questions for others. Teachers might even send all students who are fans of the class site reminders about upcoming project deadlines. Think of this as an online learning community—both students and teacher can contribute.

Students can also use Facebook to create groups for conducting literature circles. Individual groups could create informational pages about their books to share with other group and class members. Students could check for updates on the status of the project or for information about the book and characters.

There are myriad student-centered learning approaches possible with technology like Facebook. Go where your students go; know what your students know, and then share it! That’s what Facebook is all about.

HELPFUL LINKS

Facebook Page template:

- <https://kreftenglish.wikispaces.com/file/view/blank-facebook-template-small.jpg/109452221/blank-facebook-template-small.jpg>

A great list of creative ways to use Facebook in the classroom:

- <http://www.onlinecollege.org/2009/10/20/100-ways-you-should-be-using-facebook-in-your-classroom/>

A simple how-to for students who need help creating their Facebook page:

- <http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Facebook-Profile>

Interesting article on the important considerations for students:

- <http://www.nais.org/resources/article.cfm?ItemNumber=151505>

Interesting Facebook statistics:

- <http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/facebook-statistics-stats-facts-2011/>

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Facebook Project

Directions for Online Page:

1. You must have an email address to create a Facebook account. If you do not have an email address, create one at www.gmail.com. Make it simple and make sure to WRITE DOWN YOUR PASSWORD! (For example: romeo_montague@gmail.com)
2. Once you have an email address, go to www.facebook.com and create a new account. Name your character using your character's first name and YOUR LAST NAME. (For example: John Smith's page on Romeo would be Romeo Smith.)
3. This class will have a universal birthday, so that I can see everyone's page (if you are under 18, no one can see your page, regardless of privacy settings, unless you are friends). SO—your birthday should be January 1, 1990. THEN put your character's correct age in your BIO section.
4. Have the information from your paper page on your online profile. Post your status updates from first in the play to last in the play. For example, Benvolio would post information about breaking up the fight in the streets first, then about going to the party with Romeo.
5. Finish uploading your information, like the class page FROM YOUR CHARACTER'S PAGE. The class page is titled: Romeo and Juliet Unit Project—English 9A, Seaside High School. If you search this in the search area from your character's profile, you should find the page. Go to it and hit LIKE!
6. Set your privacy settings so that everyone can see your page, not just your friends. Go to My Account, Privacy, and check EVERYONE under all categories.
7. Complete this page NO LATER than 2 weeks from today (_____).

Using Modern Technology to Enhance Writing Curriculum in the Classroom

Emily E. Marshall

With the development of social networking systems such as MySpace, Twitter, and Facebook; websites that allow people to “blog”; cell phones that encourage texting, internet use, and e-mail; and the use of Instant Messaging and discussion boards, people all over the world are experiencing digital and Internet-based writing. For some reason, people who previously despised writing now love the idea of being able to write freely for an audience, to connect with others on various levels, and to receive feedback concerning the content of their writing.



Teachers must find ways to embrace our digital era, learn about it, and implement it into our classrooms. We must desire to be on the same page as our students and to research how to teach them effectively in ways that will deepen their connection to and understanding of the sometimes daunting curriculum. Below are annotations from scholarly journals and articles that can be used to assist writing teachers in developing innovative ideas for using technology in the classroom. The annotations explain the benefits of web-based technological writing and how it boosts students’ readiness for the future.

Andrew, Tammy. “Teaching with Blogs: Ideas for Integrating Technology into Established Curriculum.” *Suite101.com*. 23 Feb 2009. <http://teachingtechnology.suite101.com/article.cfm/teaching_with_blogs>.

Tammy Andrew defines a blog as “an electronic journal or diary, sometimes also called a web log.” Blogs can be viewed on the Internet, and most blogging websites give bloggers the option of permitting public feedback by visitors. Additionally, she lists two types of software

that can be used to create blogging websites: free and fee-based websites. Depending on the level of involvement and feedback a teacher wants from outside sources, software providers have developed specific blogging software just for educators. Sites such as *Saywire* and *Blogmeister* provide both free and secure blogging websites that can be monitored by teachers and administrators. More importantly, Andrews provides lesson plan ideas concerning blogging usage in the classroom. She asserts the importance of creating a rubric for students on blogging expectations as well as highlighting the differences between a classroom blogging page and a Myspace or Facebook page. Finally, Andrews lists lesson plan ideas including the following: incorporating blogs through an interactive comment session, having students post their opinions about a controversial issue, and asking students to post their own questions for fellow students to ponder and respond to. In short, the classroom blog can be an effective technological tool for both teachers and students.

Additional articles and brief annotations related to the topic of blogging in the classroom:

- “Blog Basics.” *Teaching Today*. The McGraw-Hill Companies. 25 Feb 2010. <<http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/blog-basics>>. This article discusses how to create blogs in a user-friendly manner, lists the educational benefits of blogging, provides examples of how to integrate blogging into the classroom, and identifies blogging risks to consider as an educator.
- “Digital Toolbox: Blogs.” *National Writing Project*. 30 Jan 2009. Web. 25 Feb 2010. <<http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2756>>. This article provides a more in-depth discussion of why edu-

cators should use blogs and gives a more detailed step-by-step guide on how to begin using blogs.

Andrew, Tammy. "Twitter Novel Creative Writing Assignment." *Suite101.com*. 3 Jan 2010. Web. 10 Mar 2010. <http://teachingtechnology.suite101.com/article.cfm/twitter_novel_creative_writing_assignment>.

In her article "Twitter Novel Creative Writing Assignment," Tammy Andrew presents the idea of using Twitter in the classroom to write novels or stories through

For some reason, people who previously despised writing now love the idea of being able to write freely for an audience, to connect with others on various levels, and to receive feedback concerning the content of their writing.

a step-by-step process. She recognizes that because Twitter allows for no more than 140 characters in a given response box, it does not seem an ideal mode for assigning a creative writing assignment. Andrew's idea, however, uses the restriction of Twitter to 140 characters to encourage students to think critically and to plan out the stories they want to write. Through the use of Twitter, students can receive feedback on their post each day as well as expand the ideas of their stories further into sophisticated elements of plot, character development, and setting. Additionally, Andrew points out that teachers need to have a Twitter

account in order to launch this assignment but presents ideas on how implement Twitter Novel Creative Writing assignments through the use of other technological measures as well.

Faulkner, Grant. "Digital Comics Spur Students' Interest in Writing." *National Writing Project*. 20 Jan 2009. Web. 10 Mar 2010. <<http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2811>>.

In his article "Digital Comics Spur Students' Interest in Writing," Grant Faulkner discusses how fourth-grade teacher Glen Bledsoe involves his students with creative writing and critical thinking by having them work together to create digital comic strips. Using a software system called Comic Life, students are able to "drag in photos and images, write captions, and create speech balloons" in order to craft together their own personal comics. Bledsoe asserts that Comic Life is an easy software system to operate and guarantees that anyone can create a comic

after only a few minutes of limited instruction. Bledsoe often leads the creative writing process in the classroom by typing students' suggestions for plot development, characters, and setting. Ultimately, students feed off each other's ideas and work together collaboratively to create their own comic strips. In short, Bledsoe emphasizes that creating comics in the classroom not only introduces students to story and plot development but also pushes students to think critically about how to sequence events, present and organize ideas, and make decisions that best represent what is happening in the comic strip. Because comics are not necessarily easy reading, Bledsoe asserts that writing comics involves a high level of critical thinking, an understanding of curriculum material, and effective planning and preparation. Implementing the creation of digital comic strips in the classroom can not only improve students' writing skills but can also provide them the opportunity to experience writing in a fun and exciting way.

Pascopeella, Angela, and Will Richardson. "The New Writing Pedagogy." *District Administration* 45. (Nov 2009): 44-50. <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6938/is_10_45/ai_n45539658/?tag=content;col1>.

In their article "The New Writing Pedagogy," Angela Pascopeella and Will Richardson emphasize the importance of using social networking systems in modern classrooms in order to provide interesting educational opportunities for students. This article would benefit teachers who are dealing with the transition to a digital era and want to increase their students' skills in critical thinking, creativity, literacy, communication, and interest in school-related activities. More specifically, Richardson and Pascopeella elaborate on the benefits students receive from using social networking tools. For example, students writing electronically get the experience of writing for real and diverse audiences, gain skill and confidence in how to work collaboratively with others, and make connections with students that otherwise would not be possible in the classroom. Additionally, while there is much controversy concerning the relationship between students' safety and web-based writing, Richardson and Pascopeella explore ways that teachers can protect their students from encountering compromising situations. Overall, this article introduces innovative methods for using technology in the classroom as a way of strengthening students' writing skills.

“Podcasting Basics.” *Teaching Today*. The McGraw-Hill Companies. 25 Feb 2010.<<http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/podcasting-basics>>.

“Podcasting Basics” discusses not only the basics of podcasting in the classroom, but it also describes how podcasting provides creative alternatives to traditional writing and learning. For example, this article describes a project in which students work collaboratively to develop a podcast on a specific topic or character in a novel. They research their topics or characters and then create questions to “ask” the character, or they collect information to share with the class and develop it in the form of a podcast. Through this project, students write a script to record and create a story board. Other benefits of podcasting include the ability to provide lectures for students who miss class or to assist students with their homework. Lastly, podcasting can be complicated because of the technicalities that come along with using such a highly advanced piece of equipment. This article, however, provides an in-depth “how-to” guide for educators contemplating a more technological approach to writing and the benefits of such methods.

Additional articles and brief annotations related to the topic of podcasting in the classroom:

- Sprinkle, Melinda. “Fireside Chat Podcasts.” *Teacher Experience*. Hewlett Packard. 25 Feb 2010.<http://h30411.www3.hp.com/articles/viewArticle/p/course-Id/13300/Fireside_chat_podcasts_lesson_plan_.htm?courseSessionId=17503&campusId=3800&webPageId=1000413>. This article discusses a specific lesson plan in which students are assigned to research a historical topic and put together a podcast as a presentation for the class. Podcasts should include an introduction, historical content and analysis, connections between past and present, historical perspectives, and a summary. Although this is a history lesson, it could be adapted to fit any English or writing standard as well.

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Emerging Trends in Digital Citizenship in Pre-Service Teacher Practice

Gayle Y. Thieman



We live in an age of accelerating change, exponential information growth, and evolving technologies. While these changes are enabling many youth to become more civically engaged and raise questions about the nature of citizenship and civic participation in a digital age, educators have been slow to recognize and respond to such changes. Our schools are challenged by the digital disconnect (Friedman and Hicks,

2006) between students who are “digital natives,” for whom technology is ubiquitous and whose lives have been shaped by nearly instant and interactive access to the world, and “digital immigrants,” describing many teachers who have adapted to technology but not entirely embraced it (Prensky, 2001). Despite the digital divide more of our students are coming to school with technology at their fingertips: cell phones, media players, game devices, and laptop computers. It is no longer sufficient for students to learn about technology; they

must also learn how to use multiple technologies as tools for learning, communication, and participation, both locally and globally. How can teachers take advantage of our students' enthusiasm for using digital media to support their civic engagement?

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007) developed student outcomes representing the skills, knowledge, and expertise for success in 21st Century work and life. The 21st Century Skills Map for English (2008) demonstrates how technology can be integrated into language arts to teach creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and information and media literacies. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) developed technology standards for teachers and students, which inform expectations for citizenship skills in a digital age. The ISTE's National Educational Technology Standards for Students: The Next Generation (ISTE 2007) reflect a growing consensus that the digital world requires students who can use technology as a tool for research, to think critically and creatively, construct knowledge, communicate and work collaboratively, and use information to problem solve and make decisions. These are essential citizenship skills.

The ideas in this article are based on research I conducted in a longitudinal eight-year study of the use of technologies to develop 21st Century citizenship skills. (Thieman, 2008). Specific examples in this article represent a sub-set of data involving 48 secondary pre-service teachers who attended a graduate teacher education program between 2008 and 2010 at an urban university in the Pacific Northwest. All of the urban schools and many of the suburban and rural schools represented in this research had high populations of students who are poor, linguistically and racially diverse, and who qualify for special services. A few schools had adequate technology in all classrooms; however, most of the pre-service teachers lacked access to adequate technology in the secondary schools. I have organized the technology examples around five aspects of digital citizenship. While most of the examples feature social

It is no longer sufficient for students to learn about technology; they must also learn how to use multiple technologies as tools for learning, communication, and participation, both locally and globally.

studies content, the technologies are equally applicable to language arts classrooms.

1. *Responsible citizens are informed; they are able to access, research, manage, evaluate and use information.* Secondary students' access to information has been greatly enhanced by the variety of digital tools, which were not readily available when my research began in 2002. While the digital divide between technology-rich and technology-poor schools continues to exist within and across the districts in this study, pre-service teachers overcame limitations to engage their students in research. For many of the topics, the Internet was the only source of information as school libraries were inadequate and textbooks were outdated.

A middle school pre-service teacher created an informative brochure and posted resources on her blog so that her students could learn about the ongoing conflict in Darfur. Students accessed a web site to analyze their personal ecological footprint and learn ways to reduce their consumption of resources (<http://www.myfootprint.org/>). Others examined online photos and documents, revealing perspectives on the women's rights and civil rights movements, which were not available in their textbook. Students traced the origin and processing locations of the components of manufactured items to better understand the globalization of trade.

The Internet hosts a rich depository of music and video clips, most notably on youtube (<http://youtube.com>) but also on sponsored websites such as the National Archives (<http://loc.gov>) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/>). High school students investigated the influence of popular culture by analyzing lyrics from 1920s blues and jazz music, 1960s civil rights and anti-war songs, and comparing historic music to contemporary rap. Students accessed online digital video libraries, e.g., analyzing the Presidential debates of the 1960 and 2008 elections, investigating how the 1920s challenged social norms, exploring the Harlem Renaissance and the New Deal, and examining how media perpetuates stereotypes. Middle school students listened to a podcast on early 19th Century reform movements. Searchable images now rival text as information sources and are especially appealing to K-12 students. Students analyzed digital

photos, historical and political cartoons and consumer ads. Middle school students completed interactive map activities with Google Earth.

2. *Informed citizens understand complex public issues and diverse perspectives.* Many of the work samples that featured online research also illustrated students' comparison and contrast of public issues and multiple perspectives, e.g., the Obama economic stimulus plan and the New Deal policies of Roosevelt, the preambles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the U.S. Constitution, and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and Barack Obama's speech on race. Middle school students analyzed quotes from former slaves and historic figures as well as antebellum legislation to understand Northern and Southern perspectives prior to the Civil War.

Pre-service teachers created digital archive accounts (e.g., <http://www.portaportal.com>) to organize digital resources and facilitate their students' research and analysis of complex issues. In addition, pre-service teachers created web-quests to enhance students' research, e.g., on social change in the 20th Century (<http://zunal.com/webquest.php?user=38073>) and on social justice in the civil rights movement (<http://zunal.com/webquest.php?user=23987>).

3. *Competent citizens think critically and creatively, evaluate and make informed decisions.* The pre-service teachers in this study fostered creative ways for their students to express learning. Tenth grade students analyzed print and online U.S. and international news headlines, graphing the changes in Chinese government policy over time. In a unit on the U.S. civil rights movement, students wrote poems from the perspective of African American soldiers returning home after World War II to racist Jim Crow laws or from the viewpoint of African American women who were fired from their wartime manufacturing jobs when white servicemen returned.

Students created graphic organizers (<http://www.inspiration.com/>) to compare ancient and contemporary government systems. More tech savvy students created movies using digital tools such as iMovie (Macintosh) and Windows Movie Maker (PC). Others used a visual ranking tool to prioritize the lasting importance

of historical figures (<http://www.intel.com/about/corporateresponsibility/education/k12/tools.htm>). While studying urbanization, students examined digital photos of historic Roman sites and then created dough art replicas. They also took digital photos of contemporary examples of similar sites in their community. After studying Japanese American internment during World War II students created a newsletter from one of the camps and created artwork and poetry from the perspective of internees. Using principles of online simulation games, eighth grade students created a civil war personality and created a "My America Facepage" from the avatar's perspective; however, the students did not post their creations.

4. *Effective citizens communicate with diverse audiences.* K–12 students' communication ranged from interviews and traditional letters to digital emails and wiki postings. Eighth graders interviewed family members and neighbors about reform movements they had experienced and about reforms which are currently needed. Students in a sheltered social studies class wrote letters to their senators regarding an issue which concerned many of them—U.S. immigration policy. High school students emailed their congressional representatives to share their opinions on the Economic Stimulus Act. A secondary social studies class studied concepts of representative democracy and looked at effective tactics of protest movements. The teacher posted a link for students to email their congressional representatives. When students began to receive personal responses from their representatives, they could see they had in fact played a role in the democratic process. Students at an alternative school for homeless teens became investigative reporters, conducted interviews, and published a "zine" to dispel myths and stereotypes of homeless youth. High school students in a world history class chose a published article about a contemporary issue related to Southeast Asia. After researching the issue from multiple perspectives, the students wrote a position paper and sent it to the author of the original article they read.

[W]hile some students are gaining experiences in an online environment, few attempts are made to draw connections between these technology-supported experiences and civic matters.

Pre-service teachers also created websites, wikis and blogs to communicate with their students and parents. Secondary students could also comment on opinions shared by the teacher and fellow students. Four graduates of the program shared their sites and commented how easy it is to use these communication tools:

- <http://ken-trillium.blogspot.com/>
- <http://gstuckart.wikispaces.com>
- <http://whspol.wikispaces.com/>
- <http://sites.google.com/site/mswilkinsononline>.

5. *Committed citizens work collaboratively to solve problems.* All of the pre-service teachers in this study made ample use of cooperative learning groups. Students engaged in group research on a variety of topics and shared their knowledge through role plays, skits, simulations, multimedia presentations, and web-quests. Several recent graduates use Survey Monkey to obtain feedback from secondary students, (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/62LSM6P>) or to enable students to evaluate the work of each collaborative group (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5TQvKHXNAtucbR7pAcVLuQ_3d_3d).

So far, none of the students has collaborated in international projects such as iEarn (<http://www.iearn.org/>) or Taking It Global (<http://www.tigweb.org/>). Both of these organizations connect teachers, students, and curriculum projects all over the world.

To summarize, four of the five aspects of digital citizenship (1–4) are well represented by this research. There is an emphasis on research and information fluency with multiple opportunities for students to understand complex issues, think critically and creatively. Creative expression is supported by such technologies as graphic organizers, illustration and presentation software, wikis, blogs, and podcasts. The fifth aspect of digital citizenship, using technology to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems beyond the classroom, was least well developed by the pre-service teachers in this study. In most cases, the problems and issues were selected by the pre-service teachers to reflect approved curriculum, and their students' conclusions were communicated only to the teacher or fellow classmates. Most pre-service teachers did not encourage their students to take advantage of the power of emerging technologies for communicating

and taking action on civic matters. Some cooperating teachers would not allow their pre-service teachers to post student work. Using technology to work collaboratively and solve problems was limited in most cases to cooperative group work without the use of Web 2.0 technology. The push for content coverage, the lack of support by supervising teachers, and the limited time for pre-service teachers to complete their work samples severely limited the amount of time for in-depth collaboration and problem solving of real world issues.

Educators face several challenges related to the use of technology to enable students to become civically competent (O'Brien, 2008). First, while young people are fairly well versed in the social use of emerging technologies, many teachers do not encourage students to use such technologies for academic and civic purposes. Second, a new type of digital disconnect is emerging; students outside the classroom are technologically connected to their various social networks but are asked to "power down" as they walk into the classroom. Third, while some students are gaining experiences in an online environment, few attempts are made to draw connections between these technology-supported experiences and civic matters. As Bennett (2008) noted: "A challenging question is how to better integrate the social and public worlds of young people online" (p. 11). Continued research into emerging trends in digital citizenship in pre-service education can help teachers address these challenges.

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- *Marrla Wilkinson*, language arts teacher with SUN school program at Gresham High School, Gresham, OR

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Will eBooks Replace Traditional Texts?

Ian Hochstrasser



Since Gutenberg invented moveable type and the printing press, the printed word has become an influential part of culture. This print culture gave people the opportunity to disseminate information in a way that transcended the boundaries of oral culture. The printed word made knowledge storable, portable, and helped the word travel distances through time and space. Because of its power, the book became revered, sacred, holy.

The Internet began much like the book, primarily to make information available quickly and effectively. Welcome to Web 1.0. The information, however, could

not be limited. People began to post opinions and publish their own books and reading materials straight to the web, bypassing publishers and the printing presses. From this moment on, the book began to feel threatened. Or should I say, book-lovers began to feel that books were becoming an endangered species.

I have a dirty little secret. I am a booklover, a bibliophile, and I bought a Kindle.

I was untrusting of the little thing, too, and still am to an extent. I don't like not being able to write in my books. I like the grit of the paper on my fingertips, the soft slick cover of a paperback or the rough tough cover of a hardback. I love to look at the covers of books as well.

When that time comes, we need to lay down our egos and keep encouraging students to read, just read. This is, after all, what we want our students to do in the first place.

eBooks have no covers—a cover image perhaps, but no physical covers. I love the smell of old books, the smell of a hundred years slipped between pages. I love fine print, the various typefaces, and dustjacket artwork. I love books that are out-of-print. They are links to the past, to other people and their ideas. In other words, I love books and

will always love books because they are human to me.

Perhaps one reason we fear the ebook is that we view it as some sort of cyborg. eBooks look like printed books the way the Terminator looks like a human: just about right, but something seems artificial. There's something we don't like about them. eReaders have no smell, feel plastic in our hands, and we can't turn pages. eReader books don't look or feel like books, and I think this

is what bothers us bibliophiles the most. As Marshall MacLuhan might say, the medium is *part of* the message.

With sales of Kindles, Nooks, iPads, and various knock-offs soaring, it seems as if the ebook is here to stay. Welcome to the eBook generation.

Web 2.0 technologies take texts past their natural, active state and into the interactive. Texts become something we can search instantly, without reading and re-reading. The eReader has an interactive index, which is something we should be excited about as lovers of the written word. eReaders make libraries of books portable. (The Kindle, for instance, can hold about 1500 non-illustrated books.) We might be used to lugging multiple books around with us, but none of us could ever carry 1500 printed books. Phone applications turn cell phones with the right gear into eReaders as well. Text has transcended the boundaries of books.

Many eReaders now have the ability to read Personal Document Files (PDFs). But the eReader is not a practical way to read PDFs because the screens are typically too small. This bug will be worked out as colleges and universities adopt ebooks as part of the college culture. Larger and more interactive screens will have to be made available and affordable in order to get publishers, faculty, and students to adopt their use in studies. In addition, students may not be willing to pay as much for an electronic version of the textbook.

Some skeptics suggest that eReaders will lead to Salem-like witch hunts of books. I think these people remember part of the message of *Fahrenheit 451*: books need to be preserved, while forgetting the *larger* message of the book: *ideas* need to be preserved, passed down, and shared. Electronic texts are perpetuating the ideas and content of books for a rising generation that views electronic technology as something that "...doesn't exist. It's like the air" (Grown Up Digital, p. 19). This generation views electronic technology the way their elders view print technology—as something that's always existed and always will exist. Current K–12 students have no experience with the world before the Internet, and they expect technology to change to fit the expanding needs of their generation. To them, the ebook is a natural extension of the Internet.

The printed book seems to be going the way of the buffalo, right? So what are we to do as teachers, as lovers of books?

We may need to accept the fact that ebooks are likely to work their way into the establishment at some point. Amazon offers many of the "classics" that we study for free or nearly free in electronic form, and schools may switch to electronic texts to save money as well as to take advantage of the interactive capabilities of these Web 2.0 texts.

When that time comes, we need to lay down our egos and keep encouraging students to read, just read. This is, after all, what we want our students to do in the first place. We want them to experience the world contained within the text of the book, which they cannot do without reading it. If we bash the electronic text, we increasingly run the risk of alienating students who are growing up reading newspapers, magazines, and books via electronic devices. If we alienate students they won't learn.

We may be afraid of losing the art of the book—its weight, texture, vibrant colors on the cover, the communion between reader and text. But the truth is that there are more books than there are people in the world, and this will likely always be the case. If a time comes where physical books are burned in loads, then we can start to worry about Bradbury's dystopia becoming reality. So far, most recent libricides have been part of protests against particular works, like Harry Potter or the Koran (see "Harry Potter and the Ministry of

Fire” and “Gainesville Turns Against a Book-Burning Pastor”). Most book burnings in the United States are viewed as religious or social fanaticism and as the restriction of speech.

Banned Book Week, celebrated the last week in September of each year, strives to make the content of books available because they are important pieces of our culture. As teachers we should avoid “banning” books by resisting their transition to the medium of electronic technologies. *The New York Times* has a great blog post on ways to celebrate Banned Books Week (see resources section).

The acceptance of ebooks by society is becoming increasingly evident as *The New York Times* has decided to publish an ebook bestseller list for fiction and non-fiction starting sometime in early 2011, according to an article published in November 2010. The ascent of the ebook is continuing, and will likely continue as electronics become an increasingly evident part of American culture.

Electronic copies of books in the public domain can save money and time as you plan a course as well. Project Gutenberg is the most famous and allows you to read as well as listen to audio versions of many books in the public domain (including most works published before 1923). This is a great resource, and, like the library, it is free. The Project accepts donations if you want to support its cause. There are other sites available as well, like Google Books. A comprehensive list would be impractical here, and the numbers of electronic books available online will likely expand as information available on the Internet expands like the Milky Way.

The choice to accept or reject e texts is, of course, yours. No one will be forced out of the teaching profession any time soon because of not owning an eReader. You won't be beaten with sacks full of hardbacks by other teachers behind your school. You probably won't even be made fun of. The world will continue to turn, and great books will still be published in hard copy.

The airplane didn't replace the car, and ebooks won't replace printed books. Libraries will continue to be physical databases of information as they expand their collections to include digital collections. I think of the ebook as a supplement or “other option” to reading printed books, not a replacement. Society will ultimately decide whether ebooks replace the long tradition of the printed word.

To answer my title question, why don't *you* tell *me*: What are your students reading? Do they read on the computer, their cell phones, or some blend of printed text and electronic media? What are you reading? How are you reading it?

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Poetry

featuring Alex Habecker,
Haylie Moon,
Elisa Nance,
and John Kero

Over the summer 2010, Seaside High School English teacher Mark Mizell and a handful of his students



read *Child of Steens Mountain*, by Eileen O’Keeffe McVicker and edited by Barbara J. Scot. The book follows McVicker’s life from early childhood, growing up on a homestead on the south end of Steens Mountain, herding sheep, through her high school years living in Burns. Mizell

and his students got together for a couple breakfast meetings to discuss the book, and in the fall set off on a four-day trip to explore the Steens country. Their journey started with a visit to the McVicker home on Sauvie Island where they met with Eileen O’Keeffe McVicker, her husband Gene, and editor and neighbor Barbara Scot. Then they drove to the Steens Mountain country to hike, camp, and explore. They also did some writing related to the trip. Several of the pieces are included here.

FRENCHGLEN

Minutes, hours, days, years, all tick by.
Seasons come and go. These are facts of life we
cannot escape.
Or can we?
Sitting on a rickety bench outside the only store
in Frenchglen,
time appears to be standing still.
No; time is non-existent.
The sun’s golden rays flow over me
as the soft, icy wind blows a chill across my cheeks
and through my hair.
To my left, a small purple aster springs out of
a floor
made of red and yellow leaves.
The silence of this place has cleared my mind
of all but

what is right in front of me.
I have lost track of time.
And here, it seems,
Time has lost track of me.

—Alex Habecker

ALVORD HOT SPRINGS

O, algae-covered hot springs,
how I wish I could stand on your
algae-covered floor.
It’s as if you enjoy the terror on
people’s faces as they slide into your
murky depths, and swallow some of
your green elixir.

—Haylie Moon

WHAT WAS ONCE HERE

I close my eyes
taking in a deep breath,
the dry air filling my lungs,
yet somehow it refreshes me.
I step into their shoes,
those people from so long ago,
climbing up and down the thin, rugged landscape
tending sheep,
scaring away territorial rattlers,
shooting rabid coyotes,
being left in charge of younger siblings,
cleaning, cooking, tending the animals
for days, weeks, months,
till Ma and Pa return.
As they tuck you in for the night,
the crickets and owls come to life
while other critters go off to rest.
Now I open my eyes.
Morning in a crowded tent,

back in my own shoes,
 another day of exploration;
 pieces of what was once here
 rotting away, falling apart,
 memories scattered in the air I breathe,
 these places where people once came
 to work, to learn, to play, to dance;
 their spirits haunt,
 they are by my side, all around me.
 This isn't frightening, though.
 It's calming, soothing.
 I can almost put together
 what life was like then,
 how things really were.

—*Elisa Nance*

DESERT LANDS

everything's dead, but alive all at once
 the bushes, faded buildings
 everything surrounding me is dull
 the pale greens and creams
 all blended together
 when you're staring from a distance
 it seems so dull and colorless
 but stare deep into the wilderness
 red-winged insects spring from the dirt
 crickets sing into the cold nights
 rattlesnakes coil, waiting for the moment to
 strike
 and the people of tiny towns
 go on with their lives cheerfully
 there is no constant cover of voices
 yet it's never at dead silence
 crime seems absent
 it's old and hardly a town
 but it's got history and charm
 that calms me
 the life out here is real
 everyone knows each other
 look up into the desert sky
 hardly a cloud floats by
 clear and blue for the most part
 it's a blue dome
 that stretches on forever.

—*Elisa Nance*

CLIFF

My head feels light.
 A gust of wind, and I could be gone.
 For some reason I'm not afraid,
 but my group of spectators seems to be:
 "Haylie, what are you doing?"
 "Don't end it!"
 "Back away from the cliff, slowly!"
 I mean seriously?
 I'm not gonna jump. I'm being careful.
 If only they weren't so concerned.

—*Haylie Moon*

FIELDS

Where the mountain and desert mingle
 beneath a graduated sky
 a miniscule town holds a game-changing secret.
 The hidden treasure
 freezes the skin
 while melting the heart.
 It breaks down the strongest-willed persons,
 leaving them begging for more.
 The secret has undoubtedly touched
 thousands of hearts
 and forever has altered mine.

—*John Kero*

(Photo by Ryan Gannon)



Left to right: Alex Habecker, Scott Blythe, Moira Ferry, Elisa Nance, and John Kero outside the Peter French Roundbarn.

Teaching, Technology, and Lighting the Fire

Ruth Caillouet,
Shayla Mitchell,
Mari Roberts,
and Tricia Smith

“I worry about a naïve credulity in the empty promises of the cult of computing. I’m saddened by a blind faith that technology will deliver a cornucopia of futuristic goodies without extracting payment in kind.”

—Clifford Stoll

On a recent trip driving home from Georgia to Louisiana, I searched for a wireless hotspot so that I could participate in a webinar conference call. As the midday sun of an early spring day beat down, I sat in my car outside a pastry shop, sandwich bistro perched high on a hillside of a Birmingham shopping mall. Since I had to be able to participate by talking with the other educators in the webinar, I could not sit inside in the cool pastry shop, disturbing the other patrons. So I sat in the heat, my dogs panting on the back seat, and pretended to sound academic, intelligent, thoughtful—but all I could think about was my jetpack.



In an essay called “Where’s My Jetpack?” Daniel Wilson writes of the future that we were promised but not delivered, and it is the jetpack, the transporter room, and the communicators of Star Trek that I crave on a daily basis. And even though the blue tooth technology, wireless internet, and navigation systems that have become available in our daily lives to offer “convenience,” I find myself caught in the transition—the transition of not quite enough money to buy the latest technology while traveling the rural roads of the South where I am lucky to find any G much less three, the transition between pure joy in new toys and fear that they are gaining too much importance, the transition somewhere between Rodenberry and Bradbury, between delight and fear.

FRANKENSTEIN BY CELL PHONE

As an educator and trainer of educators, I worry whether we are indeed trapped in the cult of computing? Have we allowed blind faith and fun gadgets to take the place of sound curriculum and careful planning? When I asked a group of graduate students training to be educators to think about the importance of technology in the English classroom, their reactions and insights illustrated the contrasts between their views and those of the past. These soon-to-be English teachers focused on the need to keep up with today’s fast-paced world by, in one individual’s words, “incorporating technology as an aid—not a replacement for pedagogy.” They highlighted methods for using video and audio interpretations, slide shows, research, discussion boards, and ebooks, and many saw technology as an excellent tool for differentiating instruction.

But even these young educators are still amazed by the power of technology. One student teacher described her teaching day in which her mentor teacher, facing a shortage of books, allowed students to use cell phones, iPods, and iPads for reading *Frankenstein*. Even this young teacher, who expected students to take advantage and begin surfing and texting, was amazed to see teenagers engrossed in *Frankenstein* by iPhone. As another of these future teachers put it, “Our students are digital learners whose daily lives are engrossed in technology, and as such they are more equipped to process information through technology than they are able to without it.”

At a recent workshop I heard the term BYOT—Bring Your Own Technology—as the newest means for poorly funded school systems to incorporate technology, by allowing students to supplement instruction with their own portable gadgets. The opportunity for instant computer labs is now much more feasible than in the past, and schools in Georgia have begun eliminating the

teaching of cursive writing in exchange for computing. So I began asking my colleagues, all teacher educators with many clock hours in public school classrooms, for their thoughts on the importance of technology in the classroom. Following are their thoughts on the subject.

THE COST OF TECHNOLOGY

Shayla Mitchell, director of our Master of Arts in Teaching program in a university which requires each student



to purchase a laptop, dreams of her own school completely stripped of technology so that students have to learn the basics with the basics. In her words...

Clifford Stoll's concerns about the promises of technology stress that although technology can be helpful, it

comes at a cost. Examining the costs of technology to determine what is academically sound and what will result in educational experiences for students should be done before sanctioning and then requiring the use of new technologies. Many tout the benefits of technology in education, and those who accept it as the answer might argue that it will heighten a student's interest in education and content, that it will make teaching easier and more efficient, and that it will prepare students for 21st Century globalization. Technology promises many things for schools, teachers, and students. Mostly it promises a future, but what does it take away from the present?

DECIPHERING THE BENEFITS:

Black Boxes and Green, Squiggly Lines

While there are those who think technology is the answer, there are others who believe technology is not what is needed in schools. Those who argue against technology might hold that in an attempt to make learning "fun" it cheapens the academic process. Technology may give students the impression that learning is immediate and not a slow and sometimes difficult process. English teachers experience this whenever they begin a novel. Not long ago, while I observed a student teacher beginning her novel unit, one of the first questions asked by students was whether they could just watch the movie. I recently returned to her class and found them on chapter 21; about fifteen minutes into class a student asked her again, "Why can't we just watch the movie?" Although the students had

read nearly the entire book, the desire for an immediate—and very short—summary of the book persisted. Some might argue that technology impairs the understanding of concepts. In "Technology's Tendency to Undermine Serious Study: A Cautionary Note," Olson and Clough discuss calculators and argue that "...technology is often a 'black box' that either misleads students into thinking they need not understand conceptually what the technology is doing for them or, worse, promotes serious misunderstanding of the concept under investigation" (10).

Who will decipher if the benefits of technology are worth the risks? Is having students type their papers in a word processor worth the risk that they may not understand why they get a green squiggly line under a word—or know how to fix it if they do? Will doing research in the media center mean that Wikipedia and various websites are the best first sources for research or are bound books from a library still needed? Will we need to train them how to analyze the validity of these web resources as we once trained them to use paper resources? Will using social media to discuss novels encourage students to read and analyze texts instead of just watch the movie? Will we use the movies, in fact, to critique the book? Maybe the answers to these questions are simple. Maybe the best way to ensure that students know how to write well, find solid sources for papers, and think critically about academic content is the same as it has always been: good teaching.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEACHER:

Lighting the Fire

Mari Roberts works with graduate and undergraduate future teachers and is a leader in political and social reform for multicultural education. Her thoughts on technology follow...



What makes a good teacher? With the current onslaught of technological advances in education, some have been tempted to disavow the very need for a person's constant presence in the classroom. Conversations about innovations,

"Our students are digital learners whose daily lives are engrossed in technology, and as such they are more equipped to process information through technology than they are able to without it."

Maybe the best way to ensure that students know how to write well, find solid sources for papers, and think critically about academic content is the same as it has always been: good teaching.

robots, distance learning, and “leveraging the power of technology to support continuous and lifelong learning” (U.S. Department of Education) have recently been sprinkled liberally throughout policy reports, academic journals, and popular media. After all, information can

be delivered electronically or remotely, and education is just the transfer of information from one entity to another, right? Well, not quite. William Butler Yeats would disagree. His famous quotation states, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire” (Sacks). Simply laying kindling by presenting information carries no guarantee that the information will be comprehended or applied. Someone must light the fire, stoke it—i.e., encourage critical thinking. After all of the accolades for

technology, advocates of technology confess, albeit sometimes grudgingly, that there is no substitute for having a professional educator in the classroom.

Oh yes, of equal importance to the possibilities inherent in the union of technology and education is the fact, to quote the title of David Aspy’s seminal text, that *Kids Don’t Learn from People They Don’t Like*. The affective nature of a teacher-student relationship clearly calls for building rapport, without which teachers often fail in the instruction of their students. The interpersonal skills of teachers have dramatic effects on students’ academic achievement, mental health, and attendance. Thus, in our rush to imbue our English classrooms with the latest technologies, we cannot afford to overlook the equally urgent need to imbue our classrooms with caring teachers who are competent in the implementation of good pedagogy.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING LEARNING

Tricia Smith coordinates the undergraduate program in secondary English and tries to stress the importance of incorporating technology into each lesson. Her words follow...



In recent departmental discussions we talked about the ways we successfully incorporate technology into our coursework. As teachers of literature, we focused on strategies that promoted

not only comprehension of material, but also critical thinking. In support of technology, we illustrated how we used technology as a tool to promote further understanding of what students were reading.

Among the technology strategies I have used to help students understand dense readings are concept maps that help students illustrate character development. While concept maps could be drawn manually, designing them on a computer presents clear images that virtually jump off the screen. In a class where concept maps were used to show character development in *Catcher in the Rye*, students worked together in small groups to discuss reasons for Holden Caulfield’s psychological downslide. Scaffolding for weaker students was provided by pairing them with students familiar with developing concept maps. To illustrate their critical thinking of Holden’s psyche, students reviewed the different types of maps available on-line and chose one that best reflected their perceptions. They produced powerful multi-layered visual images, with lines and bubbles that fully explained their understanding of Holden’s mindset through different stages of the novel. Christina De Simone explains that concept mapping “requires the learner to assume an active role in learning by extracting and attending to important ideas from the text, thinking about how these ideas are related, and organizing the information into an integrated structure of sequences and clusters” (31).

Another strategy I used was chat room. In an American Literature class where we discussed Anne Bradstreet’s Puritan poetry, students met in small groups in the class but continued their discussion outside of class, using the chat room to discuss poems that illustrated the role of women in Puritanism. They kept transcripts of their chat room discussions and used them in the full-group discussion the next day. They also used the chat room to plan their group presentations.

A FINAL WORD ON TECHNOLOGY —AND CORNBREAD

So, as I, Ruth Caillouet, sit high on that Birmingham hill pondering my jetpack, I am reminded of my grandmother. I have decided that the lesson for educators can be found in my grandmother’s cornbread. Among the many memories left to me by my grandmother is her collection of recipes—a volume of culinary delights,

handwritten in that careful penmanship that is becoming a lost art. Included in the text of those wonderful creations is the history of a woman who began cooking on a wood stove—her cracklin’ cornbread known throughout the parish. Over the years as the wood stove was traded in for gas and then with the addition of a microwave, my grandmother continued cooking and developing new dishes, always the first to try new kitchen gadgets. She was a woman who knew no fear of technology, but she was also well aware that there is no way to cook cornbread in a microwave.

Technology is no replacement for good cooking or good teaching. It’s simply another tool—a tool meant to be used with skill, good judgment, creativity, and a bit of daring.

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■
After twenty years of teaching grades 7–12 in Louisiana public schools, Ruth Caillouet now chairs the Department of Teacher Education and coordinates the Master of Arts in Teaching English program at Clayton State University, Morrow, Georgia. She gives special thanks to her spring 2011 English students for their words of wisdom quoted in this article.

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Tricia Smith coordinates the English Secondary Education program at Clayton State University. She is a former high school English teacher. Her research interests include educational philosophy and pedagogy.

■

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Why Do We Keep That Old Stuff?

Anthony Greiner



An instructor named Pilsner, treasured by our academy and skilled in the arts of pedagogy, was looking for a chapter from a book from 1977. Those were the days of Gerald Ford and the Berlin Wall. Michael Jackson was not only alive, he was black. This book had been well known in its day, and had done its part to stir the pot of bubbling humanity. But time had passed, and the library did not own a copy of the book. This meant there would be extra steps and expenses involved in putting this reading on reserve for the students. Pilsner, as the instructor was named, approached the librarian, not old in years, but wise in the ways of the ancient arts. “What am I to do?” he asked.

“Colleague, there may be a way,” said one of the designated keepers of the world’s knowledge. “Provide me the name of the creator of this document, and its theme.”

“It was written by a philosopher of society named Coles, and it deals with the children of the wealthy, and the surprising difficulties of their lives.” The librarian’s eyebrow arched. “I have found that it is an effective method of tutelage,” continued the instructor, “as for our students these children are exotic creatures indeed.”

“Give me a day,” intoned the librarian, “and we will see what we can do.” The instructor touched his hand to his forelock as the librarian made a small bend from the waist, and with this exchange of mutual respect, the two went on their way.

Neverbored, for that was the librarian’s name, knew where to begin. He climbed the winding stairs into the scriptorium’s tower and went directly to the shelves that stored the ancient indexes. He walked confidently to one section of the stacks and eyed the classic titles. *Masterplots*. *Magill’s Cinema Annual*. *Critical Survey of Short Fiction*. *Grainger’s Index to Poetry* brought a bit of

a sigh, as he remembered the days when people sought out poems for special occasions. Still, he continued on. *Book Review Digest*, *Play Index*, *Applied Science and Technology Index* passed under his fingertips, and then he reached the area he sought. With trained hands he pulled the 1977 volumes for the cream-colored *Social Science Index*, the white-bound *Humanities Index*, and the green-wrapped classic *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*. With these tucked under his arm, he returned to the reading room. For here is the odd thing about the library arts, my children—they are not a secret. Librarians know that knowledge is magic in one true way: even when provided to others, the stock pile is not diminished, and that act of sharing makes the stock expand.

He flipped open the codices, and experienced fingers quickly guided him to the pages he sought. Nothing in the one. No matter, let’s try the next. Nothing there either. Let’s keep on—and there, in the *Reader’s Guide* was the entry he sought:

COLES, Robert. Children of affluence: excerpt from *Privileged ones: the well-off and the rich in America*.

il Atlantic 240:52–8+ S ‘77

His did require a bit of knowledge in the cryptic arts. “il” meant illustrations, Atlantic was the name of the magazine, issue number 240, starting on page 52, continuing to page 58, and then continued elsewhere in the magazine. S meant September, and ‘77 was the year. Neverbored smiled, but his victory was not complete. Did the scriptorium hold this document? He repaired to the computer (because he feared them not, and knew they had value) and found that the electron-based hold-

ings, large as they were, did not extend back to 1977. “Still room for improvement there,” he mused, “5400 years of civilized life, but the computer cannot reach back more than 30.” Still, he did not fear, for in his mind he knew that there were uncataloged treasures lying in the microfilm boxes.

He walked to the metal cases that held the film, found the drawer that would hold “Atlantic,” and was pleased to see a roll of 35 millimeter film labeled “Atlantic Monthly” with the desired date. He popped it out of the box and mounted it on the viewer, a Minolta, at one time considered high tech. (It was used now mostly by clever biology students who printed out copies of slides of paramecium.) Some fiddling with knobs and switches led in short order to an illuminated screen, displayed on which was a page from the magazine. He scrolled to the proper area of the roll, and then slowed the film down to find page 52. Other treasures of the past came before his

eyes—cigarette ads, cartoons, and poetry, all evocative of a time and place. The article rolled before his eyes. Neverbored began to print the pages, and remembered the public’s joy when a printer was first attached to a reader.

A moment later, he had the article in hand, ready to hand to Pilsner on his next trip to the library. The ancient words were revealed, and the students could read them without the academy paying out a small treasure of silver coins. Neverbored was pleased to be a member of a profession that kept knowledge safe and made it freely available to others. It was a good life.

■
Tony Greiner is a librarian at Portland Community College. He began his career in Alexandria and remembers when Melvil Dewey was a promising young pup.
■

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Scott Warnock

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chair butting into chalk tray
he wedged his long and massive legs
beneath the table
to face us
bulgy calves exposed
socks sliding south
inevitable as glaciers
tree trunks with roots splayed
to suggest feet
rooted to the platform

he spanned the table easily
with arms loosely resting
his hands end to end like bookends
bracing the table's edges
alternately lifting it in small scrapings
lifting himself from his chair
edging the table to the brink
reclaiming his seat on an in-breath
arms and fingers lax
table back to center

the warm winds of Southern literature
ebbed and waned in his classroom
Faulkner to Flannery O'Connor
where Dewey Dell picks to the end of
the row
Vardaman's mother is a fish
Mrs. May gets gored by the bull

and we all wait for the ACCIDENT!
his passion overpowering
table akilter

epiphany rises
one great gifted man-teacher
imparted his deepest understandings
from a foundation firm as granite
he transmitted
as a vapor across the room
as the turmoil of a nest of vipers
the anguish of dreams unrealized
and with fiery sonorous breath
the warm blood of the human experi-
ence

*Ruel Foster (1916–1999) was a renowned poet and critic of Southern and Appalachian literature. He chaired the English department at West Virginia University from 1941 until 1987.

Rachel Barton has spent the last three years teaching English and ESOL in Sweet Home, Oregon. She continues to work with the Oregon Writing Project at Willamette University.



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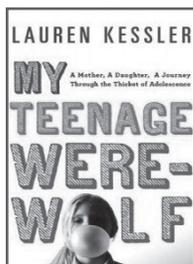
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- Mark Mizell—Seaside High School
- Janna Reid—South Grants Pass Middle School
- Grace Saad—Welches Middle School
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