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...a service of The Point - a classroom blogspace from fcps.net

New PD Opportunities, STLP/Robotic Events, DRIVE-ing Instructional Change: TIPS for November, 2010

...maintained by Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin, last updated 11/2/2010

TIPS - The Technology Feed Vol 10, #3 (November, 2010)

TIPS is a feed of technology integration ideas for Fayette County teachers, delivered through blogs maintained by Technology Resource Teachers. To see all editions (including pre-blog ones), visit our old archives.

TIPS - The Editor's Desk

Brief musings on the implementation of technology integration in Fayette County Schools...from the Office of Instructional Technology

...from the desk of Jeffrey L. Jones, Site Admin

Tuesday, November 02, 2010 10:54 AM: Are you a doer, or a watcher? -- Selecting Tools by Implied Pedagogy

Are you a doer, or a watcher?

A doer creates what a watcher consumes. We all are both at various times of any day, but one could argue that, in a specific context, most people are primarily one or the other. Since there are a lot more television watchers than actors, the presumption is there are a lot more watchers in that context.

Are your students doers, or watchers?

This question is a great deal different from the previous one, influenced by what we might infer from the word "student." Here's what Dictionary.com says about that word:

stu-dent. [stood-nt, styood-] - *noun*

1. a person formally engaged in learning, esp. one enrolled in a school or college; pupil: *a student at Yale.*
2. any person who studies, investigates, or examines thoughtfully: *a student of human nature.*

The first definition points to a state of being (formal or informal), the second to a behavior. But even the first uses the word "engaged," implying that being a student is, primarily, an activity requiring one's conscious participation.

That's actually different than one might guess, since most people (even many teachers) presume that a teacher is the doer, and students watch. That's the traditional "lecture" instructional paradigm. But current research on learning indicates that knowledge is constructed by a student, rather than induced by a teacher. Research in effective technology use and integration into instruction goes further, pointing to student-*directed* work in knowledge construction, especially in the case of higher-order learning: "depth of knowledge 4," or "synthesis" or "evaluation" from Bloom's Taxonomy (see LoTi, ACOT2). From this perspective, the act of teaching is the act of providing the tools, materials and environment whereby students can successfully engage, interactively participate in, and direct the learning process.

So, we're back to the question.

Are your students doers, or watchers?

...and the answer should be that, if they're truly students, they must be doers. That isn't to say that watching must never happen in the classroom, but if it does, it should be aimed at lower-order goals, or as a preparation for doing.

Are your educational technology purchase decisions aimed at doing, or watching?

Every education technology purchase carries with it an implied pedagogy, and sorting that out has never become more complicated than in the digital age. Fifty years ago, when television first became one of the available technologies for the classroom, the implied pedagogy was "watching," and many teachers were upset that we'd be turning an entire generation of students into passive consumers. But no consistent and measurable negative impact was ever found. One might speculate that, since the primary instructional paradigm at the time was lecture, TV just replaced one "watching" context with another. The "TV in the classroom" controversy simply ran out of steam.

But that's quite different from today. Students at MIT -- one of the best universities in the country (and, not incidentally, one of the most digital) -- spend, on average, over 50 hours a week engaged in digital media (see Digital Nation, a PBS FrontLine special). This media is interactive: email, Skype, Facebook, texting, Twitter, etc. Clearly, when such students are left to their own devices (pun intended), they are usually doers. So when we try to work out how best to allocate limited educational resources and tech purchase budgets, we're not doing it in the same context as the teachers of 50 years ago. The selection of education technologies today is taking place against a backdrop of interactive "doing" by almost every young person, as soon as their school day ends. The expectation for engagement, and the social and intellectual presence of a student in such engagement, makes the selection of any classroom technology very different from fifty years ago. We're no longer competing with the lecture, we're competing with Facebook.

We'll now look at the underlying implication for "watching" vs. "doing" for several popular categories of instructional technology, to see what they're implied pedagogy actually is.

Classroom Response Systems.

"Clickers" are all the rage. They make assessment fun. They give instant feedback, which can provide direction to instruction. They are very engaging for students (at least for now, while they're still new).

For our discussion, they're a really great metaphor for making succinct what we mean by students' "doing" the business of learning. Assessments, whether delivered by paper or classroom response systems, do ask students to do something. But it is impossible to avoid the implications of response systems -- students do not *inherently* build knowledge interactively through any assessment tool. They do not control the process, and usually interact with the content in a teacher-directed manner.

"Smart" Classroom Tools

These tools are associated with digital projection systems and interactive whiteboards, as well as hand-held devices such as the Smart Slate. These systems differ a great deal from classroom response systems in that their effectiveness is in direct student manipulation. Like classroom response systems, these tools can be very effective in producing engaging and interactive activities for students in a classroom setting.

However, once again, all students in the class will usually be doing the same thing. As a matter of fact, even when students are interacting directly with the technology, the number doing so will be small (usually one, often zero when a teacher uses it exclusively as a presentation tool), and all others will be truly watching.

Before you conclude that I am against such technologies, let me qualify. As any student of Norman Webb and Benjamin Bloom will tell you, there are important learning goals associated with each of the levels they describe, even the lowest ones, with activities (some of which are just watching) appropriate for each. In addition, a great teacher can very effectively use any tool to encourage a wide array of instructional approaches, just as they can turn an ordinary chalkboard into a student-driven knowledge construction tool. But in current instructional practice, higher-order thinking and learning are usually the neglected goals. Not incidentally, they're also the ones which benefit the most from student-directed, socially engaging learning activities. So we need to make sure that we deliberately provide technologies which inherintly support these higher goals (and, not incidentally, reflect the practices students are using outside of school). The implied pedagogy of the above tools means that they will not, in themselves, satisfy the needs and goals of higher order learning goals.

In the 21st Century, where information and interactivity is delivered in large part over digital networks, that usually means an individual computing device. There are dozens of ways a classroom can provide such devices to students: PDAs/iPods, iPads and eReaders, netbooks/laptops, classroom workstations/terminals, even smart phones. All have advantages and disadvantages (a topic for a future blog entry).

So when you map out how your classroom, your school, or your district supports and purchases technologies, ask yourself…

Are at least some your educational technology purchase decisions aimed at "doing?"

...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=10067

The Virtual Elementary Classroom

A place to showcase virtual activities in the Elementary Classroom.

...from the desk of Jamie Burch, District TRT

Monday, November 01, 2010 11:05 AM: DRIVE October Events

Teachers and administrators who participated in the October DRIVE sessions were exposed to a variety of ways to use CPS clickers as formative assessment. Teachers were divided into grade level groups and explored content specific to their grade level. Peggy McKee & Susan Chavira worked with 3rd grade teachers as they focused on the Sticks & Stones game. This involved hands on activities, graphing results on the Illuminations website, and working in pairs. 4th grade teachers worked with Lori Bowen on a reading/science lesson involving online resources and earth, sun & moon models. Leanna Prater and Jamie Burch introduced the 5th grade teachers to the interactive Revolutionary War activity Mission US. This is a free resource that can be played online or downloaded for local play. We are sharing lots of ways to integrate technology while engaging our students and planning with the 5 E Model of Instruction.

...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=28445

Student Technology Leadership Program

A discussion of STLP activities, issues, and projects in Fayette County Schools.

...from the desk of Julie Gaskin, District TRT

Monday, November 01, 2010 9:22 AM: STLP Fall Showcase 2010

STLP Fall Showcase
University of Kentucky Ballroom
Thursday, November 11, 2010
Open to the Public: 10:00 - 12:00

Join us at the STLP Fall Showcase where schools from Fayette and surrounding counties will compete in the Showcase categories of Community Service, Entrepreneurial, Global Connections, Instructional, and Technical. The school groups are competing to earn a spot in the May State Championship with hopes of winning a trip to the ISTE 2010 Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The schools competing this year include: Arlington Elementary, Bryan Station High School, Crawford Middle School, Dixie Elementary, Eastside Technical Center, Julius Marks

Elementary, Lafayette High School, Liberty Elementary, Lexington Traditional Magnet School, Maxwell Elementary, Morton Middle School, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Southern Elementary, The Learning Center, and Winburn Middle School. If you'd like to see what these schools and others have planned for this school year, please visit: http://teach.fcps.net/STLP/School/Plans10_11.htm

...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=16314

Robotics	**Monday, November 01, 2010 11:54 AM: Dates Posted for First Lego League Competition**
(Personal blog) *...from the desk of Leanna Prater*	WKU has posted the dates and locations for both the Lexington Regional Area Qualifier and the KY State First Lego League competition. **Lexington Regional Area Qualifier** Date: December 4, 2010 Location: University of KY Student Center Grand Ballroom Contact: David Feinauer **KY State First Lego League Competition** Date: January 29, 2011 Location: Diddle Arena, Western Kentucky University (Located between Avenue of Champions and University Blvd.) Bowling Green, KY 42101 Contact: John Inman Additional information can be found on WKU's FLL site: http://www.wku.edu/kyfll/index.php?page=2010-qualifiers Also, if you are intersted in starting a LEGO Robotics team at your school, but need some help to know where to begin, please contact either Leanna Prater (leanna.prater@fayette.kyschools.us) or Julie Gaskin (julie.gaskin@fayette.kyschools.us) . *...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=40708*

Announcements	**Monday, November 01, 2010 10:55 AM: Gimp and Inkscape**
Technology News *...from the desk of Julie Gaskin, District TRT*	**Gimp and Inkscape** Gimp and Inkscape are free, downloadable art programs used for photo manipulation and vector illustrations. Jason Sturgill and David Page, Lafayette High School art teachers, will be providing professional development on how to use these programs and how to incorporate their use into your lessons. **Thursday, December 9, 4:30-6:30** Lafayette High School, room 133 Sign up online: Professional Development Online Menu **Monday, November 01, 2010 11:05 AM: ArtRage** **ArtRage** ArtRage is a free downloadable paint program that is known for having realistic behaviors of the tools and paper varieties. Many options are offered in the free version and, for a limited time, Fayette County has special pricing for the full Studio Pro version. Please contact julie.gaskin@fayette.kyschools.us for more information. David Page and Jason Sturgill, Lafayette High School art teachers, will be providing professional development on how to use these programs and how to incorporate their use into your lessons. **Thursday, December 2, 4:30-6:30** or **Thursday, December 16, 4:30-6:30** Lafayette High School, room 133 Sign up online: Professional Development Online Menu *...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=18376*

Atomic Learning	**Monday, November 01, 2010 11:31 AM: Audacity Tutorials in Atomic Learning**
An introduction to some of the online tutorials and lesson ideas available from Atomic Learning. *...from the desk of Julie Gaskin, District TRT*	Atomic Learning offers short, online, video tutorials and lesson ideas to help you embrace technology and integrate it into your classroom. AL has been purchased for all FCPS students and staff. Audacity Audacity is an easy to use voice recording/editing tool that will help you create a podcast or other voice related projects. The tutorials offered by Atomic Learning will help you and your students get started. The series of tutorials on Audacity include Downloading and Installing, Setting up, Recording, Editing, Tips and Tricks, Effects, and Exporting. Within each of these lessons are several 1-3 minutes tutorials on how to do very specific things - and Atomic Learning is available 24/7 to students and teachers!

? Navigation Tip: Remember you'll need your login and password from your school STC. I've provided a direct link to the Audacity tutorials but you may also like to go to Atomic Learning and discover the multitude of tutorials offered!

...for more, visit this blog at https://edtech.fcps.net/blog/blogs.aspx?blogid=41976

The contents of this website are intended for the enhancement of instruction only. "It's About Kids"

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