THE TECH TRAINER

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Classes Using Technology Amazingly

Facebook. Many of you use it. Some of you hate it. Let's face it though, you probably still read posts on it either way. Some teachers are leveraging this fact to their advantage. For instance the 5th Grade class at the elementary has a class Facebook page which is maintained by Mrs. Carpenter. The page keeps up communication with students and parents and showcases student work. Want to check out the 5th grade Facebook page? You can find them at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Eastern-5th-Grade-Page/123503521043341. Other groups are pursuing the same idea with their own pages. If you want to start your own class Facebook page, please remember to run it by administration first and always practice internet safety when it comes to posting information.

Tech Tuesday Upcoming Sessions

February 22 & March 1—These two sessions will be the same and will cover basic audio podcasting and how you might incorporate it with students in your classroom. We will be using a free software program called Audacity along with microphones and some sample music tracks that I will provide. By the end of the session you will have a short podcast example, along with a copy of Audacity and ideas of how to use podcasting in your classroom. The session on the 22nd will be held at the elementary computer lab from 3:30-4:30 and will repeat on March 1st at the high school.

March 15 & 22—The focus these two March sessions will be basic photo editing with Picasa. Picasa is a free program available from Google. Throughout the hour you will learn how to touch-up pictures you have taken in class and finish them for printing and display. This tutorial will also give you the knowledge to apply the program to your personal photos. A sample of photos will be provided and you will actually work hands-on with the program to edit some of those samples. When you leave you will have a copy of the software on CD along with handouts on how to recreate the effects we explore in class. The session on the 15th will be held at the elementary computer lab from 3:30-4:30 and will repeat on March 22nd at the high school.

How Do You Do That?

Have you every downloaded a file to use with your interactive board that uses a "reveal" technique? You know, some activity where you erase or move something to show an answer that didn't exist before. Well, you too can create easy reveal activities by using the idea of locking and layering. How does it work? Start by placing the answer or object you wish to reveal where you want it on the whiteboard. Next, lock that object in place from the properties of the object. Finally, take your pen tool (make it thick), match the background color, and color over the object until seems to disappear. To reveal, simply use the eraser tool.

Whiteboards Coming for Those of You Without

Last Tuesday at the board meeting funds were approved for more interactive whiteboards throughout the corporation. What does this mean for you? Well if you don't already have a projector and board in your room, your wait will soon be over. The upcoming project should see the placement of boards (I say should because all planning is fluid) in all remaining rooms on a priority schedule as decided by school principals. Mr. Bagley will be in touch with the different staff to meet and decide on placement and details after confirming locations with the principals. Installation plans will then commence.

Want to Jump Into the World of Web 2.0? Check Out These Amazing Internet Tools

Twiddla (www.twiddla.com) is a realtime web collaboration tool. You do not need a username or password and you can share with students in your class by giving them the url of your "meeting." Draw, type, collaborate and each participant can add to the presentation without any messy set-up.

ZooBurst (http://zooburst.com) is virtual pop-up story telling tool. An account is required so a teacher preview would be a must. You can sign up for a basic account for free. Paid versions are available at $9.99 a month for individual teachers or $50 for a year subscription with the ability to create a private classroom with teacher created usernames and passwords. Build pop-up books with pre-made characters and supply your own story. Paid versions allow you to upload your own artwork and pictures.