

The Tech

Michael K. Berg michael.berg@eastern.k12.in.us

Trainer

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The Difference Between Interaction and Interactive

Interactive lessons, when coupled with classroom assignments, can help to enliven the teaching environment and grow enthusiasm for the subject that is being taught. There is a distinction though between interactivity in a lesson and interaction in the classroom. Many things in this world are interactive. A phone for instance is interactive. A touch screen display is interactive. Many other electronic devices are interactive, and yes, lessons can be interactive. Realize though that the use of interactive resources in your classroom does not necessarily mean you are encouraging interaction in your classroom. True interaction through technology occurs when students are actively engaged having hands-on experiences with the tools that are being used. Again let's look at a phone. If it is sitting on the counter I can still say it is interactive; I cannot however say that it is indicative of interaction. The same is true of teaching in a technology rich environment. If I am only presenting material to my students, I am not encouraging much interaction other than verbal engagement or response. If however, I have students out of their seats, coming to the board, or working in small groups together, I am encouraging learning through interaction. The principle is rooted in the idea that students should discover knowledge. There are many things that hinder active technology use in the classroom. The tools at the teacher's disposal are often very easy to use for presentation and presentation alone. Time to plan is at a premium. Getting students used to the technology can also slow down a lesson. As with anything new, there is a learning curve. Once you begin to change your habits to infuse interactive activities into your lessons and practice (you don't really have to practice, the practical application of the technology during a real lesson is practice in this case) hands-on application with the students, these concerns will diminish. Teaching is constantly changing so it makes sense to try out new methods of engagement. Technology may just be your new edge.

Tech Tuesday Upcoming Sessions

April 5th and April 12th—Okay, so I have been talking about “Storybird” for a while now. I love the online tool so much that I want to have a session on it. During the session I will actually enroll you as a student in my “class” and then you will be able to log in and create a sample book. We will then look at the built in teacher tools that come with a free classroom using my account and the materials you create. You will have time at end to set-up your own class and enroll some of your students so you can use it with them. Again, this can only be done on flash supported devices, so no ipad lessons with this nifty tool at the moment. If you're interested in seeing the tool in action and having some help setting up a classroom account for yourself, this session will interest you. The first installment of this class will be on April 5th at the Elementary Lab and will run from 3:30-4:30. Depending upon interest a follow-up session will be held the next week at the high school at the same time. If it looks as though only one session is needed the second will focus on a tool called “StoryJumper” that also allows you to set up class accounts and create online books using clipart and your own photos. Please RSVP if you would like to attend either session on “Storybird” along with the date you would like to attend.

Clean those iPad Germs Away With These Simple Instructions From Apple

Recently, someone inquired about cleaning of electronic devices, specifically iPads, and how to avoid the spread of germs. Well, Apple has a few guidelines for cleaning their products, and the iPad has specific instructions. If you were to visit the apple support website and dig around you could find them, but hey, how about I just share and give credit to apple support! The site specifically states:

“Use a soft, slightly damp, lint-free cloth. It is also safe to use isopropyl alcohol 70% or a similar product. Avoid getting moisture in openings. Don't use window cleaners, household cleaners, aerosol sprays, solvents, ammonia, or abrasives to clean iPad. Rubbing the screen with an abrasive material may scratch your screen. For additional information about handling iPad, see the iPad Important Product Information Guide at support.apple.com/manuals/ipad.”

In addition you may want to heed the advice of turning the device off before cleaning and making sure it is not plugged in or recharging during that time. Keep in mind that the screen is made of glass and light pressure during cleaning is advised. If you follow these simple instructions you can wipe away smudges and germs.