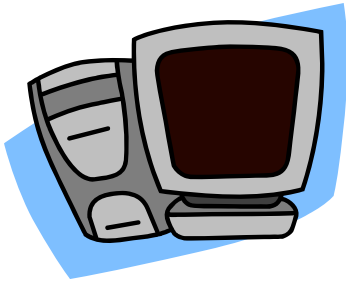


Technology Today

Kate Fahey's Monthly Technology Newsletter



Notable Teachers

- Coach Coggins' class explored rock formations using an interactive template on the Internet.
- Ms. Hunt's class used the Internet to research concentration camps from the Holocaust.
- Ms. Keene's class explored DNA and cells on the Internet.
- Ms. Junker's class learned more about Excel by using an EdClass activity.

Thumbs—What Do They Mean to Us?

Student engagement is on the forefront of everyone's mind. Our WOW design team has discussed it with us, in addition to other WOW principles. We have seen it in other staff development. We hear about it all the time, but what does it mean? One argument I often hear is, "well, this is how I learned and I turned out fine." I'll admit, I thought the very same thing when I started teaching. The reality, though, is that the world has experienced an exponential rate of change in the past 20 years. Our students are growing up in the "thumb" age. Don't laugh! Ipods, text messaging, video games...all of these use the thumb. The previous generation was the "point-and-

click" group, the ones who pushed buttons on cassettes, CDs, beginner computers, even basic video games. It's amazing that a simple switch of the fingers can make sure a difference! Well, what does that mean for us?

The thumb is an *addition*—an addition form of interaction. Now, in video games, they can do 2 or 3 things at once. They can jump, kick and punch at the same time. Our students are used to constant stimulation. They are used to a barrage of media. No longer do they watch TV and focus on one thing. They watch TV, play a computer game and instant message with their friends (4, 5, 6... at a time). Now, there's a decision that each of us

must make. Do we continue to teach as though our students were "point-and-click" individuals? If we do that, if we continue to teach the same way year after year, we are not serving our students. How about we start catering a little to that thumb? When designing your lessons, think about that thumb. Think of a way you can tweak your lesson to engage your students. That might include technology in some way, it might not, but think about that thumb.

(I have to give credit to my 17-year-old cousin, Sarah, and my sister, Ann, a recent college graduate, who first commented on the thumb generation over the holidays.)

Website of the Month

This month's featured site, www.wesfryer.com, is a site developed and maintained by a self-described "catalyst for creative educational engagement". In keeping with the engagement design factor, Wes Fryer posts articles, opinions and classroom activi-

ties on his website. He uses his "blog" (online journal) as a way to communicate his thoughts on the changes we are facing with this new digital generation. One of the things I like the most about Fryer's site is that he was a teacher himself. He knows what it's like to be in

the trenches. He remembers that while embracing new ideas to engage our students. If nothing else, this website might provide you with some leisurely reading over spring break. Many of his articles are inspiring and motivational. Enjoy!

We live in a brand new, and dynamically rich information environment, and if we are going to reach our students in a way that is relevant to their world and their future (and ours), then we must teach them from this new information environment.

-David Warlick