

Thursday, May 31, 2007

## News Nuggets

NCLB is up for Re-Authorization: Subtitle: Bend an Ear, Twist an Arm, Shake your Fist, or Kick your Congress Person's Derriere to "Muzzle NCLB" and Salvage Education It's time for the Summer Recess, and despite the public's perception that you will spend the time on the beach or in your favorite local bar, you know that you will be busy. You will either have to work a second job, part-time, temporary, menial...or teach summer school...

Or, you will spend the time tuning up your work for the next school year.

Hopefully, you will work on open-ended strategies that are adaptable in case you are shuffled to a new grade level or content-area assignment.

But, take time out to lobby for the demise of NCLB. Sidebar NCLB is really the "spin name" for the Elementary and Secondary School Act, that can't go away. But, the odious features of NCLB, i.e., the ones that stupidly handcuff and sabotage education in favor of making public schools look bad so that vouchers can be used to prop up church schools; can be eliminated.

Think about all the pain and misery that the noble, but subverted, goals of NCLB have wreaked upon students and the teachers who teach them. Then, take action and hound your highly-paid representatives and senators until they commit to radical changes in NCLB. You will save yourself lots of time and aggravation and stress if you are successful in eliminating the odious features of NCLB. Dark and Dangerous Forces are Already at Work Forces bent on continuing the "legacy of ill" of NCLB well into the next administration are at work.

For example, note these sources

Secretary Spellings Lobbies Congress for NCLB Secretary Spellings testifies before the House Committee Secretary Spellings Invites House and Senate Education to Convene on No Child Left Behind

Of course, the Secretary of Education has the "inside track" in influencing members of Congress because she speaks the same dialect as they do, i.e., "Spin-based, Bureaucra-tease." A Educational Technology Related Item US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, has asked for ideas on the integration of technology in education. There is a form on the ed.gov site, but no ability to dialog or even leave your contact information if you fill it out. Link to the US Dept. of Education "Ed Tech Roundtable" Page You will have to send an E-mail message because there is no way to leave feedback on the page. E-mail link: [edtech@ed.gov](mailto:edtech@ed.gov)

Here are the questions, and Classroom Toolkit's less than reverent answers &hellip; In what ways has technology improved the effectiveness of your classroom, school or district? Answer: Technology's history in public schools misses the potential that proponents promised. This is not the fault of the technology (though the technology is too hard to use), but is the fault of partially funded and under funded technology projects, the fault of a lack of professional development focused upon our curriculum, and the fault of the general mismanagement that occurs when the federal government bureaucrats meddle in something (like education) that they understand little about. Based on your role (administrator, parent, teacher, student, entrepreneur, business leader), how have you used educational data to make better decisions or be more successful? Answer: Nobody uses "educational data" to make better decisions. This is not the fault of the data, because useable data is non-existent. Fault school district officials who base decisions more on budget requirements than instructional needs. Also fault our federal government and our "public" for focusing on (and exaggerating until it is a caricature with monstrous proportions) a strategy of limited usefulness, i.e., high-stakes test scores.

Anyone who wants usable (and actionable) educational data needs to be willing to pay for it. And, the cost of acquiring this data has only a minor technological component. Most of the cost of building that data. Useable educational data comes at the cost of hiring, training and employing large numbers of trained observers. Without professional observational data, any other (easy to collect) data is "next to useless." In what ways can technology help us prepare our children for global competition and reach our goals of eliminating achievement gaps and having all students read and do math on grade level by 2014? No answers, but more questions. Note: The face validity of this question seems to indicate that the author is unqualified to meddle in education in any way.

Three unrelated question stems are twisted into one sentence. These question stems are: Technology preparing children for global competition

Question 3, Part 1.) Comments:

Technology doesn't seem to prepare children for anything except for more technology.

Learning experiences, generally facilitated by teachers, prepares students for later life experiences.

Preparing children for global competition doesn't seem to be one of our core curriculum subjects.

Are we planning a high-stakes test that assesses each student's readiness for global competition?

Wouldn't the study of foreign languages be for productive than technology initiatives in developing global competitors?

Eliminating achievement gaps (in whom?) Question 3, Part 2.) Comments:

Achievement gaps are calculated as the deviation or discrepancy between the arbitrary (Grade Level) standard and the arbitrary high-stakes test

The correct standard is the progress toward each student becoming all that they can be, with each student focusing on personal milestones and personal benchmarks

The "Grade Level/ Group Achievement Gap" is an arbitrary and distracting target. This Grade Level/ Group Achievement in reading and math has no relationship to global competition, or even a relationship to success on future jobs

This "standard" is based upon philosophies that didn't even function during the 19th Century when they were proposed. There is no chance that these concepts will be functional during the 21st Century All students reading and doing math on grade level (Question 3, Part 3.) Comments:

Answer: Does this assume that reading and math are keys to competition and world domination?

What evidence exists to prove that reading and math are the independent variables that determine success at global competition?

Corporate research shows that needed Twenty First Century skills include:

Collaboration

Teamwork Skills

Problem-Solving

Decision-Making

Project Management

Plan into Action and Vision into Reality, i.e., Execution

Application and Performance (AnP)

Personal Marketing

What should be the federal government's role in supporting the use of technology in our educational system?

Pay lots and lots of money and get out of the way.

Develop realistic timeframe's about how long changes will take in our schools

Develop realistic budgets. Hint: Realistic budgets will be levels of magnitude higher than the skimpy, wimpy, anemic budgets that school districts now rail about.

Realistic budgets also will be controlled by different folks (teachers) than the people that currently control those budgets (business office staff and administrators)

Sidebar One thought: Develop a matching grant program where our federal government matches dollar for dollar the money that we spend in warfare. This would be a 1:1 Program where the Feds really could provide a positive impact upon education. But, don't just settle for our ideas. Prepare your own rebuttal for NCLB and put this "vampire-like" law out of its "dark world" existence. Halt this law from its continued sapping the lifeblood of educational excitements and teacher empowerment.

Tell your senators and representatives what this law is really doing to education.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in News Nuggets at 11:00

## Short Article

Beware the "Computer Lab" Solution School administrators and parents pressure teachers to "integrate technology," and teachers have resigned themselves to the pervasiveness of this demand. But, it is folly to expect that the school district will provide the necessary computer and peripheral equipment to make this integration feasible.

One scheme that teacher will be presented with to accomplish this technology integration goal is the employment of a computer lab. What is a Computer Lab? A computer lab is a room with a lot of computers, preferably one computer for each student, or one computer for each two students. The computers are connected to the Internet, and to the school district's network.

That's it. Now, schedule your students, integrate technology and increase test scores!

But, what happens is that there are too few labs provided for the campus, maybe one per campus, one per grade level, one per department &hellip; never enough.

Here are the problems: Some teacher hog the lab

The time between scheduled access is too long

The amount of time in the lab is too short

Unless each student has an individual account and a home directory, ensuring that each student uses the same computer that they used the last time is a hassle

Students may not be allowed to plug in USB drives (virus concern), save to the local hard drive (space concern), insert a floppy disk (virus concern, new computer systems don't even come with floppy drives), etc. What is the Computer Lab Used For?

Because of scheduling limitations, the operation of these computer labs devolve to three general functions &hellip;

Word Processing

Internet Research

Creation of Computer Presentations There are a lot of other learning options that would be possible if &hellip; The students had more time

The right software was installed

The students could store files from anywhere in the district (even from home), and access them from the lab

The students had individual portfolios on the network

The teacher didn't have to be in the lab to supervise students

All students didn't have to receive the same briefing about the assignment or project before the students could start on the project  
Labs, an Obsolete Strategy? We probably shouldn't want to build and support labs as an instructional alternative, anyway.

Long-standing research demonstrates that students made better gains in classrooms where teachers had several computers (four or five). Of course, the key was that teachers with computers in the classrooms needed to change their teaching style and instructional delivery.

Of course, one lab is a "cheaper" alternative to four or five computers in every classroom.

But, the lab problem contains problems that have "teacher components," that can't be blamed on the effect of a stingy IT budget.  
Teacher Issues The inherent flaw of using computer labs is the philosophy behind deploying them.

These labs are the result of Industrial Age, i.e., "factory-floor" thinking. Thinking that is out of place in modern education. The problem is that the computer labs lend themselves to the industrial age strategies such as... Every student working on the same assignment, at the same time

Uniform assignments (so that grading is fair)

Project scheduling (and thinking about the project) maybe once a week during the lab time

Teacher does not have time to answer all students' questions at once

Project steps are slowed down to the lowest common denominator of student computer skill, where if the teacher is lucky, the computer interface can be demonstrated using a projection device

Individual student conferences (even mini conferences) are difficult to fit into the lab schedule

All project work stops when the class must exit the lab

The project work breaks the lesson cycle

Peer tutoring decreases because the "go-to, peer trainers are not available since they have to complete their own projects  
We have a Lab Climate: What's a Teacher to Do? Understanding is the best strategy for "flying under the radar."

Avoid drawing any negative attention to yourself. Maintain the proper appearance to avoid "snooping" by Campus management. (In campus management, appearances often count more than substance.)

Knowing the limitations of computer labs allows you to look like you are using them to the maximum, allows you to look like you are supporting the campus computer initiative and allows you to look like you are making good use of the money that the campus (or district) wasted in installing the lab.

A few suggestions are to: Schedule your class(es) as much as possible

Prepare you class(es) for the lab visit just like you would prepare them for a field trip (that's what this lab visit is)

Use the lab time as a portion of a collaborative group project rather than as an individual typing assignment

Prepare rubrics, and prepare your class(es) before arriving at the lab

Provide all instructions about the assignment before arriving at the lab

Develop an online presence of your own, and allows students to access the project resources from home

Test the lab and work through the processes first, alone

Plan on reusing the same rules, rubrics, strategy, or project method for every lab visit for the year

Make the original assignment generic

Build the assignment or project in a modular fashion

Train students at every step of the project

Check each student to ensure that they know what to do before you arrive at the lab

Assign helpers, partners, buddies for each student. These are the first line helpers that students will turn to before seeking their teacher's help. Plan on a strategy where every student is doing something different while your class is using the lab.

If you plan ahead, you will be able to make the best out of a bad situation, such as school district administrators and parents expecting that you will be able to "integrate technology" by means of a computer lab.

Know the obstacles. By thinking ahead, you just might pull it off.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Short Article at 10:00

## **Feature Article**

Changing Your Mind Set: "Uncovery" + "Discovery" + "Recovery" = "Empowerment"

We are "creatures of habit." And, although we usually think that habits are physical behaviors, such as how we brush our teeth, how we hold our knife and fork, etc.; our habits can be mental as well. And, it is the mental habits that we most need to change.

But what if we find that our mental habits are even more difficult to change than our physical habits and behaviors? Resistant and Resilient Our mental habits develop a resistance to change and a resilience that make a direct, force of will, frontal attack a "self-defeating" exercise.

Therefore, we have to use an indirect approach. This approach is: "Uncovery"

Discovery

Recovery

Empowerment We may be prone to giving up on the challenge of changing our mind set. We may have internalized the "spirit willing, flesh weak" mantra. We may use this excuse, but the "spirit/ body dichotomy" is far from a complete roadmap.

Beware even more of the mantras of your burned out colleagues, particularly when they apply their version to students. The burned out educator's version is, "Spirit willing, body strong and hormone filled, mind weak." Beware! Avoid commiserating with someone who displays this mind set. Avoid this thinking trap because it is slow death from moment-by-moment misery and learned helplessness. Spirit is Willing, Body is Strong, Mind is Reluctant, Recalcitrant, Resistant, Reactionary and et al. What this means is that the mind is the best tool for focusing (executing) your vision, planning, application, and performance.

This also means that your mind (especially hidden habits of mind) can be the greatest impediment to your changing, developing and growing professionally. Your habits of mind (not your IQ) are the independent variable that contributes to your professional genius. Steps to Empowerment Genius gives everybody nothing if unused and hidden. Results count! Literally, you can count results; but, how can you count something that doesn't exist?

This is the same reason that losing weight, quitting smoking or not eating sweets are ineffective goals. There is no target. There are no measures for something that doesn't exist.

That is the reason that changing your mind set requires that you specify exactly what measurable targets can be used to provide clear indicators of your progress.

This is the reason for the three steps to empowerment, i.e.,: Uncovery Here is where you find out as much as you can about the "inner workings" of your mind

Items in this category are difficult to know, and one of your lifelong learning tasks is to uncover them Assumptions

Beliefs

Rationalizations

Cognitions

Self-Talk

Values

Ideals

Dreams

Etc. Discovery This is an exploration into the "outer" workings of your mind. Items in this category are easier to know The list above plus &hellip;

Talents and Skills

Experiences

Contacts

Personal Resources Recovery

This is the process of setting yourself on the "right track," of making yourself "right with yourself"

If you know what your ideals, values and beliefs are, either Align your thoughts and behaviors, or

Substitute aligned thoughts and behaviors or misaligned ones

You see what you believe, and you interpret events, environmental states and interpersonal interactions based upon your beliefs.

This is important because so much of your effectiveness as a teacher, mentor, facilitator and guide to your students depends on the components of your mind set.

You can use almost any theory to explain, justify (even excuse) your classroom behavior and performance. This is a process, some call it a "defense mechanism" called, "rationalization." Your Relationship with your Students The "Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" process is designed to help you eliminate these rationalizations and to focus instead on the "reality" that exists for you in relationship to your students.

This "Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" process enables you to change your mind set to a mind set that reflects the possibility that your students can learn at rates and levels, at a depth and expanse that will amaze you. This

"Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" process can open your eyes to the immense creative talents, charisma, potential and insight that your students possess. Empowerment The "Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" process also

leads you to one of the most apparent (yet hidden) secrets of education, i.e., that the "empowered teacher" is the teacher that empowers students.

And, the empowered teacher is the teacher that has aligned their mind set to a constellation of attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, values, ideals and dreams that reflect a reality of empowerment for teachers and students.

When you come to behave, feel, believe, self-talk and when other people discuss this constellation that you exemplify in terms of parameters that expand instruction; then you will have objective evidence that the "Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" process was effective.

Feel free to leave the comfort of your current mind set; travel the "Uncovery," "Discovery" and "Recovery" road; and travel towards the uncharted terrain of personal satisfaction and professional genius.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Featured Article at 09:00

## Quick Tips

### Teacher Sharing: Standards are the Key to Efficient Sharing

Standards are the key to efficient and effective teacher sharing. But, we are not talking about anything like the arbitrary, grade level/ scope and sequence, or rubric-based standards (while these are invaluable).

What we are describing is a practical, "technical or project management; kind of meaning for the term, "standards."

What we are suggesting is just obtaining agreement with other teachers, agreement with team teachers; or, taking the easy route and appropriating standards similar to the ones that are promoted on Websites projects such as Classroom Toolkit Formality not Needed for Forms, Templates, Checklists, Frameworks Just one or two teachers agreeing to cooperate by using the same forms, templates and checklists; can create huge paybacks in time saved.

For example, if three teachers work together on the same lessons, individual effort is reduced by two thirds. Four teachers working together decreases the individual workload by three quarters.

And, with high-speed computer networks, teachers can work together from just about anywhere in the world. (How can any teacher justify blazing a fresh trail for every lesson when so many willing partners are available? Why "go it alone?") Leveraging and Streamlining your Workload A standardized system, such as the modular system that Classroom Toolkit recommends, is ideal for building a library of reusable instructional and classroom management components.

These standardized strategies can take the form of

Lesson Plans

Templates

Forms

Checklists (for students and teachers)

Thematic Unit Frameworks

Open-Ended Worksheets

Rubrics, especially self-correcting, group correcting models

Flowcharts and Mind Maps

Visit the Classroom Toolkit Website for samples of structured, modular learning materials.

Classroom Toolkit's materials are available for free use, as long as any subsequent sharing continues to provide the materials without cost. The idea is to wean yourself, and your colleagues, from the bland materials that connect with your district's adopted textbooks, to free yourself from the addiction to blackline master teacher books (purchased at your own expense, using your disposable income), and to extricate yourself from the bumps and grind of the photocopy chorus line

as you tread water to keep a one or two day fix of worksheets available on your desk.

Samples of what can be done include:

Daily Oral Language

Daily Oral Math

Daily Oral Vocabulary

Graphic Organizers

Thematic Units

Lesson Plans

Story Starter Framework

Math Word Problem Framework The potential for time saving multiplies as you enlist your colleagues to partner with you.

Approach them now. Selling the concept will be easy. Do you know of a colleague who would rather work more just so they can "do it all," all by themselves?

If you do, steer clear of this colleague. You don't need a partner like that.

But, if you find that you have "rugged individualistic tendencies yourself," obtain therapy and overcome this compulsive addiction.

Your students deserve more of your time, and the more that you streamline your job with shared standards, the more time that you will have available to focus upon your students.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Quick Tips at 08:00

## Top Tips

### Reflections on "What Worked:" Now is the Time to Prepare for the Next School Year

If you enjoyed a successful school year. If your instruction was dynamic, student-centered, flexible, energized and energizing, experimental, action-research-based

and if you implemented strategies and techniques that paid off

and if you attempted activities and schemes that flopped

Then you take comfort in knowing that this is how your year should have developed, progressed, and played out. This is the learning, experienced "up close and personal." This is the strategy that is guaranteed to transform "failure" into "success." This is how your performance improves from "adequate" to "genius." Application "Genius" A teacher that never tries new strategies and techniques is stagnant, even petrified; and fails to rise even to the level of "master-teacher-wannabe." Sidebar

Only trying the "tried-and-true" is the perfect mind set for the Industrial-age shop floor, factory-based learning.

Modern education, focusing on Twenty-First Century learning needs requires dynamic, open-ended, forward-thinking models of instruction. Modern learning requires that teachers and students experience the freedom, the empowerment, and the luxury of "making mistakes." "Out of the Ordinary" End-of-Year Review The ordinary method of post-school-year review is to build (or add to) a "Recycling" file. This is a "paper dump" and a "computer hard drive file dump" of every instructional activity. The theory for this "salvage operation" is that, if assigned to the same (or similar) grade level next year, the materials can be reused.

The "extraordinary" method that we propose is to sort these papers and computer files into three categories. These categories are: What produced high levels of student learning and outstanding student outcomes; worked well What produced mediocre levels of student learning and ho-hum student outcomes, but might be salvageable with major changes if used again; flopped, but not hopeless

What produced no learning (maybe even hindered the learning process); dismal failures Definitions What "worked well" means that students learned a lot from the activity, strategy or method; and that you were able to measure and assess each student's level of improvement.

What "flopped but might not be hopeless" produced significant, measurable learning for some students, lackluster learning for most.

What "dismal failure" means is that, even with massive changes, the strategy or activity is counter productive and counter indicated. Meta-Level Thinking Once all strategies and activities are sorted into these categories, the real work begins.

The ordinary teacher crates these file folders in an hour and burns the computer files to one or more CDs. By doing so, the ordinary teacher subjects themselves to hours of tedium during the next school year sifting through the "archive" and sorting and resorting the activities and resources.

You, the extraordinary teacher, are going to spend a day or two; Sorting activities

Analyzing activities The "meta analysis" that you need to perform is a discovery expedition from the high-level vantage point of; Discovering trends

Discovering patterns

Discovering repeatable processes What you want to do is identify ways that you can turn successful, measurable outcomes-based activities into reusable templates, modules, checklists, forms and generic tracking materials. Think "Strategy," Think "Streamlined Materials," Think "Flexible Materials Design" Here is the math:

One generic, reusable template, checklist or form that you can use every other week throughout the school year provides you with approximately 18 re-uses. If development of this reusable tool took one full hour, then the tool would pay back your investment by 1,800%. A strategy that you build that could be used every week of the school year that took one hour to create would return your investment by 3,600%. Sidebar This is the focus that sharpens your thinking. Think "payback" instead of wilting under the thought of how much you have to do. For example, an elementary teacher with six classes per day over a 180 day school year would need to prepare 1,080 learning activities, if each class only required one activity per day. (Of course, many classes require multiple activities per class period.) In addition, teachers must modify standard lessons to account for Special Education students, Gifted and Talented students, At-Risk Students, Bilingual Students, Dyslexia students; and who know what other category that might be invented. Time Invested Now Pays Other Dividends After one or two months, the freshness of your memories fade (much like your students' skills. Remember the students that you labored so hard to teach? In two months, thinking of anything but academic tasks, the retrieval from short-term memory for over 67% of those "hard-built" knowledge skills will have degraded. Less than one third of the previous year's learning will come to school with students at the start of the next school year.) In addition, your memory will play tricks on "what really happened" reality, and you might end up building a re-usable modular system based upon strategies that were not really top producers.

And beware the temptation to pick strategies that were easier to do in favor of strategies that produced better student outcomes.

Focus upon student achievement first and foremost. You will be saving so much time with this modular strategy that you can afford to work a bit more (during these final school year days) on strategies that pay off all of next year. Frosting on the Cake Also, plan to build in as much computer automation, self-checking, and other shortcuts to each template, checklist, form or strategy.

This step is not necessary because you can continue to stay up until 11:00 or 12:00 p.m. each night correcting student artifacts.

Of course, if you are strategic; really strategic; you might avoid taking papers home most evenings, and especially avoid taking work home on weekends.

Invest time now. Have more time to spend on yourself throughout the next school year.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Top Tips at 07:00

## Teacher Resources

Edutopia; Professional Development

We recommend that you visit (or revisit) Edutopia. The reason? Edutopia continues to challenge education to help students become all that they can become  
Help teachers become all that they can become  
Reform the educational system so that it begins to support #1 and #2  
Prompt the political system to change the educational system to a system that is more effective  
Classroom Toolkit also focuses on these goals. Visit Edutopia; This summer is a perfect time to revisit Edutopia; and participate in their "free" professional development. Of course, nothing is really "free." Professional development "costs" your time. Professional development also "costs" whatever it costs when the time spent in professional development takes away from other benefits. (This is called, "Opportunity cost.") During the summer, you could be drawn away from family time, restful activities, and leisure-time pursuits. The ideal is for the time that is spent in professional development to at least "pay back" more than it costs (in both time and money). Even better, is a "leveraged" payoff. If you engage in the right kind of professional development (strategic, focused on streamlined procedures that maximize results, i.e., improved student performance outcomes), then you get back more (multiples of time savings, multiples of effectiveness) than you invest. It is amazing that school district administrators and executive decision-makers fail to comprehend this simple concept. What Edutopia Offers  
The free professional development resources offered by Edutopia include:  
Articles  
What's Working in K-12 Schools  
Interviews  
Professional Development Actions that You can Take  
Links to Professional Development Options  
Student-Centered Education  
Edutopia targets education exactly where school district administrator, politicians, and "the general public" should be focusing their efforts. The editors at Edutopia demonstrate a knowledge that the energy and creativity of our students motivates achievement if we facilitate students' own interests and if we expand students' life experiences. There is nothing fake or artificial about the dynamic relationship between teachers and students when students are engaged, when students are working on projects that the students perceive to be real-world, beneficial, crucial to the people that live on our planet. What a far cry from the sterile, stagnant, antiseptic environment that a focus upon high-stakes tests creates. The Choice is Clear: Focus upon Students or Focus upon Tests  
So, during your summer, take advantage of the free professional development resources at Edutopia;  
Next year, both you and your students will be glad that you did.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Teacher Resources at 06:00

## Site Strategy

### Preparing for the Summer

While most members of the general public believe that teachers are well paid (i.e., teachers make more than they do), and that teachers receive three (3) months of paid vacation; we know that teachers spend the summer gearing up for the next school year (without compensation).  
Sidebar Even though some of our colleagues are able to take Caribbean Cruises or travel Europe (London, Paris, Moscow or Rome) and take tax deductions for a portion of the trip spent in study, and spent in the development of instructional materials; the general public thinks that all teachers get paid to spend all three months in leisure-based activities.

And, if teachers are lucky enough, school district and campus administrators keep their promise and assign them to the same grade/ content area that they were expecting (meaning that the work done over the summer wasn't wasted). A wiser (risk mitigation) strategy is to build generic, modular, multi-level strategies during the summer to provide the flexibility (and luxury) of being ready for any assignment for the next school year.  
Sidebar Classroom Toolkit presents our evaluation of the year in review at the end of each school year. An honest assessment of what went right, of what went wrong, and of where we can improve is best completed as soon as we can catch our breath following our project year.

Classroom Toolkit's publication year coincides with the calendar year, but our focus parallels the school year. Classroom Toolkit Summer Strategy  
Classroom Toolkit has evolved into a "multiple-personality" movement where;  
Our Website Provides;

Basic classroom planning information  
Reusable modules  
Graphic Organizer starter kit

Our Newsletter provides;  
Teacher empowerment  
Stress Management information  
Teaching Tips  
Self-Help information  
Bargains and Resources  
Satirical commentary about the politics of education  
Rants against NCLB, and appeals to get the odious law repealed  
Classroom Toolkit "Tells it like it is" and we keep the

political rhetoric confined to our Blog and Newsletter. The Good, the Bad and "Needs Improvement" Positive&hellip; Classroom Toolkit's content continues to blaze trails in honest and practical strategies for teachers. Our modular approach to Open Source instructional materials continues to provide unique value. Negative&hellip;

Some of our articles are too political (or controversial) for teachers to share with campus or district decision-makers&hellip;a sharing that would benefit students if those administrators launched realistic, adequately funded, instructional improvement projects.

Some of our articles describe the "behind the scenes" And, there is some measure of stress involved for teachers who learn that the causes of many of their problems are school system generated. Teachers who learn how the problem can be resolved; but, who cannot do anything about the problem because "the system is the problem.quot; may experience un-needed, undeserved stress. Needs Improvement&hellip;

The major difficulty with the "body of knowledge" that Classroom Toolkit has created is that finding focused information among the webs of threads (articles, pages, postings) is difficult on a limited time schedule, i.e., the kind of schedule that teachers face in their daily marathons.

In addition, as the materials were written over a period of time, they represent a huge amount of material, i.e., 108 articles per year in the Newsletter, alone. And, our articles are lengthy, often academic.

One other issue emerged&hellip;many of our Website visitors come to download our creative materials [e.g., Daily Oral Language Samples (DOL), Daily Oral Math Samples(DOM) and Daily Oral Vocabulary Samples (DOV)].

This means that we are spending more time (writing our newsletter) than in creating more of the materials (instructional content) that teachers are looking for. Volunteer Disconnect Classroom Toolkit was designed to be a volunteer effort in the same way that programmers volunteer to create Open Source software packages.

But, we have not enlisted any volunteers. One volunteer would allow us to produce twice as much, three volunteers would allow us to produce four times as much, etc. Without volunteers working on our materials, the development of usable content is slower than we planned. Sidebar

Of course, this "volunteer disconnect" is exactly what keeps many teachers working at an effort level that is more time consuming and stressful than needed.

What we are referring to is the "volunteer spirit" where teachers pitch in and work together. Teachers working together (collaborating), sharing the labor and distributing the load is the easiest, non-technological, non-budgetary strategy for increasing teacher output (productivity).

Of course Classroom Toolkit's strategy of standardizing materials and building reusable modules drives high levels of teacher collaboration&hellip;even from other states, countries or continents.

If teachers want to decrease the amount of work in order to increase personal quality time, then working together is the quickest real strategy. And, starting this summer is just the time to take action. Classroom Toolkit's Summertime Focus Our summertime focus will be on updating our Website to&hellip; Provide a drill-down overview of our materials

Make finding materials easier

Make sifting through our article repository easier This full site update will take two months and we will have to learn some new programming skills. The goals of the site update include&hellip; Easier access to online teacher tools (our toolkits)

Easier online access to our eBooks

Links to&hellip; Tools

Resources

Reviews

Promotions Self-Sustained Hosting Our site is now financially self-sufficient after the move to a different Web hosting company. The cost of hosting the site is low enough that small amount of money that our Google(TM) ads generate covers the hosting fees. Volunteer Now! If you believe in our Open Source for free instructional materials project, and if you have some writing skills; feel free to volunteer to share your materials with the world.

Sidebar Please be sure to check with your employer to make sure that you can legally share materials that you create, even materials that you create at home, on your own time. This restriction may not be fair; but, it will probably take federal and state legislation before our country comes to understand that the materials that are developed by our public schools belong to "the public."

Until then, please check because many school district administrators, living with intense "poverty consciousness" and the "budget-shortfall blues" react in a very stingy way&hellip;even for things like employees sharing teacher-created instructional materials that the school district that they work for don't "ethically" own.

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Site Progress at 04:00

## Book Review

Simple&bull;Ology: The Simple Science of Getting what you Want Author: Joyner, Mark ISBN: 0470095229 Format: Hardcover Pub. Date: 2007 Publisher: John Wiley Pages: 241 Cost: \$ (List) Available: Amazon at as low as \$ (new) - \$3.99 at eBay(TM) Subtitle: The Simple Science of Getting what you Want The Books' Topics: Insanity and Science

## Personal Brain Reprogramming

### Logic

The Rules of Simple&bull;OlogyThe central themes of this book are:Wishing and wanting don't make situations happen  
If you want something do what it takes to go directly after it

We live with the effects of illusion, delusion and disinformation, but, we can clear these mistakes from our mental programming

Clear thinking is possible, in fact easier, than clouded thinkingKeywords:Having it

Wanting it

Intelligence Trap

Pseudoscience

Utilitarian Model Flexibility

The Laws of Simple&bull;Ology

Maintenance Plan for the New BrainMain Idea:

Getting what we want in a real world requires that we think in correct, scientific, and logical ways.

Knowing that mistaken thinking, gaps in logic, and subverted thought patterns exist, we can take steps to correct our mental processing power.

Knowing the basic patterns of focused (correct) thought enables us to perceive the propaganda, disinformation, deceit and other methods that hope to influence us.

If we reprogram our thinking, if we examine what people say to us, examine what people say as they try to sell us stuff, if we learn to think; then our lives tend to be happier.Quotes:"Reading is one thing. Understanding is another. And proper application ia a whole 'nother [sic] thing entirely.

If you want to sound knowledgeable at diner parties, stopping at the level of understanding is okay.

If, however, you want to achieve something unusual )for example, obscene sit-on-your-butt-for-the-of-your-life wealth, Tiger Woods greatness, Mick Jagger rock stardom, Donald Trump luxury), proper application is where it's at." (p. - vii)

"See, the problem isn't trying unusual things. The problem is doing things that don't serve our aims, but erroneously thinking that they do." (p. - 6)

"See, some form of intelligence is the inherent ability to argue your point&hellip;the smarter you are, the better you are at verbal justification, so this will in fact prevent you from learning and problem solving. It binds you to an unhealthy way of living&#8212;you just talk yourself into it." (p. - 24)

"Our model of the world is comprised not only of what we see, but also of what we hear, feel, and think.Sadly, and perhaps thankfully, this model will always, by definition, be incomplete." (p. - 40)

"Because our model of the world will always be incomplete, and therefore fallible, belief in one model or another (without flexibility) can cause us a great deal of pain." (p. - 47)

"We base our decisions on emotion, justify them with logic." (p. - 79)

"&hellip;much of the pseudo-scientific claptrap of today comes with the claim that 'you must believe' (or have faith) in order for it to work." (p. - 98)

"There's nothing wrong with positive thinking per se, but there is a problem with an inflexible, dogmatic model of the world&#8212;especially when that model itself is likely to result in some truly harmful decisions (like putting your trust in some dodgy new age gadget when your health is on the line)." (p. - 103)

"Both skeptics and believers are doing a real disservice to people by not teaching them how to find real answers to these questions themselves." (p. - 113)

"The conversation between a True Believer and a True Skeptic isn't much of a conversation, really.What you have is two people who are dead-set in their opinions ready to say just about anything to justify those opinions.It is not an exploration of ideas, but a chest-pounding shouting match." (p. - 114)

"Stupidity training is freely available today." (p. - 114)

"Now, I am not knocking every person out there who ever tried rubbing two crystals together to see if a dollar bill would pop out the third eye.

I'm also certainly not knocking anyone's faith.I'm just saying: Evaluate the feedback like a scientist! " (p. - 115)Issues

Addressed by the Book:This book addresses:The mechanism of substituting language and beliefs for reality

The tools that dishonest folks use to get others to do what they want

Ways that we can protect ourselves from these dishonest others

Ways that we can free ourselves from inflexible beliefs and rigid models of our world

Strategies for focusing our behavior on the actions that create the outcomes that we want.The sections on logic, with their practical examples, could be used as the basis for classroom lessons in almost any subject. All the teacher needs to do is substitute more politically acceptable examples for the ones that the author provides.The Book's

Shortcomings:The book may seem too flippant for some, and it can be easy to make light of

There also is an empathy/ sympathy disconnect between a multimillionaire author who retired early (really early), and most teachers who can't earn that much in two or three lifetimes of teaching (unless inflation really

skyrockets).Comments:This book can be used by teachers of most subject and content areas as a resource for developing lessons throughout the year. Analytical and structured thinking is a Twenty-First Century skill that all students (and the adults that teach them) need practice with.

Online free software accompanies the book. And, the software is available, even if you don't purchase the book. Link to the software:

The book also presents a number of delightful (instructional) cartoons, and these cartoons can be found on the Internet as well.

Link to the Mark Joyner Blog with access to the cartoons: /blockquote>Summary:

The book is a delightful, easy read. And, it doesn't hurt that a lot of insights crop up along the way.

The book may snag at the sensibilities of some teachers, but, compared to the raunchy and racy stuff that is broadcast on Prime Time television, this book is bland and tame.

However, the book is "ready for prime time" even if the airwaves are filled with fluff that isn't worth the wavelength bandwidth.

My favorite quote from the book should prove this point&hellip;

"If you want a bogus rah-rah self-help manual that blows a ray of sunshine up your back door, then you've got the wrong book. If you want a book that teaches you 'magical thinking' one that teaches you how to hope, pray, and meditate on what you want and 'let the universe do the work for you' while you sit on your butt high on ganja and dogma, again, you've got the wrong book. If, however, you want to get things 'for real,' then you're in the right place." (p. - ix)

Rating (Four Point scale): Useful - 4

Applicable - 4

Relevant - 4

Innovative - 4

Original - 4

Interesting - 3

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Overall Rating - 3.8

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Book Review at 04:00

## **Open Source for Education**

Teachers to IT Departments: You have Network and Back-End Programming Homework It is an ethical question. When teachers know that students can't (or won't) complete homework assignments, should teachers "pile" the homework on anyway? A similar issue exists where school district's Instructional/ Information Technology (IT) Department is concerned.

Is it ethical for teachers to assign homework to the school district's IT Department when they know that the department can't (or won't) complete the homework? "King of the Hill" or Self Preservation? Sometimes school district departments, such as the IT Department, play the child's game, "King of the Hill." In this brinkmanship/ brinkswomanship scenario, one player attempts to gain and hold a position of dominance.

Of course it is "stupid" and self-defeating for IT Departments to play this game because the school district's mission (i.e., teaching children), Sidebar Unfortunately, this "King of the Hill" game is often also played (ruthlessly and powerfully) by the school district's Business Office staff, with predictable, loss of benefits to the district's students.

Sometimes this game is played by the school district's superintendent and school board. Ditto for the negative impact that trickles down (or for the needed benefits that fail to trickle down) to the district's students.

Why won't the IT Department do its Homework? In other cases, the IT Department works as a team, understands instruction, knows the needs of the students; but cannot deliver.

In most of these cases, either&hellip; The IT Department is losing the "King of the Hill" game to another department

The IT Department is under funded and under staffed and cannot deliver

The school district is not prepared to spend as much money as it will take to do the "IT Job" right

Human nature trumps good sense, i.e., some of the technical work that is required can only be completed by

engineering professionals who easily earn more than school district superintendents Types of Homework Professional Development

Elimination of Labs

Integration of Back-End Processes Student Records

Attendance

Parent Communication

Meaningful Test Result Interpretation

Access to Students' Online Portfolios

Access to District Network Assets from Home Integration of Data Collection

Data Warehousing

Multi-Level Client Resource Management (CRM)

Infrastructure Repair and Automation

Membership in the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF) Initiative

Etc. Is all this Possible? All this is possible if a school district is committed to the Integration of Technology. Of course, all

this is expensive, very expensive.

But, what is better, 1.) spend the money, hire the staff, purchase the equipment and develop and upgrade teacher's skills over a period of three years; or 2.) provide less than the minimum of these requirements and place the burden on the backs of teachers?

Which option did the school district that you work for choose?"Cheap and Free" AlternativesCan school districts create effective environments for the Integration of Technology with "cheap" and "free" software?

The answer is "Yes, but&hellip;,"

The free stuff:Is a bunch of disjointed software programs that don't work together

Is not as easy to use as the commercial programs

Requires more teacher work and effort, when completing the IT Infrastructure Homework would streamline and decrease the technology work that teachers have to do

Fails to work in a transparent manner so that students and teachers focus upon the curriculum and subject-matter content instead of the technologyThe platform required to deliver the IT Infrastructure Homework does not matter.

But, the "free and cheap" arguments of some proponents leads school district administrators and school district budget managers to believe that their obligation has been fulfilled if they supply "free and cheap" technology resources instead of costly and expensive resources.

The debate over "free" and "cheap" Technology Integration solutions distracts IT Departments, keeps IT Deparements from doing their homework for teachers. Streamlining the Work of TeachersStreamlining the work of teachers so that teachers can attend more fully to students seems to be the one core value that underlies the missing IT Infrastructure Homework.

Teaching requires a complex skill set, and teachers require several years of structured help (professional development) before they move to the level of habit and comfort where integrating technology seems to be "effortless." Useless tasks need to be eliminated from our teachers' routines.

IT Homework also should focus upon making the technology easy to use. Of course, unless the technology streamlines our teachers' workloads, easy to use translates into "busy work."Finding Funding for the HomeworkFunding a large scale program such as the Integration of Technology requires planning and a re-allocation of resources by school districts and IT Departments.

So far, school administrators and politicians seem to want to do Technology Integration "on the cheap." This forces IT Departments to "skimp and save," but also pressures IT Department staff to pressure teachers into doing on their own, what network administrators, technicians, trainers, programmers and engineers should have done for those teachers. However, real funding, almost unlimited amounts of funding would have been possible if school district IT Departments had focused all IT expenditure on instruction, if instruction (rather than building technology infrastructure) were the IT goal. If school district IT Departments focused upon measuring the direct connection between providing the technology and student achievement.

Focusing on instruction and the needs of students and teachers&hellip;this is the missing assignment.

Another missing component of the IT Infrastructure Homework is that the IT Folks locked on to the words "infrastructure." Words like "student outcomes, student achievement, driving instruction, teaching and learning first and foremost" seem to have been relegated to the backseat (maybe the trunk) of the Technology Integration vehicle.

Asking the Right Questions

IT Infrastructure went astray by asking technology questions. Instead, the questions should have been instructional. For example, questions like&hellip;What support do we need to provide to teachers?

What resources do we have to provide?

How long will it take to get teachers up to speed with the new

procedures, processes and changes to their teaching styles?Instead of placing the blame upon teachers because Technology Integration efforts languish, we should ask school district IT Departments what homework was left undone.

The job of IT Departments is to figure out what tools and skills teachers need to deliver and manage instructions.

The answer that these IT Department come up with only starts when hardware, software,

professional development, release time and collaboration time are made available to

teachers&hellip;in a streamlined and easy to use way.

Once these minimum requirements are in place, then IT Departments can begin their homework of developing the systems that teachers can use to deliver instruction.Who is at Fault?It seems logical that any stakeholder that assumes that technology alone provides a solution to Integrating Technology into instruction is at fault. By not understanding what the educational case for the use of technology is, these stakeholders missed the train, and left a lot of expensive freight (un used and under used hardware, software and network capacity) on sidings and in rail yards.

In my view, our efforts at Technology Integration are similar to going into some isolated rain forest and giving the indigenous tribes a dozen rifles and a case of bullets, then leaving. The tribe may feast for a short time, but what happens when the bullets run out? Support for the rifles would require...Mining for lead, copper, zinc

Smelting of lead and brass

Molding the bullets, machining the shells

Mining the components of the gun powder

Creating the caps that detonate the bullets

Rifle repair machinery, Optical sight repair facility

Etc.Perhaps this is a silly example, but the question concerning IT Departments completing their homework are similar: What do we need to provide to enable a sustainable Technology Integration effort?

What support (or maybe cottage industries) do we need to build before the Technology Integration can be successful?

How do we get participants (teachers) to break with their traditional ways of doing things and adopt the new methods?

Will teachers and students be better off?

Will teachers and students be performing at higher levels, to greater capacity, with higher quality outcomes, products and performances that we can directly measure and attribute to the technology investment?

Will our initiatives be easier and less stressful for teachers to use than traditional methods?Teachers's InterestsIT

Department staff forgets that most teachers do most of their instructional development and planning work at home.

School districts are too stingy to provide the support that teachers need for equipment in their home. (Some school districts don't even supply needed support for equipment inside their districts.)

This means that IT Homework requires that everything that teachers need be made available for their use in their homes.

Teachers have little interest in servers, thin clients, or distributions. Teachers just want everything to work, to work without a lot of effort, to work without their having to engage in a steep learning curve, to work seamlessly with everything else. These expectations for support are justified.

Teachers need help with planning, classroom management, lesson delivery, curriculum and high-stakes test survival.

Teachers need stress relief, strategies for self-improvement, and streamlined ways to keep their jobs. These are areas of homework that school district IT Departments are turning in late.

Training and Professional Development: Different Vocabularies

It is school district IT Department staff members' responsibility to learn instructional vocabulary. Teachers have only a limited need to learn IT Infrastructure vocabulary.

However, the terms "Training" and "Professional Development" need special clarification.

The IT Department calls "it" training, while teachers call "it" professional development.

Both groups talk as though the terms were synonymous. The terms do not mean the same thing.

IT Folks attend training, but teachers attend professional development. This means that one the missing IT Homework assignment is to convert every single bit of training (software training, for example), into curriculum-targeted, instruction-focused, practical and applicable professional development.

If teachers are "ordered to training," they attend out of a sense of duty or out of a need to meet professional development seat-time requirements. But, the training stands little chance of motivating teachers, and stands an even lower chance that teachers will seek follow-up learning. Teachers, like everyone else, want easy solutions, magic pills, quick fixes; but they feel free to ignore (and never apply) training session content that is not directly related to instruction.

Teachers desire solutions that fits into their (comfortable) habit patterns.

To do this, IT Department staff must do their homework and&hellip; Develop a "educational case" for the use of the technology

Develop direct measures of student outcomes based upon the use of the technology

Identify exact instructional delivery methods that research proved were the independent variables responsible for increased student learning

Deliver an easy to use, fully-functional solution that included the hardware, network resources, software, professional development, in class coaching, long term follow-up

Track teacher implementation, assess teacher skill at the delivery of those specific instructional tasks

Follow-up with teachers until the teachers "get the specified instructional delivery skills right."The lack of teacher enthusiasm for Technology Integration is easy to explain. Definitely understandable. The lack of teacher enthusiasm for Technology Integration is a realistic response to an untenable and precarious situation that teachers are left in because school district IT Departments have not done their homework.SolutionsSolutions to this Integration of Technology issue range from easy, painless, low-cost and quick to difficult, painful, expensive and long-term.

Why the huge difference in solutions?

Because school districts don't have to do anything about Integrating Technology. A Technology focus distracts school districts from their core expertise, leads school districts away from their area of expertise, requires school districts to play in an arena that is too expensive&hellip;an arena that school district officials (unanimously?) agree is beyond the means of most school districts in the financial and knowledge-of-how-to-do-it areas.

Or, school districts can commit to the Integration of Technology, re-purpose funds from every nonessential project and program, "cut the fat" out of every project and program that is essential, and beg (grants, fund-raising development), borrow (bond issues), or steal (rob from other projects and programs and let them flounder from under funding in the ways that the Integration of Technology was let flounder.)

Or, school districts can commit to what they say they are doing to Integrate Technology and actually do their IT Homework. If the expertise does not exist in-house, then the program can be outsourced (hired out to companies that have the expertise). Solutions such as this will cost, and cost, and cost&hellip;Other Creative SolutionsThis article is

posted under Open Source Solutions section of the Classroom Toolkit Newsletter because moving to Open Source is one creative solution to fulfilling the needs of our school districts to Integrate Technology. But a workable Open Source project means that school districts would share (contribute) all the proprietary content that they hoard. (Note: This solution does not mean faking a way out of the Technology Integration problem by implementing free and cheap software. This would be an Open Source of quality, usable instructional content, having nothing to do with free computer operating systems. Delivering instructional content is another school district IT Department's missing assignment.)

Quality instructional content is neither free or cheap, unless this content is created through a grassroots effort such as the Open Source for instructional materials started by Classroom Toolkit. Cooperative Solutions Other, creative solutions include: Cooperatives, inter-district sharing

Open Source, instructional materials collaborative's

Large-scale foundation grants, such as the ones that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supports

State-wide sharing initiatives All these initiatives could get school district IT Departments "off the hook," and "excuse" these departments from doing their homework.

But as the politics and the rhetoric now stand&hellip;

IT Departments: "Do your homework!"

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Open Source at 03:00

## Site Strategy

### Preparing for the Summer

While most members of the general public believe that teachers are well paid (i.e., teachers make more than they do), and that teachers receive three (3) months of paid vacation; we know that teachers spend the summer gearing up for the next school year (without compensation). Sidebar Even though some of our colleagues are able to take Caribbean Cruises or travel Europe (London, Paris, Moscow or Rome) and take tax deductions for a portion of the trip spent in study, and spent in the development of instructional materials; the general public thinks that all teachers get paid to spend all three months in leisure-based activities. And, if teachers are lucky enough, school district and campus administrators keep their promise and assign them to the same grade/ content area that they were expecting (meaning that the work done over the summer wasn't wasted).

A wiser (risk mitigation) strategy is to build generic, modular, multi-level strategies during the summer&hellip;to provide the flexibility (and luxury) of being ready for any assignment for the next school year.

Sidebar Classroom Toolkit presents our evaluation of the year in review at the end of each school year. An honest assessment of what went right, of what went wrong, and of where we can improve is best completed as soon as we can catch our breath following our project year.

Classroom Toolkit's publication year coincides with the calendar year, but our focus parallels the school year. Classroom Toolkit Summer Strategy Classroom Toolkit has evolved into a "multiple-personality" movement where&hellip;Our Website Provides&hellip;Basic classroom planning information

Reusable modules

Graphic Organizer starter kit Our Newsletter provides&hellip;Teacher empowerment

Stress Management information

Teaching Tips

Self-Help information

Bargains and Resources

Satirical commentary about the politics of education

Rants against NCLB, and appeals to get the odious law repealed Classroom Toolkit "Tells it like it is" and we keep the political rhetoric confined to our Blog and Newsletter. The Good, the Bad and "Needs

Improvement" Positive&hellip; Classroom Toolkit's content continues to blaze trails in honest and practical strategies for teachers. Our modular approach to Open Source instructional materials continues to provide unique value. Negative&hellip;

Some of our articles are too political (or controversial) for teachers to share with campus or district decision-makers&hellip;a sharing that would benefit students if those administrators launched realistic, adequately funded, instructional improvement projects.

Some of our articles describe the "behind the scenes" And, there is some measure of stress involved for teachers who learn that the causes of many of their problems are school system generated. Teachers who learn how the problem can be resolved; but, who cannot do anything about the problem because "the system is the problem.quot; may experience un-needed, undeserved stress.

Needs Improvement&hellip;

The major difficulty with the "body of knowledge" that Classroom Toolkit has created is that finding focused information

among the webs of threads (articles, pages, postings) is difficult on a limited time schedule, i.e., the kind of schedule that teachers face in their daily marathons.

In addition, as the materials were written over a period of time, they represent a huge amount of material, i.e., 108 articles per year in the Newsletter, alone. And, our articles are lengthy, often academic.

One other issue emerged&hellip;many of our Website visitors come to download our creative materials [e.g., Daily Oral Language Samples (DOL), Daily Oral Math Samples(DOM) and Daily Oral Vocabulary Samples (DOV)].

This means that we are spending more time (writing our newsletter) than in creating more of the materials (instructional content) that teachers are looking for. Volunteer Disconnect Classroom Toolkit was designed to be a volunteer effort in the same way that programmers volunteer to create Open Source software packages.

But, we have not enlisted any volunteers. One volunteer would allow us to produce twice as much, three volunteers would allow us to produce four times as much, etc. Without volunteers working on our materials, the development of usable content is slower than we planned. Sidebar Of course, this "volunteer disconnect" is exactly what keeps many teachers working at an effort level that is more time consuming and stressful than needed.

What we are referring to is the "volunteer spirit" where teachers pitch in and work together. Teachers working together (collaborating), sharing the labor and distributing the load is the easiest, non-technological, non-budgetary strategy for increasing teacher output (productivity).

Of course Classroom Toolkit's strategy of standardizing materials and building reusable modules drives high levels of teacher collaboration&hellip;even from other states, countries or continents.

If teachers want to decrease the amount of work in order to increase personal quality time, then working together is the quickest real strategy. And, starting this summer is just the time to take action. Classroom Toolkit's Summertime

Focus Our summertime focus will be on updating our Website to&hellip; Provide a drill-down overview of our materials  
Make finding materials easier

Make sifting through our article repository easier This full site update will take two months and we will have to learn some new programming skills. The goals of the site update include&hellip; Easier access to online teacher tools (our toolkits)

Easier online access to our eBooks

Links to&hellip; Tools

Resources

Reviews

Promotions Self-Sustained Hosting Our site is now financially self-sufficient after the move to a different Web hosting company. The cost of hosting the site is low enough that small amount of money that our Google(TM) ads generate covers the hosting fees. Volunteer Now! If you believe in our Open Source for free instructional materials project, and if you have some writing skills; feel free to volunteer to share your materials with the world. Sidebar Please be sure to check with your employer to make sure that you can legally share materials that you create, even materials that you create at home, on your own time. This restriction may not be fair; but, it will probably take federal and state legislation before our country comes to understand that the materials that are developed by our public schools belong to "the public."

Until then, please check because many school district administrators, living with intense "poverty consciousness" and the "budget-shortfall blues" react in a very stingy way&hellip; even for things like employees sharing teacher-created instructional materials that the school district that they work for don't "ethically" own.

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