



Winter 2008
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SISD

Technology Unplugged

Welcome to the winter edition of the SISD Technology Unplugged newsletter. Happy New Year! 2008 is going to be a very challenging and exciting year in Sherman ISD. One of the first initiatives for the New Year is the implementation of the new Pinnacle Gradebook program. The software was installed in December. Most campus level training was conducted in January when we returned from winter break. Although we are still fine tuning the program, there are many positive features. Most teachers are able to access the Gradebook via the Internet from their home computers. This means teachers can access their Gradebook 24/7. Another positive feature of the new Gradebook is parent and student accessibility to grades. Parents can request an account at the parentviewer website. Once they create their accounts, they can login and see student grades, student assignments if entered by the teacher, and student attendance. Parents may also request an email notification for student attendance and grades. Providing parents access to student grades allows them to be proactive. Several teachers have already received parent initiated contact about student grades and performance based on information from the Gradebook notification system. There are many features available in the new Gradebook and we will be providing additional training throughout the year.

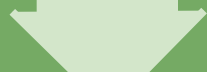
In this edition of the Technology Unplugged newsletter, you will find a great article with resources for President's Day as well as many examples of technology use in our classrooms. Discovery Education Streaming (formerly known as United Streaming) is a resource available to all teachers (preK to 12) and classrooms in Sherman ISD. Discovery Education Streaming contains engaging educational videos and online teaching resources. There is an article about Discovery Education Streaming use at Washington Elementary on page 4. If you have not used this resource, contact your campus technology specialist for an account and training.

As you integrate technology in your classroom we would love to hear and share your success! If you have a project you would like to share, please send it to your campus tech specialist for inclusion in the next edition of our newsletter. Also, if you have students who would like to submit a story, please send them as well.

Enjoy this edition of Technology Unplugged.

Mignon Plyler
SISD Technology Team

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<http://www.shermanisd.net>

"640k [of memory] ought to be enough for anybody"
-- Bill Gates, 1981

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."
-- Popular Mechanics, 1949



By: Teddy Pitman
Special Projects Coordinator, Technology Department

Eduphoria is fast becoming one of the buzzwords of the employees of the Sherman school district. Implemented during the 2006-2007 school year, Eduphoria applications are simplifying many of the tasks we face.

Eduphoria Forethought allows teachers to set up lesson plans with easy access to the TEKS scope and sequence. Teachers can create and publish activities that are aligned with the learning standards. Once approved, those activities may be used by other teachers in their plans. Team planning in Forethought allows teachers to plan with their peers.

The Eduphoria PDAS application allows teachers and administrators to file their reports online. Teachers can file self reports and evaluations, and principals can conduct walk-throughs, formal observations, and summative evaluations – all online.

Eduphoria Workshop tracks all of the courses and trainings for all employees. District classes are added to Eduphoria prior to the class date. Employees may then sign up for the classes through the Eduphoria program. Once the class is complete, a survey must be filled out to receive credit for attending. Out of district classes are added as New Portfolio Entries by the employee. The program tracks CPE hours as well as attendance. It is very important that all employees fill out the surveys for classes attended in a timely manner. Survey results cannot be seen by the instructor until the class is closed. Once the class is closed, employees may no longer fill out the survey. Classes are closed at the end of every month.

As with all new programs, it takes time to get used to using the various features. Most of our employees are now familiar with Eduphoria and are using and enjoying the components of the program. If you have any questions, or need help, please contact the Technology Department. Contact Jenniefer Parker for Forethought, Chris Cooper for PDAS, or Teddy Pitman for Workshop.

Melissa and Houdini

By: Melinda Green
First Grade Teacher, Jefferson

Melissa G., a first grade student at Jefferson Elementary, has attached herself to Houdini, a certified Animal Assisted Therapy black Labrador Retriever that belongs to her teacher, Melinda Green. Houdini, in return, has taken a fancy to Melissa. Melissa dictated a book about Houdini using pictures that were taken with a digital camera and printed. The format of her book is the same as the sentences Melissa writes for her Reading Recovery teacher, Cindy Pressley. Melissa then took the draft to the computer lab where she transferred the book and pictures to a PowerPoint show. Her class will now be able to view her book, Melissa and Houdini, on the TV or read the printed version in the reading center. This is a great way for classes to produce high interest books for their classroom libraries.





By: Carolyn Speers

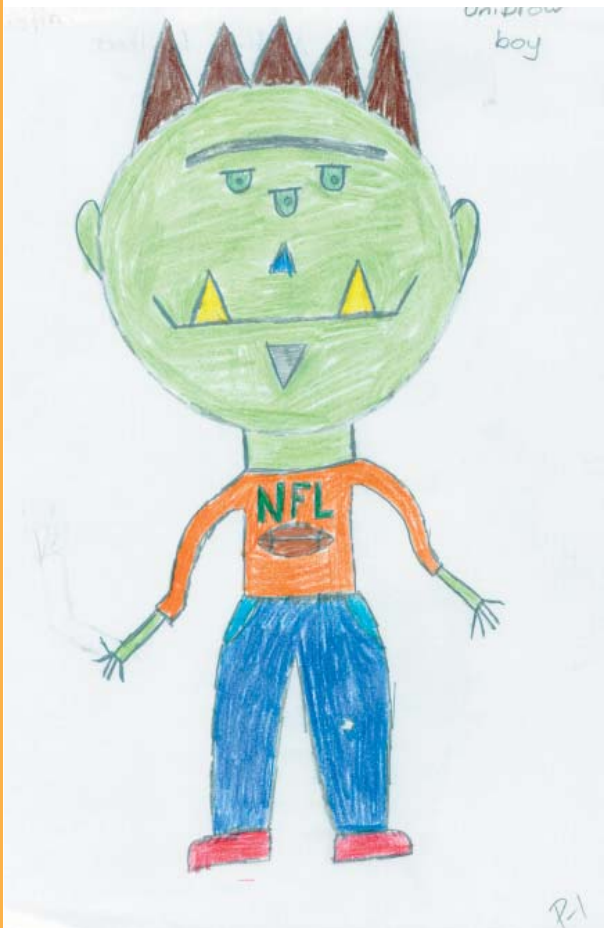
Sixth grade Language Arts Teacher, Dillingham

Sixth grade Language Arts students in Mrs. Speers class recently joined the Monster Exchange program on the Internet to enhance descriptive writing skills. The students each created a monster and described him in detail for classroom students from other states, as well as other countries, to try to draw.

Everyone enjoyed the project from drawing the monster, to writing the description, and especially “exchanging” the projects. The students also showed off their tech skills by creating PowerPoint book reports complete with pictures and sounds. Each class presented the reports to fellow students as we all learned some new, fun, and inventive ways to share books.

UNIBROW BOY BY AUSTIN

- Step 1 -you make a big circle for the head.
- Step 2-on the side of the head you put half hearts.
- Step 3-you put spiky brown hair.
- Step 4-you put a long unibrow across the forehead.
- Step 5-you put 3 eyeballs.
- Step 6-you put a triangle nose.
- Step 7-you put a long grey line below the middle of the circle.
- Step 8-you put little lines on the side of the big line going diagonal.
- Step 9-you put two yellow teeth going up out of the mouth.
- Step 10-below the mouth you put a brown goatee.
- Step 11-for the neck you put a cylinder.
- Step 12-you put a short sleeve that has a football on it.
- Step 13-then above the football you put NFL in big letters.
- Step 14-you put blue jeans that has a hole by the nee.
- Step 15-you put really red shoes.
- Step 16-the head is a lime green.
- Step 17-the unibrow is brown.
- Step 18-the nose is blue.
- Step 19-the goatee is brown.
- Step 20-the three eyes are brown.



Multi-Media Projectors Have Teachers & Students Beaming with Discovery Education Streaming

By: Sharon Krenek

Campus Technology Specialist, Crutchfield and Washington

“Wow!”, “That’s cool!”, “Can we see that again?” are just a few of the comments heard by students at Washington Elementary as they experience the exciting new ceiling mounted projectors in their classrooms at Neblett Elementary School. Of course, everything is new at Neblett, but the projectors rank at the top of the list with both the teachers and the students of the things they like the most about their new (although temporary) location.

Nearly every teacher on the campus has created an account with Discovery Education Streaming in order that they may show a video to reinforce the skills being taught in their classrooms every day in every subject area. “It’s just fantastic!”, says first grade teacher Carmen Davis. “We use it every day. The videos are aligned with our TEKS, so all we have to do is type in a key word, click on our grade level and a variety of videos appear to choose from.” Another teacher, David Witten, says it has really helped his students to learn new vocabulary words. He recently was reading a fairy tale to his students, in which a fair maiden was spinning on her spindle. The students asked, “What is a spindle?”

So Mr. Witten went to his computer, brought up a video that had a spinning wheel and spindle in it, and showed the students just a minute of the video. The students’ question was answered almost instantly. Students are completely engaged when they have that huge image in front of their eyes and “surround sound” to go with it.

Special Education teacher Donella McConkey has found the use of the videos and songs a great way to reach her special needs students in learning math concepts. The use of song and dance in some videos has been a big hit with several of her students. Her students have really enjoyed learning their multiplication facts with “Rappin the Facts”.

Music teacher Lila Honts says Discovery Education Streaming has really made music come alive in her classroom and substantially impacted the students’ learning when they can see and hear different instruments and sounds come alive through video. “Students often don’t

have the life experiences needed to relate their learning to. Consider the number of ESL students we have at Washington. Understanding vocabulary is a constant target area of instruction. The use of videos to show students makes learning and understanding much more meaningful.”

If you are interested in learning more about Discovery Education Streaming or creating an account for your classroom use, see your campus tech specialist for an access code and go to the following Website and explore all the great resources available at the click of the mouse. <http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com>



Tux Paint

By: Beth Weeks

Campus Technology Specialist, Fairview and Perrin

Tux Paint is a freeware program that was placed on our computers this year. Kindergarten and 1st grade classes at Fairview and Perrin did some exploring in January to see all the cool tools that this new paint program had to offer. Students created masterpieces by using the cool paint brushes that drag and drop leaves and squirrels and cats along with other regular types of round and square paint brushes. Students also used the “stamp” feature that allowed them to put fish in their water or birds in the sky! A favorite feature of Tux Paint was using the “magic” tool that allowed students to draw rainbows, bricks and grass around their pictures.

As students explored the new programs teachers were sharing ideas of how they thought they could use Tux Paint in their classroom. Some of the ideas included: using the stamp feature to have students create patterns, use all the draw tools to create a picture to go along with their writing examples, use the stamp feature to recreate math problems with pictures. The ideas were endless! To get to Tux Paint at school, click on start, programs, and go to Tux Paint. You can start it full screen or windowed in a smaller screen version. You can find Tux Paint on the Internet for download if you would like to use it on your home computer. Go to <http://www.tuxpaint.org/>



**PRESIDENT'S
DAY**



A Teachable Moment

By: Brenda Neyman
Campus Technology Specialist, Piner

As defined by Wikipedia, “President’s Day (or Presidents’ Day), is the common name for the federal holiday officially designated as Washington’s Birthday, and both variants are among the official names of a number of coinciding state holidays. It is celebrated on the third Monday of February.”

In 2008, that day falls on February 18th. Below are some links for easy access to President’s Day information, worksheets, and all kinds of activities (including some for the technology lab) to help you prepare for the federal holiday. Some sites/activities are intended for all levels; some are elementary, while others are secondary. In addition, what a time to tie in the upcoming presidential election!

Description/History of Holiday

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidents_day
<http://www.teach-nology.com/themes/social/presidents/>
<http://www.theteacherscorner.net/seasonal/presidents-day/index.htm>
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/presidentsday/>
<http://ap.grolier.com/splash>
http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/Themes/Presidents__Day/
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/socialstd/features/presday.html>

Help Wanted – Presidential Ad

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/02/lp254-01.shtml

Design a Presidential Monument

http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/02/lp254-02.shtml

Everything You Want to Know about the Presidents!

<http://www.potus.com/>

White House Tour

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/life/video/index.html>

Primary Resources-Letters from the President

<http://www.americanpresidents.org/classroom/gen13.asp>

List of Topical Sites

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=2888>

Presidential Campaign

http://www.eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/US_Government/GOV0032.html

Create Your Own AR Tests

By: Sharice Jennings

Campus Technology Specialist, Jefferson and Wakefield

Do you have a story or novel you study in class and have always wanted to have an Accelerated Reader test for it? Well you can create your own A/R tests. To create a test, you will need to follow these simple steps:

1. Open Accelerated Reader Management.
2. Click on School.
3. Click on Quizzes.
4. Click the Add button.
5. Choose a Quiz ID number for your quiz. Quiz numbers 900-1399 are reserved for teacher-created quizzes. You can choose a number from the list.
6. Click OK when you have chosen your number.
7. In the window that pops up, fill in the blanks with the required story information. You will need to decide what reading level would be best for the book and how many questions the quiz should have.

If you need some help leveling the book, you have several choices:

- You can go to the Renaissance Learning Website http://www.renlearn.com/store/quiz_home.asp to see if a quiz has already been written for that book but the school has not purchased the quiz. You can use the book level they list on their Website. This Website allows you to search by title, author, or ISBN.
- If your book is not on the list, you can use your own judgment on the book level.
- If you feel uncomfortable estimating the reading level, you can use a Readability formula to calculate the reading level. You can search on the Internet for your preferred Readability formula. Edward Fry's Readability calculation is based on the number of syllables and sentences in a selected passage. You will also need to know the word count of the book. If it is

a long book, and it is difficult or impossible to count the words of the story, you can take several reference samples from different pages and estimate for the total book.

8. Click the Questions tab at the top of the window to start entering questions. Click on "1. New Question," and click the Edit Question button.
9. Another window will pop up allowing you to type in the question. Because the A/R system will rotate the answers, you only need to make sure the correct answer is in the Correct Answer line.
10. Click OK to go back to the list of questions and edit the next "New Question" until you have entered all questions and answers. Remember:

- Vary the difficulty of the questions. When you write the questions, some of the questions should be simple recall questions. Some should be analysis/application questions. One or two questions should be more difficult evaluation questions, yet appropriate for the book level.
- Vary the location where the answer can be found in the book. Space the questions out so some answers are found at the beginning, some in the middle and some at the end.
- Some of your answer choices should be easy to eliminate, but the student should not be able to choose all the right answers unless they have read the book carefully.

Following these steps will make the quiz available to your entire campus. To reduce the occurrence of duplicate tests and test typos, please check with your librarian before creating the test and have your peers proofread the finished quiz. If a correction needs to be made to the test, you can follow these same directions to get to the window to edit the created questions.

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