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SISD

Technology Unplugged

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"The trick to teaching is to entice and motivate the students' excitement and interest in the topic, and then to give them the proper tools to reflect, to explore, compare, and contrast, to form the proper conceptual structures."
-- Don Norman, 1993

Welcome to the March edition of the Sherman ISD Technology Unplugged newsletter. Inside this edition you will find many useful and informative articles, as well as upcoming training opportunities. Are you ready for 21st century learners? The article on page 2 describes the six key elements of 21st century learning. Looking for a way to integrate technology and thinking maps? See page 4 for a lesson plan focusing on double bubble thinking maps and digital cameras. Interested in how SISD teachers are using technology successfully in their classrooms? See pages 3 and 4 for SISD success stories. Is your classroom "millennial" friendly?

What is a Millennial, Anyway?

Have you heard the term "millennial"? Would you know what a "millennial" looked like if you saw one? You may be wondering WHY you need to know what a millennial is. Well...millennials are everywhere in SISD. They are riding our buses, eating in our cafeterias, walking our hallways and learning in our classrooms. If you have the opportunity to interact with students, born between 1982 and 2000+, you are interacting with millennials. Millennials are young people born between 1982 and 2000+ and they are 70 million strong. Millennials are very tech-savvy. Technology drastically affects the millennials (today's students) and the way they view and function in their everyday activities.

- Technology is allowing today's students to be ultra-communicators and multi-taskers.
- 58 percent of students have a cell phone and 68 percent of those students bring their cell phone to school
- 21 percent of those school-bound cell phones have text and video/photo capabilities
- 81 percent of students have at least one email account
- 75 percent have at least one instant messaging (IM) screen name
- 60 percent e-mail or IM people other than friends on a weekly basis. (69 percent to parents and family members, 24 percent to teachers and coaches and four percent to religious leaders)

Continued on page 2 - See Millennials

Upcoming Technology Training

The following SISD technology training is being offered in March. Training will be held at Austin College. If you need a substitute, you will need to call the Sub Line. Your absence will be counted as Professional Development. Please clear absence with your principal before registering. If you wish to attend one of these sessions, e-mail [http://mailto:training@shermanisd.net](mailto:training@shermanisd.net)

The Technology Department strives to meet the needs of all employees. If you are unable to attend training, use the technology helpdesk system and request "just in time" training scheduled at your convenience.

Portable Home Pages
March 30, 8:15 - 11:15 a.m.

Integrating Digital Gadgets
March 30, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Producer
March 31, 8:15 - 3:15 p.m.

See summary of classes on page 6 ...



<http://www.shermanisd.net>

Learning for the 21st Century

Learning for the 21st Century, a report from a new public-private coalition known as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>, articulates a vision of how schools can best prepare students to succeed in the first decades of the 21st century. Central to the report's recommendations is a call for schools to focus on six key elements of 21st century learning:

1. Core Subjects: The authors reaffirm the importance of the core subjects identified by No Child Left Behind but challenge schools and policy makers to expand their focus beyond "basic competency" to understanding the core academic content at much higher levels.
2. Learning Skills: "To cope with the demands of the 21st century," the report states, "students need to know more than core subjects. They need to know how to use their knowledge and skills by thinking critically, applying knowledge to new situations, analyzing information, comprehending new ideas, communicating, collaborating, solving problems, and making decisions."
3. 21st Century Tools: Recognizing that "technology is, and will continue to be, a driving force in workplaces, communities, and personal lives in the 21st century." Learning for the 21st Cen-



tury emphasizes the importance of incorporating information and communication technologies into education from the elementary grades up.

4. 21st Century Context: Experiences that are relevant to students' lives, connected with the world beyond the classroom, and based on authentic projects are central to the sort of education the Partnership for 21st Century Skills defines as the appropriate context for learning in the information age.
5. 21st Century Content: The report's authors believe that certain content essential for preparing students to live and work in a 21st century world is missing from many state and local standards. Twentyfirst Century Content includes global awareness, financial, economical and business literacy as well as civic literacy,
6. New Assessments that Measure 21st Century Skills: "As pervasive as assessment seems to be today," the report says, "it remains an emerging and challenging field that demands further study and innovation." Recommendations include moving beyond standardized testing as the sole measure of student learning; balancing traditional tests with classroom assessments to measure the full range of students' skills; and using technology-based assessments to deliver immediate feedback.

Millennials - continued from page 1

- They are not just using technology in different ways; they are approaching their lives and their daily activities differently because of technology.
- The ways that students are using technology gets more sophisticated as they get older, but do not underestimate younger children's capacity for using technology meaningfully.
- 54% of students in grades 7–12 know more of their friends' instant messaging screen names than their home phone numbers.
- 67% of students in grades 7–12 go online first to research a topic they are studying.
- 81% of the students said that losing access to the Internet would impact their personal lives and their schoolwork.

According to NetDay's Speak Up Day 2003 data, today's students want to use all kinds of technology to help them learn collaboratively, in their own time and at their own pace, and through structured activities that allow for creativity and self-expression.

These students have great ideas on how technology should be used in school, and they want to be more involved in technology discussions and issues at their schools. Are your students involved? Are you using technology in your classroom the way your students use technology at home? Is your classroom a 19th century classroom with 21st century students? Hopefully, as educators, we can learn how the millennials use technology and use that knowledge to transform our classrooms into 21st century classrooms.



Statistics from a PowerPoint presentation about NetDay's Speak Up Day 2003, "Millennials: Who are Today's Students? (From CoSN's 9th Annual K-12 School Networking Conference)" and NetDay 2004 preliminary data. <http://www.netday.org>

Crutchfield's "Techno Buddies"

Jennifer Parker, Technology Specialist at Crutchfield Elementary

Some very excited Crutchfield 1st and 3rd grade classes are putting a twist on the best practice of partnering older and younger students. Ms. Jay's and Mrs. Krennek's 3rd grade classes are Techno Buddies with Mrs. Hutson's and Mrs. Monroe's 1st grade classes. So far this year, the 3rd grade students have given the 1st grade students one on one instruction on taking AR tests, creating PowerPoint presentations from scratch, creating Publisher projects from scratch, and using Excel. The Techno Buddies teachers meet to determine what curricular areas need to be addressed and then come up with technology projects that meet those needs. Reading comprehension, number concepts, and states of matter are a few core curricular areas that have been addressed thus far. The Techno Buddies program was presented by Crutchfield teachers at this year's TCEA conference in February.



Digital Cameras in Sherman Elementary Schools

Lishelle Foster, Technology Specialist at Washington Elementary

Digital cameras are wonderful pieces of technology that students can easily be trained to use. Digital cameras are not only simple to operate, but they provide the user with instant printable images. Below are some examples of how elementary school teachers can incorporate digital cameras into their daily lesson plans.

Kindergarten: Use the digital camera to make class books. With teacher assistance, students can photograph objects and create books to practice alphabet letters, sight words, color words, rhyming words, shapes and numbers. Create the book by inserting the pictures into a PowerPoint presentation. Students can view the PowerPoint on the classroom television or at individual work stations during center time. Seek out technology savvy 3rd and 4th graders to create the PowerPoint presentations for you! Make hard copies of the books to be sent home for extra reading practice.

First: Use digital cameras in math to capture "real-life" shots of patterns in our environment. Go on a pattern walk around the school. Have students look for patterns in their school building and surrounding areas. Allow the students to photograph the patterns that they find. Students might find patterns on a classmate's shirt, on the gym floor, in a class line, or even on the school building. Use the digital pictures that students take to make a math center game. Have students match the pictures to their corresponding written pattern. For example: a red and white striped shirt would be paired with an AB pattern card. Students could also use the picture to continue or complete the pattern in written or verbal form.



Second: Take a fieldtrip to Sherman's historic downtown. Give students the opportunity to photograph many of the downtown buildings and shops. Upon returning to school, have the students discuss their findings and photographs. Students can then sort the pictures into two categories, goods and services. Students can insert their pictures into a graphic organizer template created in a program such as Publisher. They can add text boxes to the template to create captions for their pictures.

Third: Students can use the digital camera to photograph simple machines in our school environment. Students can then insert the digital pictures into a Word document and write a short paragraph explaining how the simple machine works. This is a great opportunity for students to incorporate science vocabulary into their writing.

Fourth: Each week assign one student to the job of classroom photographer. This student should have easy access to the digital camera. The class photographer is responsible for capturing at least one photo of hands-on learning that can be used in your weekly newsletter. The class photographer can also be responsible for writing a short paragraph or caption about the activity.

Visit these websites to learn about additional ways to integrate digital cameras into your classroom instruction.

<http://www.edzone.net/~mwestern/pix.html>

http://www.hardin.k12.ky.us/res_tech/TEC/digitalcamera/primary.htm

<http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/digitalcameras.htm>

http://www.escanabaschool.com/digital/digital_files/v3_document.htm

Integration:

Education is not just what students can memorize, but what the students can do with the knowledge...

Thinking Maps with Technology

Name of Lesson: Common Ground

TEKS & SE:

Tech Apps: 126.3 - 1B, 2A, 7A, 7B, 7C, 11A

Tech Apps: 126.12 - 1B, 1F, 2A, 5A, 7D, 7F

Grade Level: K-12 (Lesson can be adapted for any grade level)

Subject: Technology (Lesson can be adapted for any subject)

Materials: Digital Camera and Double Bubble Thinking Map

Objective: Students will learn how to operate a camera while comparing and contrasting using a double bubble.

Procedure:

Step 1: Begin by showing and demonstrating how to use the digital camera. As with any other activity in which children will be handling expensive equipment, emphasize the importance of care and safety when operating the camera.

Step 2: Put students in pairs and have them take a picture of each other. Students can then transfer the pictures to their folder. The teacher should have predetermined the file management procedures.

Step 3: The students will open the Double Bubble Thinking Map template in PowerPoint. Insert each picture into the main bubbles. Continue teaching the students how to move, resize and crop pictures using the picture toolbar. Then use the textbox tool to draw a textbox and type the characteristics. Put similar characteristics down the middle and unique characteristics on the outer edges of the bubbles. Put two students to a computer.

Examples:

This activity can be easily modified and customized for a variety of age groups. Also, whatever the topic or theme, you will need to develop a list of criteria the students will be scored on. Here are the ones I typically use:

1. quality of picture (was it in focus, was it cropped properly, was it inserted into the map appropriately)
2. neatness of map (appropriate font size, alignment of text in bubbles)
3. content of map (was the map used properly)

Assessment: Teacher Made Rubric

Extension: Common Ground can be used to compare and contrast anything within the curriculum. Use the digital camera to get a picture of the items being compared.

Why Use Technology?

- To facilitate and support student achievement of essential learning outcomes
- To provide all students with appropriate technology literacy skills for 21st century citizenship, including social and economic prosperity
- To provide parents, community members, and staff with the tools and training necessary to support student achievement and essential learning outcomes

“Start Page” Success Story

Mary Hensler, SHS Art Teacher, participated in the January training over Portable Web Pages. After the training she stated...

“One of the most difficult problems of teaching so many preps is keeping all of your assets where you can find them. I have been on the computer for over 10 years now and have thousands of files over every subject I teach. Creating a start page will help me organize not only my documents, but also all my resources such as Quicktime movies, Web pages, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Start pages allow me to put all of the resources for each lesson in one place. So this is how I am going to set my lesson plans. Thanks for making my life easier.”

For a Portable Web Pages “How To” click on the following link for the November/December issue of SISD Technology Unplugged.

<http://www.shermanisd.net/tech/TechnologyUnplugged-NovDec04.pdf>

Creating Panoramic Images Using Photomerge in Photoshop

Creating a Photomerge Composition



Objective

As part of our introduction into working with Photoshop, it is important to understand it's image manipulation capabilities. In this project you will learn how to create a panoramic image by stitching three images together.



Resources & Directions

Click the **Image Browser** and open all three of the images located in the **Photomerge** file located in the **Photoshop Samples** folder.

Click the link below to the **Photoshop Help** menu.

<file:///Applications/Adobe%20Photoshop%20CS/Help/help.html>
Then click **Search** and type the keyword **“photomerge”**.

The information in the following tutorials listed below will be especially handy in completing this project:

Creating Panoramic Images using Photomerge

A portion of a portable start page submitted by Mary Hensler.

Technology Solutions For the Eye

Amy Elliott
SISD Technology Integration Specialist

Use Windows Magnifier

A common need for teachers working with visually impaired students on computers is to magnify a portion of the screen. Fortunately, there is no need to purchase a separate program to accomplish this task, as the Windows Magnifier is a built-in visibility enhancer.

To start using the Windows Magnifier, click *Start, Programs, Accessories, Accessibility*, and click *Magnifier*. The top half of the screen will magnify at two times the normal size while the bottom half remains the same. You can adjust the portion of the screen to be magnified and the desired level of magnification.

For more help on this topic, including a list of other low vision accessibility techniques, visit the following website. <http://www.magnifiers.org>

Change Text Size in IE and Word

One of the easiest adjustments you can make for low vision students using Internet Explorer or Microsoft Word is to increase the text size. To accomplish this in Internet Explorer, go to *View, Text Size*, and bump it up from the default *Medium* to *Largest*. Note: Not all sites will change their text size. Some are coded so the text stays one size regardless of how you set up your browser.

In Word, font sizes can simply be increased for the sake of visibility. Sometimes the student will want to type a paper in a specific font size, such as the standard 12 points, but will want to see the text better. To increase the view of the text rather than simply enlarging the font, click *View, Zoom*, and then choose a desired percentage. Choosing 200%, for instance, will double the size of the text shown on the screen.

Dyslexia

Scotopic Sensitivity or Irlen Syndrome (SSS or SSIS) is a "perceptual disorder," where the brain is more sensitive to certain wavelengths of light than it is to other wavelengths. It is not an eye disorder, so your ophthalmologist will probably not know about it. You may recognize it if I call it light sensitivity. You probably know people who are uncomfortable or get headaches when forced to work under fluorescent lights or who must wear sunglasses whenever they go outside. But you may not be aware of the extent of the stress this sensitivity can cause a person, or that this stress can be alleviated.

Helen Irlen, a school psychologist, first discovered this syndrome in the 1980s. Her book, *Reading by the Colors*, details the discovery of how colored overlays could reduce the intensity of certain wavelengths of light to which some people were sensitive, making reading easier or even possible for them.

Talk to your SISD Dyslexia Specialist to find out what color will best serve your students. Studies have shown that certain colors work better for individual students.

Sometimes students with reading difficulties can have their word processing experiences enhanced when teachers alter the traditional white screen and black text. This change in contrast may also assist students with visual acuity problems.

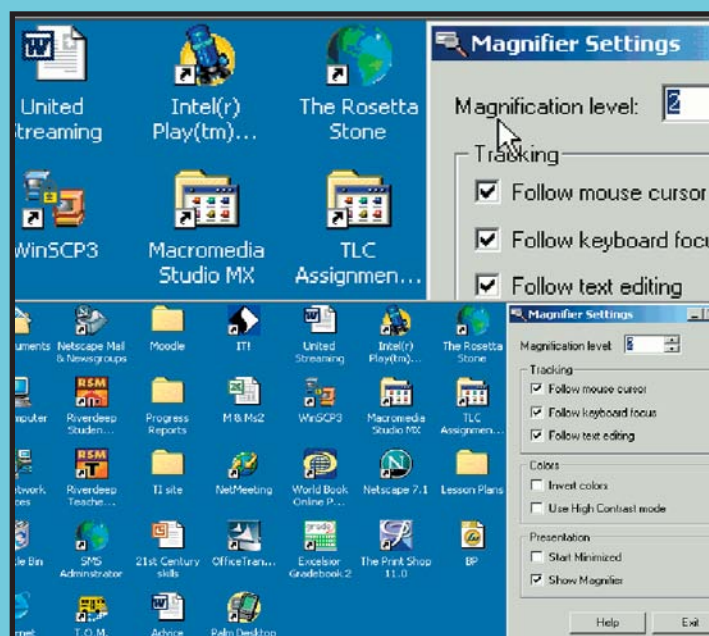
Change Contrast and Background in Word

The easiest way to change the background color in Word is to click *Format, Background* and choose a fill color other than white. Turquoise, for instance, provides a nice background color that is not as harsh on the eyes as white. Glare also appears to be reduced. Changing the font color in Word is also a good contrast. Many visually impaired students can see much clearer with a black background and white text.

References:

Rice, J. (2005, Winter) Texas Center for Educational Technology, 12 Technology Tips for Resource and Content Mastery. TechEdge Vol. 24 No. 2

Irlen Institute <http://www.irlen.com>



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The Technology Department strives to meet the needs of all employees. If you are unable to attend training, use the technology helpdesk system and request "just in time" training scheduled at your convenience.

Portable Home Pages

Wednesday, March 30, 8:15-11:15 a.m. (3 hours)

Learn how to create an Internet start page located on either the hard drive, floppy or CD that can easily be changed, updated, copied, and used on any computer with Internet access. Personalized with Web links, text and images, it is one touch Internet access for your students.

Integrating Digital Gadgets

Wednesday, March 30, 1:00-4:00 p.m. (3 hours)

Learn how to use all those cool digital gadgets in your classroom. If you have access to or own digital gadgets and do not know how to use them, bring them to this workshop. Walk away an expert, ready to integrate gadgets into your curriculum. This innovative workshop will go over scanners, digital cameras, pen drives, Web cameras, microphones, CD burners, and digital microscopes. This is one workshop you don't want to miss. At the end of the workshop one participant will walk away with a cool digital gadget. Limit 20 seats.

Producer

Thursday, March 31, 8:15-3:15 p.m. (6 hours)

Microsoft Producer for Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2003 makes it easy to capture, synchronize, and publish audio, video, slides, and images. Producer 2003 is a popular add-on for Microsoft PowerPoint and is the ideal tool for creating engaging presentations by combining video with your presentations. PowerPoint knowledge is a must for this class.

SISD Technology Vision Statement

The Sherman ISD, in cooperation with the greater community, will empower students, teachers, other staff, parents and community members, using appropriate information and communication technologies, to maximize learning, productivity, and performance, in order that all students become life-long learners and contributing participants in a changing world community.



SISD Challenge Teachers participated in Microsoft Producer training. They worked hard to produce an informative video about Chris Van Allsburg. Check it out at http://www.shermanisd.net/challenge/challenge_index.htm

Create a Digital Photo Album

Create a photo album to display your photos in Microsoft PowerPoint. This is a great way to share digital photos of your students, school projects, class trips, and other school events with students, parents, faculty, administrators, and board of education members.

How to:

1. Start Microsoft PowerPoint
2. From the Insert menu, point to Picture, and then click New Photo Album.
3. Click File/Disk or Scanner/Camera to insert your pictures.

Tip: You can select a group of pictures by using the SHIFT+click technique. Click on the first file that you want, press SHIFT, and then click the last file that you want to select.

4. In the Photo Album dialog box, under Album Layout, choose Picture layout and Frame shape options. See how the photos look in the Preview window.
5. Select other options that you would like to use. When you're finished, click the Create button.
6. Save your presentation, and then view the photo album in Slide Show view. Don't forget to add slide show transitions and sounds to make your photo album even more fun to view.

Note: See your Campus Technology Specialist for additional help.



The PE teachers across the district have been working diligently to vertically and horizontally align the SISD PE curriculum. The writing teams met to collaborate, share resources, and write lesson plans.

<http://www2.shermanisd.net/ci>

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