The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

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The Bulletin, the official journal of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, promotes professional and personal growth of members through publication of their writings.

The Bulletin invites materials appropriate to the Society’s Purposes: position papers, applied and/or data-based research, reviews of literature, program descriptions, and other articles on announced themes or other topics of interest to educators; letters to the editor; book and technology reviews; poetry; and graphic arts.

Prose manuscripts for the Bulletin, a refereed journal, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on relevance of the topics addressed, accuracy and validity, contribution to the professional literature, originality, quality of writing, and adherence to Submission Guidelines (see page 70). Editorial Board members evaluate each submission’s focus, organization, development, readability, and relevance to the general audience of Bulletin readers. Due to the diversity of the Bulletin audience, material that expresses a gender, religious, political, or patriotic bias is not suitable for publication.

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Call for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the Bulletin Editorial Board. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin accepts Action/Classroom Research, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Reviews of Literature, Program Descriptions, Position Papers, Book/Technology Reviews, Graphic Arts, Letters to the Editor, and Poetry for print issues (spring, fall) and online issues (summer, winter). Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for Bulletin readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines on page 70 and the Submission Grid on page 71. Listed below are the suggested themes of upcoming issues.

Summer 2014 (80-4) Impact of Educational Reforms (Online)
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Fall 2014 (81-1) Teaching Performance (Print)
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Winter 2015 (81-2) Teacher Leadership in Nonsupervisory Roles (Online)
(deadline is September 1, 2014)
National Board Certification • Mentoring and Coaching • Content-based/Instructional Leadership

Submit all materials to:

Bulletin Editorial Staff
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From the Editor

Once upon a time...the most exciting technologies I had at my disposal as a high school English teacher were a carousel slide program with synchronized sound (the tape recorder beeped and I advanced the slides); a film projector that enjoyed chewing up well-worn movies borrowed from a county-wide library; and slightly scratched vinyl recordings that made Shakespearean plays just a bit more comprehensible to my students. My fellow department members and I cheered when we advanced from long, multi-part stencil mimeograph forms to less complex ditto masters that left purple smudges on our fingertips and provided a scent-filled experience for students, who sniffed handouts before passing them back. We entered grades by hand in grade books and on report cards; received messages from parents via notes from the school secretary; and relied on good old chalk to transmit information in class on black (and then green!) boards. Having a phone in the classroom was a bonus—and access to an outside line, a miracle!

The early-career educator I mentor—Jessy, a middle-school science teacher—smiles when I reminisce about these primitive technologies. Her lesson plans reside in files on a USB key; she transmits them to her principal electronically—much as she enters grades that parents can access online to track their child’s progress. Chalk will not work on the whiteboards in her classroom—but she has little need to waste time processing notes on the board anyway. Material can be presented via a PowerPoint in which she has embedded videos and hyperlinks to live sites to demonstrate earth science phenomena such as volcanoes, tornadoes, and tsunamis. Equipped with iPads, her students can easily access assignments and activities she has developed for them and can journey beyond the classroom walls to explore, collaborate, and connect with others. Indeed, she can sometimes flip the classroom norm so that students first access information at home and then engage in application and problem solving during class time. Parents can reach Jessy via email with their questions and concerns, or they can check out her regularly updated Web site to gain insight into what their child is studying; plans for upcoming trips; and deadlines for long-term projects. The technology at Jessy’s disposal is not merely more advanced than what I used—it redefines her students’ educational experience and her challenges as a teacher. Thirty years apart in our careers, we are light years apart in our lives as educators in good part because of changes in educational technology—the theme of this issue of the Bulletin.

Interviewed by editorial board member Trybus, noted educational-technology authority Alan November sets the stage by championing the use of technology to transform teaching and learning. He focuses on engaging students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers. Sinclair provides an example of just the kind of shift in thinking promoted by November as she describes a partnership between educators and business persons that relied upon the creativity and technological expertise of young people in the community. Camardese and Peled describe another collaboration that extended students’ interaction beyond classroom walls and continental boundaries to bridge cultural differences through

“As the articles in this issue indicate, educational technology can vastly extend our human capacity as teachers and as learners.”
the use of technology. Considering another bridge, Pyle and Esslinger make a case for the integration of technology into physical education, minimizing varied misconceptions about and roadblocks to linking what may seem to be odd partners. Wolff-Hilliard and Baethe discuss varied technology-based feedback systems to help students develop writing proficiency, and Faulconer, Geissler, Majewski, and Trifilo explain an early-alert system to support student success.

The issue also includes several reviews of specific Web sites and apps. Focusing on educators’ never-ending quest for resources to expand their technological expertise, I examine the Educational Technology and Mobile Learning Web site. Hamilton reviews the FarFaria app that helps young readers gain motivation and fluency, while McNally recommends Evernote software for flexibility and ease of use in managing many tasks for educators.

Beyond the theme, Bledsoe provides a review of Lean In, a recent nonfiction exploration of gender-equity issues. Sandbrink describes an educational leadership program offered in Uganda by an American university, and Garrett shares a chapter-level, practical approach to supporting early-career educators as part of DKG’s international project.

Technically, the term technology refers to anything that extends human capacity. Back when I was a young teacher, the slide projector, film projector, and record player extended my ability to interest students in English-class topics. Today, Jessy and other early-career educators—as well as their seasoned colleagues—have an astounding range of tools at their disposal. As the articles in this issue indicate, educational technology can vastly extend our human capacity as teachers and as learners.
Interview

Redefining Education through Technology: An Interview with Alan November
By Margaret Trybus

This interview continues a series initiated by members of the Bulletin’s Editorial Board. The goal of the series is to feature interviews conducted with Delta Kappa Gamma members or other educational leaders on a topic related to the theme of the issue. Here, Dr. Trybus presents the results of an interview with education writer and leader Alan November regarding technology and the future of education.

An Introduction to Alan November

Alan November is an internationally known leader in educational technology who is the senior partner and founder of November Learning (www.novemberlearning.com), an educational consulting firm. With the mission to empower educators to expand their own boundaries of what is possible, November has been challenging educators to utilize technology to transform teaching and learning for the last 30 years. Known as a visionary who has the needs of students at his core, November approaches emerging technologies with experience and great insights about planning technology across the curriculum, new school designs, community building, and leadership development. He is a leader in revolutionizing education by providing professional development worldwide in the United States, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Belgium, Thailand, Luxembourg, Canada, and Japan. Starting as a classroom teacher in an island reform school for boys in Massachusetts, November is credited with being most likely the first teacher in the world to have a student project online in 1984. His experience includes being a director of an alternative high school, computer coordinator, technology consultant, and university lecturer. November was named one of the nation’s 15 most influential thinkers of the decade by Technology and Learning Magazine. His books, Empowering Students with Technology (2001), Web Literacy for Educators (2008), and Who Owns the Learning? Preparing Students for Success in the Digital Age (2012), show teachers “how technology allows students to take ownership of their learning, create their own learning tools and participate in meaningful work” (http://novemberlearning.com/educational-resources-for-educators/books-on-educational-technology/). November’s workshops are inspiring and challenging as he continues his life’s work to improve the quality of education through technology.

Introduction to the Interview

Technology is not just a device that teachers must master in order to be more efficient in record keeping, storage of lesson plans, and their own personal and professional tasks—although these uses are important. Rather, technology can help teachers transform
their craft by changing the paradigm of teaching and learning into experiences that help students become critical thinkers and problem solvers. The 21st-century learner is a member of interactive learning communities beyond classrooms due to the development and utilization of communication tools such as Facebook and Twitter and of smartphones, tablets, iPads, and other mobile devices that are now part of society. The question of how these technologies impact classrooms world-wide is ever present and challenges teachers to examine ways in which students can and should be engaged in learning through information technologies.

As examined and presented by Alan November, this shift in thinking about technology goes beyond just knowing about new devices, tools, and software to addressing transformative education that puts the changing needs of students at the very core of what education should and must be in order to add relevancy and rigor to the learning environment. Knowing that technology is not just an add-on but an essential learning tool requires creative teaching and inspires professional educators to make fundamental shifts in their roles and relationships with technology-literate students. The teacher can no longer be the sole knowledge expert and authority figure. Rather, teachers have to be innovators and risk-takers who teach differently from how they have been taught and have learned. Teachers are required to embrace new perspectives in the field of technology innovation in order to make the most meaningful changes possible that will prepare students to be college and career ready, as required by the new Common Core State Standards.

Even with schools adding one-on-one computing devices in classrooms; increasing facilities for more computer laboratories; and developing technologies to deliver curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the issue remains that schools and teachers still struggle to change practice and keep up with this ever-changing phenomenon. In this interview, Alan November shares his experience, insight, and entrepreneurial spirit as he explains why and how technology can build different types of learning communities.

How did your early teaching experiences frame your thinking about technology in schools?

As a Director of Alternative Education, I found the structure of schools was in the way of student learning. One student I had early in my career clearly pointed out that students perform much better if they are self-directed. To this day, classes in which students are
expected to be problem solvers—not just sitting passively listening to the teacher—are more effective. With the advent of the Internet, I designed a course called Community Problem Solving with Technology in which students identified problems in the world and were expected to explore creative solutions. Before No Child Left Behind, one could do creative things like that, but now, unfortunately, that creativity has been stifled. This course became the most popular elective at this high school. The best thing we did was to work to help handicapped people find resources through technology. Because there were no yellow pages for such information, one student built a database of 97 agencies that provided services to handicapped people. We put that online—perhaps the very first online student project in the world as early as 1983.

When I was Director of Technology, my school was one of the very first to get the Internet, and I realized at that time the Internet was going to take off. The reason the student who built the database and others became successful was because of immediate feedback. Thirty years later, because of game theory, the importance of such feedback is not surprising.

Do you think schools are successfully integrating and using technology to address curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Let’s set the context for what has gone wrong and where we are. Too many schools have a vision of technology that views it as an add-on, and they try to do it on top of everything else, with no change in the culture. Everything stays the same: curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling. It’s called automating, and that is how about 99% of schools use technology. The kinds of schools we have inherited fundamentally have teachers owning the learning. They design assignments, correct the tests, give the homework, and maintain control of the learning. Even with laptops, students write things down the same way as they would with pencil and paper while the teacher talks. In this case, technology is not adding value and may, in fact, lower the quality of education, because kids are still sitting passively while the teacher uses this expensive technology. Much is going terribly wrong. Teachers using technology to maintain control is unfortunate. My experience over decades has framed the question, Who owns the learning? Fundamentally, teachers own the learning. They maintain control of the classroom, and students still sit passively. Technology is regressive and not adding value when used this way.

If one agrees that students ought to own their own learning, then one sees a problem that is bigger than technology. Technology can address the problem but not totally solve it. In order to solve it, we have to have a shift in control that acknowledges that access to the knowledge of the teacher is limited to a certain time of the day and room, but students have immediate access to knowledge in general 24 hours a day. Students can gain access to what the teachers are going to teach even before they teach it, especially in colleges and universities, where students are now accessing knowledge without physically having to be there. Time and space don’t count any more, even though they still exist. We don’t have to have them as design variables in schools any more. Because we aren’t going to send the kids home, we are still going to have schools—but we must raise the question, What should schools look like? If I can have unlimited access to knowledge that matches my own learning style rather than the teacher’s, then what is the value of the teacher? The age of unlimited access to knowledge raises this interesting question. Teachers must speak a lot less and listen a lot more. This is a fundamental change, and technology enables it.

The real revolution is not technology—it is information. Typical school technology
planning committees should end right away. The more interesting question is what information do you want, not what technology do you want? I’m confident we have technology-rich but information-poor schools. Students will ask more questions looking for information online than they will face-to-face. Teachers need to change the concept of the lesson plan that assumes the teacher will determine what to teach and instead determine what to teach based on students’ questions. Teaching based on students’ questions rather than on teacher’s knowledge is the shift—and technology is the tool to address that change in practice.

**Will online learning eventually replace face-to-face learning?**

Online learning is oversold. I think blended learning is where we are going to end up. Providing online delivery of content, allowing online interaction in which students can ask more questions, and managing online assessment can be effective and can save money. Student forums exist and are certainly engaging students online. But learners still need hands-on and face-to-face learning because kids are basically social. They enjoy being with one another when they are allowed to engage in talking and solving problems together. You can do some of it online, but you can’t do everything.

Social media will also enhance parental involvement. Technology is a way of life with families now, and parents will want more options to communicate through technology and see their children learn in schools as they do on their own. Textbooks are also going to be gone, and legislators have already freed up textbook money to be applied to any technology device.

The dominant model will be bring your own device. Schools won’t be able to buy new devices every 3 years. School personnel should build a very robust wireless network as their responsibility, so that kids can log on with anything they bring to school. For students who don’t have devices, the school will need loaner devices. This is where we are going. Schools don’t buy book bags now; we expect students to get their own. So, eventually schools will expect students to get their own devices that can connect to the Internet. If a child can’t afford a device, schools will need loaner devices. This is where we are going. Eventually schools will have to have some available for students to use. We can manage such technology implementation without buying computers every 3 years for kids.

**How does technology impact curriculum and assessment?**

Some assumptions include curriculum will be online and students will go at their own pace and get immediate feedback. Teachers will get an overview as to how students are doing by utilizing diagnostic tools such as Learning Catalytics (https://learningcatalytics.com/), an educational tool and novel way to manage student learning that gives a teacher an overview of how students are doing through significant data analysis regarding every student’s performance. In terms of assessment, we need kids who can take tests at any time—when they are ready. Students should be able to do self-assessments, and when it comes time for state and Common Core testing that students must do on the same day, that’s fine—but that is only once a year. Apart from that, students should be tested continuously and involved in ongoing assessment.

**How can technology measure problem solving, especially with the advent of the Common Core Standards?**

It’s not that difficult. For example in mathematics, you could show students a photograph of Wrigley Field where baseball is played in Chicago. How many math problems are
embedded in that picture? Where is the perfect bunt?—a geometry problem. What is the area of the field?—a calculus problem. What is the range of possibilities once the ball leaves the bat traveling within seconds to a certain destination?—a physics problem. Most kids will probably never look at Wrigley Field and think of math problems. We have to be much more creative with assessment—and there are limitless possibilities to be creative.

Something as mundane as the area of professional sports shows us how video is used to break down what players need to do to figure out the game plan, even as it is used to teach individual players what they have to do. Without video, the coach couldn’t accomplish these tasks. Teachers don’t have the same kind of access; therefore, they don’t record enough student behaviors to see learning. As one kind of answer, the blog of one teacher in Saskatchewen, Canada (Ms. Cassidy’s Classroom Blog; mscassidysclass.edublogs.org/) shows the sense of excitement of what learning is about in that grade and stores what occurred at the previous grade level. Students can then reflect on this rich documentary and see their own learning journey. In classrooms, we don’t think of the possibilities of ways to document student learning creatively. This has to happen and can be very exciting.

**How can technology be used to build a community of learners?**

One way is the culture shift that a sixth grade teacher is doing with a Web site called Mathtrain.TV. This is a site of student-designed tutorials of about 3 minutes each that cover the entire curriculum. This teacher has the highest test scores in his district in two grades, which he attributes to the fact that students like to learn from someone their own age rather than the teacher. A concept now being developed in cognitive science is called the curse of knowledge. If you know a tremendous amount about your subject, you probably don’t understand the first-time learner’s confusion and questions. Because students are social and want to learn from a friend anyway, then logic suggests that every teacher should build a library of student-designed tutorials right away, immediately. That is the first thing I would do, but that involves a shift of control.

Teachers should bring students to workshops with them. If the kids are shown how to design tutorials, then the teachers will quickly see how students can adapt to this task. Even with a 3-hour workshop, teachers say, “I can’t learn this.” If the kids are there, then the teacher can’t be the gatekeeper any more. Some teachers are overwhelmed and lost with certain software applications, whereas kids can handle the software within a matter of minutes. Then the teacher can say, “Don’t worry—I’ll just help you.” The teacher’s role shifts to becoming a coach. We shouldn’t be sending teachers to technology workshops without kids going with them. That needs to become the norm. We have to get rid of the idea that teachers have to learn everything before the kids do. That’s just a dead end concept.

**If we are going to make this shift, what is the role of leadership to build this community?**

The principal is the most critical person in the system. I break it down into two areas: the principal as role model; the principal as culture builder. Principals have to use the same concepts within their leadership. For example, they lead a research group for teachers using diigo; they demonstrate their use of Twitter hashtags to follow important ideas and bring them up at staff meetings; they organize staff meetings to be online; and they do a lot of work online and save huge amounts of time.

The other part of leadership is to make sure your technology is actually making a difference and in alignment with core curriculum goals. A lot of technology is not in
alignment. The leader must also look for the creative application of ownership and the change of culture. For example, you can send a teacher to a workshop to learn how to make PowerPoints on *Romeo and Juliet*; or you can teach that teacher how to find 5 PowerPoints in England, and 5 PowerPoints in the United States and then have kids look at 10 PowerPoints on *Romeo and Juliet* in smaller groups and design an 11th using a rubric the teacher creates. This is more powerful than students looking at one that the teacher has spent hours creating and really hasn’t involved the kids. The leader has to figure out the power of technology, and the most important skill the leader needs to have now is the ability to help colleagues to shift control. For that to happen, teachers need permission, and the leaders have to give it.

**How can a leader do this with all the high stakes in accountability?**

You need very courageous leaders who are willing to say, “We aren’t going to teach to the test. We are going to shoot beyond the test and above the test.” Frankly, I think this will lead to doing better. If one just shoots for the test, one might not get everybody scoring as high as one would want. That has already been demonstrated. So, I would overshoot the test and hope to get more. Especially as they try to master the Common Core Standards, students can’t memorize, and they will have to understand problem solving. I am hoping that will be true.

**What are future trends in educational technology?**

The trend is anything that empowers kids to be self-directed and own their learning. This could be online curriculum with immediate feedback where kids could test themselves, where students will have access to videos, and where different ways of learning are all built in. Anything of that ilk is worth considering.

We are also going to see a lot of the use of video games to create content. Games provide kids with immediate feedback, which helps them with decision making. The [mathletics.com](http://mathletics.com) site is an example of this. There is no punishment if you don’t do your homework, it puts you in contact with kids around the world, you can start at any level you want to, and there is no limit...if you want to get to trigonometry as a fourth grader you can do it!

**How will technology impact the schools of the future?**

It’s all about owning the learning. You could have a really good school where teachers own the learning and students have high test scores. In my opinion, this isn’t really a great school unless there is a culture of collaboration where teachers listen a lot and kids own learning. The physical design won’t save us. We have a lot of new old schools. For example, one day we will see a library with very few books. Kids will go into a library and create. They will be connected globally, and they will take online courses. The library will be a student-generated content-online learning center that will be transformational. Physical design has some influence, but the culture and values of the school are more important to make this kind of change happen.

Finally, the Common Core Standards will require digital literacy because the tests will be on a digital device. Schools are now gearing up for this challenge. Technology is no longer optional; at least we have come that far. I’m very hopeful that the Common Core is something that theoretically one can’t memorize; students will really have to understand. That is where technology kicks in: hands on, engaged, immediate feedback, and much more efficient for the learner. I am very hopeful!
Using Technology to Engage Students and Empower Communities through Authentic Tourism

By Marjorie H. Sinclair

The author examines a partnership between educators and tourism operators that explored the creative potential and technological expertise of the community’s youth. Using technology skills acquired during their daily classroom assignments, students developed projects to enhance the products of local tourism operators and showcase their peoples, cultures, and histories. In just 3 years, the first SMART™ Showcase District in the world provided the catalyst for a community to be recognized as the first SMART Showcase Community in the world.

Background

The Miramichi region of northeastern New Brunswick, Canada, is a complex and diverse community and ecosystem. Including people with a mix of languages and backgrounds, the community has looked to the Miramichi River, which runs 250 km through the region, for access to its primary industries, fishing and forestry. Between 2004 and 2010, the forest industry collapsed almost entirely, resulting in mill closures and job losses. Hundreds of people were without jobs, and an out-migration of workers began to the oil patches in Northern Alberta. Relying on that diverse mix of community and its celebrations of the founding cultures of the region—First Nations (Mi’kmaq), Acadian, Irish, and Scottish—the residents of the Miramichi region began looking to tourism as a major source of income.

When a community faces challenges, a trickle-down effect occurs into all sectors of the population and especially into the school system. School district leaders and workers began feeling the effects of the regional economic and population collapse as the student population began to decline. In order to move forward, they knew that creative, educational, and community solutions were needed.

During the time the community was facing these challenges, school district leaders had developed a model for integrating technology into the classrooms. Under the direction of visionary superintendents, a strong district technology team was established with a technology supervisor, technology mentors, information systems (IS) manager, and technicians. Every member of the team brought unique strengths to ensure the successful integration of technology into the curriculum. Identified for their leadership skills and technical expertise in incorporating technology into their daily lesson plans, the technology mentors were recruited from classrooms. The IS manager and his technical staff created
an infrastructure that would handle emerging technologies. The technology team met on a regular basis to design and implement strategies that would ensure that technology provided to teachers would meet the curriculum outcomes of their various classroom projects. Teachers were invited to submit proposals about these projects, and although they were allowed to suggest certain technologies, the final decision was ultimately left to the technical staff. Often technologies were moved between schools depending on each building’s infrastructure and educators’ needs.

Technology mentors developed professional development strategies to assist teachers with incorporating the new technologies into their lesson plans. These included one-on-one sessions, after-school professional development, and modeling within the classroom. As teachers became more comfortable with the technology they were using, the technical staff installed new servers and network cabling to support the new directions educators were taking. When SMART Boards® (interactive white boards) were first introduced into the district, teachers had to submit proposals detailing how they would use these resources in their classrooms. As teachers observed their colleagues using these tools, they realized that teaching with technology was no longer intimidating, and eventually all classrooms in the district were provided with SMART Boards and the Phonic Ear® Surround Sound System. Many of the district’s teachers were recognized as SMART Exemplary Educators with their creation of SMART Notebook™ lesson plans that would engage students while meeting the needs of individual learners. As a result of the integration of SMART products into daily classroom instruction, in 2007, SMART Technologies recognized the district as the first SMART Showcase District in North America. The Miramichi teachers began to share their methods of creating new learning environments for their students by presenting at international conferences and hosting visiting teachers in their classrooms.

The availability of interactive white boards was instrumental in changing how teachers were teaching and how students were learning. A variety of other technologies were incorporated into the district’s classrooms as well, but they were all based on curriculum outcomes. Students began creating presentations that incorporated digital video and audio, stop animation, or digital photography. School work took on a global focus as students and teachers began to collaborate via videoconferencing with schools in locations such as China, Holland, and Texas. Students also began to consult with experts such as authors and scientists. These collaborative projects, based on the concept of project-based learning (PBL), built a culture of inquiry and creativity by allowing students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills while using technology.

The Basis for the Project

District educational staff provided a series of professional development sessions to teachers and support staff on a variety of topics that supported the project, including PBL, 21st-century skills, and differentiation. Ensuring that all educators had access to experts

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and the published literature created a learning environment for engaging students to achieve success.

Markham, Larmer, and Ravitz (2003) described their PBL model as “an instructional method that uses projects as the central focus of instruction in a variety of disciplines” (p. ix). Teachers who use this model may do short- or long-term projects that may focus on a single topic or extend to “involve community participation and adults outside the school” (p. 4). All projects are based on a “Driving Question or authentic problem that creates a need to know the material” (p. 5). Successful projects are based on meeting the curriculum outcomes, and teachers must plan accordingly to allow students to apply higher order thinking skills.

Markham et al. (2003) provided guidelines to determining the scope of the project. “Community based projects that help students work with adults and investigate issues outside of the classroom are ideal, since PBL works well with authentic issues. Such open-ended investigations invite many different possible solutions to problems” (p. 14).

Trilling and Fadel (2009) provided guidelines for the skill-development goals of a PBL project. They explored another framework for preparing students to meet new challenges by introducing 21st-century skills into the classroom. The first set of such skills to ensure lifelong learning are

- critical thinking and problem solving (expert thinking),
- communication and collaboration (complex communicating),
- creativity and innovation (applied imagination and invention). (p. 49)

Partnership for 21st Century Skills (http://www.p21.org) similarly identified the skills students need to be successful in the 21st century, noting “within the context of core knowledge instruction, students must also learn the essential skills for success in today’s world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration” (http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf). According to Trilling and Fadel (2009), PBL is a key way to develop these skills because children are natural-born problem seekers and solvers. And if the problems are ones they really care about, ones that affect their lives and the lives of their friends and family, there are few limits to what students will learn to help solve the problem. (p. 156)

PBL creates real-life learning experiences that connect to 21st-century learning.

PBL is also connected to differentiated instruction. As educators become aware of the diverse needs of the students in their classrooms, they plan a variety of approaches to address what their students need to learn and the various ways in which they learn. They then provide students with options for showing what they have learned. “A classroom where students are active, involved learners and where curriculum is based on important ideas that are organized to be meaningful, memorable, and useful is not only the best environment for differentiation; it’s also a better classroom overall” (Tomlinson & Kiernan, 2002, p. 6).

**Developing a Partnership**

Once the district educators started to showcase what the students were learning and how they were using technology, leaders of various businesses and nonprofit organizations in the City of Miramichi saw the potential of the new technologies for their sites. They soon realized they faced the challenge of determining how their personnel would acquire the skills needed to ensure successful implementation of technology into their workplaces.
In particular, the administrators of the Miramichi River Tourism Association (MRTA) were in the process of developing authentic tourism experiences for visitors to the region. They worked with district educators to develop a plan that would ensure MRTA’s authentic tourism themes would fit into the existing curriculum. Teachers would be able to focus on 21st-century learning proficiencies as their students took part in curriculum-based learning activities, while MRTA would be provided with new and innovative approaches to developing and delivering tourism products. This process of integrating tourism into curriculum while engaging youth in the community became known as The Miramichi Model, designed to be adapted easily in other tourism jurisdictions.

The Escuminac project. The first successful collaboration was a school-wide enrichment project involving members of the Miramichi Rural School community and MRTA to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Escuminac Disaster of June 2009. This was one of the worst fishing disasters ever to occur in eastern Canada, resulting in the death of 35 fishermen from a community of 600 people. Members of MRTA and teachers at the school worked together under the guidance of the district’s enrichment consultant, who used a school-wide enrichment model to help students research, prepare projects, participate in activities, and create multimedia content related to the disaster. Students thus met their curriculum outcomes through a PBL model.

Technology played a major role in the recording of firsthand accounts of the disaster and the sharing of stories about the individual tragedies that occurred. Students produced interactive SMART Board presentations, video productions, and digital audio recordings. Reluctant fishermen began to be more conversant when they realized that their stories would be passed on to future generations via the technological expertise of the students. One cluster of students produced a short film—Eric Williston: The Youngest of Them All—about a 13-year-old boy, the youngest fisherman to perish in the disaster. Another group of students created a television news broadcast based upon the original audio recordings about the disaster from the local radio station. These recordings were among many primary resources and artifacts brought into the school by members of the community. In addition to engaging in the technology activities, clusters of students planted 35 day-lilies to honor the fishermen who were lost at sea, made a quilt, painted a mural with a scene looking out at Miramichi Bay, wrote two plays based upon narratives from survivors, and learned how to make traditional seafood recipes. Students chose their clusters based on their personal interests, and teachers evaluated their final projects to determine if they had met the curriculum outcomes.

MRTA promoted the events for this day at its tourist venues all along the Miramichi River, and on June 20, 2009, the community, dignitaries, and other visitors came together to honor the lives of the lost men. The students of Miramichi Rural School presented a
1-hour program on the events of that day 50 years ago and the effects of the events on the community over the years. The audience members were impressed with the poise and confidence of the students and the knowledge they possessed of an event that happened so long before their time.

**The SMART community evolves.** The success of the Escuminac project led to the installation of interactive white boards in a dozen tourism venues along the length of the river. They were used to enhance the tourism experience and to provide information and guidance to the visitors. Leaders at SMART Technologies believed the implementation of their technology in this community warranted recognition for the creative use of their products and, in 2010, officially announced Miramichi as the *First SMART Community in the World*. Thus, as educators, municipal and provincial politicians, company officials, and members of the community recognized the creativity of the youth, new partnerships were established. The focus was no longer on the technology but on the creativity and skills of the young people and their importance in building a strong community.

After the commemoration ceremony and the presentations by the students, the fishermen who had participated in the project met with tourism officials to discuss ways to promote their industry and region. Inspired by the students’ creativity, they developed two hands-on fishing experiences to introduce tourists to this important industry when they visit Escuminac Wharf. The fishermen had been reluctant to interact with tourists, but after seeing the students’ projects, they became more confident in what they had to offer, and provincial tourism marketing initiatives now promote these experiences. Accordingly, educators and tourism leaders have recognized this partnership as beneficial to each group. Educators provided their students with the opportunity to connect to the local community through the application of various technologies, while tourism leaders realized that the technology skills of the youth could enhance the tourism information to visitors in the area.

**Making the Partnership Work**

The success of this partnership was based on trust. Although educators and those in the tourism industry did not traditionally work together, a collaborative framework allowed tourism managers, directors, teachers, and other educators to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In a visioning exercise at a joint education and tourism symposium, high school students led the discussions by presenting projects they had previously done in their home schools. These curriculum-based projects were developed using SMART Notebook software. One example of the projects presented was a Jeopardy-like game based on knowledge of tourist sites in the Miramichi. These students had strong public speaking skills and were knowledgeable in their use of the interactive white board and the topics they were presenting. The tourism and business officials had an opportunity to see the strengths of the area youth. Once the students had finished presenting their projects, participants collaborated on how tourism leaders could learn from the youth while working with the new technologies available to them. The students were treated as equals in the discussions, and their opinions and suggestions were valued by the community leaders.

Students hired that first summer trained tourism staff in how to use the SMART Board and create content that could be shared among the centers. Several students with strong technology skills developed a content-management system to allow tourism officials to share files. This sharing was advantageous in disseminating content created by the students that was unique to each of the centers. For example, at the Atlantic Salmon
Museum in Doaktown, students created an interactive site to allow visitors to learn about fly fishing and some of the famous pools where one might catch a salmon. Tourists visiting one center can link to other centers via videoconferencing to discuss the events at those locations with an operator. This allows tourists to create individualized plans to meet their particular vacation styles. They are able to savor more fully the authenticity of the life lived in this region on a daily basis, enjoy the vastness of the landscape, and experience the richness of the area’s cultures.

**Outcomes**

As these students became engaged in showcasing their community to the world, they saw their hometown in a new light. They learned their local tourism assets while gaining a greater understanding of their history and culture. Instead of thinking there was no longer a future for them in this rural location, they began to see it as a place that people around the world wanted to visit. Even as they brought a fresh perspective to the tourism industry with new ways to promote the region, the Miramichi students realized the value of the curriculum they had been learning in their classrooms. The technological skills they had acquired were secondary to how they wanted to use the technology in an authentic learning environment. Community leaders involved in the project recognized the innovative ways students were learning and realized they had a lot to learn from them.

The Miramichi Model attracted other New Brunswick tourism operators to the area to learn how they might apply this method in their locations. Students continued to lead the discussions and demonstrate how technology could be used to support the industry. Several students developed promotional videos for other tourism sites in the province. One student was hired by Tourism, Heritage and Culture New Brunswick to produce a stop-motion, felt animation about the Bay of Fundy (http://youtube.com/watch?v=wRNPuuzEIE). The youth of the area continue to be empowered to promote the region to the world. The learning that happens daily in their classrooms continues to be relevant to their life outside the school. They see themselves as working with tourism instead of working for tourism.

**Challenges**

The education and tourism partnership had many successful components, but it is important to note some of the challenges that can be faced when building new directions in a community. One of the greatest challenges is change that occurs when people who are initially involved in the project retire or move on to new positions. Government organizations also change constantly, especially with new leaders and new budgets. Organizations often restructure, and the enthusiasm for the project no longer has the same priority. In some cases, such changes in Miramichi resulted in a loss of focus as new priorities were established. Consistency and continuity are needed if the partnership is to continue growing and evolving.

Funding is always a challenge. It is difficult to find the financial resources to stay current with technology, so leaders must decide which technologies will be upgraded or replaced. The hiring of sufficient personnel is also difficult in times of fiscal restraint.

In the beginning days, it was difficult to convince leaders that this was a symbiotic partnership, offering benefits to both. Educators needed to be assured that students would meet their curriculum outcomes, and tourism operators needed to recognize that the region would be properly promoted to new and returning visitors.
Beyond the Initial Project

The results of this community partnership have breathed new life into the Miramichi region with the arrival of several technology companies that have established satellite offices in the area. They provide virtual and face-to-face training to educators and business leaders. Leaders of these businesses have seen the potential for future growth for their companies in a technologically skilled workforce.

Various groups of students in the local schools have been involved in other historical projects about the area. A group of middle school students created a downloadable application (app), *Chatham Historic Places* (available at https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/chatham-historic-places/id478865130?mt=8), that provides a walking tour of the historic downtown Chatham area, one of the former towns that merged to form the City of Miramichi. Tourists who visit can download the app and, as they walk around the area, they are able to listen to students' podcasts about the historical buildings and look at pictures and videos showing highlights of the interiors of these buildings, many of which are still private homes.

Several school-wide enrichment projects have been showcased in the district in recent years. Inspired by *The Nine Lives of Charlotte Taylor* by Canadian author Sally Armstrong (2008), the staff and students of Tabusintac Rural School examined the life of this early settler known as *The Mother of Tabusintac* and her struggles to raise a family in pioneer Canada. Students composed original songs and plays and participated in a number of other activity clusters. The culminating project brought New Brunswick's Lieutenant Governor and author Armstrong, a descendant of Taylor, to the celebration of the work of the youth in the area. As a result, tourists to the area are now able to visit the sites where she lived and to see the location of the original homestead.

A school-wide project at one of the elementary schools examined the history of Middle Island, a quarantine station for the arrival of Irish immigrants to the area in the mid-1800s. Students worked in enrichment clusters with district educators, local artists, and tourism staff on a variety of undertakings. The project culminated in a showcase at Middle Island where students presented an original play, videos using green-screen technology, Irish cooking, Irish dance, art work, and a variety of other endeavors. The project was so successful that the school did a second phase the following year, and the teachers and students still have ideas for further research on this historic site. The significance of the research by the students became evident when they realized visitors, newcomers, and even local people were learning from them. An article detailing this project was printed in the *Shamrock Leaf*, the newsletter of the Irish Canadian Cultural Association of New Brunswick (Loggie, 2013).

Students continue to be involved in community-based projects that make a difference in the lives of the Miramichi citizens. A group of Grade 11 students, guided by their homeroom teacher and enrichment consultant, met one of their English Language Arts curriculum outcomes by creating a video, *Barry Amos Documentary: Wheels in Motion* (available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VCc4mulTsk), and presenting it to personnel at the city hall. As a result, wheelchair accessible doors were installed at one of the local high school gyms.

Leaders in the local tourism industry discovered that the technological expertise and creative energy of the community’s youth provided innovative ways of promoting Miramichi and are now looking to them for new directions on how to use social media.
Youth play a key role in using this platform to share content with a global audience. The creative youth of this rural school district also challenged the tourism officials to rethink the types of summer jobs they had been giving the youth. One tourism site director concluded that tourists would have a more positive experience if she did the manual tasks and the students manipulated the technology.

Tourism operators also had to rethink how they gave directions to the youth working for them. They no longer told a student what they wanted done but instead started asking the young people for ways to help them achieve the tourism goals for their location. They also realized the influence that youth have on the vacation plans of parents because they have their own perspective on what they enjoy doing on vacation.

Conclusion

What started as a technology-based project moved to a youth project and ended up being a creative, community-building project. Miramichi youth continue to build the foundation of a prosperous tourism industry in the region. Participants in the project learned that tourism provides dynamic curricular connections for students and that local schools have facilities and resources that can be used to assist tourism. As change continues to affect both tourism and education, those involved in the project explore new opportunities for expanding the partnership amid a culture of creativity. Thus, this unique and powerful partnership that is based on PBL and technology and that has brought international recognition to the community continues and grows.

Notes

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References


Using Technology to Bridge Cultural Differences
By Amy Camardese and Yehuda Peled

The writers describe a qualitative study of a unique technology-based literacy and social studies program that paired middle school students from two very different cultures, Israel and the United States. Students used e-mail and videoconferencing to discuss a common text—in this case, the story of an 11-year-old boy who hides in the Jewish ghetto during World War II. Educators were able to integrate reading, language arts, and social studies in a unit. Results of qualitative research indicated the program significantly and positively affected understanding and tolerance for other cultures. The writers also share information on aspects of technology as part of their study.

The purpose of the study was to examine the outcomes of a literacy program, the International Book-Sharing Program (IB-SP), from the perspectives of students, principals, and teachers. The IB-SP was intended to be integrated into the literacy program in schools. The project is based on a twinning program developed by Partnership 2000 of the Central Area Consortium and Western Galilee. Connections between classrooms in Israel and the United States are made to develop collaborative programs that engage students in joint learning activities (Jewish Agency for Israel, 2005). The IB-SP matches a middle school in the United States with a middle school in Israel. School administrators and teachers in both schools agree to participate and receive training from an IB-SP administrator who oversees the project. All students read The Island on Bird Street by Uri Orlev (1997), and each Israeli student is paired with one U.S. student. Teachers from both Israel and the United States pose questions related to the reading for students to respond to via e-mail. Teachers in each respective country follow a curriculum developed to engage students in the classroom and in e-mailing and to foster understanding of culture (Jewish Agency for Israel, 2011).

More specifically, in this qualitative study, middle school students in the United States and Israel, their teachers, and their principals identified key issues pertinent to a shared international educational reading project. We used semistructured interviews and questionnaires to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the IB-SP and analyzed data from these sources using QSR NUD*IST 4 qualitative software.

Research Questions
1. How does the IB-SP promote understanding and appreciation of diversity?
2. What technology and communication need to be addressed in the IB-SP?
Background

Twinning. Educational twinning is the pairing of two classrooms from separate geographical and national areas in order to infuse added value to traditional learning (Peled & Dunnivan, 2011; Zimmerman & Peled, 2009). As students participate, their understanding of the wider world is expanded. The ability to communicate worldwide easily and quickly creates a new paradigm for the international collaboration of educators and school children, creating a classroom virtually without walls (Chen et al., 2004; McLuhan, 1960).

Gone are the days of international pen-pals and the occasional letter exchange. Now individuals can communicate quickly and easily via e-mail and chat rooms and can see and talk to one another in real time via video technology (Harris, 2001), thus becoming a community. Communities of practice are groups of people who have a common interest and are engaged in a shared enterprise, through which they both have, and further develop, a repertoire of knowledge, skills, and practices (Edens & Gilsinan, 2005; Wenger, 2000).

Video clips, audio recordings, and photography—especially when accessible universally through World Wide Web browsers—can enrich the mix of contextual clues available for multilingual, intercultural learning (Frydenberg, 2011; Sayers, 1997). Through the IB-SP, individuals in both schools learn about the wider world and broaden their horizons as current affairs are brought to life. School twinning provides pupils and teachers in both partner schools with valuable learning experiences: developing their communication and inquiry skills; reflecting on their attitudes toward other people and places and their own behavior and traditions; developing empathy and openness to others; learning that stereotypical views are often inaccurate; and beginning to act as global citizens (Uzunboylu, 2006). Successful collaborations can benefit not only school personnel but also the wider community. Chen et al. (2004) claimed that students in classrooms around the United States gain the most from collaborations that work to involve members of the community.

Successful twinning is based on a partnership model: a working relationship based on respect and equal contributions from each partner and a recognition that students will learn from each other. Successful educational twinning programs include (a) commitment by all educators to educational twinning with their partner school (Peled & Rozansky, 2012); (b) the development of principals who encourage and mentor teacher participation throughout the experiences (Peled, Kali, & Dori, 2011); (c) competent twinning coordinators at each school, including those with fluency with the primary language(s) at each site (Peled & Rozansky, 2012); (d) opportunities for face-to-face personal interactions among principals, twinning coordinators, and teachers; (e) similar understandings of curriculum as theme-based bodies of knowledge and processes (Peled & Dunnivan, 2011; Zimmerman & Peled, 2009); and (f) time allocated for teachers to identify common curriculum and develop shared activities (Zimmerman & Peled, 2009).
A successful partnership can start with the initiative of one or more teachers and grow to include the whole school community. Sayers (1999) stated that partners can explore issues and themes that concern students in both countries, such as economics, trade and globalization, social justice, peace and conflict, government, and environmental issues. Enhanced literacy skills can be achieved by reading and discussing a book written in languages native to both partners (Mayes & Bennett, 2005).

Other programs that partnered students in European countries and Far East countries have improved the understanding of civil issues and resulted in an increase in civic involvement (Blumenfeld, Fishman, Krajik, Marx, & Soloway, 2000; Lock & Redmond, 2006). For faculty, education twinning projects have enabled foreign teachers and educators to learn from the experience and perspectives of U.S. curriculum developers, educational developers, and teacher trainers (Lock & Redmond, 2006; Mayes & Bennett, 2005; O'Dwyer, Russell, & Bebell, 2005).

Collaborative learning. Collaborative learning is the educational theory-based practice on which school and classroom twinning succeed. The term collaborative learning refers to a method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal (Gokhale, 1995; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). Research on traditional, face-to-face collaborative learning has revealed numerous benefits over individual learning: better performance, better motivation, higher test scores and levels of achievement, and so forth (Dansereau, 1983; Sharan & Sharan, 1997; Slavin, 1987).

Technology leadership. Fullan and Miles (1992), Blumenfeld et al. (2000), Davis and Varma (2008), and Varma, Husic, and Linn (2008) all noted that the success of innovative approaches to education—and of utilizing technology in classrooms in particular—is heavily dependent on the school’s environment and organization and on the principal’s attitude toward the proposed change. The principal is increasingly expected to take a lead role in supporting teachers to adopt technology-based innovations that support learning and instruction in their classes (Bowyer, Gerard, & Marx, 2008; Creighton, 2002).

Methodology

We investigated technology and communication issues and the understanding and appreciation of diversity from the perspectives of students, teachers, and principals. Data were collected through qualitative measures. Here, we describe subjects, setting, research instruments, and procedures. The final section includes data analysis techniques for this study.

Participants. The 151 participants are described in the Table. All subjects were selected based on availability; the students were members of classrooms participating in the IB-SP. The U.S. students attended three different districts bordering a northeastern Ohio city and serving students with family backgrounds ranging from lower to upper middle class. Approximately 25% of these students received free and reduced lunches; 25% were African-American, 65% Caucasian, and 10% other.

The 63 Israeli students attended two different schools in Akko, Israel, a diverse city of approximately 50,000 residents located in the northwestern part of Israel. The Western Galilee region is approximately 50% Jewish and 50% Israeli Arab (including Druse, Christians, and Muslims; Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Teachers of the 141 students also participated in the study. All of the teachers had bachelor’s degrees and master’s degrees in education. Their classroom teaching experience spanned 7-30 years.
Instruments. We used two data-gathering instruments: questionnaires and semistructured interviews. Questionnaires included open-ended questions designed to identify program strengths and weaknesses (See Appendixes A and B) and were administered to student participants.

We conducted semistructured interviews with all teachers and principals and with 12 of the Israeli students who visited the United States. This methodology, as described by Yin (1994), was selected because interviews gave participants a forum to share their experiences and provided an opportunity for us to ask follow-up questions. The semistructured interviews allowed us to identify emerging themes about the perspectives of students, teachers, and principals on the implications of the IB-SP.

All interviews with teachers and principals were audio-taped, took approximately 30 minutes, and were conducted in a location that was comfortable for the participant. We used the interview protocols found in Appendixes C and D.

Data Analysis

According to Yin (1994), the analysis of qualitative data requires treating the evidence fairly in order to produce compelling analytic conclusions and rule out alternative interpretations. We used a qualitative software instrument, QSR NUD*IST 4 Classic, to code the qualitative data in a progressive process of sorting and defining the data. This allowed the data to be chunked into themes and provided an organizational framework. Once the chunks were identified, we put the information gathered into meaningful themes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Findings

We used semistructured interviews and a questionnaire to find the benefits and weaknesses of the IB-SP. Findings for each research question are sequentially presented.

Research Question 1. How does the IB-SP promote understanding and appreciation of diversity?

Themes elicited from the data are presented in Figure 1.

Table

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<tr>
<th>Participants in the Study</th>
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<th>Israel</th>
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<td>Grade 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
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Teachers. All of the teachers involved responded that understanding and appreciation of diversity were outcomes of the IB-SP. Teachers believed that their students learned about the Holocaust by reading The Island on Bird Street by Uri Orlov (1997). Associated lessons and discussions in class led to further awareness of a historical era far removed from their current lives. Online discussions between Israeli and American students enhanced the gaining of different perspectives. According to Chen et al. (2004), students develop communication and inquiry skills when participating in an international collaborative project. Sayers (1999) noted the exchange of meaningful and purposeful context-embedded communications increases both second language acquisition and intercultural
learning. The following statement from one of the teachers illustrates Sayers’ findings about expansion of students’ knowledge and perspectives.

Yes, especially when they studied about the patches. Many of them didn’t know there were more than just the yellow patches. Other nationalities and other groups had to wear them. And they were almost [nearly] with their jaws hanging open [students were amazed at this fact].

Teachers also noted that Israeli and American students alike found similarities with each other. Through online discussions and face-to-face meetings, students were able to compare their favorite musicians, find similar interests, and realize their clothing was similar.

**Figure 1.** Themes elicited from data analysis.

**Students.** Students’ responses indicated an understanding and appreciation of diversity. The theme of gaining another perspective was prominent in the students’ responses. An Israeli teacher noted regarding her students, “They know they are the third generation. They have to talk about it. They have to learn.” U.S. students were able to look at the perspective of the Holocaust from the Israeli students’ point of view. The ability to gain perspectives is an important component of social studies education. As stated by Welton (2005), “The goal of multicultural literacy is to develop citizens who have the knowledge and ability to understand events and experiences from different perspectives.” A U.S. teacher captured this outcome for the IB-SP:

I think there were a lot of things that were taking place that you can’t measure on tests. Like the relationship between here and Israel. The understanding of cultures. The differences that go on there. Wow, they like the same kind of music as we do. So there were a lot of social activities going on, too, which go far beyond whatever was included in the curriculum.

Indeed, the second theme that evolved was the ability of students to find similarities with each other, which is demonstrated in the following excerpts from an interview with U.S. middle-school students who visited a synagogue during the study of *The Island on Bird Street*:
• To show how small the world is, and how much alike we all are. We have the same needs, same desires, same interests.
• I learned that language and distance do not have anything to do with the people inside. We are all people. We are all friends.
• I learned so much from this project. I mostly learned about how to discuss our opinions. I also learned about how people are very different but that’s what makes us unique.
• The most important part was that it was fun. The Israelis came and learned a lot. Also the interchange between the cultures was awesome. The project was a little boring, but it was worth it to communicate with them online. The book was also good. When they came is when it was worth it. They were interesting people and fun to talk with. Also going to the synagogue was interesting. You should definitely try to get into this program!

When students are able to find similarities with one another, understanding is a natural outcome.

Responses to the open-ended questionnaire that was administered to the Israeli students revealed that more than 50% of the students liked to correspond with people they did not know (see Figure 2).

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of answers to the question, “Which new things did you learn that you didn’t know before?” Forty-one percent of the students mentioned that the new and interesting part of the project was to learn about differences between people.

Principals. Principals also believed that students gained tolerance and understanding of others. Responses to the interviews indicated all principals believed the IB-SP had educational value. The novelty of pairing with international partners stimulated discussion and comprehension of the reading material. Students were interested in the content, and assessments indicated mastery of the reading material.

According to the interviews, principals reported noticeable congeniality among the Israeli and American students when 12 Israeli students and their teachers came for a face-to-face visit in the United States. From the principals’ perspective, the ability to find similarities in likes and dislikes fostered not only understanding of other cultures but, in essence, became a program that ultimately promoted peace.
Research Question Two: What technology and communication issues need to be addressed? Themes elicited from the data are presented in Figure 4.

The IB-SP is based on a dialogue between and among groups of students across the globe. The teachers act as coordinators and mentors for their students. The coordination, which is essential for the success of the program, is based on communication between the teachers and the IB-SP coordinator. The program has a unique Web environment that is password protected and thus enables participants to dialogue and interact with the knowledge that they are not being monitored or experiencing interference.

Prior to the beginning of the program, the teachers were asked to participate in a preparatory workshop where they were acquainted with the content of the IB-SP and with its technical aspects. The teachers were instructed in opening e-mail accounts and setting up Skype (or in earlier times ICQ) or Messenger, and they practiced using these communication means. They learned how to create work groups on the book-sharing environment designated for their pair of classrooms and practiced opening a dialogue, monitoring it, and communicating with their students.

The book-sharing coordinator at each country conducted an on-site workshop for the students to acquaint them with the Web-based environment. As the program developed and the students from both sides of the ocean got to know each other, a videoconference session allowed students to see their peers face to face, ask questions, and dialogue.

Teachers. Teachers expressed great appreciation for the training they received before and during the school year: “Excellent training. The coordinator provided in-service for teachers and students.” They appreciated that the Web site and the discussions were constantly monitored by the coordinator, who helped them identify content or behavioral issues. Another teacher said, “The coordinator monitors the Web site, which helps me a lot…I know that she’ll call me if there’s something weird going on…She is very good at what she does, real positive. So it is excellent.”

Most of the communication among students was done from school as teachers took them to the computer lab. They would log in to the program’s environment, read the posts, and respond to them. Teachers complained about technological issues such as poor

Figure 3. Responses to question, “Which new things did you learn in the IB-SP you didn’t know before?”
computer maintenance and insufficient Internet speed. Some of the teachers spent a great deal of time at home reading students’ posts: “We don’t have very good computers, but it’s OK because, for myself, I do most of the monitoring work from home...We do have Internet at school but it’s so slow...Mainly on Saturdays I go to the Web site and see who has received a letter and read the students’ posts.”

![Figure 4. Themes from technology and communication issues that need to be addressed.](image)

**Principals.** The role of the principals in the project was to facilitate the technological aspects in terms of availability of communication and computers at specific times; this meant that the book-sharing classroom needed priority in accessing the computer lab: “As a principal, I just felt like I was a communications link to get the thing going.” As the program coordinator matched schools, there was no need for principal-to-principal communication on a regular basis, but they did communicate from time to time. The principals participated in the videoconferencing session, and one noted,

This year we did a distance learning teleconference, which was an absolutely amazing thing. How excited our kids got! The band and the orchestra playing. I had a chance to talk to their principal briefly on it. It put a face with this. You know they had some background information and they had sent some e-mails prior to that. It was the fact that you could actually see them.

The principal’s role as a school leader was crucial to the perceived success of the IB-SP. Without the blessing of the principal, the program could not flourish.

**Students.** The students believed that, technologically, communication could have been more exciting or even more practical. They regretted the fact that they could not use face-
to-face software such as Messenger and Skype from school because of limitations imposed by school policy: “I thought it would be much more interesting to talk to the person I was writing to... I did not have Internet at home and school does not allow Messenger.” The way the Web site was organized and the way the students were divided into workgroups apparently were somewhat confusing:

It could have been better by having more interesting topics. If whoever is writing to me isn’t very interested in the topic, it’s hard to see their personality. Sometimes it was also hard for me to write if I didn’t think the topic was interesting.

Some said that they believed some of the difficulties were due to distance and differences in the way they understood each other and that “if we could communicate more, we could have solved some of the misunderstandings.” Another student said, “The online sharing of the book could have been better. Not every student [knew] who to write to, and it made it kind of confusing.”

Discussion

The qualitative data indicated several conclusions related to the first research question: How does the IB-SP promote understanding and appreciation of diversity? The findings suggested that the IB-SP was successful with regard to teaching tolerance and understanding of diversity. Every student, teacher, and principal interviewed attested to the efficacy of the IB-SP and its positive impact on tolerance and understanding of diversity. Although responses in the interviews and on questionnaires indicated positive results, it remains to be seen whether students will display increased tolerance and understanding of diversity in the future.

Analysis of data also indicated that the leadership skills of the principals were directly related to the success of the IB-SP. Traits principals exhibited that led to the success of the program included support for the teacher and encouragement of teacher autonomy, as suggested by their comments:

1. If you allow them [teachers] to engage in programs they have a passion for, they will, in return, provide greater results in the other areas they are involved in.

2. In all honesty, I stay out of the way. I say, What do you need?

Regarding the second research question regarding technology and communication, we found that both of these components were integral to the program’s success. The different time zones sometimes prevented a smooth flow of communication; Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. For example, when it was 9:00 a.m. EST, it was 4:00 p.m. in Israel. It was thus a challenge to coordinate a convenient time to use Skype and videoconferencing. In addition, the structure of the school week was different. For example, Israeli students attended school Sunday through Thursday and U.S. students attended school Monday through Friday. The Israeli school year began in October and finished at the end of June, whereas the U.S. school year began at the end of August and ended at the beginning of June. These factors required extraordinary efforts to establish and maintain communication. These findings coincided with those of Peled and Rozansky (2012), who suggested that school principals must agree on a joint school-year calendar to include the twinning activity events for both schools. This joint calendar will act as the road map for planning the detailed activity in each school.

Web 2.0 technologies offer abundant tools and secure environments that can be used for joint-learning activities. Social networking is widespread among teenagers, who are accustomed to online sharing of information. Thus, technology should not be a hindrance
when planning and executing a twinning activity (Peled & Dunnivan, 2011; Peled & Rozansky, 2012; Zimmerman & Peled, 2009). Three issues affected communication between schools: (a) availability of videoconferencing communication on a regular basis, (b) Internet-connected computers at students’ homes, and (c) low technical capabilities at school.

Limitations

Interviews of the Israeli students included the 12 students who visited the United States at the conclusion of the IB-SP. Even though all of the Israeli students completed the questionnaire, this subset of Israeli students might have had different impressions of the program because of their ability to meet the U.S. students face-to-face.

Because participants in the study were from two different cultures and native languages were not common, misunderstanding of questions and interpretation of questions might have created limitations for the study. Researchers for this project included an Israeli and an American who were able to ferret out misunderstanding of questions and provide clear interpretation of questions as much as possible—but the possibility of inaccuracy existed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Research Question 1: How does the IB-SP promote understanding and appreciation of diversity? All levels of the school community agreed that the learning outcomes exceeded their expectations. In this study, principals, teachers, and students reported the IB-SP promoted understanding and appreciation of diversity. In fact, principals and teachers believed the inquiry-based approach was a preferred avenue to addressing the skills required for high-stakes testing. Leaders at institutions preparing teachers are supporting the notion of inquiry-based strategies and, in particular, integration of content areas such as reading, language arts, and social studies (Welton, 2005). Teachers reported that both Israeli and American students found similarities with each other. Finding similarities increases communication and increases the ability to view the perspectives of others (Chen et al., 2004; Sayers, 1999). From the principals’ perspectives, the ability to find similarities in likes and dislikes fostered not only understanding of other cultures but, in essence, contributed to creating a program that ultimately promoted peace.

Recommendations. Suggestions for future IB-SPs include improvements in organizing the topics. A second suggestion for improvement is related to organization: Students might have benefited from a series of contacts with their book-sharing partners prior to reading the corresponding literature. Organizers should consider carefully crafting student partnerships by incorporating an interest inventory. Students might also benefit from providing input to topics selected for discussion; teachers may want to develop a list of topics for each week.

Research Question 2: What technology and communication issues need to be addressed? Technology was the platform that enabled the IB-SP to exist. The book-sharing coordinator provided necessary training for the teachers involved in the project; topics included (a) content of the book-sharing program, (b) using e-mail to communicate, (c) monitoring the Web site, (d) using Skype, and (e) using videoconferencing. Teachers reported concerns about the poor computer maintenance and insufficient Internet speed; it was not unusual for them to spend time outside of the classroom monitoring the Web site and checking e-mails. Principals facilitated the technological aspects by providing access to the computer lab when needed. Students would have enjoyed more face-to-face time
with their e-mail pals, but time differences made that difficult. Effective communication is necessary for program success and requires teacher commitment to the project.

**Recommendations.** School principals must agree on a joint school-year calendar to create availability of videoconferencing communication on a regular basis. Opportunities for students to communicate with each other outside of the regular school day will help to alleviate the differences in time and school calendars. Organizers should employ the assistance of the computer teacher and principal to make sure that Internet connectivity is sufficient for proper communication and should incorporate Skype as much as possible to facilitate communication.

The IB-SP helps strengthen ties between communities by creating opportunities for participation in concrete projects that expand beyond the classroom walls and school perimeter. In the broad spectrum of educational objectives, the program has the potential to (a) improve literacy, (b) promote understanding of diversity, (c) make the curriculum more interesting and inviting, and (d) help students in both schools to gain an educational awareness of different countries, cultures, and needs.

The IB-SP addresses three key conceptions of curriculum development. **Joint learning activity** is the heart of twinning. **Collaborative programs** provide opportunities to discuss and critique issues generated through open dialogue with partners focused on differences and issues of change. Through the mastery of basic **inquiry-based and project-based learning** and of the **technological skills** required for communication, both teachers and students will develop an understanding and appreciation of diversity that can replace a simple tolerant acceptance of others.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire—Israel

1. What is your native language?
2. Which other languages can you speak fluently?
3. How did you learn that you would be working on some projects with students in the United States?
4. What did your teacher tell you about the Twinning project?
5. What did you like best about the activity?
6. What did you like least about the program?
7. Which activity was hard to do? And why?
8. Which activity was boring?
9. Describe the new things that you’ve learned during the course of the Twinning activity that to your knowledge are not learned during the “usual” course of school.
10. With whom are you in contact from the partner class in Youngstown?
11. Are you in contact with any of your colleagues from Youngstown in your spare, unoccupied time (not school time)? If so, please describe the way in which you contact each other.
12. We’ll be happy if you’ll be able to recommend to the teacher any changes in the program. Please write down which improvements you would recommend for next year’s activity.

Appendix B
Student Questionnaire—United States

1. How did you learn that you would be working on some projects with students in Israel?
2. What did your teacher tell you about the Twinning project?
3. What did you like best about the activity?
4. What did you like least about the program?
5. Which activity was hard to do? And why?
6. Which activity was boring?
7. Describe the new things that you’ve learned during the course of the Twinning activity that to your knowledge are not learned during the “usual” course of school.
8. With whom are you in contact from the partner class in Israel?
9. Are you in contact with any of your colleagues from Israel in your spare, unoccupied time (not school time)? If so, please describe the way in which you contact each other.
10. We’ll be happy if you’ll be able to recommend to the teacher any changes in the program. Please write down which improvements you would recommend for next year’s activity.

Appendix C
Teacher Interview Questions

1. How did you get involved in the Twinning project?
2. What background/interest do you have with the Holocaust?
3. Tell me about the training you received for the International Book-Sharing Project.
4. Are you comfortable using technology to communicate with participants?
5. Tell me about the communication procedure with the partner school? Principal?
6. Describe communication with parents.
7. Describe materials/text used for the project.
8. What adjustments to the curriculum were necessary?
9. What work procedures were in place?
10. Describe the communication with the partner school with regard to:
11. Availability of hardware
12. Communication channel (LAN, Modem)
13. Technical ability using e-mail, videoconferencing, telephone, and "snail mail"
14. Describe student interest.
16. What were some of the successes? Difficulties?
17. What would you do differently next time?

Appendix D
Principal Interview Questions

1. How did you first hear about the International Book-Sharing Project? How did the program get started at your building?
2. What responsibilities do you have for the Twinning project? Who did you communicate with to initiate the program?
3. What commitment do you have to the program?
4. How was the faculty person selected?
5. Describe parent involvement in the program.
6. How does the project fit into your goals for the school?
7. Describe ways in which the development and implementation of the goals of Twinning are fostered or hindered by the school context.
8. Describe ways you support the teachers as they develop and work to meet their objectives for the Twinning project.
9. In which subject’s curriculum will the activity be imbedded?
10. Are changes needed in the curriculum so that new teaching/learning activities are feasible?
11. How did you benefit from participation in the program? Teachers? Parents? Students?
12. What were some of the difficulties? Successes?
13. What would you do differently next time?
Utilizing Technology in Physical Education: Addressing the Obstacles of Integration

By Beth Pyle and Keri Esslinger

The use of technology to enhance the educational experience has become a standard within all content areas. Physical education is not exempt from this standard, although implementation of technology use has been difficult because of the unique nature of the physical education classroom environment. The authors discuss the obstacles that teachers and administrators face while integrating technology into the physical education environment, as well as approaches that can be taken to overcome those obstacles.

Technology and physical education (PE) are often considered at opposite ends of the educational spectrum—one sedentary and the other requiring movement. Tony Hall, in his keynote lecture given at the International Association of Physical Education in Higher Education 2011 Conference, addressed this very dilemma, suggesting that interactive technology needs be a solution to, rather than a reason for, “the serious contemporary educational and societal problems of inactivity, hypokinetic, and sedentary living” (Hall, 2012, p. 106). However, establishing or crossing the bridge with technology on one side and PE on the other can be difficult because of two major roadblocks—those from the perceptions of administrators and those self-imposed by physical educators. These roadblocks are not insurmountable, but they do require a plan, resting on the important idea that technology should enhance teaching, not replace it (Juniu, 2011).

Administrative Roadblocks

Administrators and faculty technology committees often overlook the technology needs of PE. This oversight is not necessarily intentional but more often occurs because they are unaware of the technology possibilities within PE or because of financial restraints. Administrators may not consider the gymnasium a classroom. For instance, an interactive whiteboard is often out of the question in a gymnasium because of Internet capabilities, wiring, and safety concerns and because the gym is a multipurpose facility—often used for lunch, assemblies, interscholastic competitions, band and choral concerts, and so forth. Although having a separate classroom for PE would be ideal, it is rarely the reality, and many do not see retrofitting an older gymnasium with technology as being cost effective.

Self-Imposed Roadblocks

Even as administrators often overlook how technology and PE can be partnered, physical educators may also overlook obvious links that could create this needed relationship.
Most physical educators recognize the positives of technology in education but may not know how to implement them into the curriculum without taking away from activity time. Utilizing technology without adequate prep time for teachers to master its use may result in technology taking away from student learning and activity time (Sinclair, 2002). The key to maximizing the positive effects of technology in PE is to enlarge the physical educator’s knowledge base. By starting small and enlisting the help of colleagues—with more than one person making an effort—the PE teacher can share and lessen frustration during the learning curve. For instance, creating a Web page for PE on the school’s Web site is a viable first step. Successfully implementing one piece of technology within PE will affirm its importance. It is also imperative that physical educators make administrators and technology committee members aware of the technology needs within PE.

**Teacher Preparation**

In teacher education, technology is frequently an area in which all student teachers must demonstrate competence. Teacher-preparation universities need to address how they are preparing future teachers in PE (Liang, Walls, Hicks, Clayton, & Yang, 2006) and emphasize the need for teacher candidates to meet technology standards (Southern Regional Education Board, n.d.). For instance, in Kentucky, technology is one of ten standards on which teacher candidates are evaluated. The candidate must display his or her ability to implement technology to (a) support instruction; (b) access and manipulate data; (c) enhance professional growth and productivity; (d) communicate and collaborate with colleagues, parents, and the community; and (e) conduct research (Kentucky Teacher Standards, 2008). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) also emphasizes the importance of technology for teachers and for student learning.

**Technology in PE**

Technology can be implemented in a number of areas within the teaching of PE: unit and lesson plan preparation; classroom management; communication with parents and students; instruction and feedback; and assessment. However, too often physical educators implement technology only to meet the standards without discovering the how, why, and when to best use the technologies available (“Does Technology,” 2012). Technology should be used to enhance student learning, to save time, and to motivate the student and the teacher. Technology should not be used just to meet state or district requirements. The challenge is how to find best uses of technology for PE.

**Class preparation.** The most common and accessible way for PE teachers to use technology is in their
preparation for the school year. Numerous Web sites to which teachers can refer are available in this area: www.pecentral.com; www.aahperd.org/naspe; www.braingym.com; www.pe4life.org; www.letsmove.gov; and www.spark.org. At these sites, physical educators can find inspiration for units, outlines, lesson plans, and national and state standards as well as new ideas to augment their knowledge and experiences. In addition, physical educators from around the United States and the world can collaborate, share ideas, and problem solve, thereby further expanding their knowledge bases. Sharing via the Internet is also a valuable tool for new teachers as they prepare for their classes.

Classroom management. Keeping students meaningfully active is the primary goal of physical educators, but this is sometimes a difficult task. Music is a great addition to physical activities, useful for getting the students moving faster, keeping them motivated and moving, or calming them down. Software such as GarageBand (www.apple.com/ilife/garageband)—a tool that can create, write, or edit music as well as record songs—is advantageous to use in PE (Miller, n.d.). It allows a PE teacher to create musical loops with sound effects that the teacher then plays to signal students to move from station to station. For example, one piece of music can designate time for working at a station; a sound effect can signal equipment return at that station; another piece of music can then cue transition from one station to another; and a sound effect can signal students to begin the next station. This musical loop can be repeated until the students have moved through all the stations. Because the music is set up on a continuous loop, the PE teacher no longer needs to turn the music off and on manually or remotely to signal student rotation but can move freely about the gym, providing instruction and immediate feedback as well as monitoring off-task behavior.

Communication. A PE Web page is a great technology tool with which to keep students, parents, colleagues, administrators, school board members, and the community informed. Daily PE routines, special events, review worksheets, exams, PE policies, and so forth can all be communicated to stakeholders via the Internet. Also, having an area on the Web page for parents and other viewers to submit questions and concerns provides an additional opportunity for communication. PE advocacy is yet another reason for such a Web page. Links to community recreation opportunities and tips on health and wellness can promote lifetime physical activity for the entire family.

However, a PE Web page is only valuable if its contents are up-to-date; reading information that is 2 years old will not give others, including administrators, the impression that technology is important. PE teachers must have a systematic strategy in place to keep information current. For example, the organizational concept of only handle it once can be utilized to ensure timely information. PE teachers can write their units and assignments right into their Web page while they plan, rather than having to plan, transfer, and update.

Instruction and feedback. Physical educators are often their own worst enemies when it comes to technology because they sense that technology operates against the very soul of their mission: to help students be physically active! Technology and PE appears to be an oxymoron, but the terms can complement each other. Video game consoles such as Wii (Nintendo, 2013), pedometers, heart rate monitors, iPads, active apps, interactive whiteboards, digital video recorders, and so forth can all be used to help students understand the relationships among the key components of physical education: motor skills, fitness, and physical activity. For example, a PE teacher may use a camcorder to record, share, and critique a student’s performance. In their research, Banville and Polifki (2009) found a student’s ability to learn and perform motor skills increased with the use of digital video
recorders. Furthermore, digital videos are teacher friendly because they can be recorded and played back without any interruption to instructional time (Banville & Polifki, 2009).

Another application of technology to enhance instruction and feedback is to make available videos of appropriate skill performance and game play. Such videos can be used during the teaching, review, and assessment portions of a PE unit. Every day brings a new app for nutritional tracking, video feedback, PE rules, workout routines, and so forth. The number of apps and the rate at which they are hitting the market is astounding. Many schools are now providing iPads for each student or portable learning labs, so the possibilities of using apps for direct instruction and feedback are limitless.

Assessment. Although much of the physical skill assessment done in PE is time consuming by nature, technology can be a time saver if used properly (Graham, Holr-Hale, & Parker, 2013). For instance, to save precious in-class time for physical activity, teachers can assess cognitive knowledge with exams given online outside of class time; feedback on these exams can be immediate. Another advantage is that record keeping for student attendance and grades can be linked directly to the teacher’s grade-reporting system for easy access and distribution from various mobile devices such as tablets, iPads, or smart phones. Students can also utilize these devices to self-assess motor performance by analyzing their skills immediately through videos. In addition, using software such as MovieMaker (Microsoft, 2013), students can showcase the application of their PE knowledge and skill through the creation of instructional and performance movies. Technology makes this type of authentic assessment more meaningful for the student and the teacher (Kovar, Combs, Campbell, Napper-Owen, & Worrell, 2012).

Conclusion

Despite the roadblocks, a partnership of technology and PE is workable and beneficial for all involved. Frustrated by early failures with technology, many physical educators may give up or under-utilize technology just to say they are using it. The ability to understand technology may appear to some a natural-born trait; however, just like the acquisition of any skill-related endeavor in PE, time on task makes the difference. Once they invest the time and effort to learn technology, teachers who use it for unit and lesson plan preparation, classroom management, communication with parents and students, instruction and feedback, and assessment can save enormous amounts of time and energy. Truly, developing and improving the partnership between technology and PE is vital for student learning and needs to be a priority for all stakeholders—physical educators, administrators, classroom teachers, parents, and students.
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Using Digital and Audio Annotations to Reinvent Critical Feedback with Online Adult Students

By Denese Wolff-Hilliard and Barbara Baethe

The majority of undergraduate students attending online classes at the university level are adults from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Often, they have limited writing experience—a situation that creates difficulties for them and for their instructors. Providing feedback to address grammar and mechanics is relatively easy, but handling issues related to the content of students’ work is more challenging. The authors discuss their use of a combination of technological feedback systems that offer an opportunity for these students to develop writing proficiency.

Teaching English can be stressful, and teaching English in an online environment is truly a challenge. In online English classes that we teach at the University of Phoenix, adult students sign in with a myriad of writing concerns. With a tight schedule of only 35 days in a typical semester, English instructors have to help students improve their writing skills by providing feedback that is immediate and specific. To address this issue, we used a number of approaches in the online environment and found a combination of written and oral feedback worked well for our students. Specifically, we reinvented the feedback method, combining digital and audio annotations to provide rich and significant feedback to adult writers in our online classes.

Background

In the virtual classroom at the University of Phoenix, most students are culturally and linguistically diverse middle-aged adults with intermittent or no college experience and jobs that do not afford them many opportunities to practice writing. In 5 weeks, students in beginning English classes write several papers ranging from 750 to 1,400 words. Students have access to WritePoint™, an automated essay-scoring system (University of Phoenix, 2013). To use the software, students submit their papers electronically through the institution’s Center for Writing Excellence and receive feedback on the grammar and mechanics of their work. In addition, instructors can download the system and use it through Microsoft Word to insert comments directly into students’ papers.

Introduced in 1966, automated essay-scoring systems provide immediate feedback on students’ papers by inserting comments on grammar, usage, and mechanics (Rudner & Gagne, 2012). Although the automated essay-scoring systems provide feedback quickly,
some of the comments are inconsistent with APA 6th Edition formatting. Instructors have
to edit the automated comments and insert additional comments about errors that the
automated system overlooked. Some students receive more feedback on their papers than
they write. McCurry (2010) and Dikli (2010) discovered that automated feedback is often
complicated, redundant, and lengthy. Another concern is that the feedback weighs heavily
on grammar and mechanics, not content. Finally, automated feedback does not help most
students improve their writing (Dikli).

Additionally, to respond to the automated comments effectively, students need an
understanding of grammar and mechanics. Many adult students in our classes do not
know how to use the automated comments to improve their writing, and they continue to
repeat errors. Adult writers need and want feedback that helps them improve their writing
skills (Ben-Simon & Bennet, 2007). Thus, finding the right combination of techniques to
provide meaningful feedback was our primary goal. For more than a year, we experimented
with different approaches and discovered that Web-based digital software such as Essay
Grader (Gatsby’s Light, 2013), Adobe Reader XI (Adobe TV, 2012), and Jing (TechSmith
Corporation, 2013) helped us to provide better quality feedback on students’ papers.

Implementation to Reach Different Learning Styles

Students write four individual papers in a typical 200-level course at the University of
Phoenix. We focused on different areas for each writing assignment in order to meet the
varied learning styles and needs of students.

Verbal learners. For the first paper, we provided written narrative feedback from
Essay Grader’s prewritten bank of comments, which allowed us to present detailed
analytic and holistic feedback without typing the comments on each paper. Essay Grader
is an inexpensive software package available for the PC, MAC, and iPad that provides five
banks of comments arranged in categories: praise, essay organization, content, mechanics,
style, and documentation. Sometimes we used the comments as presented and, at other
times, we edited the comments for a more personal approach. Students responded
well to the narrative feedback, which helped some improve their writing skills because
the suggestions for improvement were presented as a separate document in addition to
embedded comments in the body of their work. One student commented, “My writing

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Feedback should be rich communication between student and teacher. Comments on papers should help students internalize the learning and see the gaps between their learning and the lesson goal.

is improving. I am learning to write less in the passive voice and to refrain from overuse of ambiguous statements and other grammatical errors” (A.M., personal communication, January 26, 2013).

**Auditory learners.** Although teachers in online classrooms deliver instruction through sophisticated learning-management systems, instruction still focuses primarily on the written word, as did our feedback for the first essay. To address the needs of auditory learners more fully in the second round of feedback, we used a different approach. On the second paper, we used a PDF annotator, such as Adobe Reader XI, that allows a reviewer to insert analytic feedback into the body of the paper and also to provide holistic comments with the software’s built-in microphone.

Using the PDF annotator, we provided both written and audio feedback to our students. After reviewing the paper and inserting suggestions for improvement into the body of the work, we used the built-in microphone to add oral feedback on the validity of the content. Although we could use the computer microphone, we discovered that we had better quality using a computer headset. Adobe Reader XI maintains a log of the comments made in the text, and we used that log to guide our audio comments about editing issues. Next, we commented on the structure and content to help students understand how the paper was organized.

According to Hope (2011), students respond positively to audio feedback because they understand the comments better. Ice, Curtis, Phillips, and Wells (2007) further supported this idea, indicating that students pay more attention to feedback presented through audio comments than to written comments. Furthermore, because audio feedback is easier to review, students may be more likely to use the audio comments to improve their writing (Ice et al., 2007). Our students were accordingly receptive to the audio feedback. One student commented, “I really enjoyed your feedback. I felt like you were sitting here with me and explaining everything that I needed to do to make my writing better. Thank you for this!” (J. G., personal communication, September 21, 2012).

**Visual learners.** Most students responded well to the first two kinds of feedback. However, by the third writing assignment, we still had a few students who were struggling. Their comments indicated that they enjoyed the feedback, but we noticed that improvement was slow. For struggling students, we used screencasts as a third form of feedback to demonstrate how to revise and edit their work. Virtual librarians use screencast tools such as Jing to create assignments and interactive training sessions (Gormely & McDermott, 2011; Jensen & Tunon, 2010; Sekyere, 2010). Annotated screenshots in Jing appear on the desktop as 5-minute presentations. This free, Web-based software allowed us to show the students the steps to take to complete a series of revisions, proofreading, and editing.

Holistic screencast annotations take about half the time of analytic annotated evaluation with the Adobe Reader XI software (Hope, 2011). Allowing students to benefit from analytic and holistic comments, screencasts provide students with visual and oral
feedback resembling an audiovisual conference. Perhaps the greatest benefit of this type of feedback for us was that we worked directly with the students’ papers, showing them how to fine-tune their writing. Students responded positively to audiovisual feedback. Because the feedback was more deeply engaging by appealing to multiple senses, students were better able to understand the comments.

**Tailored.** Using the digital and audio methods of feedback provided our students with several opportunities to gain information about their writing strengths and weaknesses. The combination of feedback methods allowed us to organize and present comments so that students could incorporate the information into their writing repertoires. During the fifth week of class, students submitted their final individual writing assignment, and we expected to see a difference in their writing skills. Because class was ending and we would not have further contact with the students, we wanted the final comments to help students delve into critical reflection about their writing.

For the culminating writing assignment, we used a combination of feedback methods that depended on students’ writing needs. Students who had a better grasp of the writing process received embedded comments with narrative feedback. Those students who indicated that oral comments were their preference received audio feedback and embedded comments. Finally, for students who still needed visual and audio instruction, we provided feedback through screencasts along with embedded comments. The variety of methods gave students time to work through the feedback, process the information, and reflect on their experiences.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Very little research is available on writing intervention with adult writers, and most college instructors modify writing strategies used with younger students to fit the needs of adult student writers (TEAL, 2012). Feedback should be rich communication between student and teacher. Comments on papers should help students internalize the learning and see the gaps between their learning and the lesson goal. Furthermore, specific feedback on writing should provide a roadmap to help students reach the instructional goal and determine where they are on the learning continuum. With each feedback delivery, we asked students to select three areas that they wanted to improve. The combined methods of feedback helped students learn how to work with the comments to set the next writing goal. Therefore, the experience of writing and receiving critical feedback helped students work through the learning experience and emerge more informed and rejuvenated as developing writers.

Ultimately, quality feedback helps students reflect on their learning by building metacognitive skills to support their sense of self-efficacy (Beach & Friedrich, 2012). By using a combination of feedback methods, we were able to have deliberate conversations with students about their self-efficacy as it applies to writing. Detailed feedback—particularly the audio feedback and the audiovisual feedback—facilitated that discussion. Because adult writers may not know how to combat negative self-talk, providing students with quality feedback through a combination of methods may improve their sense of self-efficacy and help them polish their writing skills as adult students in an online environment.
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Adoption of an Early-Alert System to Support University Student Success
Johna Faulconer, Jayne Geissler, Diane Majewski, and John Trifilo

Retaining students is critical to a university’s success, and employing student-centered, data-driven strategies for retaining students is essential. Technology (both hardware and software) can be an effective tool to assist with recruitment and retention efforts and to build a sense of community across a large campus. Using an early-alert system is one student-support strategy that has the potential to create a more cohesive and centralized approach to communicating with students and monitoring their academic progress. The authors describe a campus-wide implementation of an early-alert system designed to engage students in monitoring their academic progress in collaboration with faculty and advisors early and throughout the academic term.

Background

Great strides have been made in expanding access to higher education, but retention and completion rates have remained virtually stagnant, and time-to-degree rates have risen considerably (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009). With an ever-expanding array of choices for students and with funding dollars being tied to student numbers, leaders of higher education institutions are feeling the pressure of both recruiting and retaining students (Zhang, 2009). If retention is to improve, leaders of such institutions must systematically rethink their approach to student persistence and graduation (Simons, 2011). Getting students to enroll is only the first step. Supporting students and intervening quickly and proactively before issues become insurmountable are keys to student success (Varney, 2012).

Early-alert systems use software to provide a formal, proactive feedback structure through which university faculty alert students and their campus support agents to issues impacting academic performance. With the rapid advances in technologies has come an increased interest in using early-alert systems to support students; however, care should be taken to select a system that best meets the needs of all stakeholders. With this priority in mind, educators at a large southeastern university in the United States designed a plan for the rollout of an early-alert system. The plan included selection of the system, a pilot, campus-wide implementation, and study of effectiveness.

Selection of the System

To select the best system, a committee made up of faculty from different ranks, advisors, administrators, and technology specialists convened to explore early-alert systems. The
The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin committee reviewed numerous systems available through private vendors and made a recommendation to adopt The Starfish Retention Solutions™ (www.starfishsolutions.com) because it offered the following:

- **Early-alert flags:** Instructors are able to notify students regarding their academic performance through raising flags. A flag is a notification sent via e-mail to students regarding their academic performance (positive or negative) within a course or regarding their absences.

- **Monitoring:** Specific individuals and offices (i.e., advisors or individuals in athletic and academic offices or student services) can be notified when a student receives a flag notification.

- **Reporting:** Administrators, faculty, and advisors can generate a variety of reports by type of flags, student names, departments, and class-identifying prefixes.

- **Student success network:** A description of resources and services, hours of operation, contact information, and links to specific Web sites can be included and linked to courses within the student’s schedule.

- **Appointments:** A scheduling option is available. Students, faculty, and advisors can make or request appointments using this feature.

Once the early-alert system was selected, pilot testing and limited implementation followed.

### Pilot Testing and Implementation

Initial pilot testing of the early-alert system was conducted during fall 2010 and focused on assessing the technical compatibility of the system with existing technology. This pilot involved 14 instructors and 172 undergraduate students.

A second pilot testing conducted during spring 2011 included 20 faculty, 2 academic advisors, and 1792 students. This pilot testing focused on system functions, ease of use, and effectiveness for faculty and students and included those involved in freshman-level foundations curriculum courses. Of the 1792 students in this pilot study, 958 (53%) of the students received one or more flag notifications. An academic-issue flag (Poor Academic Performance, Excessive Absences, and Stopped Attending) was raised on 699 (39%) of the students in the pilot test. Additionally, 246 students (13.5%) received an Outstanding Academic Performance flag.
To evaluate the effectiveness of the early-alert system from a student perspective, implementers surveyed two groups of students: (a) those who received an Outstanding Academic Performance flag, and (b) those who received a Poor Academic Performance or Excessive Absences flag. In both groups, the majority of those who responded noted it was beneficial to receive an update on their academic performance, believed their professor was paying attention to their performance, and indicated they preferred that all of their professors utilize the program. Of the 14 faculty members in the pilot test who responded to the survey, 100% indicated they would use the program in future semesters.

Based on the positive response by faculty and students, university administrators decided to make the early-alert system available to all faculty effective fall 2011. Flag types were modified and expanded, and faculty and staff attended intensive training sessions focused on how to make best use of the early-alert system.

Outcomes of Campus-Wide Implementation
Implementation of a campus-wide effort to market the early-alert system and to educate faculty concerning the benefits and uses occurred during spring 2011 and fall 2011. Faculty, students, academic advisors, and network office personnel received electronic surveys via university e-mail for their assessment of the early-alert system. Results for system users exceeded expectations. More than 28,000 flag notifications were sent to students by 38% of faculty. More than 80% of faculty respondents indicated the early-alert system was effective. Interestingly, the kudos flag (reflecting good course performance by students) was received by more individual students than the academic difficulty flag. In focus groups, faculty indicated they were appreciative of the kudos option being available in this early-alert system.

Students received electronic surveys at the end of fall 2011 to gauge their perceptions of the early-alert system, and their responses were primarily positive. Notably, 93% of students who received a kudos flag indicated it was motivational to receive the positive feedback. Of the students receiving the academic difficulty flag, 85% indicated that they took action.

Implementers surveyed professional advisors at the end of fall 2011 regarding their role in the early-alert system. Twenty-nine advisors completed the survey, yielding a 55% response rate. Regarding the utilization of the system, 100% indicated they read the reports or logged into the system to view advisees’ flag notifications. Advisors’ follow-up was focused on communicating with students who received an academic difficulty flag.

Finally, in fall 2012, university administrators convened a cross-campus research group to analyze institutional data, implement and assess surveys, and facilitate focus groups to understand better the perceptions of the early-alert system by faculty, students, and staff. This group is continuing to study the effectiveness of the tool, but initial findings have been very positive. These include the faculty’s belief that raising a difficulty notification was only the beginning of a larger conversation with a struggling student and that using the early-alert system was helpful to communication because students rarely visited the instructors’ Early evidence suggests an early-alert system has the potential to impact student success by enhancing in real time the lines of communication among student, instructor, and advisor.
offices. Students also believed that faculty who sent notifications were more engaged and were aware of their students.

**Conclusion**

Initial data support the notion that this technology tool has the potential to create a more cohesive approach to monitoring the academic progress of university students. In addition, early evidence suggests an early-alert system has the potential to impact student success by enhancing in real time the lines of communication among student, instructor, and advisor. Longitudinal research on the effectiveness and uses of this early-alert system at this large public university, where it is often a challenge to communicate in real time, is critical to determining whether or not this system impacts student success and retention over time.

**References**


Capturing a Wealth of Resources: A Review of Educational Technology and Mobile Learning Web Site

By Judith R. Merz

This article continues a series of occasional book or Web site reviews contributed by members of the Bulletin's 2012-2014 Editorial Board. Dr. Merz provides a review of a site that provides extensive resources regarding educational Web tools and mobile applications.

Educational Technology and Mobile Learning (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/) is a site that speaks to the heart of teachers by providing information about how to use technology in the classroom. Developed by Web 2.0 researcher and author of ebooks Med Kharbach of Canada, the site puts resources galore at the fingertips of teachers even as it fully illustrates why web is an appropriate term for such an Internet site.

Home Page

Without even delving very deeply into the site, users can find a variety of informative topics on the home page. For example, in September 2013, the home page provided links to

• Awesome Chart on Personalized Learning versus Individualized Learning
• A Nice Comic Featuring 12 Types of Procrastinators
• Interesting Guides on How to Use Google Services in Education
• Top 15 Tools to Showcase Students’ Creations
• A Goldmine of Resources for Teaching Students about Copyrights
• Flipped Classroom Explained for Teachers — A Must Watch Video
• Three New Educational Video Resources for Teachers
• This is How to Create Maps Using Google Maps Engine
• A Must Read Code of Best Practices in Fair Use and Copyright
• 10 Good TED Talks from Inspiring Teachers (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/)

In a sidebar on that same page, users were able to access popular posts on an equally impressive variety of technology topics in education — from posts exploring such pedagogical topics as good digital citizenry to practical, how-to posts on specific applications:

• The 6 Types of Questions your Students Need to Know About
• A List of All the Best iPad Apps Teachers Need
• A Great Edmodo Cheat Sheet for Teachers
• 90 iPad Apps Teachers Should Try This School Year
• 10 Important Things for Students to Be Good Digital Citizens
• 6 Things You Didn’t Know You Can Do with Dropbox
• Bloom’s Taxonomy Apps—A Great Resource Section for Teachers
• 8 Excellent Free Timeline Creation Tools for Teachers
• 15 Pinterest Boards Every Teacher Should Know About

Analogous to exploring a web, a user who clicked on any one of these posts could find not only the core information but also additional links to related material in a section called you might also like. For example, if one clicked on the Pinterest posting listed above, the you might also like segment on that page offered links to (a) Teacher’s Visual Guide to Creating Pinterest Boards for the Class (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/06/teachers-visual-guide-to-creating.html); (b) 4 Great Educational Alternatives to Pinterest (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/07/4-great-educational-alternatives-to.html); (c) The 8 Best Pinterest Boards about Educational Technology (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/12/the-8-best-pinterest-boards-about.html); and (d) Teachers’ Manual on the Use of Pinterest in Education (http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/12/teachers-manual-on-use-of-pinterest-in.html). In many cases, additional articles replaced the initial four recommendations when one navigated back to the core page.

As if the abundant links were not enough, the home page also offers a link to “Teachers’ Tech Workshop: A resource site providing tips and reviews of educational Web tools to help teachers better integrate technology into their teaching.” This site mimics the main site, with even more links organized and accessible by topic. In September 2013, the tabs on this page included six key topic areas: 21st century education; infographics; android apps; iPad apps; educational tools; and educational games. A segment on Popular Posts offered tools for creating educational infographics, critical thinking worksheets for kids, Facebook templates in the classroom, templates to create classroom newspapers, and an article exploring why the Finnish educational system ranks first in education.

Rounding out the plethora of material on the home page are a link to a translator to allow reading of material in other languages; a link to the 2012 Edublog Awards, which, in turn, provides extensive lists of blogs on various educational topics; and the usual array of links to social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and Pinterest, as well as to RSS and email. Information on the founder of the site, a list of Google+ Followers, random Tweets regarding content, and, unfortunately, a series of advertisements, round out the very busy home page content.

Tabs

Assuming that a user exhausts all the connections on the home page, he or she can explore nine additional tabs to find resources in a variety of ways. Tabs labeled all categories and all resources lead to pages that provide overviews of content throughout the site. Popular
topic areas are highlighted via tabs labeled iPad Resources, Teacher Guides, and YouTube 4 Teachers. The tab labeled Teacher Tools leads to lists of “top Web tools you will need as a teacher in order to effectively level the power of technology and Web 2.0 in your teaching and learning”(http://www.educatorstechnology.com/p/teacher-tools.html). In September 2013, no less than 30 lists were provided for topics such as bookmarking, annotation, digital storytelling, publishing students’ work, mind mapping, photo editing, collaborating, creating surveys and polls, and so forth. Even more intriguing, the tab labeled Downloads leads to a page of slideshow presentations on a variety of technology topics and applications—ready for use with students or colleagues.

Drawbacks

As one might guess from the descriptions provided above, the site does have several drawbacks. First, although the multiple links are useful, they can seem overwhelming—something of a tangled web that requires considerable exploration and unthreading, as well as a basic knowledge of tech terminology. Second, advertisements are abundant and can be distracting in an already-crowded visual field. Third, the dynamic design of the site means that one may come back to a different set of offerings when following certain links—a frustrating experience. In the same vein, pages are sometimes slow to load because of their complexity.

Summary

Overall, however, the super-abundance of information makes Educational Technology and Mobile Learning a site worth exploring. Those who have the patience and persistence to navigate and explore its many strands will find that it catches many educational technology gems for its users’ digestion and delight.
Reaching Readers through Technology: A Review of FarFaria.com
By Kamiah Hamilton

The author reviews an iPad application that is useful for teaching elementary students and for encouraging enjoyment of reading in general.

Reading is a fundamental skill necessary for success in many aspects of life, but children learn to read at very different rates. Teachers thus often face the difficulty of addressing the needs of students with a wide range of reading levels in any one classroom. For these teachers—and for parents encouraging their youngsters to read—FarFaria (www.farfaria.com) is one of the best reading applications available for the iPad platform. Produced by Intuary Inc., FarFaria is a collection of more than 450 stories and songs, with five new stories released each week. FarFaria enables teachers and parents to encourage an enjoyment of reading for all children.

Using FarFaria

Three reading options are available for students as they access each book. In the Auto Play option, the book is read aloud and the pages turn automatically. In Read to Me mode, the text is read aloud, but the user turns the pages. The text is not highlighted when read in either of these options, but the audio is very clear and is read at a good pace. In Read it Myself mode, the user can read the book at his or her own pace with no audio. Teachers will find these options useful for differentiating instruction within their classes.

Another aspect that makes FarFaria highly effective for educational settings is that all of the books are labeled according to grade level, from preschool picture books through Grade 4. The program displays the reading level of each book on its cover in the selection menus. Thus, teachers, parents, and students are able
to identify books that will allow for challenging but pleasurable reading.

The books are organized into categories arranged on a map of lands. They include Animal Kingdom, Adventure Island, BedTime Bluffs, Loony Lagoon, Fantasy Falls, Fairy Tale Forest, Picture Point, GoodLand, Classics Grove, Fable Hills, and Sing-Along City. Some books appear in multiple categories. Most of the books are original stories written for FarFaria, but classic and familiar tales retold are included. All of the books are well illustrated.

Example of Use

FarFaria is ideal for use in all elementary classrooms but particularly in special education settings where a variety of reading levels are addressed. Teachers can use the app on an individual basis with students. For example, the teacher may select and preview a book at the student’s instructional level and have the student listen to the story, following along with the text, one or more times. Then the student might read the book to the teacher or another adult in Read it Myself mode. Returning periodically to previously read books, without listening, will provide repetition and practice.

Teachers who are using a fourth generation iPad or an iPad mini have the ability to lock the device into one application. This feature relieves the concern that students or young children may access other applications or make unwanted changes to the iPad. Instructions for controlling access are available from Apple.

Students’ response to this reading app is usually very positive. Youngsters enjoy the variety of stories and colorful illustrations and may ask to use the app during free time. With so many books available at all reading levels, students always

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have something new to discover in FarFaria.

**Downloading FarFaria**

Users can download FarFaria free from the iTunes App Store and may access one book per day without a subscription. However, purchasing a subscription of $3.99 per month will allow unlimited access to all of the books. A single subscription may be used for more than one iPad, which means a teacher can activate the books for as many students as needed.

Users need a wireless connection to the Internet in order to enter FarFaria initially and to access new books. However, books that are added to the favorites list will be available offline when a wireless connection is not available. In this way, teachers can get around some of the usual technology access issues in a classroom or school.

**Conclusion**

The home page of FarFaria suggests its value for parents who want to create great story-time experiences. However, the app’s design, flexibility, low price, ease of use, and simple technology make it a wonderful resource for educators as well.
Evernote: A Tool for Educators
By Eileen McNally

Recommending a software suite called Evernote, the author assesses its security, flexibility, and ease of use for educators’ many personal and professional tasks.

When a project or task is on the agenda for anyone, but particularly for teachers, an arsenal of technology products is available to help. Among them are the Google Drive, which now includes Google Docs (http://drive.google.com); Microsoft OneNote (http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/onenote/); and Evernote (http://evernote.com/). Although each of these products has strengths and weaknesses, Evernote stands out. This suite of software and services encompasses collaboration, which is the strength of Google Drive, and, unlike the OneNote software for note-taking that functions best primarily with Microsoft products, Evernote is platform and application neutral.

Think of all the information that a teacher collects as he or she plans lessons, evaluates students’ work, and interacts with colleagues! Keeping such information organized is always a challenge—a challenge that can be met using this multiplatform app to replace literal file cabinets and folders full of information. Although Evernote is a family of products for everyone, educators will find it particularly helpful as they collect, share, and use data such as text, images, audio, PDF files, Web clippings, handwritten ink notes, and attached files. This suite is invaluable for any educator in any discipline because it allows for multifaceted organization that is secure and flexible.

Advantages of Evernote

Compatibility and security. Evernote is platform neutral. If they have a Web browser on a device, teachers, parents, and students can access an Evernote account. A Mac at home and a PC at school? Using a tablet or smart phone? No problem. Evernote apps are available for all devices and are free to download. Lesson plans, documentation, worksheets, assignments, portfolios, anecdotal records, and projects can be stored in Evernote. Anything that is on one’s desk or in a filing cabinet can be retained and organized via Evernote. For example, an individual teacher can establish an account that can be used to collect student assignments, homework, and projects. The staff of an entire school can establish an account to share information on a school-wide basis. What is more important, educators and students can feel secure using Evernote based on its developers’ 3 Laws of Data Protection (http://blog.evernote.com/blog/2011/03/24/evernotes-three-laws-of-data-protection/): (a) The data are yours; (b) your data are protected; and (c) your data are portable.

Ease of data entry or capture. Inputting data is limited only by the educator’s preferences because Evernote is easy to use. Simply writing or dictating directly into Evernote is one way of providing the information that becomes the foundation, the Note, in an Evernote account. Dragging documents into the Note List or e-mailing them to the
account also stores information. Using the Web Clipper on a browser can save images, text, links, or almost anything on the Internet. Using the built-in camera on a device and Snapshot for handwritten notes or other items, saving screen shots, or scanning—all are ways of entering images into the account.

**Flexible organization.** Methods of organization can be as individual as a teacher’s needs; Evernote cannot be used incorrectly because it is an extremely flexible tool that can be adapted and tailored to satisfy the needs of any educator. Notes are usually organized into notebooks. Notebooks can be divided to meet the teacher’s needs, such as by topic, class, projects, or even by access (public or private). Tags can be assigned to all data. For example, a photo of President Kennedy might be tagged with the words *Kennedy, history, 1960s,* and *photo.* Thus, searching Evernote for the word *Kennedy,* one might find lesson plans, articles about Kennedy, a photo, a timeline, an audio file, or even a video. Similarly, if the teacher is working on a lesson about the 1960s, the Kennedy information will be readily available as well. Teachers might also tag notes by activity (drawing, singing, etc.), subject area, level of difficulty, grade level, or any other categorization desired. In addition, all documents are searchable—even typed and handwritten text found on images.

Individual notebooks can also be stacked, putting several notebooks together in a larger, common notebook. For example, an elementary teacher could stack assignment notebooks for each subject in a lead notebook named *Assignments.* Likewise, there could be stacks for math, reading, science, and so forth.

**Sharing.** Educators can share material with students, other teachers, administrators, and parents by creating a public link that can be used anywhere on the Web, even on a class Web site. In this way, all participants can gain access from any electronic device with an Internet connection—a tremendous advantage that makes interaction possible both within and beyond the classroom. The teacher can choose to make all shared information **read only** so that material can be accessed but not edited. For example, such a choice would allow students to read directions or an excerpt—but not change it. Alternately, the teacher can allow editing of shared information, which is advantageous for group projects. Within a notebook, people can create different notes and share ideas. For example, students can get assignments from a public notebook (read only), then submit their assignments to their own notebook that can be accessed by the teacher. Teachers can share materials with other teachers anywhere in the world. Administrators can access lesson plans before an

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“This [software] suite is invaluable for any educator in any discipline because it allows for multifaceted organization that is secure and flexible.”
evaluation. To be kept up to date, parents, who do not need an Evernote account, can access an Assignments notebook simply by following a link provided by the teacher.

**Disadvantages of Evernote**

Some teachers and many parents may initially find a steep learning curve if they try to use all facets of Evernote. However, anyone can use the basics of Evernote as he or she learns the more complex features. A special section for teachers on the Evernote site (http://evernote.com/schools/for_teachers/) will help a user to set up an account and will explain many features unique to education. As an educator learns to use Evernote, he or she also has access to videos (http://evernote.com/video/) with tips, tricks, and demos and to blogs (http://blog.evernote.com) for explanations and suggested uses.

**Conclusion**

*Remember everything* is Evernote’s tagline. Using any electronic device and the storage and sharing power of Evernote, educators will be able to teach more efficiently with organized resources at their fingertips.
Encouragement to Take the Risk: A Review of Sandberg’s Lean In

By Christie Bledsoe

The author reviews Sheryl Sandberg’s Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead as a contribution to discussions on gender equity.

In her NY Times best-selling nonfiction book Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg describes her personal experiences in the battle of gender inequality through her journey to executive leadership in a male-dominated profession. Readers will relate to her easy-to-read personal stories and vignettes as she clarifies some of the ways society has stereotypically limited female leadership but also some of the ways women limit themselves. My initial reaction to her assertions was disbelief and shock, but, after some honest reflection, I must admit I have observed these behaviors in myself and in my colleagues—and, yes, concluded that, in some ways, many of us limit ourselves.

Gender Perceptions

Sandberg illustrates gender inequity by referencing a Harvard experiment in which groups of college students received identical resumes with different names. The students indicated a preference to work with or for Howard more than Heidi. Sandberg claims society views a successful male as strong and likable, but a woman with the same abilities and successes is perceived as abrasive and offensive. Often women internalize this negative stigma and miss opportunities due to an unwarranted fear of success. One of Sandberg’s key points is that these stereotypes in modern society deserve attention and demand change. Men have the freedom to publicize their accomplishments, but females often avoid attention or underestimate their successes. According to Sandberg, an inequitable representation of gender in executive positions ultimately limits the advancement of the organization and the opportunities for all women. Female leaders add needed perspective for the betterment of the organization and all employees.

A Message for Women and Men

Sandberg’s message is relevant to men and women. Men need to recognize the perceptions and systems that limit the potential of female employees and must proactively support a diverse work environment. When female employees and peers do not develop to their potential, the organization suffers. Sandberg suggests men and women must work together to eliminate negative stereotypes of females in leadership. For example, in a chapter devoted to mentoring, she highlights the value of relevant relationships to professional advancement and encourages mentors and mentees to prioritize personal
traits and professional skills rather than gender when establishing such relationships. The value of mentoring is an important message for female leaders, because women too often inhibit rather than foster the success of other women. According to Sandberg, true mentoring is a natural, casual interaction in which the mentee gains knowledge and insight while respecting the time of the mentor.

Encouragement for Women

Sandberg’s perspective is certainly not radical or even feminist. She simply acknowledges the underrepresentation of female leadership in the workplace and identifies gender misperceptions in society while encouraging women to reflect on the personal tendencies that may limit their career opportunities. She asserts that professional women do not have to choose family or work. Many women are best for their families when they are able to use their strengths in the workplace. However, neither does her message contain scorn for women who choose not to pursue upper-level leadership positions or choose not to work outside the home. Sandberg encourages true partnership in both the workplace and the home.

Sandberg shares practical conditions, such as the lack of restrooms for executive females or priority parking during pregnancy, that silently reflect the reality and communicate the expectation that executive leaders tend to be male. However, she also argues that women often minimize their potential by doubting their own abilities rather than taking the risk to pursue new professional challenges. For example, a woman is less likely to apply for a new position unless she meets all the criteria, but men with similar qualifications tend to approach the challenge with the confidence that they will develop the required skills. As Sandberg notes, many women fail to sit at the table because they look out for the needs of others and allow others—often men—to occupy the important seats first. Her advice to women is to sit at the table because “more female leadership will lead to fairer treatment for all women” (Sandberg, 2013, p. 171).

Sandberg’s claims are based on her experience in a corporate environment, but the principles of gender equity also apply in the field of education. Although the majority of teachers are female, more males serve in executive leadership positions. Sandberg’s message is not about breaking the glass ceiling, but it is encouragement for each woman to realize her potential and take risks to advance professionally. The message is consistent with Delta Kappa Gamma’s purpose to promote the professional and personal growth of women educators.

Conclusion

As the COO of a successful organization, Sandberg has a financial stability that may enable her to take more risks professionally than the average female in the workplace. The message of Lean In will resonate with women at all stages of their careers. Her words will provide encouragement for all women to believe in themselves, take risks with confidence, and make their contributions in the workplace. The world will be better for it—better for women and better for men.

References

Educational Leadership: A Master of Arts in Education Program offered by an American University in Uganda

By Carol Sandbrink

The author describes the evolution of an off-campus, across-the-borders, graduate-level program in educational leadership. The result of 6 years of collaboration and cooperation between higher-education leaders in the United States and Uganda, the program meets all academic standards and has been completed by 68 students since it began in 2009.

Introduction

Programs in educational leadership focus on offering a candidate the knowledge and skills that facilitate, promote, and develop the ability to provide successfully a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment within a school setting. For almost 6 years, a university in Ohio has offered an educational leadership master’s program to African educators in Uganda. In 2007, I was contemplating retirement from Walsh University when a campus visitor changed many things. This visitor was the former president of the university, who now was in Uganda, where he was establishing an institution of higher learning. He explained the great need for a program that prepared administrators to run schools in Uganda. The Ugandan President, the honorable General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, established compulsory education for Ugandan children in 1997 and, under his rule, “Uganda has made fantastic progress” (Briggs, 2010, p. 26). However, this progress caused a dilemma. As education expanded and the population matured, teachers were appointed to administer and lead schools without training. An educational leadership program would provide much needed information and experience to this emerging class of school leaders.

Offering a cross-borders higher-education program required much thought and
consideration to ensure quality practices and to create a program that meets “human, social, economic, and cultural needs” (UNESCO, 2005) within Uganda, a country challenged by many obstacles. Consequently, interested parties explored possibilities and continued conversations. Ultimately, I wrote a program and presented it to the members of the Walsh University Division of Education for approval.

The first cadre of Master’s of Arts in Education (MAED) students began their educational leadership program in September 2007, with 13 of this pioneer class graduating in October 2009. On December 13, 2007, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the United States approved the MAED program of Walsh University as one to be offered off-campus in Kisubi, Uganda, East Africa (HLC, 2008). A fall 2009 on-site HLC visitation confirmed this status. On June 29, 2009, the National Council for Higher Education, Uganda, accredited the MAED program at Kisubi Brothers University College (KBUC).

The Educational Leadership Program leads to a Master of Arts in Education and requires 21 semester hours in foundation courses and 18 semester hours of professional classes. The Ugandan students take these classes during either the holiday (January, May, August) or the weekend terms, with at least 3 classes offered within each term.

Twenty-one professors are responsible for teaching the coursework necessary for completion of the MAED Ugandan program. Ten of these professionals are PhDs, six are PhD candidates, and the others hold master’s degrees. The MAED program instructors have degrees that have been conferred from all over the world—from Kenya, Italy, Uganda, the Netherlands, and the United States. Additionally, internal and external examiners work with the students during the course of each candidate’s research and dissertation.

Internships

The importance and relevance of the internship have helped to establish the MAED program as a premier one in Uganda. The clinical internship may not be attempted until the student has achieved candidacy and successfully completed designated, requisite courses. The pioneer class completed the first internship during June and July 2008.

Graduate clinical experience in the MAED program is comprised of two semesters of internship under the supervision of designated individuals. In each term or semester
of internship, the candidate is required to spend a minimum of 60 hours (6 weeks, 10 hours weekly) in the field. Over the past 6 years, several considerations have been imposed for selecting a suitable internship site. The students and their cooperating administrators look forward to having KBUC personnel (especially a 

mzungu: that’s me, a different-looking person) actually travel to the school site and spend time. At first, some of the school personnel were mistrustful of the intent for the visit; now they are proud to be a part of the experience. The internship also publicizes the program.

It is the internship portion of this MAED program in which I participate most actively. I travel to Uganda three times a year and, to date, have visited 168 students on-site at their internship schools. This requires traveling widely throughout the country; traversing tarmac and murram, one-lane-only roads that pose challenges for the vehicles, drivers, and passengers; and viewing schools without electricity and water, without chalk or boards, and without desks. But everywhere there is a great enthusiasm, love, and eagerness for learning displayed.

**Student Enrollment and Retention Rate**

Classes in the program are offered on a rotational basis so that students can complete the work within 2 years. Classes are offered on weekends during three terms and during three holiday sessions. The enrollment goal of 50 new students each academic year has been met for the past 2 years.

The student retention rate for the MAED Program at KBUC has been consistently above 90%. Most of the students who have left the program have done so because of lack of funds. The high retention rate seems to indicate that the students’ needs are being met: a solid master’s program offering quality education in educational leadership at an affordable price.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Total Yearly Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>53</td>
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**Program Success**

Word of this MAED Program has spread throughout Uganda. Students spend long, arduous hours traveling to Kisubi from their homes but are dedicated in their will and desire to gain a higher education. MAED student Jane Florence Adong wrote from Gulu, a community located in northern Uganda and the site of previous wars and conflicts, “Carol, I must tell you that I am so proud of our Bishop, His Lordship Sabino Odoki. It was he who directed me to Walsh University. I had never heard of it, but now I am so proud of myself. I am going to be an ambassador to spread the good news about Walsh University. Thanks so much for your love and care.”

Understanding and following the American system of evaluation and grading has not been easy for the Ugandan faculty. At their meetings, faculty members have frequently discussed the use of rubrics. Perhaps the breakthrough in understanding this American
way of assessment came when Dr. Lisa Ncube, from the HLC, Purdue University, visited the Kisubi campus and came to a faculty meeting. Dr. Ncube, originally from Zimbabwe, spoke to the Ugandan faculty about the British and American educational systems as one who had studied in both. She spoke from experience and gave credibility and approval to the American systems.

In order for this program to function 9,000 miles from one campus to another, cooperation is a must. At the North Canton, Ohio campus, the registrar and personnel from the Office of Admissions, the library, Division of Education, Information Systems, Academic Affairs, Book Store, Graduate Studies, Global Learning, Administration, and University Relations have all reached out to support and contribute to the program. Some have offered counsel, others provide academic support, and some give specific Walsh University items. On the Kisubi Uganda campus, the same is true: people such as the librarians, the registrar, leaders in the various academic offices, and the information systems personnel all work together to maintain the MAED program.

Of the 68 African students (1 is deceased) who have graduated from the Walsh University MAED program, 56 (82%) have been tracked and their previous and current jobs compared. From those numbers, 35 (62%) have changed jobs since their graduation. Twenty of the students in the MAED program were already school administrators when they entered the program. Of these 20 administrators, 11 (55%) have changed positions. Thirty of the 67 program participants were teachers as they began their studies; 13 of those teachers (43%) now hold an administrative position.

**Conclusion**

Walsh University’s mission statement in part reads, “Walsh University is dedicated to educating its students to become leaders in service to others through a values-based education with an international perspective in the Judeo-Christian tradition.” The MAED program as offered to Ugandan students extends this mission internationally to Africa. Students in southeast Africa proudly receive an American degree from an American institution.

One of the program’s objectives is to promote the development of visionary leadership, and indicators suggest that this objective, among others, is being met. An alumni chapter has been established in Kisubi with enthusiastic members. One of the Ugandan students traveled to Ohio in April 2013 to receive her diploma in person during the Walsh University ceremony rather than at a ceremony in Uganda. The Walsh University administrators and Division of Education members are committed to guiding this program and leading
its practices in accreditation standards. The courses offered in Uganda meet the degree standards and policies of all Walsh University graduate programs. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, upon completion of the MAED program in Uganda, graduates have found leadership positions within the academic community.

These indicators, continuing applications to the program, the high retention rate, and the observed performance of its interns and graduates suggest the value of this cross-borders effort. This MAED program clearly serves the Ugandan culture by providing trained educational leaders and embracing global leadership.

References


Early-Educator Fair: A Practical Approach to Addressing New-Teacher Support

By Jo Ann Garrett

In an effort to provide meaningful support to North Greenville University students preparing to transition from students in the class to teachers of the class, members of Beta Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International formed an ad hoc committee to organize and facilitate a forum to unite prospective new teachers and veteran educators. As a practical approach to addressing new teacher support, the forum was presented as an Early Educator Fair. The fair connected early-career educators, chapter members representing the university, and educators from the community at large through a round-table discussion, mock interviews with principals, access to teacher recruiters, and shopping for classroom/teaching materials and wardrobe items.

With the increasing rate of new-teacher attrition, Beta Kappa Chapter members in South Carolina assumed an active role in expanding the support given to graduating education students from North Greenville University (NGU). Recognizing that a third of beginning teachers leave teaching within their first 3 years (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000) and 50% of new educators leave the field in the first 5 years (Kaiser, 2011), chapter president and NGU Professor of Education Dr. Jill Branyon stated, “It is imperative that we provide more support to increase the confidence and success of our new teachers.” The idea of the Early Educator Fair (EEF) originated with Dr. Branyon as an effort to extend new-teacher support, as well as to comply with the mission of Delta Kappa Gamma: promoting "professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education" (The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, n.d.).

In an interview regarding the challenges of supporting new teachers, Darling-Hammond (2012) indicated that teachers, especially new teachers, are collaboratively oriented and benefit from professional learning communities. “We know that teachers who
are fully prepared stay in teaching at much higher rates than those who lack key elements of preparation” (Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 19). The purpose of the EEF was to expand the boundaries of academic coursework, student-teacher orientation, and student teaching through additional support aimed at new-teacher success. Furthermore, many professionals have come to regard helping new teachers to succeed as a collective responsibility—a responsibility that is a sustained and coordinated effort by educators at all levels, with success contributing to teacher longevity (Inverness Research, 2010).

Chapter members representing a wide variety on the continuum of educational experiences joined to identify and offer assistance in key areas to give support to the new educators. These key areas included the need to (a) recognize and address specific student questions and concerns; (b) provide practice interviews with principals with feedback; (c) allow students to interact with veteran educators on a professional and personal level; (d) provide teacher recruitment opportunities, and (e) alleviate new teacher expenses.

The EEF addressed these areas with varied approaches:

1. **Time for questions and answers:** A round-table panel of educators with experience ranging from 3 to more than 30 years responded to questions and concerns posed by the students. The panel members represented distinctly different levels in age and classroom and administrative experience. When asked her perspective of the discussion, chapter and panel member Dr. Robin Johnson replied, “[The students] were certainly attentive and engaged. Sometimes students learn more from such informal sessions than in the classroom.” Fifth grade Teacher of the Year and chapter member Tamara Miller expressed, “What an excellent opportunity for education students! The round-table discussion was a great way to get various viewpoints on the same topic.” Emily Russell, an elementary education student, stated, “I really enjoyed the panel answering all the questions. Hearing from someone who has done some of everything was very helpful. I definitely took advice from the panel to apply to my future classroom.”

2. **Practice interviews:** Interviews with district-level personnel and school principals not only gave students practice with interviewing but also provided constructive feedback.

Jo Ann Garrett, EdD, is an instructor at North Greenville University in South Carolina and serves as Second Vice President of Beta Kappa Chapter in Alpha Eta State (SC). A recipient of a state scholarship in 2010, Garrett has also served as chair of the Membership, Personal Growth, and Early Educator Fair Committees. She is a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); National Association for Music Education (NAfME); and North Greenville University Women’s Auxiliary Board (WAB). jgarrett@ngu.edu
Acting as an interviewer, Dr. DeeDee Washington, Greenville County Schools Associate Superintendent of Academics, stated, “...students asked specific questions about the interview and hiring process.” Grace Cobin, an early-childhood education student, stated, “[The] round-table discussion and mock interviews were very helpful...They made me feel more prepared [for being a new teacher].”

3. Personal interaction between students and veteran educators: Veteran educators were available to interact and help the students identify resources that would help them set up a classroom, as well as resources useful for instruction and professional development. “New teachers need ready access, formal and informal, to colleagues who know the same subject matter the new teacher is teaching” (Inverness Research, 2010, p. 3).

Chapter member Jenna Garrett noted, “Despite years of training in school, future teachers still have so many questions and concerns. Talking to students about setting up a classroom, building a library, and collecting materials gave me an opportunity to share things that I had to figure out on my own as a new teacher.

4. Teacher recruiters: Students were presented with teaching opportunities, such as in a bilingual school in Zamorano Valley, Honduras. Brooke Pizzati, director of the school and an NGU education graduate, stated, “Thank you so much for the opportunity [for me to meet potential applicants]! Students received great insight and information for new teachers.” She also indicated that she left the fair with six resumes.

5. Materials and resources: The EEF provided items for setting up a classroom, instructional resources, and professional development materials, as well as items for upgrading the young educators’ wardrobes as teachers. A recently released retail-awareness study by the National School Supply and Equipment Association stated, “On average, teachers reported spending about $149 of their own money on school supplies, $198 on instructional materials, and $138 on other classroom materials...”
for a total of $485 in the 2012-2013 school year. Comparing the data from the 2009-2010 survey when only school supplies and instructional materials were counted, teachers spent an average of $347 of their own money vs. $314 in the prior report, an increase of nearly 10 percent. (NSSEA, 2013)

Early educators also enjoyed shopping in The Teacher Closet. Wardrobe items donated by chapter members provided suitable attire for transitioning from student in the classroom to interviewing for teacher of the classroom. Student shoppers showed excitement and expressed gratitude for the clothing and accessory resources that further alleviated some of the expense they were anticipating as new teachers.

Chapter president Branyon assessed the fair in the following way: “I felt our chapter did an amazing job. In speaking with those who attended, the students and chapter members found it to be a very valuable effort in helping meet the challenges facing the new teacher.”

A follow-up survey with the attending students indicated that students experienced emotional and professional support that created a greater sense of being part of a professional learning community. The students believed that the EEF provided them with knowledge based on practical experience, as well as knowledge relevant to their specific concerns. They further believed that the interviews with feedback from the principals provided an engaged learning experience and the confidence to interview in a real-life setting. The students also indicated that obtaining resources at minimal to no cost financially supported their transition from student to new teacher. The EEF extended the investment already made in the students through the NGU teacher-education program by addressing the challenges of new-teacher support in an effort to retain teachers for the long term and well into the future.

References


Chapter member Dr. DeeDee Washington conducts a mock interview with an aspiring teacher and provides information about the hiring process.

**Bulletin Submission Guidelines**

Submissions from members will be accepted for review provided that:

- The submission is not being considered concurrently in whole or substantial part by another publisher.
- The *Bulletin* has exclusive option of possible publication for a period of 6 months following receipt of the submission.
- The author assumes responsibility for publication clearance in the event the submission was presented at a professional meeting or is the direct product of a project financed by a funding agency.
- Authors are responsible for accurately citing all quoted and bibliographic materials and for obtaining permission from the original source for quotations in excess of 150 words or for tables or figures reproduced from published works.
- Co-authors are permitted. At least one author must be a Delta Kappa Gamma member.

**Manuscript Preparation**

- Although there is a suggested theme for each issue, manuscripts on all topics are welcome.
- Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. Topic headings should be inserted where appropriate.
- Please see Submission Grid on the following page for specific requirements of the types of manuscripts appropriate for publication.
- Double space the entire manuscript, including quotations, references, and tables. Print should be clear, dark, and legible. Pages must be numbered.
- References should refer only to materials cited within the text. Nonretrievable material, such as papers, reports of limited circulation, unpublished works, and personal communications, should be restricted to works absolutely essential to the manuscript.
- Abbreviations should be explained at their first appearance in the text. Educational jargon (e.g., preservice, K–10, etc.) should be defined as it occurs in the text.
- Place tables and figures on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Use Arabic numerals and indicate approximate placement in the text.
- Photos, graphics, charts, etc. that may enhance the presentation of the manuscript may be included. Contact the editorial staff (bulletin@dkg.org) for information regarding the use of photos.

**Submission**

- One submission per author per issue.
- Submit electronically, in Microsoft Word format, to bulletin@dkg.org. Do not submit PDF files. For a manuscript, include definitive abstract, photo of author(s) [see below], and biographical information. Biographical information must include author(s) name(s), occupational position(s), Society and professional affiliations (list offices held), address(es), phone number(s) and e-mail address(es).
- Electronic/digital photo files must be saved in JPG or TIFF format and must be a minimum of 1.5” x 1.5” with a 300 dpi resolution. For photos submitted to enhance text, include caption/identification information.
- For poems and graphic arts, submit name, address, and chapter affiliation. A photograph is not required.
- All submissions will be acknowledged and assigned a review number within 2 weeks. Contact the editor at bulletin@dkg.org if you do not receive timely acknowledgement of your submission.

**Publication of Submissions**

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# Bulletin Submission Grid

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<th>Submission Type and Description</th>
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<th>Abstract or Introduction</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action/Classroom Research:</strong> Organized, systematic, and reflective observation of classroom practice that also addresses areas of concern.</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
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<td><strong>Qualitative/ Quantitative/Mixed Methods Research:</strong> Essentially narrative with nonstatistical approaches and a focus on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meanings from their experiences (Qual)/ Gathers and analyzes measurable data to support or refute a hypothesis or theory through numbers and statistics (Quan)/ Utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to explore a research question (Mixed).</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
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<td><strong>Position Paper/Viewpoint:</strong> Defines an issue; asserts clear and unequivocal position on that issue, and argues directly in its favor.</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
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<td><strong>Review of Literature:</strong> Presents supporting and nonsupporting evidence on a topic of interest and value to educators; synthesizes and critiques the literature; draws conclusions; describes procedures for selecting and reviewing literature; may include narrative review, best-evidence, synthesis, or meta-analysis.</td>
<td>1,500-3,000</td>
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<td><strong>Program Description:</strong> Provides an overview and details of a single program in an educational setting. Goals, resources, and outcomes are included. No marketing or promotion of a program is allowed.</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
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<td><strong>Book/Technology Review:</strong> Combines summary and personal critique of a book, Web site, or app on an educational topic or with educational relevance.</td>
<td>400-700</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<td><strong>Letter to the Editor:</strong> Responds to materials previously published in the Bulletin; must include author’s name and chapter/state of membership.</td>
<td>200-300</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td><strong>Poetry/Graphic Arts:</strong> Original expressions in any brief poetic format or through drawings, sketches, etchings, woodcuts, photographs, cartoons.</td>
<td>NA</td>
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