

NPS Middle School Tech News

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Check out the new **NPS Middle School Technology Website** for links to dozens of integration ideas, tutorials, and resources.
- Watch for notification of a second session of the **Intel Teach For the Future Course** starting this winter.

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Tales from Windows Camp

This summer over 40 middle school teachers decided to forego beaches and pools in order to participate in the first year of Windows Camp. Based on the iCamp model which was held for the fourth time this summer, Windows Camp featured a relaxed atmosphere, workshops, lots of hands-on activities and project time as well as a daily raffle.

Teachers from all four middle schools spent four days in one of two camp sessions honing their technology skills and learning how to use software applications such as: Inspiration, Publisher, Picasa, MovieMaker, PowerPoint and more. Classes were taught by the Instructional Technology Specialists from Bigelow, Brown, Day and Oak Hill.

The goal of Windows Camp was

to provide a relaxed and technology-rich experience for teachers to learn new techniques and experiment with multi-media applications. For each session of camp there was a high ratio of counselors to campers which



made it possible to give everyone quick responses and more individual attention. Camp attendees created or polished First

Class Websites, made graphic organizers with Inspiration, experimented with Picasa and scanners to organize, enhance and collect digital images, used PowerPoint to make more dynamic presentations, learned how to use Publisher to jazz up brochures, handouts and Websites, and filmed movies that were edited with Movie Maker.

Windows Camp was funded through a grant provided by the Newton Schools Foundation and money provided by Newton's IT Department. After the success of this year's sessions, we hope that we can get funding again next summer.

IBM Thinkpad Laptops

This past spring, Newton provided IBM Thinkpad Laptops to all sixth grade teachers. Giving teachers a laptop for use at school and at home is part of Newton's Technology Plan to update the computers currently in use in the middle schools.

The new laptops come pre-loaded with most of the software that middle school teachers need including: Inspiration, Geometer's Sketchpad, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher, Impact math software, and much more.

The Information Technology Department will continue to



provide teachers with laptops as funding allows; plans are in place for the 7th and 8th grade teachers to receive one this year.



Intel Teach to the Future Course

Looking for new ways to improve student learning through the effective use of technology? Would you like to learn strategies to help students understand content more deeply, think at higher levels, and become self-directed learners? This training gives you a model for building a project using standards-based curriculum as the basis, and time to create your own digital-age, interactive Unit Portfolio. Many teachers from the Newton schools have participated in the Intel® Teach to the Future Essentials Course. They com-

pleted forty hours of hands-on instruction and have created project-based units that align with standards and use curriculum framing questions to focus on higher-order thinking in engaging tasks. Armed with strategies to develop digital literacy, creativity, higher-order thinking, communication and collaboration, these **teachers are more able to effectively apply units learned in their classroom.**

Each participant's Unit Portfolio consists of a unit plan, multimedia presentation samples, publications, a web site,

evaluation tools, handouts, templates, and classroom management documents. Teachers will receive a binder with tutorials, curriculum material and a CD-Rom loaded with sample unit plans, useful web sites and other resources. You can earn 40 PDPs and 3 graduate credits. The Intel course will be offered again in the winter and is geared for the Windows PC.

Contact Rosa Sterk at Oak Hill for more information.

NSF Grant for Journalism

At Day Middle School, the students have been given a fantastic opportunity to develop desktop publishing skills with first class professional software and hardware. All this has been provided by a \$20,000 Newton Schools Foundation (NSF) grant. This grant brought thirteen new desktop computers to the Newspaper lab. These computers are HP 5100 desktops with a gig of RAM. They are designed to handle the professional publishing software Adobe Creative Suite, which includes Acrobat® 8 Professional, as well as Adobe Photoshop® CS2, Illustrator® CS2, InDesign® CS2, and GoLive.

The students at Day have already used the new technology to publish their first edition of The Daytime newspaper, one of the only broadsheet middle school newspapers in the country. Demonstrating the talents and versatility of our students, the student editors were able to make a fantastic transition to a new operating system and new software.

The NSF grant also funded a new printer and a new HP 5100 desktop computer for each of the other Newton middle schools. These machines have Microsoft Office 2003 and the Adobe Creative Suite installed. Students at Day will be offering peer workshops so that

they can train the students from the other middle schools. In addition, our students will be creating an on-line tutorial to help the other schools. They will also be offering an Open House for parents on November 6th and 8th, at which students will demonstrate the use of the new technology.

The Newton Schools Foundation continues to make positive changes in public education. Students and teachers have found unimagined possibilities with the new equipment and look forward to further exploration and learning.

Podcasting and Blogging

Podcasting and Blogging are the current buzz words in the technology world. But what are they and how can they improve teaching?

Podcasts are anytime, anywhere broadcasts of your favorite news programs or "how to" shows. Blogs are a kind of web log where you can share thoughts and ideas with anyone around the world. In any case both of these mediums can be used for recreational as well as educational purposes.

Almost every newspaper, news station, and news radio

show offers a podcast. Now with the addition of video iPods you can even watch your favorite show hours after it airs. Podcasts can be used in your classroom to repeat broadcasts, or segments of radio shows. You can also use Podcasts to help you expand your professional development or knowledge base. For example, you can listen to *Inside Mac Radio* to keep up to date on breaking Mac technologies.

Blogs are not necessarily open to the public and can be password protected so that only

your students can access them. Moreover, blogs can be used as a way for you to communicate with other educators around the world. In other words, you can share ideas and read professional practices from other teachers.

Having on demand access to these resources is extremely exciting. To learn more about either of these two new mediums visit this website for an online PowerPoint with links to more resources:
www2.newton.k12.ma.us/~robyn_defonseca/



Middle School Technology Website

In the fall of 2006 the middle school technology specialists launched a new Website to provide links to online resources for technology integration, tutorials and other Web resources. In addition, there is a link to access a Middle School Tech Newsletter that will serve as a venue for informing teachers, administrators and parents about technology use in Newton.

The goal of this site is to give teachers a resources that targets their specific needs. The site was a



spin-off of a similar site piloted during the Windows Camp sessions this summer. Teachers attending camp found it very helpful

to have an online tutorial resource so that they could continue the work started at camp in the months beyond. They used the Integration Resources to find projects that might add a technology-related element to a lesson or unit that they wanted to spice up with something new.

Users of the Website are invited to send in suggestions or additional resources for the site.

PTO and NSF Funding for Technology

Bigelow - In 2002-03, Bigelow's PTO raised over \$50,000 that facilitated the purchase of an Apple iBook for every full-time teacher.

The ready access to laptops in school and at home has made it easier for teachers to become more skillful and competent in a variety of technology applications. These skills have led to better communication with students and parents through Websites and online homework pages, the use of multimedia presentations to introduce or reinforce curriculum content and a variety of other uses.

Brown - This year Brown received two Newton Schools Foundation Grants that will aide in integrating technology. One will to help integrate technology into the art curriculum using Adobe's Photoshop Elements. With this wonderful resource, Brown hopes to expand the art program to include the use of technology to add a graphic arts component to the curriculum. The other grant will help expand technology use in French classes by using iPods to record students' oral presentations.

In the past two years the PTO has funded laptops for teachers, com-

puters for the Library, software and needed supplies such as toner for our printers. The PTO is currently looking to replace the writing lab at Brown. Presently the lab is composed of 25 older Macs (PowerMac 5400).

Day - Adding to the good fortune for the students and staff at Day Middle School, The PTO has funded a new computer lab. This computer lab has the same professional hardware as the Newspaper lab, the HP Compaq dc5100. These computers came with Microsoft Office and a gig of RAM. With help from the Technology Department, the lab is up and running, with a central server that makes access to saved files easy and practical. These machines have lightning-fast Ethernet connections and an updated browser, making it possible for teachers and students to visit educational websites that were previously inaccessible from the school. Students at Day will be having an open house for members of the PTO on November 6th and November 8th from 5:30 to 7:30. The purpose of this event will be to highlight the uses of the new machines. We look forward to students sharing the equipment with parents.

Oakhill—Through the organization and efforts of the PTO Presidents and an

outpouring of generosity by Oak Hill parents, the school has received 21 new HP computers for the Windows lab. In addition, the PTO has raised funds to purchase a number of IBM laptops for teachers.

The PTO is putting in a tremendous amount of time and effort to provide technology for our students and staff. As a result, the Oak Hill professional staff can expand the borders of their classrooms by taking advantage of the latest technologies made available to them. This leads to our students developing technology and critical thinking skills as they collaborate and live out one of our important core values (using acquired skills to engage in technology literacy) to collect, analyze and present information.



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Newton Public Schools
Information Technology Department

The goal of this newsletter is to inform middle school teachers and administrators about technology-related stories and events happening in Newton.

If you have a project or resource that you would like to share with other teachers, please contact us so that we can write an article spotlighting the work you are doing.

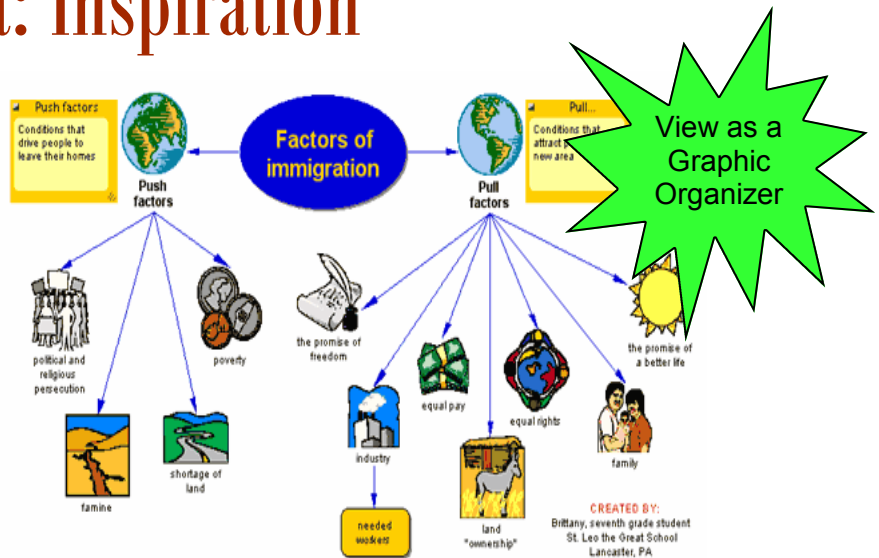
http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/bigelow/instructional_technology/mstech/index.htm

Software Spotlight: Inspiration

Inspiration is a wonderful software application to help your students develop their ideas and organize their thinking in a very visual and interactive way. It can be used to create a myriad of projects with graphic organizers, timelines, diagrams, storyboards, family trees, concept maps and outlines. Not only is Inspiration a useful learning tool, it is also a powerful teaching tool for presentations, test review, rubrics and more.

Once a student, or teacher, has created an organizer using Inspiration they can add clipart, hyperlinks, Quicktime movie clips, colorful backgrounds and a variety of other visual enhancements to make the organizer more engaging. With the click of a key you can convert your organizer into a standard outline format that can be used to generate a research paper.

You can find out more about Inspiration by visiting their website at www.inspiration.com or by talking to your technology specialist. The Inspiration site has links to many resources and examples of projects created with this wonderful software.



Factors of Immigration

I. Push Factors - Conditions that drive people to leave their homes

- A. Political and religious persecution
- B. Shortage of land
- C. Famine
- D. Poverty

II. Pull Factors - Conditions that attract people to a new area

- A. The Promise of Freedom
- B. The promise of a better life
- C. Equal Pay
- D. Equal Rights
- E. Industry
 - 1. Need workers
- F. Land Ownership
- G. Family

...or View in
an Outline
Format