TECHNOLOLGY FOR STUDENT TEACHERS

D.M. Syracuse, Biologist Extraordinaire

dsyracuse@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

When the phrase “The World’s Oldest Profession” is brought up in casual conversation, it is not generally teaching that is being referenced. Teaching, however, is the oldest job around[[1]](#footnote-1). Early humans taught their progeny to hunt, gather or sing, and many animals actively engage in teaching when showing their young how to survive. Teaching is, quite simply, in our genes.

 Teachers have managed to imbue students with the love of learning for thousands of years using nothing more than rocks and sticks, and any good teacher should be able to do just the same today. Technology is not what makes teaching work. Technology is only a tool; it is nothing more than the modern equivalent of a rock or a stick. It is important to remember that the most important thing in a classroom is a competent and caring teacher.

 A teacher’s job also includes selecting the methods that work best to impart knowledge to students. Technology certainly fits this bill. One must be cautious to use technology as a tool – a means to an end – and not get caught up in the excitement of it. Given that caveat, technology can be an amazing boost to student achievement in our modern (post-modern?...I never understood that) time, so long as it is implemented with a sound knowledge of pedagogy as its base.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this presentation is to acquaint you with some of the myriad technologies that might be useful to you as you begin shaping young minds. It will also allow you to understand not only what these technologies are, but how they can be smoothly implemented as learning tools, and not bells, whistles or the like.

RESOURCES:

I. Mimio Interactive Whiteboard – [www.mimio.com](http://www.mimio.com) With the mimio, you or your students can control anything on your computer that you can with your mouse in an interactive environment. Some other brands of interactive whiteboards are Smart ([www.smarttech.com](http://www.smarttech.com)) and StarBoard ([www.hitachi.com](http://www.hitachi.com)). Use your google skillz to find some others.

II. Document Camera – [www.avermedia-usa.com](http://www.avermedia-usa.com) Mine is made by AverMedia, but you can get quality document cameras from many different companies. The most important thing to remember is that document cameras ARE NOT electronic overhead projectors! Use them for fun things! Below, you’ll find a list of just some things that I can think of:

1. Model proper textbook/dictionary usage.
2. Have an off-task student work under the document camera.
3. Project an image of your worksheet onto a whiteboard or chalkboard for a “smartboard” on the cheap.
4. Put a timer under it to keep students on schedule.
5. Use it for class ethics discussion. Is a signature forged?
6. Use it for more than paper – 3D objects, dissections, demos! Most document camera heads can tilt, zoom or otherwise move around.
7. Tilt the head up to model essential skills, such as pouring liquids, measuring to the meniscus, drawing technique, etc.
8. Make a great “Do Now!” activity by zooming in on an everyday object.
9. Use it as a scanner to easily import student work for display.
10. Consider using your master copy on the document camera instead of making copies. Or, use the camera to supplement copied worksheets with color images (e.g., see the board for figure 2.)
11. Great platform to start extemporaneous discussions about newspapers, pictures, paintings, etc. Simply throw up an image and discuss!
12. Use to demonstrate origami or other paper-folding skills. Great calming technique, and develops manual dexterity.
13. Demonstrate how you read or edit papers. Show students a window into your mind and your world.
14. Tilt head up to photograph students – be wary of permissions needed.
15. Current events become easy when students can bring in the paper or magazine.
16. Capture work in-progress – art, writing, sculpture, music – to help students track their own achievement.
17. Mad-Libs or a story a line-at-a-time are great classroom activities to introduce a new topic. What a fun way to sneak in information!
18. An easy way to do a jeopardy-style review. Have a master category sheet, and then small cards with the questions and answers.
19. Use picture-in-picture or split-screen view to compare and contrast student work, art, etc.

A few tips for you, as well:

1. Use a font no smaller than 14 point. Don’t use fancy fonts – tempting, but can be hard to read.
2. Try to see how many copies per week you can eliminate with the use of the document camera. Have your students keep track or make suggestions!
3. Make sure you can see both the students, the screen, and the stage. Pick an appropriate position for the camera.

III. Wikispaces – [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com) Check out mine: [www.mistersyracuse.wikispaces.com](http://www.mistersyracuse.wikispaces.com). You can post files, share information, collaborate on projects and more. I can’t even attempt to explain everything that you can do on a wiki, but there are some great sites that do. Go to [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com) for tutorials and information. There are videos and how-tos. You can easily google up some more information for yourself.

IV. Blogger – [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) Check out mine: [www.mistersyracuse.blogspot.com](http://www.mistersyracuse.blogspot.com). You know what a blog is, of course. It’s a web log, a way to share information with the world. Blogger is just one iteration of the technology; myriad other companies have versions of it as well. [www.edublogs.org](http://www.edublogs.org) is another popular site, but I find blogger to be the easiest. In addition, blogger is run by Google. So, when they finally take over the world, you’ll be in on the ground floor.

V. Webiste – [www.mistersyracuse.com](http://www.mistersyracuse.com) I host my website at [www.bluehost.com](http://www.bluehost.com). They provide hosting for about seven bucks a month, but if you check with your school, they might have webspace available for you. My website is in its beginning phases, but I hope it will eventually be a resource where students can go to get copies of labs, worksheets, etc.

VI. Scribd – [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com) I like it. You can upload files to it, and they’ll be visible to whoever you want, or to the world. I’ve imbedded it into my website to allow students to view my notes as well.

VII. Delicious – [www.delicious.com](http://www.delicious.com) I can’t live without it. You can bookmark websites and retrieve your bookmarks from anywhere on the interweb. You can share your bookmarks with others in your department, students or fellow teachers. I’m dsyracuse on delicious, so add me in your network to see my bookmarks!

VIII. Inspiration – [www.mywebspiration.com](http://www.mywebspiration.com) This is a tool you can use to brainstorm, collaborate, create or otherwise map your thoughts for your students. Create and share flowcharts and thought webs instantly! Webspiration is a free online version, but your school can buy kidspiration as a software package.

IX. Twitter – [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) I tweet with many of my students as well as with other teachers, and it’s great! We’ve had many stimulating discussions, all in 140 characters or less! Twitter can be updated from mobile phones, so it’s great for sharing pictures with your students on the fly! I’m dsyracuse on Twitter – follow me if you’d like. Be wary, of course, of what you tweet. Perhaps you’d like one account for your friends, and one for your students.

X. Voicethread – [www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com) SO cool. You can upload pictures, video, sounds and more, and then annotate it visually with on-screen tools or even your own voice! You can create directions for projects or even for other teachers to follow.

XI. The Groton Evolves Wiki – I’m not sure if I’m supposed to share this with you…so…SHHH. [www.grotonevolves.wikispaces.com](http://www.grotonevolves.wikispaces.com). It’s got all the stuff that we’ve been working on at Groton. Check the navigation bar at the left for the worksheets that we’ve developed for workshops that have been presented, as well as a copious amount of links. Please feel free to use it.

XII. Google Earth – [www.earth.google.com](http://www.earth.google.com) You can use this to create tours, show off your school, find other locations on earth and so much more. There really is a lot you can do with the program, so you’ll need to spend some quality time exploring it on your own.

1. Nevertheless, to avoid undue awkwardness and potential offensive/illegal behavior, it is best not to bring up the phrase at all. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)