

From: Richard W. Burkett <Richard.Burkett@tus.k12.pa.us>

Subject: **Excellent class today**

Date: April 29, 2010 12:25:50 PM EDT

To: Rodney N. Benedick <rodney.benedick@tus.k12.pa.us>, Jane C. Johnston <Jane.Johnston@tus.k12.pa.us>, Clifford A. Smith <clifford.smith@tus.k12.pa.us>, Cindy H. Etchison <cindy.etchison@tus.k12.pa.us>

Cc: Rebecca E. Erb, Ed. D <Rebecca.ErbEd.D@tus.k12.pa.us>, Kelley A. Reeder <kelley.reeder@tus.k12.pa.us>

I had a chance to stop in and observe Kelley Reeder's 9th grade English class today. I was very impressed with the performance by her 9th graders. The activity for the day was really an assessment: students had to select a random topic and had a few moments to create a 2 minute impromptu speech exhibiting the characteristics of a 5 paragraph essay (thesis, main ideas, transitions, conclusion). In addition to the presentation skills clearly articulated on the assessment rubric, Kelley was fostering an activity promoting higher order thinking skills while building on Collins writing techniques. The kids were humorous, articulate (with a few bumps along the way), imaginative, and creative. Students at their seats were engaged and very receptive to each speaker.

In addition to this great opportunity I observed today, I saw a very clear connection to extending such an activity through the 1 to 1 laptop initiative. If Kelley were to begin the year by teaching not only the fundamental skills for developing a thesis within a 5 paragraph essay format, but also practice the impromptu speeches as a form of assessment throughout the year, I can see her extending the activity to the development of a 2-3 minute PRESENTATION using the tools on Mac. A movie clip would allow students to self-assess, edit and modify, then grade themselves on how they think they did while the class views each clip and rates them. But a movie clip of the student speaking wouldn't be all there was to it. The idea can be transferred to the development of a podcast with photos, speaker shots, and musical accompaniment all the way to the development of a GROUP or collaborative project where each group was given a random topic and a timeframe within which to work before presenting. The broad range of presentation formats generally rely upon the same foundational skills, but could be used as a form of assessment (formal or informal) all year long!

With the right tools (*ahem*...Mac), this could all be accomplished relatively easily within the structure of the classroom. The prospect of using the laptop as a tool to facilitate both informal and formal assessments is very exciting and very powerful, I think.

Kelley--good work today, and imagine how such an activity could be used all year long using technology as the tool for developing those presentation skills, collaborative skills, self-assessment skills, and higher order thinking skills you were promoting today!

Rick

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"The staff at JBHS are committed to connecting with each student as an individual. We promote mutually respectful relationships within our school and community, and we support the development of a unique identity as a JBHS student characterized by respect, responsibility, and resilience."

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From: Cliff Smith <clifford_smith@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Excellent class today
Date: April 29, 2010 12:59:42 PM EDT
To: Richard W. Burkett <Richard.Burkett@tus.k12.pa.us>
Cc: Rebecca E. Erb, Ed. D <Rebecca.ErbEd.D@tus.k12.pa.us>, Kelley A. Reeder <kelley.reeder@tus.k12.pa.us>, Rodney N. Benedick <rodney.benedick@tus.k12.pa.us>, Jane C. Johnston <Jane.Johnston@tus.k12.pa.us>, Clifford A. Smith <clifford.smith@tus.k12.pa.us>, Cindy H. Etchison <cindy.etchison@tus.k12.pa.us>

All,

Rick, thank you for this bit of news. It is very helpful to hear of such easy innovations we can use to bring this program to online. I think we are headed to Apple for our platform. I am convinced it is the best option for our kids.

Kelly, It is wonderful to hear about the great job you are doing. Keep up the good work, we are proud you are one of ours!

Regards,

Cliff

From: Rebecca E. Erb, Ed. D <Rebecca.ErbEd.D@tus.k12.pa.us>
Subject: RE: FYI
Date: April 29, 2010 9:36:47 PM EDT
To: Jane C. Johnston <Jane.Johnston@tus.k12.pa.us>, Cliff Smith <clifford_smith@comcast.net>
Cc: Kelley A. Reeder <kelley.reeder@tus.k12.pa.us>

Nothing is more rewarding to me than getting feedback concerning great initiatives that are happening in our classrooms! Thanks to all of you for doing and sharing!

Rebecca E. Erb., Ed.D.
Superintendent
Tuscarora School District