

Week 2 – Discussion

Managing Technology in the Classroom

This Discussion provided opportunities to share ideas, tips, suggestions, and problems with colleagues in order to build a bank of tips and tricks for resolving problems encountered with classroom and campus technology. As the course material pointed out: “As you continue to move beyond books, paper, and pencils to using more and more digital resources in the classroom, you will probably notice that new issues related to classroom management arise. It’s not uncommon for programs to crash, hardware to stop working, resources to be mishandled, and students to get lost on the Internet, lose work, or perhaps even tamper with other students’ work. Just as teachers have procedures for sharpening pencils, handing out papers, and collecting books, you’ll need to develop rules and procedures related to technology use (Week 2 Discussion, EDUC 6664).”

L.H. offered this tip: “I would like to share this tip: when using Microsoft Word I have found that I don't have to insert a text box when using the auto shapes at the bottom of the page. All I have to do is right click and then type in my message. I came across this when doing my Data Collection sorting in our last class. I hope this helps someone.”

My response was: Excellent TIP. It is amazing how often we neglect to use the right side of the mouse. It makes for convenient navigation yet we habitually left click and chase the little arrow all over the toolbar and drop down windows looking for things.

My “tip” was: I attended an eCAMP Workshop this summer that offered a new “trick” for PowerPoint use. If y'all download the templates from <http://vve.eanes.k12.tx.us/lisalome/tcea/> you will be able to allow students to “write” on finished PowerPoint

applications in a number of neat ways: typed responses or short paragraph answers to essay questions, CLICK a bubble or square, etc. By going into "properties" once you create a "box" in your PowerPoint, you can change colors, fonts, clips, sizes, etc. (hint: right CLICK mouse alot). Lots of options for inter-active lab quizzes as well as fun applications. I used the Interactive PowerPoint for my note-taking device at the eCamp session. See [PracticeWrite_ON_Ppt.ppt](#) .

A.C. added the following information to my notes: "Thanks for sharing. Anything that simplifies things is great. You can also have forms that the kids fill out and save that won't allow them to change any of your preset information by locking the form. There is a little lock. To find the lock, go to view "toolbars" "Forms" and then you will see the little lock. Once you put the lock on it, only you can modify the form. It works great for student information stuff."

S.B. provided this *Heloise Tip of the Day*: "I understand the prompt for this discussion board to request solutions to problems that occur with technology in the classroom, with that in mind what I am about to suggest is extremely simple but every time I give an in-service in my room the teachers think it is a great idea. I simply make a sign that states "Mrs. B. I need assistance please" It is taped to all of my computers. I teach the kids that they are to try and solve their own problem first. Next they may ask the student sitting next to them for help. If both of those attempts fail they are to put the sign down and WAIT QUIETLY. This is a life saver, as you know without this procedure they would be hollering across the room for me or getting up and coming to me. Since my class is a series of stations I am usually busy with other students. And since computer time in

precious they do all in their power to solve their own problem instead of waiting on me. It is a win - win situation!

I replied: Good Tip: students all too often look for paths of least resistance. Having them first reflect on the problem and trying to solve themselves builds confidence and reinforces skills. Having students seek peer assistance is a two-bagger: (1) creates cooperation and collaboration among peers, and (2) boosts self-esteem and knowledge of the student providing assistance. Having them come to you as last resort frees your time to observe whole class and troubleshoot on the fly rather than being tied to one or two overly dependent students.

L.A. provided advice for clearing the new HP 1700 Printers: “Have you had problems with your paper jamming in the newer printers with the larger toner cartridges? Well, an effective solution to finding the jammed paper is to pull out the toner cartridge and you will have access to the entire inside of the printer. You will find the jammed paper and get back to printing again.”

My response was simple, yet supportive: You are so right. Last year several teachers had paper jammed and had no clue how to get to it. This is such an easy trick, yet easily overlooked.

M.C. brought up a concern: “This problem seems to come in waves. I am hoping I won't see it this year, but I have students pop off the keys from the keyboard and change them around. You can imagine the problem an unsuspecting user will encounter. I caught two students this last year. It just seems that once it gets started, news travel fast and before I know it there will be more incidences reported. I am not always in the lab with the teachers. As the CIT, I model lessons for the teachers and once they feel comfortable

with the technology part they take over. We have a content lab rule that students are assigned a computer but even then sometimes teachers forget to do this. Short of gluing each key, I have to depend on teachers being vigilant and monitoring as the students work. Teachers, however, get busy helping other students and this is when this occurs.”

L.H. responded with this helpful advice: “When you begin your school year ask students for some suggestions on helping maintain the computer lab effectively. Explain to the students what you have encountered in the past and see if they can come up with a plan, if not suggest the following and see what the students say. First list students name on a computer lab layout assignment sheet. For example, computer 1-Larry ? 2- Mitzi, 3-Lisa? for each period. This may seem a bit time consuming in the beginning, but it should help narrow down the problem. Have all the students receive a buddy. Every day 5 minutes before they leave the lab switch buddy's to their buddies computer to close down and check the keys to make sure they are functioning properly. They all have to close a computer. Then when the next group comes in you will know which student sat in that seat before and have that student return if an incident occurs to discuss the findings and allow student to explain why the computer had this problem. In addition to these other suggestions can you xerox your key board so students can visually see that it matches correctly. I hope these suggestions help narrow the issue and have students take ownership of the problems in the computer lab.”

And I followed up with the following observation: Generally, CITs request/require teachers to have a seating chart prior to lab use in order to narrow down culprits who vandalize (a.k.a. "harmlessly change things around" in fun) computers or attempt to access inappropriate websites. Even so, stuff happens and any lover of late night TV has

probably seen "The Great Escape" or "King Rat:" inventive minds will find a way to screw things up for you. Seat assignments and peer checks are a good start. When problems persist administrative clout may become necessary. Restricting a student from technology access can be a sticky issue due to IDEA/FAPE/IEP and a dozen other acronyms, but having a student do D-hall in a lab dusting, aligning wires, and straightening chairs and headsets may reinforce proper respect for resources and fellow learners. Then have him or her write a reflection paper concerning the issue and lesson(s) learned to fill out the D-hall time (on the position that was messed with so you can see that it works).

K.L. asked for help in getting better resolution on the computer screen, particularly for people who are visually impaired: "I was wondering is anyone knew of a way to enhance a screen when you are on a webpage or any other area for people with visual impairments? Also when students use the mouse the cursor is so small that it is hard to see, is there a way to enlarge it?"

I provided this answer: One thing you might try is RIGHT CLICK on your mouse, at the DESKTOP. Scroll down to PROPERTIES. You should get a window with several tabs at the top. At SETTINGS slide the pixel rates bar all the LEFT and CLICK APPLY. The screen will go black and come back on with Icons and text enlarged and the arrow about twice as big. Somewhere in those options is one for LARGE ICON - I am not sure whether clicking that will make things even more large or perhaps more distorted....there seems to always be a trade off with things.

C.P. piggy-backed on this exchange with another means to solve this problem: "You might try this...On the desk top, right click and scroll to properties. Click properties.

Click on Settings tab. Now...adjust your resolution to a lower number. This will increase the size of icons...and I think your web sites. We had to do this for our new televisions in the classroom. They would not read the higher resolution screens.”