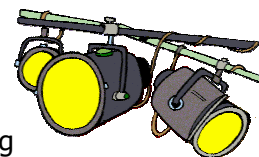


# SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROJECTS WITH JOE KOTT (HSE)



Joe Kott only recently joined our Shen community but has already been engaging his students in several learning activities that feature innovative uses of technology.

First, Joe maintains a blog (<http://shenten.edublogs.org>) that informs his HSE English students of activities that have taken place during the day, as well as any assignments that have been given. Handouts are stored online, and accessed via a hyperlink from the blog. In this way, students who missed class can find out what was learned, as well as get any relevant handouts. It also acts as a running log of what has been taught during the course of the year. Mr. Kott has enabled students to post comments to any of his blog entries as a method of expressing concerns or asking questions. The comments all go through a filtration process that Joe controls, and if he feels the class would benefit from the dialogue, the comments and his responses to them are presented on the blog.



For a unit called "Poetry Out Loud" (<http://www.poetryoutloud.org>) in addition to standard poetry recitations, Mr. Kott's students were encouraged to use a program called Audacity to create audio files which featured a reading of their favorite poem underscored with music selected to represent the mood of the poem. They also recorded a description of why the poem was chosen, as well as why they felt the music chosen reflected the mood of the poem. Aware that this is a highly personal exercise, Mr. Kott created "drop-boxes" on the S: drive that only he and the individual student could access. Grades were given based on a rubric stored in the students' drop-boxes. As such, it was a completely paperless project!

Mr. Kott has begun preparations for a new writing project that will focus on storytelling. He would like to teach students how to tell stories with images and imagery, as well as light dialogue. To this end, some of his students will be using a program called *Comic Life* to create graphic novels. The program creates "comic book-like" panels into which students can drop photographs or scanned drawings, and add speech and thought bubbles, as well as the traditional rectangular narratives commonly used in this type of media.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S CONFERENCE DAY:

### MANY CHOICES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.

-George Eliot

On Superintendent's Conference Day later this month, teachers will choose among a variety of peer-facilitated sessions designed for collegial sharing and learning. Laraine Longhurst worked tirelessly with academic administrators, principals and a variety of other staff to plan a day that will address district goals, provide opportunities for personal and professional growth and offer teachers choices to meet their individual needs. Topics will include everything from K-5 Discovery Boxes to Teaching to the Male/Female Brain, Organizing your Digital Life, Brain Research related to LOTE Learning Strategies, the Parent Portal, IEP mapping and more.

Throughout the day, Dr. Robinson will speak separately with elementary, middle and high school teachers. In addition to the self-selected sessions, time is allotted for departments or grade levels to meet. In an effort to encourage electronic sharing, many presentations and handouts will be saved on the G: drive (SharePoint) to allow teachers to review and reflect upon something they saw during the day, or peruse materials from sessions they were unable to attend. Please take advantage of this revised conference day format to renew your commitment to excellence and enjoy the many opportunities presented.

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After 3/28, find conference day presentations & handouts at:  
**G:\Instructional Services\Teacher Resources\Supt Conf Day**

Professional Developers:

Pat Stone and Anna Sugarman

[www.shenet.org/district/staffdevelopment/staffdev.htm](http://www.shenet.org/district/staffdevelopment/staffdev.htm)

Lead Teachers for Instructional Technology:

John Bullington (MS), Adrien Gleason (HS) and Gail Pietrafesa (EL)

[www.shenet.org/district/shentrac](http://www.shenet.org/district/shentrac)

## Educational Technology Survey Results

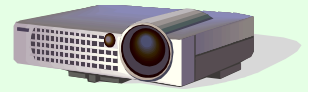
Many thanks to all who put time and thought into completing the recent educational technology online surveys. Four hundred staff responded, as well as 1,935 students (Grades 3-12) and 275 parents. The feedback was quite helpful and will be carefully considered as the district's 5-year educational technology plan continues to take shape. The 2008 survey results will also be used as a benchmark to gauge future progress.

On March 13 results were presented to the District Instructional Technology Integration Committee. A summary will soon be available to anyone interested in viewing the results.



## 200+ New Projection Systems in 08-09

Pending budget approval, approximately 216 new projection systems (ceiling-mounted LCD projector, audio capability, screen, TV tuner card and DVD player) are expected to be installed during the 2008-09 school year. Principals provided prioritized lists identifying the order in which rooms will receive projection systems in each school. The district hopes to outfit all instructional spaces with such systems by 2012. Year 1 installations will take place throughout the year and will be completed by June 2009. Large scale projects such as this require economic/efficient work flow; the order of installations will depend heavily on Facilities and IMS schedules).



During the next two months, the Lead Teachers for Instructional Technology will coordinate with teachers and building administration to determine screen location and other particulars for next year's installations. In addition to the 200+ new installations, existing IMS-supported, ceiling-mounted projectors (e.g. projectors in libraries) will be brought "up to spec." That is, the existing projectors will not be replaced, but additional components (speaker, TV tuner card and DVD player) will be added, in line with the new installations.

## Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities



### MAGNIFICENT NINE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

[Offered **3/25** and **4/23**, facilitated by Carol Scearce]

Researchers have aggregated all the studies done on various teaching strategies and have identified nine strategies that have a major impact on student achievement. This workshop focuses on those nine strategies and gives the participant specific examples of how to use these in their classroom.

Workshop	Date	Time
Powertools for Reading in the Content Areas	3/24	8:30-3
Collegial Discussions – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	3/24	2:45-3:45 or 3:45-4:45
Magnificent Nine Instructional Strategies (Gr 6-12)	3/25	8:30-3
Exemplars and Best Practices (designed for Administrators)	3/27	9-11 or 1-3
Asperger's and Adolescence	4/3	3:45-5:45
Teaching Using Inquiry	4/7	8:30-3
Organizing Your Work Life	4/7	9-3
Website Design for Teachers	4/8	9-3
The Brain at Play and Work	4/8	4-5:15
Curriculum Dev with Technology	4/9	1/2 or full day
Springboards for Better Writing	4/10	8:30-3
Collegial Discussions – 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	4/10	2:45-3:45 or 3:45-4:45

Workshop	Date	Time
Magnificent Nine Instructional Strategies (Gr 6-12)	4/23	8-3:30
Writing a Unit of Study (K-5)	4/24	8:30-3
Integrating Technology in MS Lang Arts	4/24	9-3
Team Challenge: High Ropes Training	4/25	9-3
Discovery Boxes Part I	4/28	12:30-3
Collegial Discussions – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5/1	2:45-3:45 or 3:45-4:45
Math: Technology is more than just calculators	5/5	9-3
Adventures in Low Elements	5/8	9-3
Discovery Boxes Part II	5/16	12:30-3
Website Design for Teachers	5/22	9-3
Curriculum Dev with Technology	5/23	1/2 or full day

To register, submit a completed [registration form](#) to the individual(s) in your building responsible for identifying workshop attendees. Once the form has been initialed as approved, it can be submitted to the Prof Dev Office at the D.O. Be sure to complete a Prior Approval form.