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Distance Learning Wins Again

J. Alan Baumgarten

As it turns out, if you want to get students to learn more, one of the best ways to do it is to keep them in school longer. Pilot programs for expanded learning time in schools indicate that it indeed raises student achievement, but those gains come at a significant cost. What we need is a way to achieve the same academic gains as extended learning time while significantly lowering total costs. And as you might have expected, online learning is the answer.

I never get tired of repeating that.

Dr. Cathy Cavanaugh of the University of Florida, working in conjunction with the Center for American Progress, completed and published a research study in May that examines the potential of Distance Education not only to expand learning time in an extremely cost-effective way, but also to allow students greater flexibility and educational choice. The [complete report](#) is available in PDF format from the Center for American Progress site.

[Plot spoiler alert] Dr. Cavanaugh concludes in the report that there is sufficient rationale for "making distance education courses uniformly available to expand school learning time." In other words, this is a call to action for America's public education system to get wired.

I found Dr. Cavanaugh's presentation of the facts to be compelling, but so infused with common sense that they almost didn't need to be. For example, she demonstrates that distance learning is a cost-effective alternative to traditional education. Yes, if you take away the building expenses, the furnishings, bussing and transportation, school lunch, classroom supplies, athletics, and so on, it is no great epiphany that an Internet connection and courseware are significantly less expensive. That may be just common sense, but Cavanaugh does her due diligence and tracks down the exact estimates, which I appreciate.

Dr. Cavanaugh also provides evidence that students who participate in distance learning spend more time engaged in learning. Again, take away the common classroom disruptions, the administrative overhead of attendance and school announcements, transitioning between classes, and a variety of other factors, and it becomes clear just how little of a student's time is spent engaged in learning. What's more startling is how inflexible traditional education is compared with distance learning. If a student is really enjoying a topic and very focused, there are no bells forcing the student to stop and move on. Of course they spend more time learning when they are online; it is simply that much more efficient and conducive to both individual and group learning.

I, Scientist: Blending Current Research with Project-Based Learning

Lisa Kerscher

Spend summer brushing up on current research and new scientific techniques to build a project-based learning (PBL) module that will ignite students' interest, fuel their knowledge, and propel their skills.

A teacher's school schedule and responsibilities are typically daunting. Although summer can provide some respite, it can also offer a time to refresh, reflect, and rethink tired old lessons. Start by re-energizing yourself. Take some time to explore new research in one or more of the fields you teach to deepen your own knowledge or discover some new angles. This article will point you in the right direction for finding several good places to jump off and dive in.

Discovering fresh insights into key topics can also open the door to new ideas for teaching content. In the March 2009 issue of *Learners Online*, the article "More Meaningful than Ever: Project Based Learning" provided a thorough explanation and top resources for project-based learning in general. You are encouraged to review that article, as this month's article will help you take the next step in creating learning projects for your science students.

Having solidly shifted from the Information Age to the Participation and Collaboration Age, today's students are poised to learn not only from their teachers, but also from each other. In a classroom of multiple intelligences, diverse skills, and emerging talents, everyone can contribute to a creative learning project that results in rich outcomes, provides memorable experiences, and promotes every participant's sense of value and purpose. With the intensified push to prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), simply understanding the



content is not enough. Applying our know-how to solve real-world problems and being able to work with others toward a shared goal are critical skills for success in these professions.

Take the Plunge

Sometimes it is difficult to find fresh insights and in-depth learning for topics that have either been taught for years or may be brand new. Often, teachers need some professional development courses specially designed for their profession. [Annenberg Media](#) helps fill that need free of charge. To access the Videos on Demand (VoD), you will need to register and log in. For biology teachers, explore the wealth of [Rediscovering Biology: Molecular to Global Perspectives](#). The VoD segments, listed by individual program descriptions, serve as the core of this course. The [series Web site](#) provides materials (online textbooks, interview transcripts, and images), animated case studies, and guidance that support the video instruction. Similarly, biology, chemistry, and earth science teachers may also find [The Habitable Planet](#) course series valuable, and physics instructors will enjoy [The Mechanical Universe . . . and Beyond](#). Review all of the site's [Science Teacher Resources](#) for additional course topics. Consider using many of the videos and animations for student instruction.

Two excellent science news sites can also help provide fresh insights and inspiring ideas. [Science Bulletins](#), produced by the American Museum of Natural History, offer stories in the categories Astro, Earth, Bio, and Human. In each category, there are Feature videos, as well as helpful Visualizations and Snapshots. Each story also includes Educator Resources. Use the Open Story Tools feature to e-mail or bookmark that specific story for easy reference later on.

[ScienceDaily](#) does not cover topics as in-depth as the previous two resources, but it does offer a large volume of topics that report on the most current news. News, Articles, Videos, Images, and Books are sorted into eight categories. Near the bottom of the page and on the right-hand side under the heading "Free Subscriptions," sign up to automatically receive the latest news postings through their e-mail newsletters or RSS feeds.



Science Projects in the Collaboration Age

Now it is time to grow some ideas. Based on your research refresher, brainstorm a list of topics or specific angles that you think could be applied for a learning project. As explained in the related March 2009 article, you want to first come up with a driving question. Think about what you want the outcomes to be, and then plan backwards; watch [A New Way to Teach: Begin with the End](#) for some guidance. Although a team or teachers developed that project plan collaboratively, such intensive and team-based planning may be helpful but is not required.



Also, keep in mind that the project exploration itself is ideally student-driven. The goal is to build a framework in which you will guide students in their investigations and assessment goals. Read the Edutopia article [World Without Walls: Learning Well with Others](#), which will help remind you of what your digital natives are capable of and how vital it is for you to serve as their "connector."

As you review the following steps and Web sites, construct a "Thought Tree" for each topic by drawing branches from the starting topic and sketching out your ideas of what is "possible." Use a whole, separate sheet of letter-sized paper (or larger) for each topic so that you can organize all of your ideas in one place.

Step 1: Think of the children in your classroom not as students, but as scientists. Do not simply provide your students a real-world application for the project's goals. Plan to treat them like scientists in terms of expectations, involving them in decisions, collaborating with others, applying their talents in meaningful ways, and using available technologies commonly used by professionals to collect and analyze data. What possible results might they share with the larger community? For some inspiration, watch the Edutopia video [The DNA of Learning: Teens Tackle Animal Poaching Through Genetics](#). Add branches on your topic trees that describe some of the tasks and behaviors of scientists who research that topic.

Step 2: Identify adult collaborators. Consider collaborating with other teachers within or outside of your school or district. Also consider researchers—including graduate students—at nearby universities or professionals in a particular field. Collaboration

options could include co-teaching a learning project, finding a real-world application someone is working on to which students can meaningfully contribute, or inviting experts to lead a day of learning. Watch the Edutopia video [Team Teaching: Two Teachers, Three Subjects, One Project](#), and then add more branches to your topic trees.

Step 3: Evaluate your resources. This includes any textbooks, lectures, known field sites, lab tools, and any multimedia segments you may have found during your research refresher. Also, take some time to inventory your school's technology capabilities and challenges, including the availability of computers and students' Internet access. Make a list of software programs already installed on school computers, and briefly describe their common uses. Would you or other teachers use any other programs if they were available? If so, do any comparable, easy-to-use open source options exist? Also, consider how you and students might creatively use other digital devices, such as handheld GPS units or video cameras. Based on your evaluation, add branches with ideas for technology integration.

Step 4: Consider content standards. Check out the article and overview video illustrating [Integrated Studies](#). From there, view the links to other videos you find interesting. Next, review and identify the content standards that could fit well with each topic's tree full of ideas. Do not limit yourself to reviewing only STEM standards, but also review standards for English, social studies, and art. List the standards on the topic sheet, or staple a checklist to it for later reference. Reflecting on the standards, modify existing tree branches that may cover either instruction or assessment ideas.

Put away the thought trees for as long as a week, and then revisit each topic tree. As you review them, keep in mind that the project does not necessarily have to last 10 or 12 weeks. Although a relatively long and deep immersion can be beneficial, the real key is the quality of the experience, rather than the quantity of time spent on the project.



Carefully and critically analyze the merits of each idea. How will you encourage students with different "smarts," learning styles, and talents to work with their peers? How exactly will you guide students through collaborative exercises of discovery, debate, and measurable outcomes? Try to pick the two best ideas and highlight

each topic tree's most viable branches. Summarize each one by writing down the project's primary driving question, descriptions of the instruction and assessment goals, the names of potential adult collaborators, descriptions of preferred technologies, and an outline or timeline of the project's activities. For each milestone in the timeline, note the expected goals (i.e., what do you expect students will have learned by then?). Tie content standards to milestones, as appropriate. When completed, share your summaries with one or more fellow educators for feedback. If you have identified specific adult collaborators, then share your ideas with them as well, requesting their feedback and level of interest in participating.

Following peer review, flush out your best idea with the details. As you develop your plan, create a checklist of steps to complete before implementation. For example, talk with your school's technician to make sure you have what you need installed on the computers, schedule a meeting with your adult collaborators to prepare for their participation, confirm access to field sites, and so on. In the end, breathing new life into your teaching strategies will not only benefit your students, but it will also reinvigorate you as an educator.

Reference:

Annenberg Media – Science Teacher Resources

<http://www.learner.org/catalog/resources/browse.html?discipline=6>

American Museum of Natural History – Science Bulletins

<http://sciencebulletins.amnh.org/>

ScienceDaily

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/news/>

Edutopia – World Without Walls: Learning Well with Others

<http://www.edutopia.org/collaboration-age-technology-will-richardson>

Edutopia – A New Way to Teach: Begin with the End

<http://www.edutopia.org/begin-end>

Edutopia – The DNA of Learning: Teens Tackle Animal Poaching Through Genetics

<http://www.edutopia.org/collaboration-age-technology-biotech-video>

Edutopia – Team Teaching: Two Teachers, Three Subjects, One Project

<http://www.edutopia.org/collaboration-age-technology-blood-bank-video>

Edutopia – Integrated Studies

<http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-studies>

Inequalities

Stephanie Tannenbaum

For many students, inequalities remain unclear. They spent so much time throughout their math careers focusing on finding *the* right answer. Therefore, it is sometimes hard for students to visualize a “correct” response that represents a range of values as opposed to one exact value. Solving inequalities does not have to be a mathematical enigma. By following the same basic steps as solving equations, students just have a couple of additional aspects to consider.

Solving inequalities is indeed similar in many ways to solving equations. Instead of merely finding a single exact value, equalities represent a range of possible values. By adding only one or two additional steps, students can find consistent success with solving inequalities. The graphs on a number line or grid help to visualize the purpose for solving inequalities. When students understand that the value range defines an area, the process becomes much easier. Simply put, for any point on the area of the graph, the inequality is true. For any point not within the specified area, the inequality is not true. Thus, an infinite number of points can be described by a single expression. It follows then, that exploring the graphs of inequalities is essential to completing the process of understanding and application. There is no place better to do this than on the Web.

Students explore inequalities through various lessons, tutorials, and activities on the World Wide Web. Through the interactive explorations, students will gain a greater depth of understanding and appreciation for inequalities.

NM-ALG.9-12.2

Represent and analyze mathematical situations and structures using algebraic symbols

- understand the meaning of equivalent forms of expressions, equations, inequalities, and relations;
- write equivalent forms of equations, inequalities, and systems of equations and solve them with fluency -- mentally or with paper and pencil in simple cases and using technology in all cases;

TEKS

§111.32. Algebra I

(1) Foundations for functions. The student understands that a function represents a dependence of one quantity on another and can be described in a variety of ways.

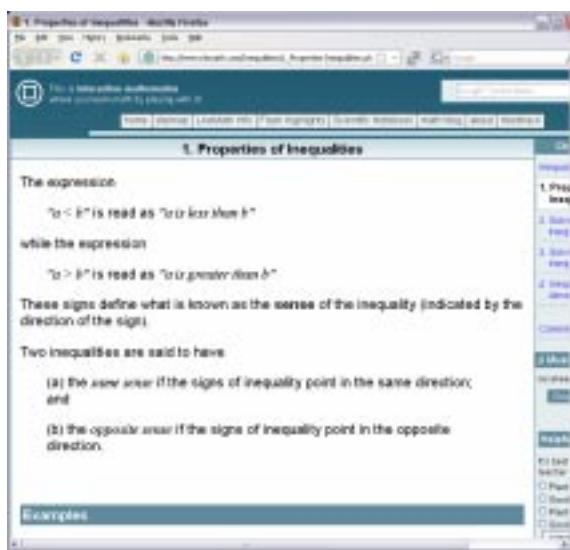
(C) describe functional relationships for given problem situations and write equations or inequalities to answer questions arising from the situations

(D) represent relationships among quantities using concrete models, tables, graphs, diagrams, verbal descriptions, equations, and inequalities

Understanding Inequalities

Students benefit when they can consider a real-world scenario. Ask students to consider a formula where x represents the speed of a car. If x equals 40 miles per hour, the equation is only true when the car is actually traveling at that exact speed. However, if x is defined as greater than 30 miles per hour and less than 50 miles per hour, a range of speeds will make this inequality true. Many computer programs use inequalities to make decisions. For example, if a value is greater than 5 but less than 10, the action might be to present the word “valid” on the screen. Any other number would become “not valid.” Therefore, if the value is 6, the program exhibits “valid” and if the value is 15, the program exhibits “not valid.”

By the time students work within an Algebra (or even Pre-Algebra) course, they should be familiar with the basic idea of inequalities. Start with some very basic introductory lessons and activities when working with the inequalities. Point students to [1. Properties of Inequalities](#) from Interactive Mathematics. The information is easy to follow and provides an excellent overview about the important properties and terms to consider when working with these types of math entities. [Inequalities](#) from Math.com eases students in by taking them through the process of performing a very basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division sample. Working through the four components of this program (First Glance, In Depth, Examples, and Workout) provides an excellent preface for exploring inequalities.



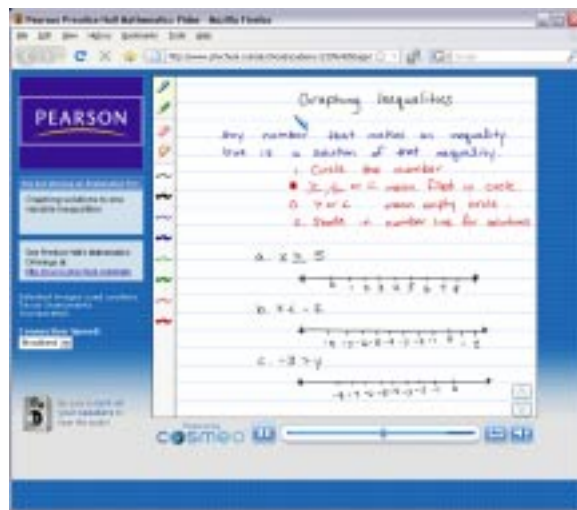
One-Step Inequalities

Invite students to sit back now and watch some video clips about solving inequalities. Start with Pearson Prentice Hall’s [Solving Inequalities by Adding](#), [Solving Inequalities by Subtracting](#), [Solving Inequalities by Multiplying](#), and [Solving Inequalities by Dividing](#). Continue with Robert Fant’s video demonstration on [Solving Inequalities](#) for solving, graphing, and checking an inequality. After watching this video, students will be familiar with writing in set notation as well. Looking down at the bottom-right corner, click the small set of white boxes for additional inequality demonstrations.

Now that students are ready to solve some problems, start with [One Step Inequalities](#) (scroll down to the section titled One Step Inequalities) created by Trent Tormoehlen. Assign students to work in pairs and read the information on this site, watching the video clips as they proceed. Stop after the second video. Continue with the set of lessons and practice activities from Oswego City School District Regents Exam Prep, [Solve Linear Inequalities](#). Begin with the first lesson [Solving Linear Inequalities](#) and then continue with both practice sets, [Practice with Solving Linear Inequalities](#) and Practice with [Applied Problems for Inequalities](#).

Graphing Inequalities

Once students are comfortable with solving basic, one-step inequalities, start graphing. Graphing provides a visual representation that pulls all the pieces together. Even though inequalities define an area or range of values, students will be interested to find out how they can still be graphed on a Cartesian grid just the same as equations. Let's return to some videos to introduce the idea. Return to Pearson Prentice Hall to watch an excellent clip on [Graphing Inequalities](#). Assign students the complete [Beginning Algebra Tutorial 18: Solving Linear Equations](#) from West Texas A&M University. This is an excellent resource that defines the properties of inequalities necessary for graphing. Finally, wrap up with Oswego City School District Regents Exam Prep Center's [Graphing Linear Equalities](#) activity for the graphing calculator.



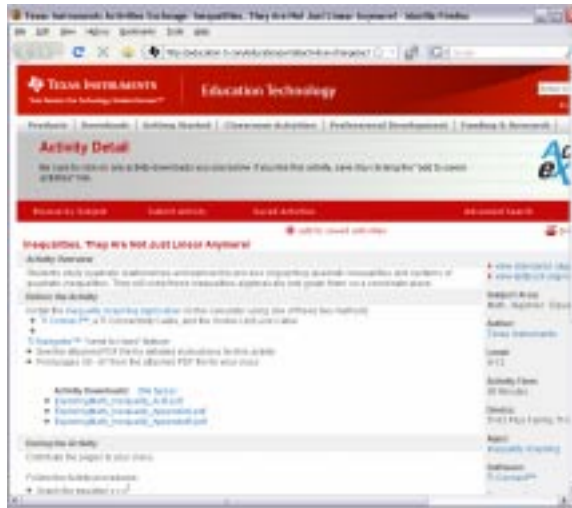
Two-Step Inequalities and Beyond

Return to Trent Tormoehlen's excellent lesson, [Solving Two Step Inequalities](#) (scroll down). Working in pairs again, read the steps and then scroll down to view the three video clips. Continue with Pearson Prentice Hall's video clips, [Solving Two-Step Inequalities](#) and [Solving Multi-Step Inequalities](#). Math.com's set of lessons on [Two-step equations and inequalities](#) provides further instruction and examples (only work with the inequalities).

Now continue with an exploration for systems of inequalities. Start with Pearson Prentice Hall's video, [Systems of Linear Inequalities](#). Then visit ExploreLearning's set of activities on Linear Inequalities. For each of the three Gizmos, first click the

Exploration Guide and read. Then instruct students to continue working with the interactive activity. Working in pairs will enhance the collaboration. There are three excellent lessons: [Systems of Linear Inequalities \(Slope-Intercept Form\) Activity A](#), [Systems of Linear Inequalities \(Slope-Intercept Form\) Activity B](#), [Systems of Linear Inequalities \(Standard Form\)](#).

Texas Instruments provides a download for exploring inequalities on the graphing calculator; [Inequalities, They Are Not Just Linear Anymore!](#) Encourage students to use their graphing calculators throughout their exploration of inequalities. Students will surely run in to and use inequalities in future math lessons throughout high school and college. Promoting interactive activities through use of the Internet helps to make these lessons more interesting and understandable.



Reference:

Math.com Inequalities

<http://www.math.com/school/subject2/lessons/S2U3L4GL.html#sm1>

Interactive Mathematics Properties of Inequalities

http://www.intmath.com/Inequalities/1_Properties-Inequalities.php

Pearson Prentice Hall Mathematics Video

<http://www.phschool.com/webcodes10/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.gotoWebCode&wcprefix=aae&wcsuffix=0775>

Robert Fant – Solving Inequalities

<http://robertfant.com/PMWiki/index.php?n=Algebra2/SolvingInequalities>

Trent Tormoehlen – Solving Algebraic Inequalities

<http://www.squidoo.com/inequalities1>

Oswego City School District Regents Exam Prep – Solve Linear Inequalities

<http://regentsprep.org/regents/math/math-topic.cfm?TopicCode=solvin>

West Texas A&M University – Beginning Algebra Tutorial 18: Solving Linear Equations

http://www.wtamu.edu/academic/anns/mps/math/mathlab/beg_algebra/beg_alg_tut18_in_eq.htm

ExploreLearning – Linear Inequalities

<http://www.explorelearning.com/index.cfm?method=cResource.dspResourcesForCourse&courseID=243>

Exploring Best Practices

Rachel Cummings

Summer's gift is time—time for unfinished projects, time for relaxing, and time for learning.

Teaching rarely offers teachers time to reflect or to engage in meaningful professional development during the school year. However, summer offers an open season to explore our craft, to examine new pedagogies, and to study new content. Teachers interested in professional development need not worry about traveling to conferences or paying registration or materials fees. A select few Web sites make professional development convenient by hosting free online webinars, workshops, and videos for teachers.

Annenberg

As part of its ongoing dedication to sharing ideas, Annenberg Media sponsors Learner.org. Guests at the site find such valuable professional development resources as videos, and workshops and courses. A list of [Literature and Language Arts](#) resources displays both the videos, and the workshops and courses. Designed for K–12 teachers, the topics cover the gamut—from effective writing instruction strategies to contemporary writers' thoughts to the Holocaust to American literature in context. Click the topic that interests you which opens an Overview of the program. Overviews include descriptions of the video segments, links to the videos, and a link in the right margin to "Enter the Series Web Site" for workshops or courses. Most video programs feature at least several parts, and the VoD icons make it easy to identify the free videos, which come equipped with closed captioning. The videos are full of information and examples, and they are worthwhile for independent study or as part of a group inquiry; however, as freestanding videos, they rely on engaged participants to generate questions, share observations, and make connections.



For those looking for a more organized, prepared course, Learner.org also offers a [List of Workshops and Courses](#). Workshops and courses differ from the video programs in that they include everything you (and your colleagues) need to complete a professional development inquiry on the topic. Click a [Workshop or Course](#) topic to automatically be directed to the series Web site. (For example, review this workshop on [Conversations in Literature](#).) This provides a plethora of resources: links to each session and video segment, support materials—including a course guide or session guides—assignments (expect homework!), a Lesson Builder to facilitate integrating new methods into your teaching, and access to TeacherTalk, the e-mail discussion list for each program. Professional development has never been so convenient.

View a complete list of [workshops and courses](#), including those related to the arts, history, and education, among other topics. These resources—videos, as well as workshops and courses—are free to use, and can be completed independently or with colleagues. They do require [registration](#), but this process is cost- and pain-free. Completing the workshops and courses for [Graduate Credit](#) is an option; however, you must then pay a fee. For the graduate credit option, peruse the [Graduate Credit Requirements](#).



PAEC

The [Panhandle Area Educational Consortium](#) (PAEC) hosts [e-Learning Workshops](#). (Please note that Internet Explorer is required.) Originally part of the U.S. Department of Education-sponsored Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative, the courses were taped and now exist in the form of online courses. Visit the [getting started](#) section, and read six steps that take you from identifying the appropriate course through completing the course and finding additional resources. Since the course is an outgrowth of a Department of Education initiative, 49 states offer professional development credit for these Teacher-to-Teacher courses. PAEC provides information to receive credit and [Requirements by State](#).

To begin a course, examine the list of [English/language arts](#) workshops. Topics cover broad instructional issues such as Feedback, Reading in the Content Area, and Differentiating

Instruction. After selecting a course, click the “more” button to the right of the author. The new page is not flashy, but it is clear. Open and print the viewing guide, click “view video course,” and refer to the guide as you view. You will also see a list of links to additional resources, including a transcript, PowerPoint presentation, course handouts, and follow-up activities. Video segments vary in length; [this chart](#) shares the length of each so you can plan your day at the beach or your session with colleagues. The final step for each course is the course assessment.



After completing this assessment, you will receive a certificate of completion for submission for credit toward certification. You must [enroll](#) to access the assessment (and receive the certificate of completion); however, this enrollment is free.

PAEC also hosts Teacher-to-Teacher courses on [additional subjects](#). These topics are not English- or language arts-based, but they are still relevant to most teachers (e.g., Building Teacher Leaders, Turning Data into Information, Differentiated Instruction, and Positive Behavior Strategies).

Edutopia

Established by George Lucas, Edutopia imagines a more perfect educational reality in which parents, students, faculty, staff, and policymakers are equal partners in an innovative and an inspirational education system. To facilitate this mission, Edutopia hosts videos, Edutopia magazine, and Edutopia.org. The site includes six [Core Concepts](#): Integrated Subjects, Project Learning, Technology Integration, Teacher Development, Social and Emotional Learning, and Assessment. Scroll over the titles to read a brief definition of each. Each concept page contains a description, Real-Life Videos, and Real-Life Examples. Use the videos and examples in the professional development sessions you design.



On the [home page](#), find the section title in the left margin. More organized and thorough professional development resources are available on this page. The [Video Library](#) catalogues 18 pages of videos. These include interviews with experts (for example, Linda Darling Hammond and Howard Gardner), videos submitted by teachers addressing a variety of issues, and videos featuring innovative projects or illustrating core concepts. Select a video of interest, a Related box appears to the right of the video box. Look at the range of additional resources, including articles, other videos, and links to the core concepts. Occasionally, these resources will include discussion questions and quizzes, and the bottom of the page features Comments and Responses. Following the links provided in the Related box and reading visitors' feedback is one way to explore a professional development topic.

For those interested in learning more about [project-based learning](#), [technology integration](#), or [assessment](#), Edutopia provides teacher-training modules for each. This training includes related articles, videos, PowerPoint presentations, and class activities. To participate, simply read each chapter in one training session, and be sure to follow each blue link. If a group of colleagues is interested in joining in your study, the final chapter (titled Resources or Teaching About) suggests ways to use the training module with a group.



There are also webinars in the Sections menu. These are not free. The cost of a yearly Edutopia membership is \$35; however, the teacher-training and video archives are free for all.

Mention professional development, and many teachers groan—required, after-school, top-down topics on district initiatives, served without food. Thankfully, a discerning few Web sites raise the bar on professional development, making it more accessible, relevant, and engaging than ever before. These online programs bring high-caliber presenters to you (along with all the resources necessary) and enable you to delve deeply into relevant education and into the literature and language arts topics of your choice. This summer, treat yourself to some professional development. On the beach, in your pajamas, with three colleagues at a coffee shop—set some summertime aside for professional development.

Reference:

Annenberg Media – Learner.org
<http://www.learner.org/>

PAEC – Teacher-to-Teacher eLearning Workshops
<http://www.paec.org/teacher2teacher/index.asp>

Edutopia
<http://www.Edutopia.org>

Homes Around the World

Courtney Kincaid

The housing we construct and occupy reflects our environment, lifestyle, culture, and even our aspirations.

Beyond merely satisfying the basic human need for shelter, the homes people create may form a basis for community living, reduce energy use, or even carry out a dream or an artistic vision. The summer is an excellent time to explore the topic of housing around the world and to consider the relationship between people and the environments they create. Will you take a vacation this summer? If so, take some time to explore homes unique to the area you are visiting. If not, take a virtual tour of housing around the world, courtesy of the World Wide Web. Through photographs, interactive online games, and narratives, there are many amazing, creative, and practical ways people have found to provide shelter. We will also explore the ways people have addressed the need for sustainable and affordable housing around the world.

Traditional Homes

Traditional homes often reflect available building materials, environments, and lifestyles. To see photographs of a wide variety of traditional homes, visit [Houses Around the World](#), a Web page from the Haga Library of Tokyo, Japan. Consider how each of these traditional homes reflects the relationship between humans and nature. For a closer look at life in a traditional home, visit Experience Africa, to view photos and read about the traditional homes that are a part of [Village life In Uganda](#).

For an excellent resource to share with elementary students, visit Shelter Online, where you can peek inside [Wonderful Houses Around The World](#), a book by Yoshio Komatsu.

NSS-G.K-12.5 Environment and Society

As a result of activities in grades K-12, all students should

- Understand how human actions modify the physical environment.
- Understand how physical systems affect human systems.
- Understand the changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

TEKS

§113.22. Social Studies, Grade 6

(7) Geography. The student understands the impact of interactions between people and the physical environment on the development of places and regions.

(A) identify and analyze ways people have adapted to the physical environment in selected places and regions; (B) identify and analyze ways people have modified the physical environment; and (C) describe ways in which technology influences human capacity to modify the physical environment.



These excerpts from the book show photographs of the exterior of traditional homes, illustrations of the homes' interiors, and an explanation of how lifestyle and environment have affected the homes' design.

Modern Housing

Using the Internet, we can get glimpses of lifestyles that are different—and not so different—from our own. Paul and Bernice Noll's excellent Web site presents pictures of their visit to [Allen Xie's Family Home in Zhengzhou, Henan, China](#). Look at pictures of the home and the food the Xie family prepared for their visitors.

To learn about housing in Japan, visit Explore Japan's [Housing, Food, and Clothes](#) page. This student-friendly page explores post World War II trends in Japanese housing. Don't miss the Q&A section, where students can discover the size of homes in Japan, what a typical room looks like, and whether Japanese families keep pets. Have you ever wondered what a typical house in modern England is like? The UK's Woodlands Junior School has put together the [Houses in England](#) page. Peruse the links for different types of English homes.

Complete the exploration of modern homes with the wacky, weird, and wonderful feats of architecture collected on Building Material 365's page [Unusual Architecture From Around the World](#).



Looking Forward: Trends in Housing

The need for affordable, sustainable housing has been of great concern in many countries, as well as a focus for the United Nations. Housing is a worldwide problem felt keenly in both less developed and more developed countries. The colonias, along the U.S. border to Mexico, are an example of substandard housing in a developed country. Learn more about the colonias by visiting the PBS site, [The Forgotten Americans](#). This site includes photographs taken by children of their homes, as well as an online [Build a Community](#) game in the links to the right of the page. (Teacher's Note: You should review the photographs to determine whether they are appropriate for your class.) One organization dedicated to affordable housing around the world is Habitat for Humanity.

Find out how volunteers build homes at [Habitat for Humanity: What are Habitat Houses like?](#) This is a great summer volunteer opportunity as well; click [Get Involved](#) at the top of the page to find out more.

As social scientists have learned more and more about our world, we have become more interested in the ecological footprint that our homes leave. A universal goal is to create sustainable housing for everyone. A fun way for elementary students to learn more about sustainable housing is to play the games at [mysusthouse.org](#). Start with the [Introduction](#) to learn about sustainability, and then click the tab at the top of the page to play the building game. Students choose materials to build a house with a budget of \$100,000. Clicking the blue "i" icons will give students more information about each building material. This is an excellent activity for special needs students and English language learners as well.



Additionally, some individuals have tackled the sustainability issue through earthen houses. Check out WebEcoist's [Earthen Architecture: 15 of the World's Dirtiest Buildings](#).

The summer is a great time to explore homes. From the traditional to the modern, the practical to the artistic, our homes are close to our hearts. They are where we become a part of our communities, raise our families, and find shelter from the outside world. As students become more aware of their connectedness with other cultures and environments around the world, they can begin, as our future leaders, to think about the challenging issues of sustainable and affordable housing.

Reference:

Haga Library – Houses around the World
<http://www.hgpho.to/wfest/house/house-e.html>

Experience Africa – Village life In Uganda
<http://www.experienceafrica.co.uk/l4.htm>

Shelter Online – Wonderful Houses Around the World: Yoshio Komatsu
http://www.shelterpub.com/_wonderful_houses/WH_p2-5.html

PaulNoll.com – Allen Xie's Family Home in Zhengzhou, Henan, China
<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Zhengzhou/Allen-family.html>

Explore Japan – Housing, Food, and Clothes
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/explore/housing/index.html>

Building Material 365 – Unusual Architecture From Around the World
<http://www.jiancai365.cn/decorating/Unusual-Architecture-From-Around-the-World.htm>

PBS – The Forgotten Americans
<http://www.pbs.org/klru/forgottenamericans/index.htm>

Habitat for Humanity – What are Habitat Houses like?
<http://www.habitat.org/how/whatlike.aspx>

Mysusthouse: Games
<http://www.mysusthouse.org/game.html>

WebEcoist – Earthen Architecture: 15 of the World's Dirtiest Buildings
<http://webecoist.com/2009/02/02/earthen-architecture-natural-dirt-mud-brick-buildings/>

Understanding by Design: Recharge Your Classroom This Autumn!

Alan Sills

NS.K-4.7 History of Nature and Science; Science as a human endeavor.

When teachers engage in the action of professional development, they are better able to communicate the nature, action and dynamics of science to their students.

Summer means recharging the intellectual batteries, and it means evaluating which lessons, strategies, and approaches were most effective and which need an update. In recent years, a new teaching strategy known as backward design has gained greater acceptance. There are multiple benefits to learning about and employing this strategy. Consider taking a unit and redesigning it to employ the backward design approach.

We all want our instruction to be student-centered and engaging, but many studies demonstrate that we have a shortage of American students who wish to become scientists. The foundations for decisions students make later on are created in their formative years. Backward design—beginning with the end in mind and identifying the enduring understandings (the big ideas)—can help you, the educator, design more engaging lessons for students. In addition to the fabulous programs explored here, consider adding “Understanding by Design” by Wiggins and McTighe to your must-read list for the summer.

Teachers benefit from exploring the very informative and engaging Web links that provide information detailing a teaching strategy known as backward design.

Backward Design: Why Change?

[Working Backward to Move Forward](#) discusses the overarching reason the United States needs science education reform and was written by Thomas Cech, a research scientist, Nobel laureate, and recent President of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. This provocative article details the rationale for



changing how we educate students. Since industry and research universities are concerned that America is not producing enough PhDs in science, Cech argues that beginning with the end in mind can engage students and subsequently increase the number who choose to pursue careers in science and math.

Six Facets of Understanding

[Developing Goals and Objectives](#) provides an outline that illustrates the essence of the Understanding by Design approach, which encourages educators to identify enduring ideas. (Enduring ideas are those concepts that students should have learned and know 5 or 10 years after they leave your classroom.) For example, is memorizing the symbols for weather fronts (cold fronts, warm fronts, etc.) an enduring idea, or is the enduring idea that fronts, when moving across a region, cause significant changes in the weather?

The author goes on to discuss the six facets of understanding. These include students having the ability to explain, interpret, apply, have perspective, empathize, and have self-knowledge. The three stages of backward design are then addressed: identifying desired outcomes and results, determining acceptable evidence of these outcomes, and then planning instructional strategies and learning experiences designed to achieve the desired outcomes. Hence, begin with the end in mind! Examples from the 1998 Wiggins and McTighe “Understanding by Design” book are included, as well as links to additional resources for those wishing to extend their learning on this topic. Additionally, the [Rock Island School District, Office of Instruction & School Improvement](#) has prepared an excellent PowerPoint on the topic of [Understanding by Design](#).

Earth Science by Design

Numerous curriculum design projects have produced content-specific materials for teaching that use backward design methods. [Earth Science by Design](#) is one such curriculum initiative. This PowerPoint presentation highlights the benefits of employing this instructional approach in earth science investigations. As noted in the presentation, Earth Science by Design was inspired by Wiggins’s and McTighe’s “Understanding by Design.” The project’s goal is to help



teachers select what to teach and then design assessments and instructional strategies. As you review this presentation, think about the major earth system concepts taught throughout the school year, and consider how to begin each topic with the ending in mind. Earth Science by Design provides an excellent [resource](#) page designed to help accomplish this task within this content area.

[Environmental Issues: Land Use Change](#), designed by Lehigh University's Environmental Initiative, offers a content-specific example of how instructors might employ backward design in earth science. This lesson employs the use of geospatial information technology, along with the Understanding by Design instructional approach, as students explore the topic of land use change and environmental impact. The site provides all major components, from an overview to assessment ideas.



Backward Design in Physical Science

The [Delaware Science Coalition's Force and Motion Unit Template](#) provides an example of backward design in the realm of physical science. Take note of this site's construction. Beginning with the "big ideas" is an important way to begin any unit. Next, establish the "enduring understandings," and take note that these are large, overarching ideas. The "essential questions" begin to identify specifics that specific knowledge and skills statements further clarify. The "assessment and evidence" section essentially focuses on assessment and how to detect level of understanding. Finally, this resource offers a specific learning plan.

Backward Design in Life Science

Next, examine a [Guide to the Backward Design Template](#) for a model unit called Body Systems Working Together: Human Circulatory & Respiratory, developed by educators at the [Mount Desert Island High School](#). Although the template is somewhat different from that presented in earlier sections, major components are the same. Notice that the lesson is based upon enduring understandings, as well as on key knowledge and skills to be acquired. (Refer to sections IA and IB.)

The designer then correctly points out that the goal of an essential question is to develop a learner's ability to pose problems, gather information, consider all possibilities, make decisions, understand differing perspectives, and reason ethically. That designer then models and illustrates both teacher- and learner-generated essential questions.

Section IIA then illustrates acceptable evidence of student learning. Take note of the breadth and various forms of formative and summative assessments utilized during the course of this unit. Section IIC models the variety of teaching methods that instructors may employ throughout the unit. Finally, the unit models "performance tasks" at its conclusion.

Backward Design: A Template

The [Digital] Literacy's Media Working Group has posted a model [template](#) for use with the construction of backward design lessons. Complete the template online as an interactive tool and then print or simply print the template as a PDF file and then complete it by hand. If you have never implemented the backward design instructional approach, select one content unit to try out and then develop that unit in the detail you have seen in the previous sections. Begin with a unit with which you are very comfortable and focus on the instructional strategies without any concern over the material just yet. Look at some examples of model lessons that [Lesson Planet](#) has posted. There are [450 backward design lesson plans](#) and they offer a free trial to review their materials.

Summer is a time to recharge, reflect, and relax. Whether you just completed your 1st year or your 20th, there is always room for growth. Stepping out of your comfort zone will ultimately lead to a win-win situation. You will become recharged and energized as you explore a new and dynamic instructional method, your students will rise to the challenge as they increase their skills and interest in the topics you teach throughout the year.

Reference:

Working Backward to Move Forward
<http://www.hhmi.org/bulletin/feb2006/pdf/CechLetter.pdf>

Developing Goals and Objectives
http://pixel.fhda.edu/id/six_facets.html

Understanding by Design (PowerPoint)
http://curriculum.risd41.org/committee/best_practices/04-05/arlene.ppt

Rock Island School District: Office of Instruction & School Improvement
<http://curriculum.risd41.org/>

Earth Science by Design (PowerPoint)
http://www.esbd.org/resources/Activity_04_What_Is_ESBD.ppt

Earth Science by Design
<http://www.esbd.org>

Resources for Earth Science by Design
<http://www.esbd.org/resources/index.html>

Lehigh University's Environmental Initiative: Environmental Issues: Land Use Design
<http://www.ei.lehigh.edu/nes/luc/>

Force and Motion Unit Template
<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/files/6%20Force%20and%20Motion%20Unit%20Template.pdf>

Mount Desert Island High School: Guide to the Backward Design Template: Body Systems
http://www.mdihs.u98.k12.me.us/UDD/files/bd_guide.htm

[Digital] Literacy Media Working Group: Backward Design Template
<http://digitalliteracy.mwg.org/curriculum/template.html>

Lesson Planet: 450 Backward Design Lesson Plans
http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?grade=All&keywords=backwar+design&rating=3&search_type=narrow

Understanding Response to Intervention

Stephanie M. Hamilton

After assessing your class on new vocabulary words, you notice that several students still do not know the words' meanings. You reflect on your lessons, re-teach to those students who struggled, and then assess the students again. High-quality teaching requires that teachers provide interventions so that all students experience success.

Response to Intervention (RtI or RTI) is a model of intervention that is currently used in many states—perhaps even in your school district. It is one result of special education legislation that calls for teachers to monitor and document student progress before recommending special education services. Over the summer, you can learn more about RtI and how to implement it into your classroom for the next school year.

There are many resources available online to support your understanding of RtI. The U.S. Department of Education-sponsored Web site on RtI, along with several other Web sites, provides details on the law, its implications for schools, and tutorials to support teachers in the classroom. Additionally, Texas has implemented a project to build capacity in the use of RtI in its districts and schools. New York has mandated that all schools use RtI by the next school year. Although RtI is not mandated in all states, research has shown that the components of this model are beneficial to student achievement.

What Is Response to Intervention?

RtI is an instructional approach to providing all students with the appropriate instruction so that these students succeed. Through RtI, teachers can intervene early so that students do not fall behind and develop learning difficulties. The model is based on a teach – assess – reteach model. Screening assessments help teachers determine where students might have specific weaknesses and then target instruction to strengthen those areas. For example, through a screening assessment, Mrs. Johnson, a first-grade

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

TEKS

§110.5. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 3

(3.6) Reading/fluency. The student reads with fluency and understanding in texts at appropriate difficulty levels.
(3.9) Reading/comprehension. The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently.

teacher, may find that her student Margaret is weak in decoding words with short vowel sounds. Mrs. Johnson can intervene by planning instruction to help Margaret with learning those specific sounds so that she will be able to fluently read text.

The [Building Rtl Capacity](#) Web site elaborates on the core components of RtI, which include the following:

- All students receive high-quality core content area instruction.
- All students are screened to identify those who are making adequate grade-level progress and those who are falling behind and at risk for learning difficulties.
- At-risk students are provided with immediate, research-based intervention instruction.
- At-risk students' progress is monitored frequently to ensure the intervention is meeting their needs.
- Professional development is provided to educators to enhance the instruction and intervention they provide.



Click “Tools and Resources” for more information on RtI’s background and to find out how teachers have implemented the program in Texas. Click “Implementation Examples” to read case studies about four Texas elementary schools. Then scroll down the page to read about the three-tier approach used in RtI. The [RTI Action Network](#) also contains general information and resources. Additionally, you may wish to collaborate with peers by clicking “Connect with Others.” In this section, you will find discussion boards, expert advice, and blogs. If several educators in your school are learning more about RtI, you might want to use this site to share thoughts and ideas for implementation.

Lastly, the U.S. Department of Education’s Web site features helpful questions and answers about Response to Intervention. Look in the left navigational bar, and click [Q and A: Questions and Answers On Response to Intervention \(RTI\) and Early Intervening Services \(EIS\)](#) for more insight into how this model fits into general and special education instruction.

Online Learning

Rtl is targeted to reach those students who may be struggling with the core curriculum and need additional intervention. Read [Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention \(RtI\) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades](#) to learn more. The article contains specific information on how to screen students, design a three-tier intervention program, adjust instruction to support struggling readers, and monitor student progress. After reading this article, think how you might implement the strategies into your own classroom.

Next, the [National Center for Response to Intervention](#) contains numerous resources and several webinars. Click “Events” and then “Webinars” to view a list of informative, archived presentations. Two webinars that may be of particular interest are “English Language Learners (ELLs) and RTI Webinar Follow Up,” and “What is RTI? Webinar Follow Up.” Each webinar includes a PowerPoint presentation, Webinar recording, and handouts.



If you have the time and want a more extensive understanding of Rtl, the Iris Center at Vanderbilt University has several [Rtl training modules](#). Click “Resources,” and then choose RTI. Under the “Select” column, you will see several choices ranging from “All Materials” to “Podcasts.” “Modules” are designed as professional development workshops and include videos, handouts, graphics, and an evaluation tool. Two “Case Studies” are provided, as well as several “Info Briefs” appropriate for teachers and parents.

Form a professional learning community within your school for summer professional development. Click “Assignment Tips” within the Modules section of the Iris Center Web site; you will find directions on how to use these modules. Follow the instructions for “Homework,” and then invite your school team to meet (virtually) at the [RTI Action Network](#) Web site. Start a discussion group or blog about what you have learned.

Reference:

Building RtI Capacity
<http://buildingrti.utexas.org/>

RTI Action Network
<http://www.rtinetwork.org/>

Questions and Answers On Response to Intervention (RTI) and Early Intervening Services
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C8%2C>

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

National Center for Response to Intervention
<http://www.rti4success.org/>

Iris Center – RtI training modules
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>

Visit Museums Without Leaving Your Home

Andrea Annas

Ahh, summer . . . the time of year when teachers kick back, relax, and go on vacations. Wait! With teacher layoffs and pay cuts looming, few of us can afford long vacations and a break from working. So in the midst of a busy working summer, how can you prepare for the next school year?

Many of us are cutting back our expenditures in these uncertain times and cannot afford the educational trips we would like to take. Instead of spending money to go on an actual trip, use your computer to take a virtual trip. Museums across the nation offer wonderful online resources and tours. So take a few hours this summer and discover the vast array of sights and sounds that are just a click of your mouse away.

There are several wonderful American history museums. Various strategies for searching the Internet to find other useful online museum exhibits for your classroom instruction will be explored.

Searching for Museums on the Internet

Conduct an Internet search for “United States museums,” and you will discover that there are thousands of sites now on the Web.

So how do you find the good ones? One of the better search methods is to narrow down the search topic by focusing on a specific period of U.S. history. Include the phrase “virtual museum” or “online exhibits.” However, even a narrowed search can yield hundreds of results. If you do not want to wade through hundreds of questionable results, visit the Virtual Library’s site, [Museums in the USA](#). The International Council of Museums supports the Virtual Library museum pages, and the Oakland Museum of



California provides its maintenance. As a result, this site provides the one of the most accurate compilations of online museums located throughout the United States. Search for museums [by name](#), [by state](#), [by type](#), or by browsing through the page's [top sites](#). Each museum listing also includes a written description to help you find the museum that is the best fit.

The Best of the Best

A myriad of great museums are available online; unfortunately, there is no way to possibly cover the wealth of online resources within one discussion. Therefore, we will focus on five of spectacular museum sites that stand out above the pack. These museums will surely enhance the learning in many classrooms.

The first museum is the [Mariners' Museum](#), located in Newport News, Virginia. The museum offers numerous online exhibits regarding maritime history. Topics about the [USS Monitor](#) to [the slave trade](#) to [the Battle of the Atlantic](#) all provide informational and entertaining opportunities. The exhibit [Exploration through the Ages](#) thoroughly covers the exploration and discovery of the world. Learn about [the explorers](#), [their ships](#), [their tools of navigation](#), [their voyages](#), [life at sea](#), [the development of map-making](#), [exploring the Chesapeake](#), and much more. The site also hosts two interactive games: [Merchants of the Great Exchange](#) and [Whose Lunch is it Anyway?](#). Students are challenged to gain a fortune trading in the East and to make it back to England alive in the first game. The second activity tests students' knowledge of the Columbian Exchange.



Memorial Hall Museum located in Old Deerfield, Massachusetts, hosts a virtual museum called [American Centuries . . . view from New England](#). The museum's [online collection](#) consists of over 2,000 artifacts found in the physical museum. This museum is particularly ideal for teaching about colonial America. The online exhibit [Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704](#) examines the relationship between the colonists and the Native Americans. The exhibit on [Shays' Rebellion](#) takes a close look at how this Massachusetts revolt changed American history. In addition to the online collection and exhibits, the museum offers several interactive activities. In [Dress Up](#), viewers learn about

clothing throughout the centuries. [Now Read This](#) asks visitors to attempt to transcribe old written documents; this section also offers [Video Demonstrations of Early American Tools](#) and much more. The site's [In the Classroom](#) page lists a number of activities and lessons to use with the museum's site. Teachers can also [create their own collection](#) from the museum's artifacts or [create their own Teacher's Activity](#).

Next, the [Oakland Museum of California](#) has many virtual exhibitions about California, such as [Gold Rush!](#) Take the [virtual tour](#) of the actual exhibit, and then view several videos about [the Lure and the Legacy of the Gold Rush](#). Learn about the Gold Rush's environmental legacy, the peoples of California, and women in the Gold Rush. The exhibit's [Onsite Adventures](#) also let the visitor explore images of the Gold Rush.

The fourth museum is the [John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum](#), located in Boston, Massachusetts. Presidential libraries house and preserve papers, historical documents, video and audio recordings, artifacts, and much more from individual presidents. They are a great resource for teaching about 20th-century presidents and the events that occurred during their presidencies.



Start your visit of the [John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum](#) with a virtual tour by clicking the appropriate link. Next, check out the page [JFK in History](#). The museum highlights significant events during Kennedy's presidency. Along with an article about the topic, many events include additional multimedia links to video and audio recordings as well as slideshows. For example, click the [Cuban Missile Crisis](#), listen to audio recordings of presidential meetings, and see Kennedy's speech informing Americans of the crisis in Cuba. By using the drag-down menu under [Historical Resources](#), you can access the White House Diary. The diary is a day-to-day log of what Kennedy did as president, including video and audio recordings. Lastly, visit [Materials Resources and Activities for Teachers](#) for ways to incorporate the museum's resources into your classroom instruction.

This list would hardly be complete without the [Smithsonian National Museum of American History](#), located in Washington, DC. The NMAH hosts 54 online exhibits, from [The Star-Spangled Banner](#) to [A History of American Sweatshops](#) to [Treasures of American History](#). One popular exhibit is [The Price of Freedom:](#)

[Americans at War](#), which examines wars from the War of Independence to the present, including the Eastern and Western Indian Wars. Each section begins with a short video and then moves on to a slideshow presentation, complete with explanations. A teacher's manual and lesson guide, along with images and worksheets, are available for download on the [Learning Resources](#) page.

By simply using your computer, you can access great museums from all around the nation. This summer, I challenge you to find your own top five museums that you can use in your classroom next school year.

Reference:

Museums in the USA

<http://www.museumca.org/usa/>

The Mariners' Museum

<http://www.mariner.org/>

Memorial Hall Museum Online – American Centuries

<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/home.html>

Oakland Museum of California

<http://www.museumca.org/>

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/>

The Smithsonian National Museum of American History

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/category.cfm?category=online>

Get Cycling!

Geri Ruane

Name _____

Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride. ~ President John F. Kennedy

The bicycle is a simple machine, yet emanates a certain charm. Some of that magic comes from the pleasant memories of anyone who has ridden a bike. Not only is it designed for children, but many adults ride bicycles for various reasons, whether it is for work, leisure, or transportation.

The bicycle has gone through much development through the years and we have many varieties of bikes to choose from, such as road, mountain, recumbent, hybrids, and tandems. Today, there are nearly 1.4 billion people in the world who use a bicycle.

And, as beginning riders, we all learn bicycle safety rules. Yet, it is equally important to continue to review and build upon those bicycle safety guidelines as we ride our bikes, from childhood through adulthood. The bicycle is a vehicle that shares the road with cars. Safety is a major concern for both motorists and riders.

In this month's Internet Challenge™, we will take some time to learn a bit about the history of bicycles, review bicycle safety guidelines, check out bicycle equipment and apparel, and more. Are you ready?

Our first Web site is [The History Timeline of the Bicycle from the Pedaling History Bicycle Museum](http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html). Go to <http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html>

1. How did the Velocipede get the nickname of the "Boneshaker?"

2. What types of danger did a rider encounter when he was riding the high wheel bicycle?

3. How did Dunlop's invention affect the popularity and use of bicycles?

4. Give the original name for the League of American Bicyclists.

Terrific answers!

Our next Web site, [Tyler Bicycle Club.com – Bicycle History](http://www.tylerbicycleclub.com/BicycleHistory.html), contains a timeline of bicycle's history from 1817 – 1996. You can find this site by browsing to <http://www.tylerbicycleclub.com/BicycleHistory.html>

5. Create a timeline of your own on a separate piece of paper and include 8-10 dates/details in your timeline. Choose any dates that you feel are the most significant to the development of the bicycle. Add details and pictures too. After you are done, be prepared to talk about it with your teacher and classmates.

Very good!

Now, let's go to [Beginner Cycling](http://www.beginnercycling.com), a resource for anyone new to cycling! Point your Web browser to www.beginnercycling.com

Read the material on this page and then, click the "Bicycle Safety" and "Cycling Apparel" blue tabs on the left hand side of the screen. Read the information on each page and then answer the next questions.

6. What should cyclists wear, regardless if they are beginners or advanced riders?

Go to these two Web sites and read the material from both of them regarding the benefits of bicycling.

Web site #1: [League of American Bicyclists](http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/why/)
<http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/why/>
Click the five links found under "Why Ride?"

Web site #2: [Bikes Belong.com](http://www.bikesbelong.com)
<http://www.bikesbelong.org/statistics>

7. What should you check on your bike before you begin a bike ride?

11. In your own words, describe why commuting to work by bicycle instead of driving a car helps our environment.

8. Regular bicycle maintenance greatly enhances the chances of an accident due to bicycle failure.

a. True

b. False

Great!

Our last Web site is [Bicycle Museum.com](http://www.bicyclemuseum.com) at
<http://www.bicyclemuseum.com/alpha.htm>

9. Explain the type of shoes that cyclists should/should not wear.

In the Alphabetical Index, click the letter "p" and then, click "Police Bike." Read the information about the 2002 Police Bike.

10. Give reasons why all cyclists should use reflectors on their bikes and cycling apparel.

12. How do police officers use a bicycle in their line of work? Describe some special features that a police bike would possess.

Good answers!

Remarkable responses!

Extension Activity – Choose one or more!

- Let's learn more about bicycling safety. Go to each of the six Web sites listed below and read the information that focuses on bike safety. As you peruse through each site, you will see that some Web sites contain information from different states and countries. All of this proves that bicycle safety is a worldwide concern!

Bike Sense - Cycling and Traffic Skills
<http://www.bikesense.bc.ca/ch4.htm>

Ten Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety
<http://www.cpssc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/343.html>

Cycling Safety Tips – LifeMojo.com
<http://www.lifemojo.com/lifestyle/cycling-safety-tips-554392>

Ten Tips for Safe and Enjoyable Bicycle Commuting
<http://www.labreform.org/education/tentips.htm>

“Schwinn – Cycling Safety and Etiquette”
www.schwinnbike.com/esp/eng/cycling_safety
Click “10 Rules for the Road” – read the rules and watch the short video at the bottom of the page (put headphones on, if necessary).

How can you educate the public about bicycle safety? After you have previewed these sites, create your own commercial or poster about bicycle safety tips. If you had a chance to make a two-minute commercial, which bicycle safety rules would you want to include in it? Or, if you could design a bike safety poster, what would it look like? What would you say in your advertisement? Who would be your audience – young children or adults? Using appropriate computer software and technology equipment or paper, pencil and art tools, design your ad. Once you have completed it, share it with your teacher and classmates. Talk about it!

- The Care Exchange – Bike 10
<http://www.caree.org/bike101biketypes.htm>

It is the year 2020. You have been hired as a bike designer. What will your bike look like? Using computer software or pencil, paper, and appropriate art tools, design your own unique 21st century bicycle. Be prepared to share your final product with your teacher and classmates. Talk about it!

- A new sport – BMX Racing! Go to the two sites below to read information about this new sport.

What is BMX Racing?
<http://cyclingforfun.co.uk/what-is-bmx-racing.html>

Olympic.org – Cycling BMX
http://www.olympic.org/uk/sports/programme/disciplines_uk.asp?DiscCode=CB

A sports designer has hired you to create a new type of cycling apparel for the sport of BMX racing. What would you produce? Make a sketch of your creation with either appropriate computer software or with pencil, paper, and suitable art tools. Once you are done, share your drawing with your teacher and classmates. Talk about it!

- Go to the “Bicycle Museum of America” at <http://www.bicyclemuseum.com/>. Click the “for students” link. Then, read about the four different bicycles that are highlighted there.

Give a brief history of the development and failure of the Ingo-Cycle bike. If you could re-design this bicycle for the 21st century, how would you do it? Make a sketch and plans – be prepared to talk about it!

- To see some original antique photographs about The Wheelmen, go to www.thewheelmen.org/. Click “antique photographs.” How do today’s Wheelmen differ from those in the past?

Congratulations! You have done a tremendous job completing this Internet Challenge™.

Answers to Summer's Internet Challenge™

1. The appearance of a two-wheeled riding machine took place in 1865, when pedals were applied directly to the front wheel. This machine was known as the Velocipede ("fast foot"), but was popularly known as the bone shaker, since it was also made entirely of wood, then later with metal tires. The combination of these with the cobblestone roads of the day made for an extremely uncomfortable ride that shook your bones!
2. Because the rider sat so high above the center of gravity on the high wheel bicycle, if the front wheel was stopped by a stone or rut in the road, or the sudden emergence of a dog, the entire apparatus rotated forward on its front axle, and the rider, with his legs trapped under the handlebars, was dropped unceremoniously on his head. The expression "taking a header" came into being when the rider fell off from the bicycle.
3. The pneumatic tire was first applied to the bicycle by an Irish veterinarian, John Boyd Dunlop, who was trying to give his young son a more comfortable ride on his tricycle. As a result, more people began to ride bicycles because bicycles were more comfortable, safe, and less expensive as manufacturing methods improved. It was a practical investment for the working man for transportation and it gave him a much greater flexibility for leisure. For women, it was now a much more versatile machine and they could still keep their legs covered with long skirts. The bicycle craze instituted "common-sense dressing" for women and increased their mobility considerably.
4. The League of American Bicyclists was originally called the League of American Wheelmen or also known as The Wheelman.
5. Students own work.
6. Cyclists, no matter what their skill level, must wear a helmet for protection.
7. Always make sure your chain is oiled and that your handlebars and seat are adjusted properly and screwed in tightly. It is very important that your brakes are working properly; this should always be checked before taking off down the road. It is also a good idea to check your tire pressure.
8. (b) False
9. Proper cycling shoes are very important for the cyclist. When riding a bike for long distances, a rider's feet can easily become tender and blistered if their footwear is not up to the job. Quality cycling shoes are often made with velcro straps or clips that eliminate the need for laces which can become entangled in bicycle pedal and gear components. As a recreational cyclist, one may choose to wear regular tennis shoes as long as the laces of the shoe are tucked in to the shoe. Cycling apparel should never consist of loose, dark clothing or riding barefoot.
10. Reflectors are a must; not only on a rider's bike, but on all of the rider's cycling apparel as well. Reflectors should be on shirts, shorts, shoes, and any backpack or extra item a rider may be carrying. More often than not a rider can purchase cycling attire with reflective layers sewn in. Bright clothing is always a smart idea when riding. It helps to be more easily noticed by all those around.
11. Students' responses.
12. Students' answers

Extension Activities – students own answers.

Driving Our Future

Lisa Kerscher

On Tuesday, May 19, 2009, President Barack Obama announced that his administration is proposing a national policy for fuel efficiency and emissions standards in American-made vehicles. The proposal—which would involve key states, the nation's auto companies, auto workers and environmental groups—would increase fuel efficiency by five percent each year between 2012 and 2016.

Currently, the average fuel efficiency for a 2009-model vehicle is about 25 miles per gallon (mpg). The proposed new standards would raise efficiency to just over 35 mpg by 2016. These standards would not only improve gas mileage and save consumers money at the gas station, but they would also reduce greenhouse gas pollution, as well as oil and gas imports.

In today's struggling economy, people are not waiting for change in government policy and car technology to save gas money. A growing number of drivers are more frequently leaving their vehicles in the driveway and opting for walking shoes, public transportation, or carpools.

Even so, America's love for cars and the "open road," which exploded in the 1950s with the construction of the U.S. Interstate Highway System, will not fade anytime soon. Today's network of roadways totals about 4 million miles that crisscross the United States from coast to coast, border to border. These roads see about 8 billion miles of vehicle traffic every day.

During this lesson, you will examine America's love affair with the automobile and the development of a road-based transportation system. You will also get a chance to review and consider vehicles of the future.

§113.32. United States History Studies Since Reconstruction

(23) Science, technology, and society. The student understands the influence of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on daily life in the United States. The student is expected to: (A) analyze how scientific discoveries and technological innovations, including those in transportation and communication, have changed the standard of living in the United States



Moving America

Start your road trip with the early years of [America on the Move](#). In the [Exhibition](#), read the Introduction and begin exploring [Transportation in America before 1876](#). Here, discover how [Connecting the Growing Nation](#) shaped the communities and cultures we see and experience today.

What were the consequences of establishing the [Transcontinental Railroad](#) and smaller stretches of [connecting communities](#), such as Santa Cruz and Watsonville, California? What were some of the changes in [Santa Cruz](#) and in [Watsonville](#), not only in delivering goods, but also in [Working the Fields](#)? How did improvements in [Delivering the Goods](#) influence what people ate?

In what ways might the United States be different if transportation technology had evolved more slowly? Name some factors that influenced where transportation links were built. What if several or all of the major transportation links had taken different routes?

As you will soon discover, transportation technologies and related infrastructure were not only used to quickly span long distances, but they were also used to improve and expand cities such as [Washington, DC](#).

How do you think your hometown might be different if people did not drive cars, catch trains, or ride buses? In what way does the [Center Market](#) and the [New Market System](#) illustrate how transportation innovation was changing how people lived? Why did [Farm to Market](#) wagons become less preferable to newer alternatives?

How did [City Streetscapes](#) improve with boosts in road use? [What Happened to Streetcars](#), beginning in the 1910s? What factors shaped the [Growth of Suburbs](#)? Now think about where you live. Together with classmates, think about your area's early transportation days. What remnants of its history still exist today? Make a list and discuss.

Up to this point, you have mostly examined transportation's machines, so now meet some [People on the Move](#). Discover how travel improvements affected the lives of [H. Nelson Jackson](#), [Harry](#)



[Bridges](#), [Mary Johnson Sprow](#), [Fred and Maryann Knoche](#), and [Juana Gallegos Valadez](#).

Continue your in-depth exploration of this site by driving through the stretches on [New York: The Connected City](#) and by [Crossing the Country](#). Also, see what happened when [Americans Adopted the Auto](#) as a permanent fixture in daily life and how [Lives on the Railroad](#) have changed over the years. Make sure to wind along [Route 66: The People's Highway](#) on your road trip, and get a glimpse into [Roadside Communities](#).

New and more travel choices also made [Family Camping](#) easier, allowed the consolidation of [Schools](#), spurred on the [Suburban Strip](#), and shaped the relationship between [City and Suburb](#).

Following the success of long-distance transportation by the Transcontinental Railroad and the automobile boom, the [Interstate Highway System](#) was born. In what ways have these highways affected American culture over the years? List and rank what you think are, or have been, the positive and the negative impacts of the automobile and roads system. Compare your list with others, and discuss any differences.

Before leaving the exhibition, check out how transportation has had a hand in [Transforming the Waterfront](#) and in [Going Global](#). Lastly, play the [Game](#) called **Driving through Time**.

In what ways does the highway system serve the American public? How do the road system and our love affair with the automobile continue to shape our daily lives and our national, regional, and local cultures? Have you noticed if transportation preferences—for work, travel, school, and leisure—have changed at all over the last few months? Over the last year? If so, what factors may have influenced these changes? In what ways have these shifts caused other changes in American culture?

A Driving Evolution

With car companies seeking new ways to stay in business and America's desire to reduce air pollution and foreign oil imports, the driving nation seems ripe to emerge into the next stage of its life. Get a jump start in seeing the upcoming innovations by examining the [Car of the Future](#) at NOVA. As you explore



this site, take notes on any points you find especially interesting or relevant.

[Watch the Program](#) (a total of about one hour) by reviewing all six chapters in either QuickTime or Windows Media format: **Hitting the Road, Hydrogen Fuel Cells, Towards Biofuels, Frontiers of Efficiency, Plugging In, and Taking Action**. A text transcript for each video is also available on each video page.

When you have completed the main program segments, explore the extra features, starting with looking [Beyond Technology](#). As you read the transcript or watch the video clip, you will learn about how changing government policies must support the improvements expected from emerging technologies. Then, take a look at [History's Innovative Autos](#) and [Model of Efficiency](#). Review what some people are already doing, or making [My Car of the Future, Today](#).

Discuss with classmates your predictions for what the future of vehicle transportation will look like. What factors and forces will most likely shape this future? What obstacles may prohibit transportation's evolution?

Lastly, get familiar with this site's [Open Content](#) section. Here, use your notes to help you track down the video clips you reviewed by category or keyword. For your newspaper activity later, you will download and edit together some of these clips later to create a video. Make sure to read the [Rules of Use](#) guidelines. For some help and guidance on video editing, check out the [FAQ](#) page, especially the [Help & Resources](#) section.

Reference:

National Museum of American History – American on the Move
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/onthemove/>

PBS Nova – Car of the Future
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/car/>

Conducting Internet Searches for the Best Web Sites

Stephanie Tannenbaum

The World Wide Web has truly opened up the possibilities for exposure to dynamic, fascinating, and pertinent content. Implemented within the framework of our existing curriculums, the Internet serves to enhance the overall enjoyment and retention of various topics for students of all ages from Kindergarten through 12th grade and beyond. The Web is a vast portal of meaningful, real-world experiences and reservoirs that are full of information that applies to any subject.

This, we know. The problem is, there is now too much information. Google "Harriet Tubman." Wow! Amazing! There are 752,000 Web sites devoted to this freedom leader. Now all we have to do is sift through and find some great Web sites to use with either elementary or secondary students. Truly, finding the proverbial needle in the haystack would be about as easy. So with limited time available to teachers for "surfing the Web," what is an educator to do? Forgo finding fabulous interactive, rich media Web sites and stick to the textbook since there is not enough time to search for those sites?

No.

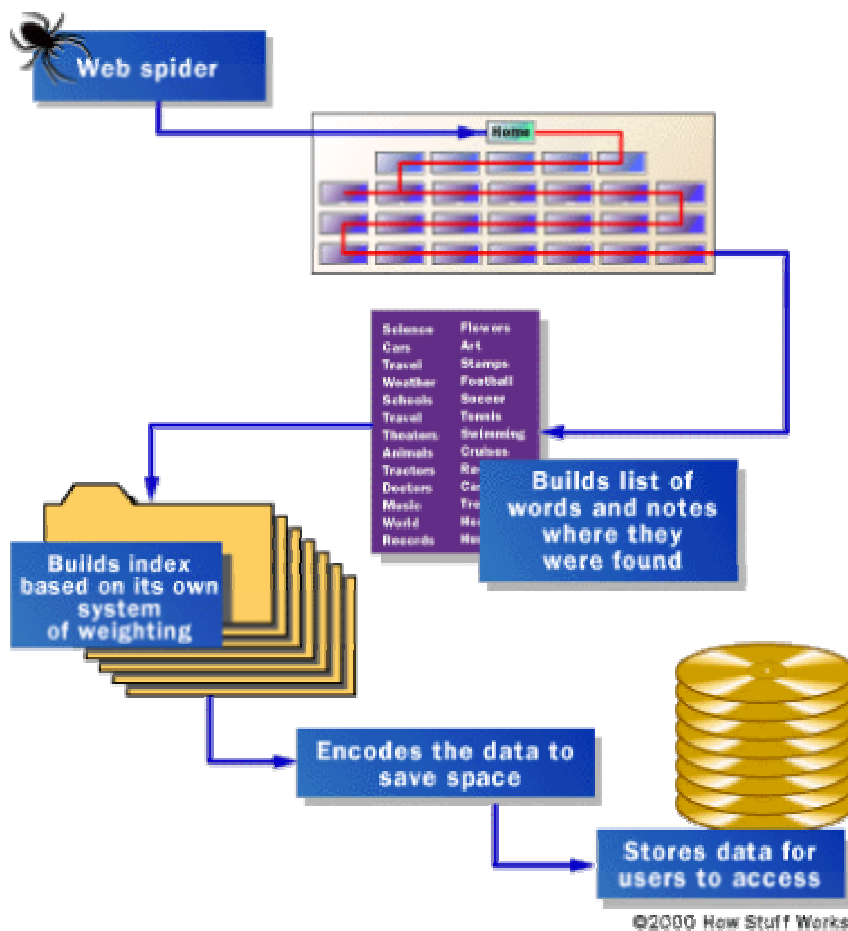
There is a way to conduct Web searches efficiently. We want to find useful, meaningful, rich-content sites. With practice, you will become a WWW expert. This summer, take your own self-paced course for enhancing and honing Internet query skills by following the programs described in this exploration.

How Do Searches Work?

To understand the nature of the search engine will help to conduct better research. Most often, we refer to a search engine to help us locate specific Web sites. So who decides which sites are listed first and which sites are listed 5,432nd in the list? Search engines may vary but they all operate in the same basic manner. Specifically, they perform three primary functions:

- They scour the Internet using special software “spiders” (thus the Web) that scan for specific words or groups of words.
- They create and store a directory (or index) where they compile these words or groups of words. The software “spiders” are “web crawling.” Indexing is the web definition for locating and including newly found web pages and other media links within a set of search results.
- They present these organized directories based upon the combination of key words or phrases entered into the search field by the users.

Examine this [Web Spider](#) chart from How Stuff Works.



The lists are compiled based on size and popularity of a site and/or that site’s server. Frequently accessed Web sites will appear higher up on the list than lesser-known sites. In addition, the words in a Web site’s title, subtitle, and meta tags significantly affect how quickly a spider “finds” that particular site. (Meta tags are the key words and terms provided by the owner of the site that enhance its

chances of being “found” – they are part of the actual code of the site and do not actually appear on the page that the viewer sees.)

There are different places to visit to conduct research on the Internet. Read this overview of the [Kinds of Search Engines and Directories](#) from the Owl at Purdue. For further exploration, visit University of California Berkeley’s explanation of four main categories for exploring the Web – [Finding Information on the Internet: A Tutorial](#) (note: clicking any of the four provides an in-depth explanation as well as hierarchal charts of suggested specific URLs).

How Can We Use This Knowledge to Enhance Our Own Searches?

Knowing the basic idea for how search engines work helps us to enhance our own query tactics. By using a combination of terms and phrases, we can bypass the bulk of the Web and truly fine-tune our Web hunt. Begin with the excellent interactive [Boolean Tutorial](#) from Colorado State University Libraries. After the slideshow, continue with the [Advanced Boolean Searching Tutorial](#). Next, visit Laura B. Cohen’s Internet Tutorials – [Boolean Searching on the Internet](#). Then continue with [Basic Search Techniques](#) and make sure to review the [Best Bet Search Tips](#).

Beyond Boolean

Obviously, inserting an “and” here and there is not going to complete the job in record time. While it is a start, there are other steps to consider and implement when performing Web research. Visit the [Four NETS for Better Searching WebQuest](#). As you review the tutorial, try the various practice activities as you proceed. This program focuses on four primary strategies for locating the best Web sites in record time.

- Narrow down the search; be specific and type in precise terms and use Boolean terms.
- Group terms into phrases and use quotation marks to help group precise keywords together.



- Manipulate the Web link; you might be surprised at what is “hidden” within a larger URL.
- Seek out alternative pages based on similar terms and keywords and phrases. Alter the way you input the information into the search field.

Keep practicing. Visit [Using Search Engines – A Tutorial](#) from Debbie Flanagan. After reviewing each mini section, try the interactive practice activities.

Is There Anything Else Besides Google?

While Google (and even [Yahoo!](#) and [Dogpile](#)) certainly represent the very pinnacle of the Web when it comes to indexing, it is not the only and certainly not always the right choice. Consider these alternative but just as valuable and resourceful options as well:

- [Library of Congress](#) – known as the largest library in the world; this site serves to make as many resources available to the public as possible (<http://www.loc.gov/index.html>)
- [Internet Archive](#) – online library that contains an extensive supply of resources (<http://www.archive.org/index.php>)
- [NoodleTools](#) – this excellent online search program is geared specifically for educators and students and enhances the research process (<http://www.noodletools.com/index.php>)
 - o Be sure to [Choose the Best Search for Your Information Need](#) as well (<http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html>)
- [Scoop](#) – this ideal search tool helps to hone in on what types of files and sites you seek; this is very good as a search engine and will also teach you how to enhance your skills just by using it (<http://www.scoop.com/>)

The good news is, The Internet provides an expansive array of excellent Web sites for any topic and the amount of information is growing exponentially. The bad news is, we have to work hard to find those excellent Web sites. By using search tactics and sharpening our skills, the effort required to find the best of the best Web sites is drastically reduced.

Remember these four steps: 1) narrow down the topic/idea 2) use precise wording and Boolean terms in the search fields 3) trim down the actual Web link and 4) look for similar pages using

alternate words. Becoming a WWW expert will not happen in one sitting. Nevertheless, with practice, we begin to “think” like a search engine ourselves and therefore locate specific sites that meet our criteria quickly and effortlessly.

Reference:

The OWL at Purdue – Searching the World Wide Web

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/558/03/#resourcenav>

University of California Berkeley – Finding Information on the Internet: A Tutorial

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>

Colorado State University Libraries – Boolean Tutorial

http://lib.colostate.edu/tutorials/boolean_info.html

Laura B. Cohen – Internet Tutorials

<http://www.internettutorials.net/>

WebQuest.org – Four NETS for Better Searching

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/searching/fournets.htm>

Debbie Flanagan Using Search Engines – A Tutorial

<http://www.learnwebskills.com/search/engines.html>

Free Online Technical Training

J. Alan Baumgarten

If your school follows a traditional calendar, the long summer break may provide you with opportunities to upgrade your technology skills. If you know where to look, there are many excellent rich media courses available online at no cost and with only a small investment of your time.

Like many educators, I am waiting for the day when schools get all the money they need while the Department of Defense has to hold an annual bake sale. If that day isn't coming soon enough for you, take heart in knowing that lack of funds does not need to put the brakes on technology training during the summer break. There are enough free online resources available to keep you busy for days. And the quality is superb – on par with any seminar or workshop. This technology integration article focuses on how and where to find training this summer.

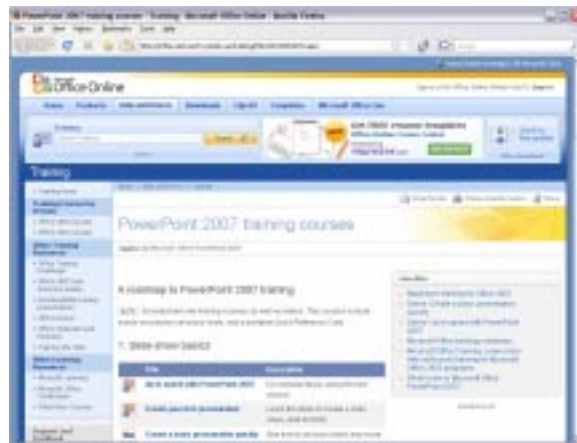
Break out the headphones.

Free Microsoft Training

If you use a PC, you almost certainly have something on there made by Microsoft. It is also just as likely that you are not utilizing even one tenth of the software's capabilities. Microsoft does a fine job of documenting their products and developing training. You can enroll in a formal (paid) training course if you prefer, but they also have a lot of good training presentations online.

Let's start with Microsoft Office. If you use Office applications like Word, Outlook, or PowerPoint at school, you can become a more knowledgeable and skilled user with these [Office Training Courses](#) for Office 2007 and Office 2003.

Think about how you use Office applications today and what kinds of things you would like to do better or more efficiently. Do you want to create better looking presentations? Browse the list of



[PowerPoint 2007](#) training and learn more about using custom layouts or design themes. Is your inbox filling up with Spam? Browse the [Outlook 2007](#) courses and take a course on filtering junk email.

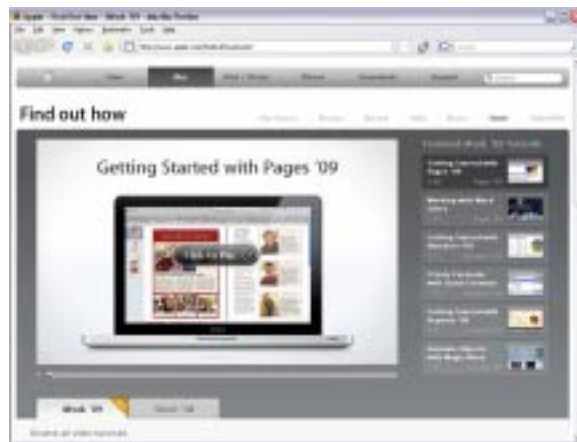
The key is to focus on features that will make your life easier, save you time, and make you more effective as a teacher and a classroom administrator.

If you use Internet Explorer, you should consider viewing this collection of [Internet Explorer 8 videos](#). Yes, if you are using Internet Explorer you should definitely upgrade. And yes, these short training courses will help you make the most of all of browser features. They are only a few minutes each.

Free Apple Tutorials

If you fall squarely in the Mac camp, you can get a similarly rich collection of online tutorials from the Apple site. Browse to the Education section and go to the [Teachers and Professors](#) page. From there you will see a list of [Online Tutorials](#). These are all focused on helping teachers use the powerful features of OS X to provide a richer learning experience for students.

Like the Microsoft Office site, you may also want to get additional software training on some of the more advanced features of Apple's iWork productivity software. Go to the iWork [Find Out How](#) site, scroll down to the tutorials list at the bottom, and find an activity category that you want to learn about. Choose the training title you are interested in, and watch it in the video window above.



Free HP Training

Hewlett-Packard or HP is known primarily for their computer hardware: desktop PCs, laptops, and peripherals like printers. The HP site features a [online learning center](#) with classes that you can take anytime. Registration and enrollment is required, but it's all free.

When the page opens, click the See All Classes tab near the top of the page. From here you can scroll down the list of topics and choose the ones that interest you. Again, focus on areas where you know you could improve. Many of the courses listed here are for IT professionals – you will probably ignore those – but

there is a section specifically for Government and Education that includes, among other things, grant writing and grant planning.

Free Training from Lynda.com

One final source of free technical training is [Lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com). This company is one of the best providers of online technical training in the world, with detailed instructor-led virtual courses for nearly every consumer software title on the market. Lynda.com sells their training for a small monthly fee – at it is an excellent value. But they also offer most of their introductory or basic courses for free as a sort of trial basis. If you don't need or have the money for more advanced software training, these introductory online courses provide an excellent way to become familiar with the main functions of a software title.



From the home page, use the drop-down menu to look for training by subject, product, or vendor. For example, if you choose [iMovie](#) from the product drop-down, you will see a list of training courses and the duration of each. Click [iMovie08 Essential Training](#) to see a list of the video sessions that make up the course. As you look in the table of contents, you will notice that some of the topics are underlined. These are free for you to view.

Reference:

Microsoft Office – Training

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/default.aspx>

Microsoft Windows – Internet Explorer 8 Videos

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/videos.aspx>

Apple Education – Online Tutorials

<http://www.apple.com/education/teachers-professors/online-tutorials.html>

Apple iWork – Find Out How

<http://www.apple.com/findouthow/iwork/>

HP – Online Learning Center

http://h30187.www3.hp.com/?jumpid=ex_R295/go/learningcenter&mcID=go

Lynda.com

<http://www.lynda.com>