

# The 21st Century Educator

August/September

Volume 1, Issue 1  
2017

Happy 2017-2018 School Year to all 21st Century Learning Educators!

## Learning Competency Focus: Collaboration & UDL

This month we are focusing on **Collaboration** and **UDL**. We often use the term *collaboration* to describe the simple act of working with others. True collaboration, however, requires more than individuals working together; it must also have a clear purpose. Thus,

**WORKING TOGETHER + PURPOSE = COLLABORATION**

In reviewing the definition of collaboration ...we see that *working together* occurs in "pairs or groups," and that *purpose* is defined as "discussing an issue, solving a problem, or creating a product."

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is a set of principles for [curriculum](#) development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for every-one--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. Providing access for all students is key.

Having students experience true 21st Century Collaboration during classroom activities allows all students to access the academic information and gives all students equal opportunities to learn.

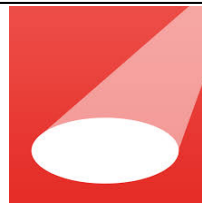
The National Center for Universal Design for Learning offers [examples and resources](#) for incorporating collaboration into your lessons through the UDL framework. For more information on UDL, click on the link [here](#).

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## Practitioner in the Spotlight

Webster's Dictionary defines a Practitioner as someone who is "**actively engaged in an art, discipline or profession**". A **21<sup>st</sup> Century Practitioner** is someone who is "actively engaged in the art of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Practices" by infusing them in their instruction. This feature of the Newsletter will be shining a monthly spotlight on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practitioners in our district who are doing amazing things in their classrooms utilizing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Practices.



### Ms. Julie Thomas, Riley Elementary School

**Can you just give a short background of yourself, what you teach and when you first started using the 21st Century Learning Practices?**

My name is Julie Thomas and I am currently a 5th grade ELA/Social Studies teacher at Agnes Riley Elementary. I am a fairly new teacher of five years and quickly grew a passion for 21st Century Learning courses, as the content and strategies were relevant to my students and I was able to transfer my learning into my classroom immediately. My first 21st Century course was Camp 21 in the Fall of 2013. The success I encountered in that course encouraged me to enroll in both Camp 21 and the Becoming a 21st Century Educator-Practitioner courses in the Fall of 2014. I then had the opportunity to co-facilitate the Practitioner Badge course with Terra Graves, as well as, facilitate the Becoming a 21st Century Educator: Explorer Badge course in 2015. While working on my Masters in Administration from 2015-April 2017, I took a break from district courses, but I am utilizing the skills I developed over the years and am looking forward to engaging in more courses in the near future.

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- ◆ [CUE of NEVADA events](#)
- ◆ November 2, 2017  
Leaders Network  
Professional Learning  
Day #2
- ◆ January 18, 2018  
Leaders Network  
Professional Learning  
Day #3
- ◆ March 15, 2018  
Leaders Network  
Professional Learning  
Day #4



### Practitioner in the Spotlight cont.

#### How has using the 21st-century learning practices transformed your instruction?

The 21st Century Learning practices have made me more aware of planning my instruction so that learning is student-centered and students are continuously engaging in meaningful learning experiences.

#### How has implementing the 21st-century learning practices transformed your students' learning and their achievement?

Implementing the 21st Century Learning practices has made my students aware of how they are learning. By the end of the year, my students have a solid understanding of the 21st Century Competencies and how those developed skills assist them in their academic and personal growth. At the beginning of a school year, students tend to be quite reserved and dependent upon me, but after training students in these valuable 21st Century skills, my classroom is transformed into a community of learning where students are leading the conversations in a lesson, constructing their own learning paths, problem-solving through collaboration and communication, and understanding how to utilize technology to drive their learning; all of these skills that will assist them through college and career.

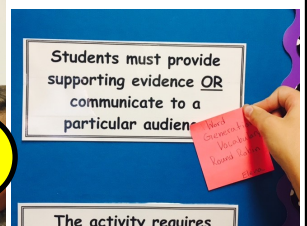
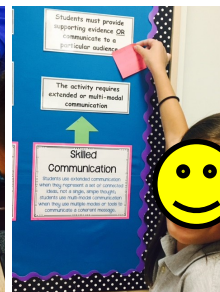
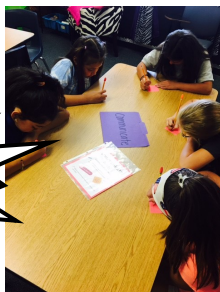
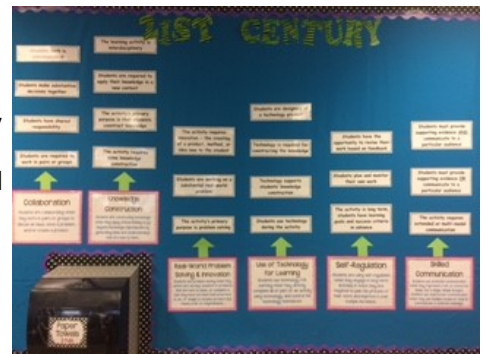
#### In thinking about planning with, and implementing, the 21st-century learning practices, what advice would you give to someone who is new to 21st Century Learning?

When I first began planning for 21st Century Learning practices, I always had the 21st Century Competencies Guide next to me so that I could be purposeful in my planning. Just start simple. Look at a lesson that you have previously taught and that you will teach again. Choose one 21st Century dimension on the 21st Century Competencies Guide and determine where that lesson falls. Now, make just one adjustment or addition that will move your lesson up on the guide and strengthen the learning of your students. Also, you may want to start by choosing just one 21st Century dimension to focus on each quarter, making the transition more manageable for both you and your students. Remember, every lesson does not need to be at the top of each dimension. Finally, don't be afraid to try new strategies and to move outside of your comfort zone as an educator, as much success and growth can come from being uncomfortable.

### Highlights from Ms. Thomas' 5th Grade Classroom

This was a Round Robin Vocabulary activity in which students were given academic words without the definitions. They had 3 minutes to answer a question using the word through discussions in their groups, then 3 minutes to independently record their answers to a second question utilizing the vocabulary words. The students were constructing the meaning of the words through interactions with those words. After students had experienced all 6 words, we shared some of their written responses and the students developed definitions for each word. This is such a powerful lesson!

When we engage in activities, I am training my students to use the Elevator Guide to understand how they are learning. We discuss the aspects of each activity and students determine where it falls on the guide. We also discuss how the activity could be enhanced to climb a step further and push their learning to the next level.



### DATABASE UPDATE

IT is continuing its work in developing the searchable database tool for uploading lesson activities. We were hoping this could be completed by the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, but more refinements need to be made before rolling it out to all of you! Stay Tuned!





**WANTED! 21st Century Exemplar Classrooms** We are looking for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Exemplar Classrooms within Washoe County School District to exhibit the positive student impacts achieved through [21st Century Learning Practices](#). Applications are coming soon, so you can highlight your work and how it enhances students' learning. If chosen as an Exemplar Classroom teacher, your practice will be showcased for your peers, leaders within the district, and professional learning communities beyond Washoe County Schools.



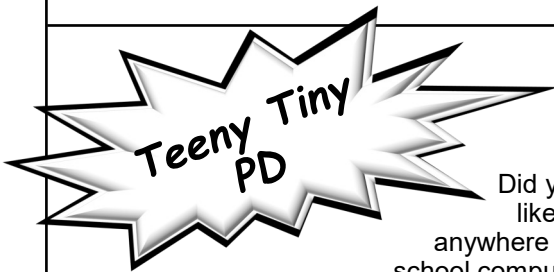
Setting up a **OneNote Class Notebook** for your Classroom? [Here](#) are some helpful tips.

Looking for **Keyboard Shortcuts** for **Office 365** products? [Here](#) is the page for you!

Want to see what **21st Century Learning** looks like in our School District? Click [here](#) for videos.



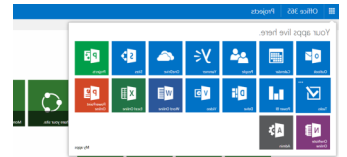
Are **YOU** doing amazing things in your classroom with 21st Century Learning Practices? Would you be willing to share these great things with others? We would love to come in and video-tape your students showcasing the 21st Century Learning Practices! Please email Shari Dunn at [skdunn@washoeschools.net](mailto:skdunn@washoeschools.net) to schedule. These also make great artifacts for evaluations!



This month's **Teeny Tiny PD** is brought to you by **Tina Holland!**

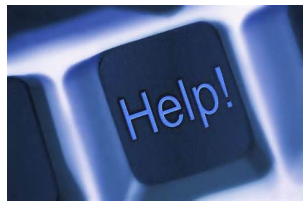
**Tina is shining a spotlight on your Office365 Waffle!**

Did you know you can access all your Office 365 apps like Mail, Calendar, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc... anywhere you have internet access without being on your school computer? Watch this video to learn how!



Video: [Spotlight On Your Office 365 Waffle](#) \* Link to [Transcript](#) of Video

Resources: [Office 365 for Education: Modern Tools for a Collaborative Classroom](#)



## What the Tech? and other Tools

**COMING SOON...** Have a question related to technology? The 21st Century Learning Division and I.T. are collaborating to create a Question and Answer Forum for your technology related questions. You will be able to browse a wide variety of categories and search for answers to your questions. Are you, at your school site, inundated with the same tech questions over and over again? You or your fellow teachers will be able to search for those answers in this SharePoint site.

**TOP PICKS for EdTech:** Top Picks are editorially curated lists of the best Edtech tools reviewed by Common Sense Education.

**Tips and Resources:** *Finding the right EdTech Tools*

**The EdTech Eleven: This Month's Must-Know Tools for September**



The articles cited above come from Common Sense Education which is a site by teachers, for teachers that helps you find the best educational technology resources and learn the best practices for implementing them in your classroom. Common Sense Education is brought to you by Common Sense Media, the nation's leading independent non-profit organization dedicated to empowering kids to thrive in a world of media and technology. These resources are updated monthly. Remember to always check with your administrator about obtaining parental consent when using third-party online tools.





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Please encourage colleagues at your site to take one of the Practitioner Badge courses!

## Practitioner Badge

### **IN-SESSION: Practitioner Fall Badge Course**

(All Certified Staff) at Maxwell Elementary School starting August 23 to October 11th; 4:15 - 6:15pm  
Facilitators: Shari Dunn & Dr. Jessica Stepaniak

### **IN SESSION: Practitioner Fall Badge Course**

(All Certified Staff) at Brown Center starting August 23 to October 11th; 4:30 - 6:30pm  
Facilitators: Rachel Gibson & Mark Skoff

### **IN SESSION: Practitioner Fall Badge Course**

(Title 1 Teachers ONLY) at Traner Middle School starting August 30 to October 18th; 4:15 - 6:15pm  
Facilitators: Tina Holland & Sara Stewart-Lediard

**Practitioner Spring Badge Course** at the Brown Center starting January 23 to March 6, 2018; 4:15 - 6:15pm

Facilitators: Terra Graves & Tina Holland

[Link to Register](#)

This monthly newsletter brought to you by The 21st Century Learning Division

Mail Stop: Brown Center

Contact us through our website, [www.wcsd21.com](http://www.wcsd21.com) with Questions, Concerns, Suggestions

Editor: [Dr. Jessica Stepaniak](#)

Check out our webpage frequently for new updates and resources.



## Leader Badge Courses

*Prerequisite: Must have successfully completed Practitioner Badge*

**Leader Badge Course** at Brown Center starting October 19th; 4:15- 6:15pm

Facilitators: Tina Holland & Mark Skoff

[Link to Register](#)

**Leader Badge Course** at Brown Center starting March 5, 2018; 4:15- 6:15pm

Facilitators: Tina Holland & Misha Miller-Hornbuckle

[Link to Register](#)

## EdTech Courses

**Explorer Badge - CAMP 21 Online Course**  
**Did you know...** You can take Camp 21 more than once to earn credit. There are many options to choose from, so you'll be able to pick something new to learn about and explore!  
October 30 to December 22; 1.0 credits

[Link to Register](#)

### **Learn How to Empower Your Students**

**Through Coding** - at the Brown Center December 9, 2017; 8:30 - 4:30pm; 0.5 credits

Facilitator: Tina Holland

[Link to Register](#)

### **Creating and Facilitating Online and**

**Blended Courses** - This is a blended course starting January 25 to April 12, 2018, meeting at Damonte Ranch High School; 2.0 credits

Facilitator: Terra Graves

[Link to Register](#)