We hope everyone had a wonderful break. Let's rock this third quarter!

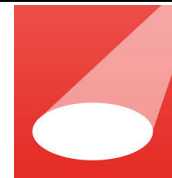### *Learning Competency Focus*: *Use of Technology FOR Learning*

This month we are focusing on **Use of Technology FOR Learning**. Technology is a powerful tool for promoting and supporting all 21st Century Competencies— including all of the Six Dimensions. For instance, students can collaborate through technologies such as Skype, Edmodo, or Twitter in ways that were not possible before. Students can communicate skillfully using different modes and to audiences to which they never before had access. Without question, the most important thing to remember about using technology for learning is that the technology itself **must be in the hands of students**. It can be instructive to think of classroom technology as we would think of pencils: the pencil is a tool for learning—but not when the teacher has the only one; the pencil is a tool to learn with, not about; and pencils are more engaging for students who are given choices about their use—color selection, what to write or draw. etc. Other considerations when using technology for learning include the following: (1) Learning to use technology is not a goal of the use of technology for learning. This is not to say that students should never receive direct instruction in specific technologies. For example, learning to program or learning to use specific industry-standard design software is very important in many fields of study; (2) Whenever possible, consider allowing students to select the technologies they use to complete tasks. When learning activities are planned accordingly, students may meet the same learning goals through the creation of a wide variety of technology products; (3) Using technology in the classroom should not be more work for the teacher. Many technologies may require an initial investment of time— setting up a class blog, for instance—but the most valuable contribution student-centered technology makes in the classroom is to empower students to work as hard as, or harder than, the teacher!; and (4) Allow students a wide selection of technologies, but teachers should avoid trying to know everything about every technology. Students who have a reason for using a particular technology will more often than not find a way to learn to use it. See the Elevator Guide here.

~ *Practitioner in the Spotlight* ~

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

Ms. Janis Ni, Grace Warner Elementary

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 Janis Ni. I started teaching 13 years ago at Grace Warner ES and I am still at Grace Warner! Currently I teach fourth grade, but I have taught kinder, second, and third grades as well. I have been working with 21st Century Learning Practices for the last four years.

How has using the 21st-century learning practices transformed your instruction? During the first few 21st Century meetings, I kept thinking, "This is never going to work with the students I have. They are far too wild to have this much responsibility with their learning process." Despite my misgivings, I was hooked by the fun web tools. I quickly found that my students were too! At first, the biggest change I saw was in engagement. Over time as I gained confidence and worked with the six competencies, I also saw critical thinking, self-regulation and communication skills develop. As an educator, I evolved from using primarily direct instruction to having a student-centered instruction. I realized that my students thrived on being responsible for their learning. As a result my instruction is more differentiated than it ever has been. I don't walk into the classroom thinking that I have to solve every problem and be in control of every process. My students are partners in a journey. I use them as resources as much as they tap into me.

EVENTS

- CUE of NEVADA events
- March 15, 2018 Leaders Network Professional Learning Day #4

Practitioner in the Spotlight cont.

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

Because of the influences of high poverty and unstable households, many of my students have significant behavior problems. Using the 21st Century Competencies to guide my instruction has helped my students grow socially and emotionally. Once they start to understand that they have control over their learning, they also grow academically. They develop better communication skills through collaboration and digital writing. Their world view expands. Reading, math and writing are not just subjects, but a means to creating something.

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?

Keep it simple. Think about what you are already doing and tweak one small aspect. What was the result? Build on what is working and experiment! The beauty of the 21st Century approach is its flexibility.

Can you describe the activities you are doing related to 21st Century Learning with or without technology and to demonstrate the students' learning.
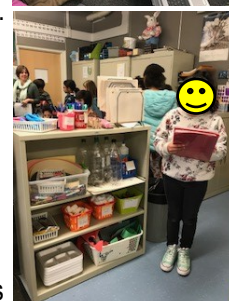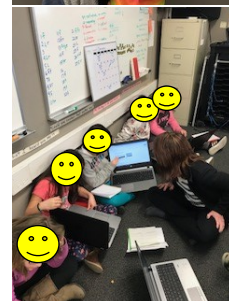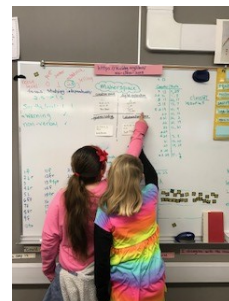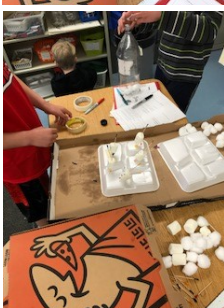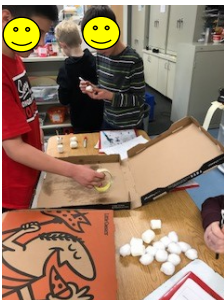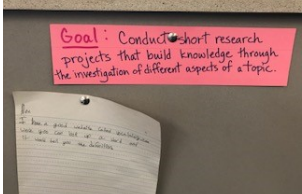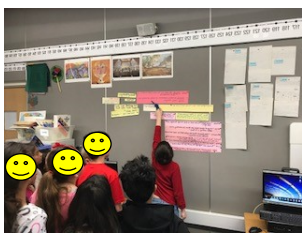
I got the idea for a Maker Space classroom when I went to an Engage - Berwyn conference in Chicago. The conference focused on 21st Century Learning. Berwyn is a small school district, about 3,800 students, which has devoted itself to giving every student an iPad. One of the exhibits was a classroom that devoted itself entirely to creating, and designing products using a variety of materials. They had super fancy things like 3-D printers, robotics, computers galore, drawing tables, bean bag chairs - no desks.

These kinds of resources are not readily available for me, but I was enamored with the idea of giving my students opportunities to create, manipulate materials, and to creatively solve problems. I sat down and asked myself a question: how could I create a similar space with my current resources, curriculum and scheduling block? I also wanted to continue to build on the six competencies: self-regulation, collaboration, real-world problem solving. Real-world problem solving involves figuring out material management and helping with planning.

The Maker Space classroom in Chicago had divided the room into different focus areas. I took my classroom and made four quadrants: a small group reading area, a collaboration area, a digital exploration/research area, and a creative space. This allowed me to use my ELA block and small group/ guided reading block. The materials for the creative space are our regular classroom supplies along with simple recyclables like plastic bottles, cardboard, pizza boxes, marshmallows - whatever students bring in!

I started my process with an essential question, so I decided to have my students work with an essential question. Our topic of study is based on our grade-level pacing schedule. Students generate questions about the topic. We vote on which question to focus. This has led to some great analysis on types of questions. We ask ourselves and discuss whether the question is open enough for in depth exploration. For about two weeks students rotate to the different areas and explore the question. They have a graphic organizer that helps guide them through the process.

Another big question was how to manage students when they have quite a bit of independence. How do I know they are on task? I had already established centers during guided reading. I used many of the same expectations and accountability that I already had in place with centers. Goals tied to standards are posted in each area. Students have wall space to hang the work they get done. Students have a durable folder where they keep all their papers and log in information. They also present their work and share with other groups. We solve problems that pop up as a class. During class meetings, I often ask my students for their feedback and suggestions. My students have become an integral part of the planning. Together, we create a dynamic, engaging learning environment.

Use of Technology FOR Learning

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WANTED! 21st Century Exemplar Classrooms We are looking for 21st Century Exemplar Classrooms within Washoe County School District to exhibit the positive student impacts achieved through 21st Century Learning Practices. Applications are **here,** 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.

Helpful Tips

♦ Here are 10 overlooked Google Slides Features!

♦ Here are new accessibility features for Microsoft Programs! Great stuff!

♦ Here are some great new updates to Microsoft Office 365 programs!

♦ Here are 24 Formative Assessment Tools for Teachers!

♦ Here are 11 great Kids-Safe Search Engines!

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 to schedule. These also make great artifacts for evaluations! Click here for the the 21st Century Learning / TPGS Crosswalk!
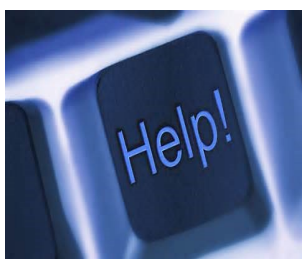
Teeny Tiny PD

This month's **Teeny Tiny PD** is brought to you by **Mark Skoff!**

Mark is shining a spotlight on Microsoft Office Lens!

Office Lens is a free Microsoft tool that lets you scan any document or take a picture with a tablet or smartphone. This captured image can then be used in other applications or converted to a PDF.

Video: Microsoft Office Lens * Link to Transcript of Video

More Resources: Office Lens for Windows and Time Saving Tips for Using Office Lens in the Classroom

What the Tech? and other Tools

IT'S HERE!! Have a **question** related to **technology?** The 21st Century Learning Division and I.T. have collaborated to create a Question and Answer Forum for your technology related questions. You can browse a wide variety of categories and search for answers to your questions.

Click on the link for: **What the Tech?** **What the Tech** is a Sharepoint site so be sure to click on "Follow" so it's easy for you to find when you need it!

The Week's Most Popular Posts on Free Technology for Teachers from *Free Technology for Teachers* - This is a great site for all things free (technology related) for teachers. There are tips, info about new add ins and tools, and professional development opportunities related to technology.

Designing a School Makerspace from Edutopia - An approach to defining and designing the right space for your school. Makerspaces provide hands-on, creative ways to encourage students to design, experiment, build and invent as they deeply engage in science, engineering and tinkering.

Curious about classroom Makerspaces? Here's how to get started from *Angela Watson.* Makerspace is a rapidly growing trend in schools across the country. How do kids know what to do? How can you find out what they're learning? How do you make time for that with all the other tasks crammed into the school day? And how do you keep the Makerspace from turning into a chaotic mess?

Create a School Makerspace in 3 Simple Steps from ISTE - As maker education gains steam, many educators are looking for ways to incorporate making and tinkering into their schools and classrooms — often on a shoestring budget. This article addresses how educators can deliver these types of experimental learning experiences during ISTE 2014's EdTekTalks, a provocative series of mini-keynotes from thought leaders beyond the world of ed tech.

Cool Tools

Please encourage colleagues at your site to take the Practitioner Badge course!

UPCOMING COURSES

21st Century Practitioner Badge Courses

21st Century Educator Practitioner Fall 2018 Badge Course
Oct. 9 - Nov. 19, 2018; Brown Center; 4:15 - 6:15pm
Facilitators: Misha Miller-Hornbuckle & Terra Graves
Link to Register

Watch for more sections opening in MyPGS.

21st Century Leader Badge Courses

Prerequisite: Must have successfully completed Practitioner Badge

21st Century Educator Leader Badge Course Spring 2018 - Brown Center - March 5 - May 21, 2018; 4:15- 6:15pm
Facilitators: Tina Holland & Misha Miller-Hornbuckle
Link to Register
Spaces are filling up - Register now to save your spot!

21st Century Educator Leader Badge Course Fall 2018 - Dates, Times and Location - TBD
Watch MyPGS for registration details.

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

Mail Stop: Brown Center

Contact us through our website, www.wcsd21.com with Questions, Concerns, Suggestions

Editor: Dr. Jessica Stepaniak

Check out our webpage frequently for new updates and resources.

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!
Fall 2018 dates coming soon! 1.0 credit
Facilitators: Terra Graves & Misha Miller-Hornbuckle
Keep watching MyPGS for Registration Information!

Other Free Webinars, Videos & Articles

Teaching Media Literacy in the Classroom from *edWeb.net.* Media literacy is an important skill both in and outside of the classroom for students of all ages. Click here to register and watch.

Key Strategies to Making Access and Equity a Reality for ELL Students from *edWeb.net,* Feb. 12, 2018. Presented by Michele Dawson, Senior Director of Instructional Technology, Compton Unified School District, CA; and Kelly Urlacher, Senior Curriculum Designer, DreamBox Learning. Click here to register.

Bring Computer Science to Life in Your Elementary Classroom from *edWeb.net,* Feb. 21, 2018. Presented by Leanna Prater, Ed.D., District Technology Resource Teacher, Fayette County Public Schools, KY; and Jennifer Rodabaugh, STEAM Lab Instructor, Fayette County Public Schools, KY. Click here to register.

Alan November: Creating a New Culture of Teaching and Learning from *edWeb.net,* Feb. 22, 2018. with **Dr. Monica Burns.** In this edWebinar, Alan November explores how to create this potent new culture of empowered teaching and fearless learning. Click here to register.

Shifting Our Thinking About Educational Technology: How to Place Tasks Before Apps from *ASCD.* Join Monica Burns, educational technology and curriculum consultant, former classroom teacher, and author of Tasks Before Apps: Designing Rigorous Learning in a Tech-Rich Classroom, to explore how to shift our thinking about educational technology. Click here to register and watch.