The Internet (Part 3): Educational Applications

Module Outline

1. Educational Web sites: Overview
   We will explore the use of the Internet as an educational tool in the classroom. Participants will learn to use the Internet for conducting research, participating in on-line projects, taking virtual field trips, publishing papers, and more.

2. Divide the class into three groups and have each one explore one major area of Judi Harris’ Activity Structures (see Project Impact's Resource Section or go to: http://ccwf.cc.utexas.edu/%7Ejbharris/Virtual-Architecture/Telecollaboration/)
   - Interpersonal Exchanges
   - Information Collections
   - Problem-solving Projects

3. Ask the class to explore the WebQuest matrix (http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/matrix.html), finding examples that are appropriate for their grade level and content area.

4. Explore the following sites:
   - www.gritsonline.org
   - www.hprtec.org
   - http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluewebn/

5. ACTIVITY WORK - Did Activity Structures/WebQuest matrix give you ideas?

6. Share projects and resources

Learning Strand Activity Work

Write a description of a lesson or unit, which uses Internet resources. Develop a brief lesson plan describing the overall objectives, task, processes, and evaluation criteria. Include a list of Web sites students might use. OR Develop a helpful resource list of sites for your area of interest. Organize your bookmark list using folders and separators.
Sample Projects
Email Projects: Overview
Email is a simple way to provide an authentic audience for your students as they compose and edit their written pieces of work. Email can be used to connect geographically separated classrooms, whether they are down the road, in another state, or perhaps located in another country.

Title: Character Impersonations
Grade Levels: K-8 collaborative project
Area: Writing Workshop, Comprehension
Pair up older grades with younger grades. Older students will impersonate book characters and respond to email questions from the younger students. Impersonators will have to remain true to the facts and personality traits of their character. For example, students may impersonate Ramona Quimby, Bunnicula, Clifford, etc.

Title: Traveling Buddies (teddy bears, gingerbread man, Flat Stanley)
Grade Levels: K-3
Area: Independent writing
Traveling buddies are stuffed animals or dolls that students get to take home for a visit, and send away on journeys to other classrooms. Each buddy has a bag or backpack containing writing materials, a journal, and other goodies. Classes hosting the traveler are responsible for writing email messages to keep in touch with the larger group. This activity can be tied into a common book that all classes are reading.

Title: Professional Exchanges
Grade Levels: 4-8
Area: Comprehension
Skill: The Writing Process, Collaborative Editing
Arrange an opportunity for your students to correspond with a writer. Explore the possibility of working with the UT English department. The author will send out drafts of his or her "Work in Progress" over e-mail and gave students opportunities to comment on and suggest revisions, explaining reasons for adopting certain suggestions and rejecting others.

Reflection and Brainstorming
- Where might email projects be useful in your curriculum?
- Have the activities described above given you some ideas for how you might use desktop publishing in your classroom with your students to promote reading and writing?
Jot some of your ideas below:

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Special Education Notes and Adaptations

1. Arrange specific bookmarks in a file for particular student.
2. Help the student develop a word list—correctly spelled—that the student can incorporate into a search engine.
3. Text-to-speech feedback (using a screen reader or similar program) can enable students to work with higher-level passages or unknown vocabulary.
4. E-mail class notes, assignments, presentation outlines, etc. to the student.
5. Most internet text is digitized; therefore, it can be manipulated or transformed in size, font, color and layout to accommodate a student’s particular needs.
6. Check out the concepts from the Center for Applied Special Technology for information on Universal Design and on developing accessible web sites. http://www.cast.org/
7. Text-to-speech freeware is available online:
   a. ReadPlease 2000 text-to-speech freeware (Windows)
      <www.readplease.com>
   b. PlainTalk text-to-speech freeware (MacIntosh)
      <www.apple.com/macos/speech>

Sample NETS Connections

- Grades K–3: Awesome Authors, p.36. A Number a Day, p.98
- Grades 3–5: You Were There!, p.48
- Grades 6–8: Birthstone Project with a Multimedia Twist, p. 52.

Explore these Web sites

Here are some sample sites, but be sure to check out Project Impact Resource site: http://web.utk.edu/~impact/resources.html

1. Alta Vista: http://www.altavista.com/
2. Excite:  http://www.excite.com