

technologytimes

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Goochland County Public Schools

Welcome Back!

I've been nostalgic lately and decided to look back over some of the previous iterations of my *TechTimes* newsletter. This is the 16th year of this publication (which obviously had a life of its own before I came to Goochland in 1999!). It is with great pleasure that I welcome you back to school for veteran teachers for the 2010-11 school year, and a welcome to our new teachers!

Back in November of 2005, our front-page story was by (now) GHS educator Kimberly Berry on "project-based learning." Her opening is worth repeating (now) in 2010:

Educators are constantly working to integrate technology into their classrooms in meaningful and effective ways. They look at old lesson plans and try to determine if they should make an informative Power Point, or have students record data in a spreadsheet. Despite our best intentions, educators may need to do more than simply add on a technology component to their tried and true lessons.

Teachers may need to adopt new methods in instruction and learning to keep pace with 21st century workplace expectations and our ever-changing technological world. Problem Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional model that can assist teachers in making lessons based on Standards of Learning (SOL), with a real world context, which are student centered, incorporate technology effectively, and foster a collaborative working environment.

She must have had X-ray, future vision! A project-based approach is a great way to learn, and that's why we've embedded this into our G21 framework. She concluded her piece with this:

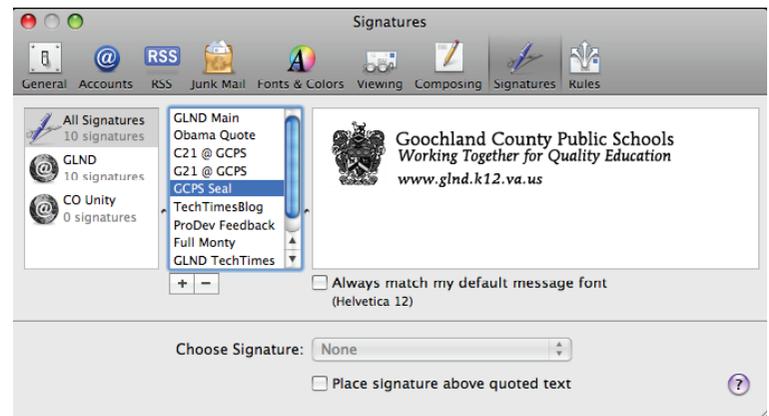
Problem based learning also fosters a learning environment that emphasizes analysis, critical thinking, creative problem solving, application, communication, decision-making, and collaboration, all of which are essential in the 21st century.

Turn this newsletter over for more information on this year's G21 Projects.

E-mail Signatures

One of the things we teach you to do when you're first introduced to Mac OS X Mail is to setup an "e-mail signature." These few lines of text at the bottom of your messages acts like stationery—it tells the recipient of your note who you are, and may include additional information, such as your blog address, your professional affiliations, and your school phone number. Some folks go the extra mile and add a quotation from someone they admire.

To add a signature, visit Mail Preferences > Signatures.



But here's a tip! Consider creating more than one signature. (Once you create one or more, you need to drag the title of your signature over to your account in the first column "to apply it" on that account. Most folks only have one account listed in the first column.)

Create a signature for parents, one for other professionals outside of Goochland, and one for internal use with folks in your school. One for an external audience may include your credentials, your blog URL, and your phone and fax numbers. But for internal communication, we likely already know your e-mail address, your title, and what school you are at. In general, internal e-mail signatures can be shorter and more brief than those intended for the public.

And here's one last tip! You can drag your own Address Book card from Address Book into your signature—with your contact information—so others can import this into their mail or contacts application (Address Book on Mac, Outlook on PC).

A New Acceptable Use Policy

This past July, the school board approved an updated **Acceptable Use Policy** for both students and staff. We simplified some of the language and also added a few new pieces. Most important to staff is the provision that allows you to bring personal devices on our network, such as iPod Touch, a wi-fi enabled Blackberry, or iPhone. You must still authenticate through iPrism, but our guest network also allows any member of the public to access the Internet in a filtered form. You can view this AUP shortly once it becomes updated on our website. It's board policy IBEA. www.glnd.k12.va.us/index/schoolboard/policies/

Important Techie URLs

As the year progresses, you'll want to stay abreast of changes, hints, tips, and more with technology in Goochland's schools. I want to share a number of web addresses with you to bookmark, and in some cases, subscribe to via RSS.

John's Tech Times Blog

blogs.glnd.k12.va.us/teachers/jhendron/

Jennifer Bocrie's JouleStore

blogs.glnd.k12.va.us/teachers/jbocrie/

Peter Martin's TechTips

blogs.glnd.k12.va.us/teachers/pmartin/

Bea Cantor's TechSalad

blogs.glnd.k12.va.us/teachers/bcantor/



Technology Class SignUp Wiki

www.glnd.k12.va.us/wiki/index.php/Classes/

Technology Cheat-Sheets and Virtual Handouts

www.glnd.k12.va.us/wiki/index.php/Handouts/

GCPS Educator Resources Page

www.glnd.k12.va.us/index/resource/

G21 Meetings

This school year I have setup the following dates to meet with teachers for G21 planning. Before the dates shown, I will send via e-mail to your school a sign-up form for a time slot. Teachers are required to plan at least one G21 project with me, although teachers may work on a project with other teachers as a team.

- Friday, September 17, Goochland Middle
- Monday, September 20, Randolph Elementary
- Tuesday, September 21, Byrd Elementary
- Thursday, September 23, Goochland Elementary
- Friday, September 24, Goochland High
- Monday, September 27, GHS/GMS Combined

Check my blog for some ideas for this year's G21!

Technology Classes

Each year we offer a number of **free after school workshops** focused on the using technology with students in the classroom. This year is no different—we plan to offer sessions that truly focus on student engagement, creativity, and sessions that focus clearly on twenty-first century skills.

Teachers may sign-up throughout the year for these sessions via our wiki. The password to edit this wiki is: [afterschool](#). Please do not share this password with students or parents. Our schedule for the entire year is now published. You'll find it at: www.glnd.k12.va.us/wiki/index.php/Classes/.

All teachers are required to take at least one technology workshop per year. Many teachers took advantage of our summer offerings to get a class "out of the way." **Certificates for all classes will be sent out in April**—from June 2010 through March, 2011.

Because we are offering fewer workshops this year, please take advantage of them. We do not plan on creating additional sessions. Classes with 4 or fewer attendees will be canceled. If you know you cannot attend a session, please remove your name from the wiki by the morning of the session's date.

Who are you?

Every blog has an "about" page. Yours doesn't still say "This is a Sample WordPress about page," does it?

Go to the blog *dashboard > edit pages* to update your "About" page today! Let parents know where you went to school, what your goals are for the year, or simply why you like working in Goochland. While you are updating your "About Page," it's also time to think about last year's posts.

Resist the urge to delete last year's blog posts! *A blog is a running time line of events.* While you may not consider last year's news and assignments that you posted valuable, other folks online may find value in that "old stuff." Consider another teacher who wants to see how you spanned content throughout the year, or a student who wants to get a feel for you or your class.



Don't wait until it's too late! With technology comes responsibility. Keeping up your blog. Posting grades on PowerSchool. And maybe the most important—**backing up your data**. Keep plugging-in your backup drive at least weekly to let TimeMachine run a backup on your laptop. Make it a routine, and don't skip this step. If you forget how TimeMachine works, ask! Bea Cantor at GHS/GMS, Ginni Nichols, or your media specialist can show you how. And when tragedy strikes, *you'll be glad you did!*