Lesson Plans, Web Cams, and Creation Options

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Explore this eclectic mix of lesson plan options, web cams, and project creation options: perhaps a Thing Link creation (http://www.thinglink.com/), a Symbaloo page, a Glogster, a Comic Life creation, or another tool of your choice. The important thing is to share and demonstrate these tools for your colleagues and learners. Be that fount of digital knowledge your building is seeking!

Qixshr (http://www.qixshr.com/) replaces one of my favorite quick, web-based collage creation tools, Stained Glass Collage. Qixshr requires registration, and students under age thirteen will need parent permission. Once an account is established, the creator uploads images. Each account has a 250MB limit for storage. When pictures are uploaded, collages can be created. Learners have control over size, placement, and privacy options. If you want to use the collage in another tool, use the slideshow view and then capture the screen. This works best in Chrome browser.

Looking for new web cams to liven up your classroom? Check out the Elkhorn Slough (http://www.elkhornslough.org/ottercam/). The camera presents a live look at sea otter life in this area be-tween Santa Cruz and Monterey, California. Web cams are superb tools for writing prompts, note taking, and gathering information for graphs and math problems. You may also want to use the video clips at the site as well.

Creativity Games (http://creativitygames.net/) provides activi-ties for educators and students. "Training Games" can be used at the secondary level with ease, and many will work with younger students. For example, the day I was writing this column, the chal-lenge was to write a six-word story using the words *stream* and *hammer*. Other options at the site include articles about creative thinking, which will be useful for you and your colleagues. Every Friday, a new Creativity Challenge is posted. Finally take a look at the Idea Generator (http://ideagenerator.creativitygames.net/).

Found (http://natgeofound.tumblr.com/) is a superb curation of photographs from National Geographic. Developed to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the magazine, the blog contains photos that have not been published or are not well known. The archive pres-ents a well-designed visual index of all the photos. This site is an excellent tool for student projects, writing prompts, do-now activi-ties, and visual literacy practice. Consider using a particular image (for example, http://natgeofound.tumblr.com/post/55006704695/the-three-pyramids-of-giza-are-reflected-in-a-pool) as a contrast writing assignment by using a current picture. Or have students use this to write a quick reference entry based on when the picture was taken in September 1926. What was life like in Egypt at that time?

Want to take students on virtual tours while conserving band-width in the building? Explore the wide range of street views de-veloped by the folks at Google Maps. Provide a QR code or a short-ened URL (https://www.google.com/maps/views/streetview?gl=us) and open the world! Indexed options include a wide range of countries, as well as U.S. locations. Share the NASA option with your science and STEM educators. Here learners can explore the top of Launch Pad 39, the shuttle Endeavor, the space shuttle main
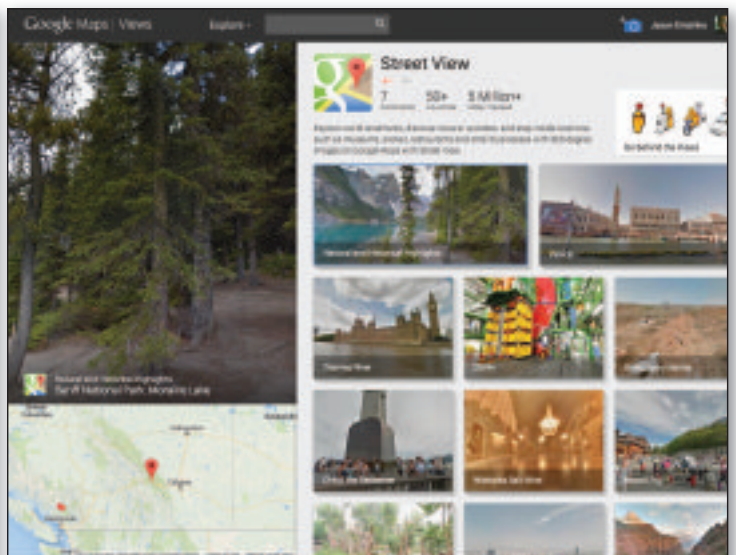
engines, and more. Learners can also explore the technology behind the street views.

Literature teachers will adore the treasure trove of materials created by the Chicago Shakespeare Theater to help teach the works of the Bard. The printable handbooks (http://www.chicagoshakes.com/education/teach_shakespeare/classroom/handbooks) contain background information, historical tie-in materials, play synopses, character analyses, and myriad classroom activities. Technology options round out the materials. Selections for the current season are highlighted, and past productions are archived. Be sure to check out the Julius Caesar handbook, which highlights taking this play into a modern setting. The Chicago Shakespeare productions are renowned for bringing the works into a contemporary setting.

The Newseum (http://www.newseum.org/digital-classroom/default.aspx) not only provides access to the front page of over 800 newspapers, but it also contains a superb digital classroom. This vault includes video lessons on bias, Edward R. Murrow, the Civil Rights movement, news apps, and more. A number of primary source collections provide materials for teaching the Common Core standards relating to using, understanding, and analyzing these documents. Finally, be sure to check out the newest module on "Making a Change" that looks at the First Amendment and the civil rights movement.

The Pulitzer Center (http://pulitzercenter.org/education/lesson-plans) houses yet another extraordinary collection of lesson plan options. Selections range from "Who Am I" projects for grades 3–5 to a unit on the right to clean water for grades 9–12. Other choices include lessons tied to projects done by Pulitzer Prize winners, such as exploring the issues of wetlands in China, looking at the global water crisis, or peace-building in Africa. Being able

to explore the thinking and writings of these prize winners is a magical experience for learners. Each alternative has a rich range of technology ties.

Stella's Stunners (http://www.ohiorc.org/for/math/stella/) is a compendium of over 600 nonroutine math problems. The content spans information taught in pre-algebra through pre-calculus. The site is indexed by math course and problem title. One of the pre-algebra problems provides the learner with the weight of ten pennies and then asks how much a ton will weigh. One of the geometry options talks about the distance a person walked from Yorkshire to London. Solutions are easily accessed. This well-crafted collection will be a hit with your math colleagues.

Teaching Kids News (http://teachkidsnews.com/) is geared to students in grades 2–8. The daily online newspaper contains news articles written specifically for this age. The authors are Canadian,

which provides an excellent cross-culture look at topics. Options for ESL students are also provided. An archive of in-class activities contains social studies, writing, science, and other curriculum tie-ins. An online dictionary is housed at the site, as well as a tag cloud for another index option. This is a terrific current events tool.