SCARFE Digital Sandbox – Come Play!

PRACTICE

Evaluate as your explore. Whether you create a lesson or find one on-line, be sure to participate in some formative assessment as you go (Weston, 2004). Try asking yourself critical questions as you explore:

Does the lesson or interactivity:

1. Support and/or meet the learning targets, current curriculum or the needs of the students and/or the teacher?

2. Provide a transformative experience rather than simply replacing existing technology? i.e. is there some affordance you have with this technology/interactivity/lesson that you would not otherwise have?

3. Reflect the pedagogy of the classroom teacher and/or current educational philosophy?

    - Does it encourage student-centered learning or personalization? i.e. is it an example of a 'flipped classroom' model where the student is at the center of instruction and even becomes a leader of instruction? Do students USE the IWB or simply watch it?
    - Does it allow for active learning? student knowledge creation? small group work? hands-on interactivity?

Resources:

SMART Exchange - http://exchange.smarttech.com/#tab=0

Scholastic - http://teacher.scholastic.com/whiteboards/learninggames.htm

ELL/Language Learners - http://iwblanguagelessons.com/

Planning for Smartboards/IWB (a White paper by SMART Technologies) - http://bit.ly/1aLny0f

Create your own games - http://www.classtools.net/_mobileQuiz/index.php

RESEARCH

Be SMART – IWB's in education

Interactive WhiteBoards, like the SmartBoard, have become commonplace in many schools over the past decade. IWB's afford access to a variety of learning styles and can support inclusion according to Universal Design for Learning theory (Pellerin, 2013). They promise the ability to increase student engagement by providing a focal point for instruction, interactivity, gaming and animations. This increased focus and engagement can improve student learning (Troft and Tirotta, 2009)

Still, barriers to this potentially valuable technology include the price tag (a system must include a dedicated computer, projector and the IWB), and time. Teachers report that initial planning and preparation time are increased when using IWB's. Further, time spent on troubleshooting, including 'orienting' the board, is seen as a disadvantage to implementation (Gursul and Tozmaz, 2010).

In order to justify the costs – both monetary and opportunity – one must ensure Interactive White Boards, like other technologies, are being utilized effectively. Effective technology integration should "support and enhance pedagogical practices" (Krug, 2004) rather than simply reinforcing teacher-led, whole group instruction (Kershner & Warwick, 2008). Educators who wish to utilize IWB's in meaningful ways must become critical consumers of this, and other, digital technologies.

References:

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Weston, Tim (2004). Formative evaluation for implementation: evaluating educational technology applications and lessons. *American Journal of Evaluation March 2004 25: 51-64, doi:10.1177/109821400402500104*