▶ Tips & tricks for using educational technologies...

▶ Links to sites that may help enhance classroom instruction...

▶ Videos to motivate, teach, or help lighten the mood...

W.D. Tech NEWS

THE WINTER BLAHS. SIGH...

"How do you combat this horrible, senseless, and crippling funny-bone crippler?

Have you ever noticed that the end of January and the beginning of February brings on... bum, bum, bummmmm... "The Winter Blahs?" You know what I'm talking about; teachers and students get a bit on the cranky side, students don't seem like they are trying very hard, there's a feeling that you can never get caught up. If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, you have *The Winter Blahs*.

There are all kinds of ways to combat *The Winter Blahs*. Some experts say that exercise helps. Others say that a vacation helps. Some say that changing the diet helps. While I agree with all of the above, I have found something else that seems to work very well... change your routine.

While students (and adults) find a routine to be a good thing, changing it up a little can make a big difference. For instance, how about having a set time each week to share a favorite or funny story? Or how about sharing a funny comic strip? Or how about watching a humorous video about something that relates to your curriculum?

Are you noticing a theme? You can create a refreshing classroom environment by focusing on "favorites" and on laughter. Many studies have proven that appropriately used humor in a classroom can invigorate a curriculum and promote student engagement. Really... don't you feel better after a good laugh? Haven't you ever noticed how your students will focus on what you say when they are relaxed and anticipate humor?

For more information on using humor, check out this site:
http://www.edutopia.org/blog/laughter-learning-humor-boosts-retention- sarah-henderson . Seriously, we all need a little help at this time of the year. Give yourself and your students the gift of humor.

Editor: Jim Roberts * Western Dubuque Director of Instructional Technology and Student Reporting
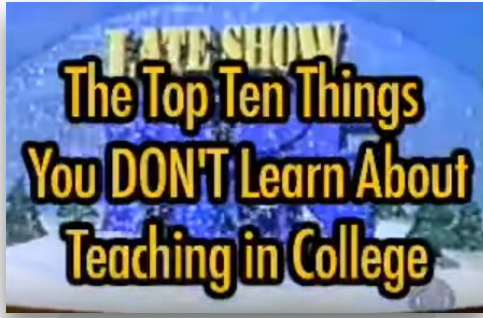
Please submit your ideas and questions to Jim at james.roberts@wdbqschools.org.

Site: YOUR SPOKEN WORDS TO TEXT

ONLINE DICTATION

Online Dictation can be a very valuable tool in your educational toolbox. You or your students can simply speak to your computer and the words will be converted to text. While not perfect, it can help speed up the process of entering text on a page. Visit this site using Google Chrome and have fun!

https://dictation.io/

Video: TOP 10 THINGS YOU DON'T LEARN ABOUT TEACHING IN COLLEGE!

A video to help pick you up when you have The Winter Blahs.

https://youtu.be/lulUvYfRl_c

App: SPEAKINGPHOTO

SpeakingPhoto stands out because of its easy usability. The three button options: Shoot, Speak, Share keep the interface clean and simple. It's a handy app for people short on time. *(Text from site)*

https://speakingphoto.com/

Site: INTERACTIVE SITES FOR EDUCATION: MATH

These activities work great with your interactive whiteboard for whole group or small group instruction or use in the computer lab or at home for individual learning.

Choose from fun, educational, interactive games and simulations for Math, English, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Brainteasers, Music, Art, holidays and more! *(Text from site)*

http://interactivesites.weebly.com/math.html

Productivity:

Microsoft Word Tips & Tricks

* Make changes to a Word document quickly without changing your original. If you have recently worked on a Word document, this will work. Click on **File > Open > Recent Documents**. Look for the filename of the document you want to change. Right-click on the filename and select **Open a copy**. Any changes you make are saved to the copy... not the original. Big time saver!

* Rather than cutting and pasting in Word, try this: Select any block of text and then press **F2**. You will see at the way bottom of your screen, **Move to where**. Simply place the cursor at the location you want to move your highlighted block of text and press **Enter**. Tah-dah! The selection has now been moved. Very cool.

Video: "I'M A TEACHER"

This is for anyone working with children in our schools. The question of how anyone has ever been able to succeed at significantly changing the world in a positive way isn't complex. It's quite simple, really; at some point in their lives, they were somehow instilled with this ludicrous idea that they might actually have the ability, the value, & the power to change it. I wonder: Who in the world has the skills, opportunity, & the depth of influence it would take to give someone such a revolutionary thought in the first place? Teachers do. In a single day, teachers have an amount of influence over the world's future that very few people will ever possess throughout their entire lives. Let's make it count. *(Text from site)*

https://youtu.be/RelL-PdcCSk

Inspirational Video: EVERY KID NEEDS A CHAMPION

Rita Pierson, a teacher for 40 years, once heard a colleague say, "They don't pay me to like the kids." Her response: "Kids don't learn from people they don't like.'" A rousing call to educators to believe in their students and actually connect with them on a real, human, personal level.

https://youtu.be/SFnMTHhKdkw

Productivity: Microsoft PowerPoint Tips & Tricks

* Create a Custom Template for your project:

1. Select the Themes tab.
2. On the far right side, click Edit Master, and then Slide Master.
3. Edit the template as you see fit. You can do pretty much whatever you want.
4. Click Close Master. This will change all current and future slides to the one you just created.

* Make your title stand out on your slide:

1. Right click on the text you want to format and click on Format Text Effects.
2. There are a bunch of formatting options that will open on the right side for you to use. Experiment to your heart's content!
3. Many times, if you "lay" your title over the top of a graphic, your slide will have a more professional look than just having it hang in the air.
4. Make sure the font you use is easy to read.