

SCKDLN

Distance Learning News!

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2011

DISTANCE LEARNING PROVIDES:

- Student projects
- Enrichment to Curriculum
- An alternative to Field Trips
- Professional Development
- Collaborating
- Savings on Travel Costs

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Twitter for Teachers 2
- Snowman Exchange 3
- Oxford TRC Grant 3
- Featured Provider 3
- Calendar 4
- Collaboration Opportunity 4

Happy New Year!

I hope that everyone enjoyed the winter break! I wanted to make you aware of a few changes to the SCKDLN website (<http://sckdln.pbworks.com>).

On the front page has been added an announcements box for a quick look at any upcoming or new programs and projects.

In the sidebar (right column) is a "Videoconferencing Etiquette" page as well as a "Collaboration Etiquette" page. These were created as a way to prepare you and your students for a program or collaboration and avoid the "videoconference jitters". At the bottom of both pages are links that provide other etiquette guide-

lines and helpful tips.

New providers are added all year for your convenience. Let me know if there is anything I can help you with.

Audra May, SCKDLN Network Coordinator

"Videoconferencing puts the world at your fingertips...don't miss out!"

Spanish Carolers

December rings of traditions, Mrs. Metzinger's IDL Spanish classes, for the past six years, meet in Wellington and go caroling. This year 50 students participated. As the students sang Christmas carols in Spanish at Washington Elementary, T.D. Buck, a former student and now a teacher himself counted several different letter jackets, each representing a different community taking Spanish from Mrs. Metzinger through an IDL class she teaches daily providing districts not able to hire a full time Spanish instructor a way to provide quality instruction for their students through videoconferencing. She is located in South Haven and teaches several Spanish classes a day over the network. The group



shared traditional Christmas carols in Spanish presenting a singing program to Lincoln Elementary, Washington Elementary, and Slate Creek Care Facility.

After presenting the programs, the students enjoyed food and fellowship at El Chile Verde. Schools represented were Caldwell, Central Burden, Flint Hills, Cedar Vale, Udall, Hamilton and South Haven.

Featured Provider:

The **Denver Museum of Nature and Science** is the Rocky Mountain region's leading resource for information science education. They offer several programs over videoconferencing for your schools. The programs feature a variety of exhibitions and activities to help students experience the natural wonders of Colorado, Earth, and the universe. The Denver Museum inspires curiosity and excites minds of all ages through scientific discovery and the presentation and preservation of the world's unique treasures. The following programs are \$120 (\$100 for SCKDLN members) and will connect you directly with a scientist in a field site or research lab. These programs are only available on date listed and available to grades 4-8. Scientists in Action Programs:

- Climate Change Then & Now, January 28
- The Sky is Falling!, April 12
- Healthy, Unique You, March 10
- People of the Past, February 17

The museum also offers the following programs for \$120 (\$100 for SCKDLN members). These programs will include a dissection of a sheep lung or heart to give your class a more in-depth look. They are available by request.

- Virtual Lung, grades 3-5
- Virtual Heart, grades 3-5

Contact your network coordinator to schedule a program.

Twitter for Teachers

Several of you may have tried Twitter for a month or so, then soon forgot about it. Or you may have heard all of the criticism and never ventured out. There are numerous educational articles listing pros and cons for Twitter in educational settings. I do have a personal Twitter account; but I don't gain much from it other than seeing today's weather forecast from the local news tweet. More importantly, I have a professional account I find very beneficial. I would like to give you some examples how you might use a professional Twitter account in your classroom.

Twitter is a social networking tool. Typically when you hear "social networking" you think of Facebook, Myspace, etc... There are many schools and businesses joining this area of social networking, but that is for another article. Twitter's format of social networking allows you to scan through 140 character "Tweets" of those that you "follow".

How to create an effective Twitter Account:

First things first—create a Teacher account (or technology, or whatever your forte), and keep it professional! Start by giving it a name that represents your class, be creative—have your students join in and offer suggestions. Do not follow anyone that is not related to your line of work or your class interests. In other words, do not follow Lady Gaga, Starbucks, or other non-related Tweeters. All accounts are set up the same, but you choose who you follow. You also have the capability to control who follows you. There are many backgrounds to choose from that are premade and easy to use.

How to Find Other Tweeters like you:

This is where the social networking comes into play. You will need to find other classroom teachers, or technology persons that you would like to socialize with. Twitter has a search engine, but it's not designed to search for specific titles. Gina Hartman (Missouri teacher) has made this an easier process. She created a wiki page where teachers can add their Twitter information for others to find. For instance, I work with Videoconferencing in Education. I added my Twitter link to the Videoconference Coordinators group and I now follow others that are a part of this group. The groups are listed very simply such as: *Elementary Teachers, Drama Teachers, Early Childhood, Librarians, Counselors, Music Teachers, Principals, Reading Teachers*, and many more. Go to: <http://twitter4teachers.pbworks.com/w/page/22554534/FrontPage> and follow the ones you choose. Pretty soon, they will follow you as

well.

What to Tweet?

You will soon begin to see what others are tweeting. Stay away from tweeting meaningless things like what your class had for lunch, or there was a fire drill. Remember that you only have 140 characters, so keep it to the point. Your goal is to share content about your class to other teachers so that they can benefit from the information. It is also for you to gain new knowledge within your Twitter network. See what other teachers are doing. Look for new ideas—post a need: "Looking for hands-on project to correlate with....", "Interested in finding a penpal...", "Need ideas for 1st grade Thanksgiving project". You can also post links to websites, articles, or interesting finds. Likewise, others will post links that may be of interest to you. There are ways to shorten urls so that they don't take up your 140 characters. Google "url shortener" and there are many tools to choose from.

How to Access if Twitter is Blocked:

Many districts block Twitter for good reason. Students do not need access while at school. If you're in one of these districts, ask your IT person if they have the ability to open Twitter for teachers only. If this is not a possibility or not allowed, don't fret and remember that you can have access from home. Generally, you can scan through tweets in just a few minutes and take note of any that were of interest. If there is a link that someone refers to and you want to open it later, checkout Instapaper (www.instapaper.com) and Read It Later (<http://readitlaterlist.com>). These allow you to have a free account to save url's so that you can come back to them later. Instapaper and Read It Later are also more likely to be allowed in your district. If you have a SmartPhone, then you can also download the Twitter Application and view and post from your phone! Instapaper and Read It Later have Smart Phone and iPad applications as well. Since I am on the road a lot to different schools, I will take a picture of a class participating in a project, then upload it to twitter with a short description, in one easy step without having to log-in to a computer. The people that follow me have now learned about a project that their students could be participating in.

The December/January Issue of Learning & Leading With Technology (available online) featured an article about PLN vs. PD where Scott Merrick gives an excellent example of how Twitter can benefit educators on a professional level.

I encourage you to try out this tool and see how it can benefit you!



Do not follow anyone that is not related to your line of work or class interests... Lady Gaga, Starbucks...

Snowman Exchange Project

Snowmen have been sited in Kansas classrooms! Twelve classes from Medicine Lodge, Hamilton, El Dorado, Wellington, and Marion participated in this year's Snowman Exchange Project. Each class was partnered with a class out of state to collaborate. Out of state classrooms were from New York, West Virginia, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Texas, Montana, and Canada.

For this collaboration, classes created their own unique snowman from common classroom items and wrote instructions how they created it. Then each class exchanged the instructions with their partner class so that they could recreate their partner's snowman. In December (and January) classes met over videoconference to share their snowmen. After sharing their projects, students enjoyed Question & Answer time with their out of state friends. A common question was how many snow days each school got a year. Surprisingly, a class in Montana stated they have never cancelled school due to the snow. They started late one day when the wind chill was -50 degrees so that the busses could warm up!



Oxford TRC Grant

Oxford USD 358 partnered with Jackson Heights USD 335 in writing a Technology Rich Classroom Grant. Partnering for the grant gave them an advantage overall for receiving the grant. While the schools are over 200 miles apart, they work collaboratively to fulfill the grant purposes. Once a month, teachers from both districts connect over videoconference for a full day of collaborating and sharing.

IDL is not only a piece of technology, but a technology allowing these two districts to work together without incurring costs and time associated with travel. To learn more about this grant, visit the KSDE website: www.ksde.org.



A 3rd grade in Medicine Lodge exchanged their directions during the connection then displayed each snowman. These students did a wonderful job of positive reinforcement and encouragement while displaying each snowman. During another connection, a 1st grade with a New York partner did a "thumbs-up" style Question & Answer session. Each question showed the classes

despite the major distance between them, they had many common interests.

This exchange project is a variation of the Monster Exchange Project. It covers several state standards and involves the kids outside of their normal classroom setting. Watch for more exchange projects in the future!



Featured Provider:

The **Inner Asian & Uralic National Resource Center** located at Indiana University's Bloomington campus has spent decades gathering leading specialists, impressive library collections, and other top-quality resources to create the nation's premier program in Central Eurasian Studies. The IARNRC is a Title VI National Resource Center dedicated to raising awareness about its target area: namely Turkic, Iranian, Mongolian, Uralic, and Tibetan cultural spheres. Some countries included are Turkey, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan.

IAUNRC offers several videoconference programs free of charge to schools. Pro-

grams include:

- Music of the Silk Road, grades K-12
- Other Worlds of Architecture, grades 6-12
- The Aral Sea & Central Asian Ecological Problems, grades 8-12
- Baikonur and the Soviet Space Race, grades 5-12
- History of the Silk Road, grades 6-12
- The Real-Life Locations of "Three Cups of Tea": Teaching about Afghanistan and Pakistan, grades 6-12

These programs are a wonderful resource to teachers that are studying Asia, or researching cultures in that area.

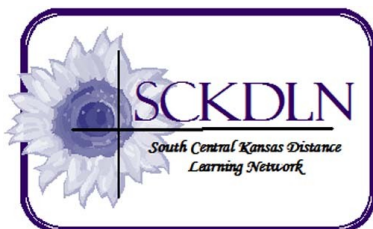
Descriptions and details about these programs can be found at: <http://sckdln.pbworks.com/w/page/34422722/IAUNRC>.



South Central KS Distance Learning



Distance Learning allows school districts to provide student access to secondary courses that were not previously offered because of low enrollment, lack of qualified instructors or funding. In addition to the identified priority of serving secondary students, Distance Learning holds promises of curricular enhancements for students in every grade level. You can defy boundaries of the classroom and let the world in the door with Distance Learning. Bring the primary sources-real objects, activities, and scholars from the staff of history and art museums, research and science centers right into the classroom.



Network Information:

For questions, or to submit an article please contact:

Audra May, Distance Learning Coordinator

Phone: 620-435-6611 x2015

E-mail: audramay@usd358.com

Website: <http://sckdln.pbworks.com>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/sckdln>

Odds and Ends

Mark Your Calendars!

- January 18, 2011 IDL Governing Board Meeting @ SCKESC
- January 21, 2011 Kan-Ed Grant Deadline
- January 26, 2011 IDL Scheduling Meeting @ Cowley County Community College
- 2011 Read Around the Planet Registration will close January 10, 2011.
- Watch for upcoming Collaboration project in January-February!



Collaboration Opportunity:

Title: The Great Race Project

Description: Columbiana County ESC and NCOESC in Ohio would like to invite you to participate in the 5th annual "Great Race" program. Over the last 5 years 5th grade classrooms from around the US have raced across the country learning geography, social studies, science, and math. This year's Great Race theme is "Island Paradise" students will race from Key West, FL to the Hawaiian Island of Maui. Each classroom will be a team and the team that gets there the quickest, spending the least amount of money, stopping at all the cultural and geographically historical places given will be the winners.

There will be 3 videoconferences. The first will be the kick off of the race on Feb. 9th where classrooms will learn the rules and expectations. Second will be a midpoint connection, then a final connection in early May to announce the winner.

To view past races, visit: <http://pd.ncoesc.org/greatrace/>.

Deadline to register is January 26, 2011.