

# IN THE MIDDLE

## Tri-States F.A.Q.

### *What is the Tri-States Consortium?*

"Founded in 1992, the Tri-State Consortium has developed an alternative assessment model designed to enhance student performance in already high-performing school districts. Through the Consortium's affiliation with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New York and New Jersey member districts receiving Tri-State visits are accorded Middle States accreditation."

### *What is the Consortium's approach to evaluation?*

All Tri-States evaluations use a Critical Friends model in which "student performance data [informs] a rigorous framework for systemic planning, assessment, accreditation, and continuous improvement."

### *Who will be visiting Scarsdale Middle School?*

A team of 20-25 educators (administrators, teachers, librarians) from Consortium-member schools. The visit will be overseen by the Consortium's executive director, John Starr.

### *What kind of performance data will the visiting team be looking at?*

Tri-States teams will be looking at data from three areas: *Student Performance, Internal Support, and External Support*. It is, of course, the indicators related to Student Performance that will require computer teachers and librarians to show models of, for example, *Performance Assessments, Longitudinal Progress, Students as Active Participants in the Learning Process, and Issues of Equity and the Opportunity to Learn*.

### *What does the final evaluation look like?*

"The evaluation report scores the district's approach for each of the indicators, the degree to which the approach has been implemented, and student performance results that are attributable to that approach."

### *When will the visit take place?*

The Tri-States team will be in the Middle School Wednesday afternoon, November 16, and much of the day on Thursday, November 17.

### *Who will the Tri-States team meet with here in the Middle School?*

Tri-States teams will interview Middle School administrators, computer teachers and librarians, as well as representative department chairs, teachers, parents and students.

### *What will be discussed in the interviews?*

In addition to a discussion of the data assembled by the District team, interviewers will try to get information that helps them address the following Essential Questions:

**What evidence demonstrates that collaboration between the teaching staff (computer teachers/librarians/classroom teachers) results in high quality technology and research projects?**

**To what extent does the use of district technology resources, including hardware, software, and personnel, support and enhance effective student research?**

**To what extent do the formal and informal professional development opportunities support the use of technology and research?**

### *Is there any way I can be involved?*

In addition to making available materials for our collection of evidence and participating in the interview process, teachers will be given the opportunity to complete a survey that will be a part of the evaluation.

## Computer-Enhanced Research

*The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently. Information Power, ALA*

*Students use technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. NETS, ISTE*

The evidence that has been collected for the upcoming Tri-States evaluation helps us understand the impact of computer resources on research throughout the District and in the Middle School. The movies, music, images, presentations, databases, web sites as well as all kinds of print documents make it clear that the increasing use of computers has influenced both the research process as well as the kind of work created by students at the conclusion of a project.

Perhaps the most obvious impact of computers on the research process has been the way students have access to extraordinary amounts of information. Increasingly, we are seeing activities where the Internet's educational promise is being more fully realized as students learn more about search strategies and web evaluation. Many activities are based on providing students access to Internet content that supplements what is available in the classroom or textbook. Students and teachers are learning to use subscription databases. Video Conferencing has made it possible for students to learn about topics and connect with experts from around the world.

Our networks make it possible for teachers to present work electronically, and students complete, submit, and store that work electronically. Web Publishing has connected teacher and student and the school to the home. Database software enables collaboration. Data tables and peripheral devices support analysis.

Much of this research finds its way into pieces of writing that, in some ways, is appropriately traditional. (Although, even here, the potential for students and teachers to work on revision strategies with a word processor go well beyond what might have been the norm years ago.) Some research supports other publishing projects: books, brochures, newspapers, newsletters, fact sheets, posters... In many cases, students present research using a medium that is, itself, relatively new: multimedia presentations, web pages, streaming video, even podcasts.

## Consistent and Coherent Technology Integration Seen in Quarterlies

We have previously discussed research-oriented uses of instructional technology in all subject areas. Indeed, there is not a single department where interesting work of this sort is not being advanced in someone's classroom. Still, as with many curriculum issues in the Middle School, it is often in the quarterly classes where the experience of a student in one house will come the closest to the experience of a student in the other three houses.

The Foreign Language department has worked closely to develop projects showcasing research into European cities and museums. Similarly, the Music department has introduced presentations and compositions based upon research into a number of classes. Every sixth grade technology student does the same history of technology project, and every eighth grader contributes to a video news story.

The Middle School's Health department showcases a series of projects that illustrate not only a noteworthy consistency across house, but also coherence from sixth through eighth grade. At each grade level, students are asked to publish important information about an issue studied in class. Sixth grade students create newsletters about bullying. Seventh grade students write a fact sheet about a HIV Aids, and eight graders design a trifold brochure about a public health concern.

Each Health teacher works closely with a librarian to help students understand how to find valid information using periodical databases and sophisticated search strategies. Web site evaluation is an essential skill addressed in all three classes. The Health teacher, the librarian, and the computer teacher supporting the project's publishing goals have increasingly been able to build on the work the students have completed in the previous year's project.

# Professional PD development

You can find information about these and other STI courses at the STI's web site. For the first time, this year, we are offering each Early Bird Technology Workshop twice: at 7:15 in Cooper and again at 2:45 in Butler.

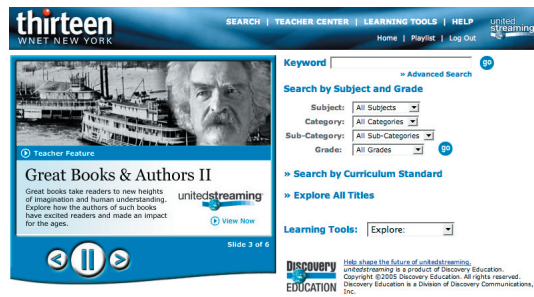
STI 3259  
*Adobe Illustrator and CAM*  
Steve Rambone  
Friday 12/2, Saturday 12/3

Early Bird (and Snooze Button) Workshop  
*Making Sense of the SmartBoard*  
Interactive display technology.  
Tuesday, 12/6

STI 3260  
*Digital Storybooks to Go*  
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys  
Friday 12/9, Saturday 12/10

*eBoard Training*  
Learn how easy it can be to make resources available to students using the Internet.  
Cooper Lab, 2:45-3:45  
Monday, 12/12

## United Streaming and Marco Polo Sites provide a compass for Internet Resources



Refining one's search skills is one solution to the needle-and-haystack challenge of finding high quality content on the Internet. That said, our students regularly hear from our librarians that even the savviest Googler will miss the best information if he doesn't know the right haystack to look in to begin with.

A teachers looking for instructional materials (video, audio files, even images or information) is faced with the same challenge as the student doing

Internet research. Using Google to find the right video or audio file to include in a Keynote presentation can be every bit as exasperating and unproductive as a student's using Google to find reliable medical information.

Teachers attending our most recent Early Bird Technology workshop learned about United Streaming ([unitedstreaming.com](http://unitedstreaming.com)), a digital video-on-demand service from Discovery Education. The digital video library includes 4,000 videos, 40,000 video clips, and thousands of images. The library is searchable by Keyword, by subject and grade, and by New York State curriculum standard. The clips and images can be shown during a lesson or inserted into presentations and other documents.

Marcopolo ([marcopolo-education.org](http://marcopolo-education.org)) is another standards-based site to have had a recent makeover. Originally, a joint venture of the MCI Foundation and a number of subject area organizations, the site's content is now correlated with state as well as national standards. Teachers can search for lesson plans, audio, video, images, even applications which have been evaluated by ARTSEDGE, EconEdLink, EDSITEMent, Illuminations, ReadWriteThink, Science NetLinks, and Xpeditions.

Both sites feature content linked to current events (Rosa Parks, for example) as well as a calendar linking to resources related to historical events. Supplementary material designed to support teachers using technology in their classrooms is available on each site. United Streaming also includes tools for creating online assignments, writing prompts, and quizzes. A collection of exemplary lesson plans is also part of these recently updated archives.

## The Web, My E-Mail, My Gradebook, and...

*"Seventy-six percent of teachers in a recent survey believe that computers are essential to teaching tools, but more use technology for administrative purposes than for instruction." (Teaching and Learning, October 2005)*

The cornerstone of our project-based instructional technology program is a teacher's opportunity to work with computer teachers to design activities in which the use of technology supports curriculum goals. At the same time, we have identified core skills that can make all students and teachers more productive users of technology. Last year we introduced a set of offerings designed for the teacher or teams looking to introduce these skills to their students.

Each two period workshop is a self-contained introduction to the use of a software application or set of computer skills. While the workshop has been designed for the computer teacher to be the primary instructor, subject area teachers are invited to take a central role in the planning and teaching of the workshop. For more information or to schedule one of the following workshops, call Ken, Doug or Vicky Beardsley today.



### Inspiration

Outlining and Concept-Mapping. Easy integration with PowerPoint and the Web.

### Data Analysis

Spreadsheet and database design and use with Excel and FileMaker Pro.

### Getting More from Word

Advanced application features, including support for sophisticated layouts, the use of tables, editing tools...

### Tables, Charts and Graphs

Introduction to creating data tables and graphing data. When A picture's worth a thousand words...

### Web Page Design

Introduction using simple tools: Word, eZedia, Inspiration, Photoshop Elements and iPhoto.

### Multimedia Presentations

Introduction to PowerPoint, but also Keynote and eZedia. Great Ideas Start Here.

### iLife

Apple's suite for music, pictures, movies and DVD. No limit to the creative possibilities.

### Working with Images

An introduction to editing images and importing images into other applications: written documents, presentations, movies...

### OS and Network Productivity

Enhance productivity by knowing more about what your computer and network can do for you (and your students).

### Graphic Design

The personal computer is the most powerful design tool ever invented, yet most of the documents we create on our computer might have been created with a typewriter...