



# Leading the Way

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# Collaboration in the 21st Century

Imagine if you could ask a question and instantly get an answer from a leading expert in your field! Imagine if your students could reach out to distant places in the world and get a real life account of events they are studying in class! YOU CAN! Collaborating in the 21st century has enabled us to become connected with our global counterparts in a rich and meaningful context. It has enabled us to work together in new ways, and allows us to share our strengths and resources towards a common goal.

Collaboration is a procedural activity through which the participants create synergy of thought and action. Collaboration demonstrates the willingness of the participants to work towards a common goal and vision. It is likened to an orchestra. Each musician must play their instrument to the best of their ability and talent. However, the players must ensure that their collaboration benefits and enhances the whole.



Participants at the Enhancing Education Through Collaboration workshop on November 3rd, 2008.

In education, the concept of collaboration has many implications for learning and improving student achievement. Through virtual collaboration, educational leaders are able to advocate their vision for 21st century learning as well as share policies for promoting safe and innovative use of technology in schools. Administrators are able to identify, evaluate and incorporated best practices for providing

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## Twitter! A collaborative community?

After our last Face2Face workshop, we were asked to explore various Web 2.0 tools to better understand their mechanics and how they may be applied to the education field. One of such tools was Twitter. I will be the first to admit that I saw very little relevance for using Twitter in my personal life, let alone my professional one! That was until a colleague reminded me that I should always keep an open mind when investigating new things. And so I did... reluctantly!

At first I began my "twitter quest" by following individuals in education from the Western New York region. I was impressed by the links to re-

sources provided in the short and fragmented conversations, but annoyed by the fact that I could barely comprehend the content. It seemed as though many of the posts related to discussions and previous posts that I had not been purvey to. I soon began to realize that the posts reflected a new collaborative lingo... one that I would need to learn quickly in order to appreciate the power of twitter. I discovered that the posts depicted a long conversation, not between two or three people, but between the entire twitter community. It was a dialogue posted on a giant message board in the hallway leading to the teachers' lounge. And besides, in Twitter you are only

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## Collaboration in the 21st Century continued from page 1

professional development for staff. It also provides avenues for administrators to communicate with their learning community in an asynchronous way that alleviates the need for face to face meetings throughout a hectic work day.

Educational leaders have made their presence known in the virtual world through a variety of methods. Blogs have become an effective vehicle for principals to discuss how they are fostering and nurturing a culture of 21st century learners and educators in their school environments. May we suggest a few of our favorite principal blogs:

- 1) **Leader Talk** <http://www.leadertalk.org>  
A group blog written **by** educational leaders **for** education leaders. It features articles by local and regional administrators facing the challenges of integrating 21st century learning in their schools.

- 2) **Principal's Policy Blog**  
<http://p8.hostingprod.com/@www.principalspolicyblog.org/blog/>  
This blog is maintained by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. It discusses a variety of issues including; NCLB & Federal Funding, school reform, and student safety.
- 3) **Working Towards Excellence**  
<http://www.abpc21.org/principalsblog.html>  
The Journal of the Alabama Best Practices Center writes a blog article about one principal's quest to walk the walk, and talk the talk. It provides links to the principal's blog where students and parents frequently post in this culture building atmosphere.

Another exciting and innovative means of collaborating in an on-line, virtual community is through social networking sites like Ning. There are several examples of successful collaboration within this social context, and here are a few of the best examples for educational leaders:

- 1) **The Schools United**  
<http://www.theschoolsunited.com/community/>  
This is one of the first world wide social networking sites dedicated to connecting schools world wide. It provides a platform for schools to share experiences and resources, including video, audio and photos. Currently there are 106 schools participating from around the world.
- 2) **Social Networks in Education wiki**  
<http://socialnetworksined.wikispaces.com/>  
The Social Networks in Education wiki is an excellent resource for researching the power of social networking. It provides a comprehensive list of social networking site used for educational practice.

In which ever way you choose to begin to collaborate, either as the leader of a collaborative community or as a participant of one, remember you 'get as much as you give'!



## Twitter! continued from page 1

able to post sentence fragments 140 characters long.

As part of my Twitter experiment, I began to search for individuals that I had been impressed by and had discovered in other on-line capacities, such as through blogs and on-line articles. I was surprised by the number of influential leaders in education that had Twitter accounts. I soon realized that I was no longer following a handful of people, but over two dozen! Suddenly, I began to make connections between presenters I had watched on TedTV, and articles referenced in our EETT Ning community. I have also discovered tools and resources that I might not have ever researched on my own.

So, based on my experience learning a new collaborative tool, Twitter, I have come to the following conclusions:

- 1) do not jump to conclusions about Web 2.0 tools without taking the time to appropriately investigate them,
- 2) realize that learning something new takes time,
- 3) ask for help!!! Sometimes a coworker can be a perfect sounding board, or in my case an excellent resource!

Please use my Top Twitters to Follow list to help jump start your experience with this collaborative tool. And don't forget to twitter me! (search: jconklin)

*Jenny*

## Top 10 Twitters to Follow

- 1) **WNY EETT TechTalks** (wnyeetttechtalk) - our very own twitter space for discussing the grant and sharing resources.
- 2) **Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach** (snbeach) - our grant facilitator
- 3) **Clay Shirkey** (cshirkey) - a consultant and teacher on the social and economical effects of Internet technologies.
- 4) **Jessamyn West** (jessamyn) - a librarian using Twitter.
- 5) **EdTechTalk** (edtechtalk) - a collaborative community that discusses how to effectively integrate technology into education.
- 6) **Vicki Davis** (coolcatteacher) - teacher & author of the Cool Cat Teacher Blog.
- 7) **David Warlick** (dwarlick) - 30+ year educator, technologist, programmer, author, & public speaker.
- 8) **Will Richardson** (willrich45) - Speaker, author, blogger about social Web tools and their effects on schools, education and learning.
- 9) **David Jakes** (djakes) - Twitter user dedicated to the discovery of tools for the digital age to advance pedagogical practice and student learning.
- 10) **Paul Allison** (paulallison) - English Teacher at East-West School of International Studies and Tech Liaison for the New York City Writing Project

## Integrating Twitter into Education

### 50 ways to use Twitter

<http://cooper-taylor.com/blog/2008/08/50-ideas-on-using-twitter-for-education/>  
Carol Cooper-Taylor brainstorms how to effectively incorporate Twitter in education.

### Twitter for Academia

<http://academhack.outsidethetext.com/home/2008/twitter-for-academia/>  
A blog post that discusses ways to integrate Twitter into education.

### Twitter for Librarians: The Ultimate Guide

<http://www.collegeathome.com/blog/2008/05/27/twitter-for-librarians-the-ultimate-guide/>  
A blog resource that provides an astonishing number of ways that Twitter can be integrated into libraries.

## Is your school ready for NETS?

As educators and administrators seek to develop 21st Century learning environments for the next generation of learners, it becomes essential to create a shared understanding and common vocabulary to foster this collaboration. The NETS for Administrators is a comprehensive set of standards that outlines the critical components for effective school leadership and appropriate use of technology in schools.

There are six standards addressed, each including separate performance indicators. The standards, developed in collaboration with the TSSA collaborative, include the following themes:

**Leadership and Vision**

**Learning and Teaching**

**Productivity and Professional Practice**

**Support, Management, and Operations**

**Assessment and Evaluation**

**Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues**

As you assess the readiness level of your school or district for implementing system change and effectively integrating technology and 21st Century skills, ponder the following questions:

*How has the school administration been proactive in developing a shared vision for educational technology?*

*Do students, teachers and staff have access to current technologies?*

*Who are the district leaders and support personnel leading the way for 21st Century learning?*

*Are there professional development opportunities that provide training about technology and 21st Century integration?*

*Who will provide the learning community with technical assistance for maintaining and using technology.*

*Are administrators and teachers knowledgeable about standards, and are they integrating technology resources and skills into the content areas?*

*Are students learning in an environment suited for their needs?*

*Has the school developed a system of assessment and accountability for evaluating the effective use of technology for improving student learning?*

*The district maintains partnerships and communications with parents, businesses, and the community to support technology use within the district?*

*Does the district seek to find opportunities within the community to support the integration of technology and 21st Century skills?*

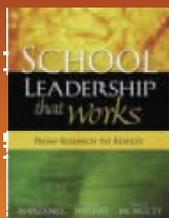
*Do the policies, requirements, and initiatives at the national, regional, and state levels support the district in the effective implementation of technology for achieving national, state, and local curriculum and technology standards?*

For more information about the NETS for Administrators, Teachers and/or Students, visit the ISTE website at [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org).



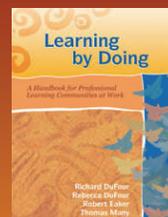
### Suggested Reading and Resources:

# Collaboration



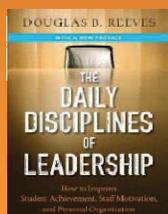
#### School Leadership that works

By Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters & Brian A. McNulty  
ISBN: 1-4144-0227-5



#### Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work

By Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Thomas Many  
ISBN: 978-1-932127-93-5



#### The Daily Disciplines of Leadership

By Douglas B. Reeves  
ISBN: 0-7879-6403-4



#### Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms

By Will Richardson  
ISBN: 1-4129-2767-6



## UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Fourth in Our Series of Face-to-Face Workshops:

### Learning Showcase

December 8, 2008

8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Erie 1 BOCES Education Campus



The Learning Showcase in December is a chance for participants of the EETT grant to share their experiences and project developments. The goal of the showcase will be to highlight specific projects that have been successful, and to provide models for successful project implementation.

The showcase will be structured around breakout sessions based on three themes: the 21st Century Administrator, Technology Coordinator, and Teacher Leader.

Here are some of the current session topics;

- ✓ Integrating Social Networking into Professional Development
- ✓ Developing On-line Technology Plans
- ✓ Safe and Innovative On-line Student Portfolios
- ✓ Using Digital Video to Enhance Writing
- ✓ Integrating Technology in Non-Public School Settings
- ✓ Integrating Wikis to Promote Administrative Collaboration
- ✓ What's New in Tech Tools for Classroom Integration
- ✓ 21st Century Lesson Planning
- ✓ Digital Safety, Digital Citizenship

*Call for Presenters!*

We are still looking for more EETT projects to present during our Learning Showcase. If you and your team are interested in presenting, please contact Shannon Logan or Jenny Conklin with a brief outline of your project and expected outcomes.

Erie 1 BOCES EETT Project announces a new workshop for Administrators and Technology Leaders aimed at enhancing best practice through technology. This hands-on workshops will assist technology leadership teams to turnkey training to their respective staff.

### Enhancing Education Through Differentiated Instruction December 1st, 2008, 8:30am - 3:30pm

Differentiated Instruction is an accepted best practice with proven results for improving student achievement. Many of the new technologies offer educators the means to facilitate the implementation of DI into heterogeneous classrooms. This workshop will introduce administrators and teacher-leaders to internet-based and Web 2.0 tools that will enhance differentiated instruction, and provide strategies and resources to turnkey the training to their district or school staff.

Participants will be able to use and train others to use technology to enhance the following aspects of Differentiated Instruction:

- Assessment
- Differentiating Content, Process, and Product
- Structuring and Managing DI in the Classroom

To register for EETT events, please visit the Ning at [www.nys-eett.ning.com](http://www.nys-eett.ning.com). On the left-hand toolbar, click the name of the event you wish to register for under the heading "Events." Under the RSVP column, you will see an option to confirm attendance. Workshops are free to EETT members. Non-members will be charged \$75 for half-day workshops or \$150 for full-day workshops.. If you have any questions, please contact Jenny Conklin or Shannon Logan.