

Talkback on Tech

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) wants educators to speak up about changes they'd want in the way technology is used in schools. But some practitioners are skeptical that their response to a new federal survey will make much of a difference.

"The solicitation doesn't even ask for [the respondent's] name, and the questions are predefined," says Steve Hargadon, who runs Classroom 2.0, a social network for educators with 1,082 members to date. "There's no way for feedback once the answers are submitted. That's probably not the best way to engage educators in a dialogue."

The survey, consisting of just four questions, is being distributed to school officials, among others in the education community, nationwide. At the same time, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings is holding roundtable chats with educators to discuss ways to marry technology with federal educational goals.

Education technology, however, has received its share of blows in recent months, with the release of a controversial study in April that indicated that software has had very little benefit on student learning. So tech advocates have been pushing back. While many are hopeful about the new round of interest by the DOE, Hargadon says that the process needs improving if Spellings and her team want solid answers.

So Hargadon created his own version of the federal survey on the Classroom 2.0 site (classroom20ning.com), allowing visitors to comment on other's responses, while encouraging the federal agency to also take part.

As of early June, a question asking what the federal government's role should be in supporting technology in our educational system had elicited 14 responses ranging from "money" to providing "equal access to the tools" and "showcasing education technology success stories."

"I consider this a hopeful strategy," says Hargadon. "I believe meaningful change can only come from an engaged dialogue and not from a top-down mandate."—*Lauren Barack*



BY GAIL JUNION-METZ



iPods in the Library?

You bet! Here are ideas on how to use them to enhance learning.

iPods in Education

learninginhand.com/ipod/index.html

Here's a good overview of what you can do with iPods in a classroom or library setting. Each section covers a different function, from how to create quizzes and take notes using an iPod to using the device to interact with others and the Web. *Created by:* Tony Vincent, elementary teacher and education consultant, Omaha, NE. *Don't miss:* The link "Getting Started: A Guide for Using iPods and iTunes for Teaching and Learning," a 42-page PDF created by Apple. *Detour:* For a brief staff workshop, check out "What Is a Podcast?" at www.educationworld.com/a_tech/techtorial/techtorial091.shtml.

Podcasting Evaluation Form for Students

school.discovery.com/schrockguide/evalpodcast.html

Teaching kids how to evaluate a book, video, or Web site is an important skill. Here's an equivalent tool for podcasts. *Created by:* Kathy Schrock, administrator for technology, Nauset Public Schools, Cape Cod, MA, this wonderful form will help you and your kids look critically at podcasts they find on the Web, as well as their own. *Detour:* Another great tool is the "Podcast Rubric for Teachers" at sblogs.writingproject.org/filer/yvpBawpManilaWebsite/ejmaterials/schoolInTheCouleePodcastRubric.pdf.

Podcasting in the Classroom

userwww.sfsu.edu/~nshelley/index.html

This simple classroom unit is a great introduction to podcasting and doable by even the busiest of teachers. The section "Educational Podcasting Resources" provides good step-by-step tutorials. To access thousands of podcasts on just about any topic, including education, visit the "Podcast Alley" link. *Created by:* Nathan Shelley, School of the Epiphany, San Francisco, CA. *Detour:* For student projects, from elementary to high school, visit the Education Podcast Network at epnweb.org. Among my favorites are the "1-Maple Audiobooks" created by first graders.

Teaching with iPod and iTunes

edcommunity.apple.com/all/search.php?collectionID=714

Teachers who are already using iPods with kids have posted their best projects and lessons here. *Created by:* Members of the Apple Learning Interchange 2007. *Detour:* Hungry for more iPod activities? Then be sure to point your browser to "iPod in Education—Lesson Plans" at www.apple.com/au/education/ipod/lessons.

Using iPods in Learning and Teaching

isp.ecu.edu.au/ipod/ideas.html

So you're already sold on iPods as a learning tool, but need to convince others in your library or school. Then this site's for you. It outlines the potential applications for iPods in teaching, research gathering, music appreciation, and language instruction. There's even specific information on using iPods in libraries. *Created by:* Trevor Bennett and Rivka Niesten, Edith Cowen University, Perth, Australia. *Detour:* For a great staff workshop or class presentation, go to "Creating a Podcast" at www.educationworld.com/a_tech/techtorial/techtorial092.shtml.

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