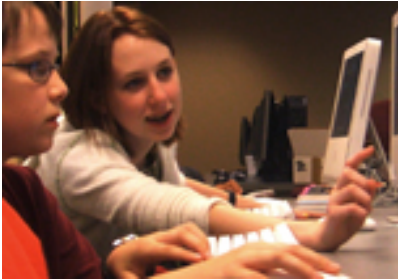


ALTEC NEWSLETTER



Bring history to life
in your classroom:
Abraham Lincoln's
letters now available
on the Web

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BRING HISTORY TO LIFE

Abraham Lincoln's letters have been digitally scanned and made available for free on the Web.

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In the first year of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln wrote a series of letters outlining his "emancipation compensation" plan. He suggested a plan to pay slave holders \$400 each for the estimated 432,622 slaves Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Washington, D.C. The cost of the war was nearly \$2 million a day at that time and Lincoln suggested that his plan would be the same as paying for 87 days of war. In exchange for this payment, states would be required to set a deadline for abolishing slavery.

In a project headed by the University of Rochester, Lincoln's original letters were digitally scanned and posted to the Internet. These letters are an important piece of history that give readers an inside look into the challenges Lincoln was facing during the war. Six months after these letters were written, Lincoln issued two executive orders known as the Emancipation Proclamation to declare an end to slavery in North America.

The letters were donated to the University of Rochester by William Henry Seward III, the grandson of Lincoln's Secretary of State, William H. Seward Sr. This searchable database of letters, released on February 18, 2008, includes 72 letters written by Lincoln, 215 letters written to Lincoln by political and military leaders, lesson plans, contextual essays written by graduate students, and easy to read transcriptions.

<http://www.library.rochester.edu/rbk/lincoln>



SECOND GRADE TEACHERS SUCCESS- FULLY IMPROVE MATH SCORES USING ONLINE GAMES

Last month we featured the exciting release of new multi-player games on Arcademic Skill Builders, a free Web site with online games designed to build math, language arts, vocabulary, and thinking skills. Teachers across the country are using this free resource to improve student learning while getting students excited about learning basic skills.

Mrs. Smeltz, a second grade teacher at Bonfield Elementary school, was unhappy with the quiz scores her students were receiving in math. Students had been working on addition facts for several weeks and were being given quizzes three out of every four days. Each student was to complete 30 addition problems in 90 seconds with the goal of each student receiving 80 percent or higher.

For some reason, the students were not progressing as she and the other second-grade teachers would have liked. This issue was discussed during a brainstorming session as to what they could do to improve test scores. Mrs. Smeltz had heard about a math computer program called Mad Minute that sounded interesting, but unfortunately the program was only available to try for a limited time each month and could not be loaded onto multiple computers during the free trial.

With limited funds, she decided to try to find another option. While searching online she stumbled upon Arcademic Skill Builders <http://arcademicskillbuilders.com>. "Just what I was looking for ... basic repeated practice of the addition facts in a fun, exciting way!" said Mrs. Smeltz.

She decided to introduce Jet Ski Addition to the class using an LCD projector to project

it onto a screen. The students were very excited to try it. She bookmarked the Web site on the three classroom computers and students could hardly wait for their turn! The classroom computers suddenly became quite a distraction for the class.

The students enjoyed the game so much they wanted to be able to play it at home. Mrs. Smeltz sent out a note to parents with the Web address and a brief description of the Web site. She then decided to use the site during her class time in the computer lab. Many students were playing it at home by this point and were very familiar so the class time was a perfect time for kids who didn't have computers at home to have the extra support from other students to build their addition skills while learning how to play the game.

Because Arcademic Skill Builders is set up in such a way that no user information is stored, allowing students to play safely without being traced by outside users, her class needed to figure out a way to know they were playing against one of their own classmates. They decided to add their classroom number to their "secret names" so they would know they were playing someone in their own class.

The names turned out to be an excellent option for students who wanted to play against a classmate but still remain anonymous. Mrs. Smeltz's students enjoyed the game so much they decided to share it with the three other second-grade classrooms in their building.

Students used their "secret names" followed by classroom numbers so they knew they were playing kids from their own school. "Suddenly indoor recess became an

exciting Jet Ski race across the hall!" says Mrs. Smeltz.

In just a few days everyone, from the recess and computer aides to the teachers, was playing Jet Ski Addition, competing with each other and the students each night. Teachers were hearing excited chatter in the classrooms, such as: "I played Jet Ski for two hours last night!", "Mrs. Smeltz, I beat you last night!", and "What time will you be on tonight?" The enthusiasm was felt by teachers as well as students, and there was even positive feedback from many parents.

More importantly, the second grade teachers accomplished their goal. Test scores improved significantly in just 10 days!

Here are the scores:

February 19

14 out of 24 children passed with 80 percent or higher; 9 had 100 percent

February 29

20 out of 24 children passed with 80 percent or higher; 14 had 100 percent

One student went from a score of 63 percent to 100 percent. Two students went from 77 percent to 90 percent. One stu-

dent went from 57 percent to 73 percent. Even the lowest student went from 47 percent to 67 percent.

The students keep track of their own scores on a chart each time they take a quiz and were very excited to see how their test scores had improved. Jet Ski Addition was instrumental in these improvements in scores. The new multi-player games currently include Grand Prix Multiplication, Jet Ski Addition, and Drag Race Division. A subtraction game is currently in the works.



There are also a large variety of single player games for students to work on skills such as multiplication, addition, subtraction, spelling, state capitals, identifying word types (ie. pronouns, nouns, verbs), choosing correct verb tenses, subject/verb agreement, and more! Visit <http://arcademicskillbuilders.com> to get started!

This article is a summary of an article written by Laura Smeltz, Second Grade teacher.

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RENEW YOUR QUIZSTAR SUBSCRIPTION TODAY!

The popular online tool QuizStar has had a very successful first year as a subscription-based online tool. Response has been overwhelmingly positive and we are very glad to be able to maintain this service at a reasonable cost.

The option to renew your subscription to QuizStar is now available in your account. To renew your subscription, please login and go to the "Account" tab. Under the Subscription Information section you'll see a button that reads "Renew Subscription." Click the button and follow the instructions to print out your new invoice or pay online. Your new subscription will begin after your current subscription ends.

2008 subscription rates for QuizStar are listed below and were effective March 10, 2008.

Individual rates:
Six months for \$24.98
One year for \$39

Group rates:
All group rates are for one year
Groups of 2-9 for \$35 per user
Groups of 10-50 for \$33 per user

Rates for groups larger than 50 instructors will be made based on student enrollment. Please email for pricing.

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Conference Calendar

Meet ALTEC staff at the following fall conferences!

Nebraska Educational Technology Association

NETA 2008

Date: April 24-25, 2008

Location: Omaha, NE – Holiday Inn Convention Center

Web Site: <http://www.netasite.org/>

Kansas State Department of Education Annual Conference

Date: April 30 - May 2, 2008

Location: Wichita, KS – Hyatt Regency Hotel and Century II Convention Center complex

Web Site: <http://annualconference.ksde.org/>

Technology in Education: Wireless Dreams TIE 2008

Date: June 24-27, 2008

Location: Copper Mountain, CO – Copper Mountain Resort

Web Site: <http://www.tiecolorado.org/2008/>

National Educational Computing Conference

NECC 2008

Date: June 29 – July 2, 2008

Location: San Antonio, TX – Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

Web Site: <http://center.uoregon.edu/ISTE/NECC2008/>

ALTEC PROVIDES SERVICES TO SUPPORT YOUR EXISTING PROJECTS

If you have an existing or proposed project, ALTEC can develop and host your Web site, support your online community with discussion boards, set up your video conference, or custom-design a software application to meet your needs. Propose stronger projects and programs using ALTEC's over 15 years of expertise in educational technology, special needs, professional development, and evaluation. Please call us at 785 864 0699 to set up a free consultation.

We're happy to assist you with all your technology needs.

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