Heart of Innovation Webinar

Questions for Matt

A copy of the webinar chat is available at the bottom of this document!

Note: To answer these in an expedient fashion, I used Google Docs voice typing (to go Tools > Voice typing) and talked through my answers. Voice typing is pretty accurate, but it messes up capitalization and the occasional word! Please forgive it and don't use those typos as a portrayal of how I intend to write purposefully with a keyboard! :)

When we have a blended classroom, what are research-based, free, or "good" resources that challenge students, but also offer immediate feedback? It is challenging to find quality and affordable digital content that allows for perfect practice or practice with immediate feedback. -- Rachel

I'm so glad you are focusing on research-based here. I'll just focus on one here. Something as simple as Quizlet can be really helpful. I know it isn't groundbreaking, the idea of using flashcards. However, much of what you get with Quizlet is research-based. The idea of getting meaningful repetitions is old but still effective. The great thing about Quizlet is that it does give you immediate feedback and it gives you a variety of repetitions. It's also based on the idea of retrieval practice, spaced repetition, and interleaving. All of these are power tools as mentioned in the book Powerful Teaching, which is based on what cognitive science says about learning. And, of course, you can throw in a Quizlet live game to do collaborative repetitions as well. The best thing about this is that all of those Quizlet features are free!

What suggestions do you have for students who use iPads and are off-task playing games, writing emails,etc instead of working on the tasks given by teachers? -- Renee Collins

This is such a struggle for so many teachers. We want to use the devices. However, we are frustrated when students don't use them in meaningful ways. I think one of the big keys to making this work is helping students know how to use devices as tools for learning instead of just for games and social communication. That's a shift that takes place little by little throughout an entire year -- and many times throughout an entire academic career of a student. Another shift we can make is to use devices just for specific tasks. we want to make sure that the devices add an element to the activity that we couldn't get without the devices. Engagement is an important part of this too. If we are assigning students drudgery on a digital device, they will approach it the same way they would drudgery on a photocopy. I think any of those elements inserted into the equation can help students to stay on task.

You mentioned wishing How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie was required for pre-service teachers. Besides this, and your books, what are two or three other books all pre-service and current teachers should read and why? -- Katie Johnston

Here are a few ideas. Of course, anytime I make a list like this, it depends on what I've been thinking about recently and where my mind is. I could make a list tomorrow and put three completely different books on it!

- Powerful Teaching by Pooja Agarwal and Patrice Bain -- This book shares how to apply cognitive science in practical ways in the classroom. When we teach the way that the brain prefers, we are learning smarter instead of harder.
- What Great Teachers Do Differently by Todd Whitaker -- I read this book early in my teaching career and it had a great impact on me. It helped me to see how lots of great educators approached their work.
- Show Your Work by Austin Kleon -- This book is written about sharing your creativity and getting discovered. Its intended audience was creatives, but I think it applies so nicely to education. Our work of Designing lessons and teaching is a craft, and this book encourages us to develop that craft.

Why did you leave the classroom? You wrote the book 5 years ago. Have any of your thoughts/ideas changed since it was published? -- Jill Koch

It was a difficult decision. I have been teaching the high school Spanish for 11 years, and that's all I really knew in my professional working life. However, I was seeing the impact of some of the ideas I shared with teachers. I knew that if I could help teachers, I would also be helping their students. The exponential impact that could have was enough to get me to switch my focus from my own classroom to educators.

Several of my thoughts have indeed changed since the book was published. For instance, in the book I talked about how devices should never be kept out of the hands of students. Since then, I have seen more and more of the distracting impact that cell phones can have on students. There's research that talks about how cell phone addiction can be just as strong as drug addiction. Now, I believe that if devices are an enhancement to the way that we teach, we should use them. However, that doesn't mean that they need to be in the hands of students all the time. I am a growing advocate for helping students to power down their devices and avoid those Temptations to focus on the important work we do in education.

What technology tools do you recommend for a preschool classroom? -- Amber Corpstein

Fair warning here, Amber. I have never taught preschool! I have three children who were all obviously preschool-age at one point. From what I've learned about the developing brain of children in that age, I know about the importance of play, of tactile learning, and of being social. I also know that these are very formative years for the brain. I'm not a big proponent of doing learning activities on a device at this age, like practicing words and shapes and others on an iPad app. I would rather see students create and do learning with their hands in the real world and then take a picture of it to share. Or record video of them explaining something. I love the idea of virtual field trips and virtual guest speakers for all ages. With any of those, the screen time is minimal and the technology adds to the learning. Again, I have never taught preschool, so take this with a grain of salt!

In Ch. 13, you say "Scan through lists of apps and websites with a discerning eye" Can you elaborate on that some? As a teacher who has not used a lot of technology in the classroom, some guidance on how to get started would be very helpful! Could you list some specific websites for launching technology tools further? -- Coby Koester

For me, the Discerning Eye means making sure that the app or website will add something to the learning you want to do. It also means making sure that the tool is safe and appropriate for students. When I am evaluating a tool for use in the classroom, I want to make sure that it plays an important part in the learning activities we do. I don't want to use it just for the sake of using technology, and I don't want to use it as a direct digital substitute for another activity we've done with paper and pencil.

Honestly, if you are wanting to get started with technology, I think it's important to start small. Start with something that you think you can do, something that makes you say, “Yep, I can do that.” another good place to start is with passion. What are you excited about? What are your students excited about? finally, another good place to start is with impact. What is an area where you or your students could stand to improve the most? Where could some improvement have the greatest impact? Of course, the most important part is that you just start!

I appreciated your discussion on organizing classroom materials for assignments. Do you have any suggestions for keeping track of tools/websites that I find that I haven't yet used for assignments but may want to use in the future? -- Jodi Schrick

Yes! There is one tool that I'm very excited about with this. It's called wakelet. It lets you collect links to websites, social media post, images, text, really just about anything, and put them into individual collections. The best part of Wakelet for me is its Chrome extension. After installing the Chrome extension, all I have to do is go to a website that I want to save. I click on the Chrome extension button. Then I choose a collection to put it in. When I want to retrieve it, I just go to the wakelet website and open up that collection.

I read about 'Twitter writing' in your book. I have not used Twitter in my classroom. Do you have any suggestions for how to start? -- Renee McGill

Earlier, Jill asked if anything had changed since I wrote the book. I remember the Twitter writing suggestion! However, I think you can get the same results without having to open the Pandora's box of social media with your students. There's an activity I've written about called add and pass. It can be done in a simple document or even with a sheet of paper. Here's a link to that post.

Real world skills are important! I was wondering what was a game-changer or something significant you have done (in your classroom or beyond) that added value that was not there before. (pg. 37). -- Tyler Hellmann

There are a few examples I can think of that relate to that chapter. For one, it has been extremely helpful for me to continuously listen and watch for new ideas. That was number 3 in the chapter. It doesn't even mean you have to be on The Cutting Edge of technology or popular culture, but a simple reference in class to something that's on the top of students Minds can have a huge impact.There one was maintaining the balance between professionalism and being a real person. Many times, I was my honest, flawed self with my students. If I struggled with something, I let them know about it. When they saw that I was an imperfect person just like them, it helps to bring their guard down.

Can you recommend some strategies for making auto-graded quizzes higher order? -- Holly Glade

Yes! In fact, I wrote a couple of posts about Auto graded quizzes.

In this post, should we use Auto graded quizzes?, I talked about how Auto graded quizzes are good for some things, including timely feedback And basic fact recall. But they aren't so good at some of the most important parts of effective feedback. Plus, there's the cheating issue.

In another post, 6 things that make Auto graded quizzes better, I talked about a handful of strategies you can use to improve them. Do a one question Deep dive. Offer an explanation box. Let students create with what they've learned. Add a graphic organizer. There are others in this post too.

Do you think using so much technology in the classroom is creating a generation of students unable to communicate with each other? Does it present the issue of "having all the current technology" to be successful? Got to have the latest and greatest mindset? -- Lori Kreykes

In some ways, I think that technology can be blamed for some of the struggles we have with communication and attention. We know now that many social media are designed to keep our eyes on the screen at all costs. There is an addictive nature to it, and in some ways, we can be the victims of that.

However, I'm not a big fan of the victim mindset. I believe that the technology is not the culprit. Instead, it's the way that we use the technology that's the problem. I really believe that one of our greatest opportunities as Educators is to help our students see how to interact with digital devices and real people in the real world effectively. Technology is always going to help us do certain things better and more efficiently. The hard part is trying to figure out when to use that when it can help us the best. If we can help students see the pros and cons of using technology to perform a specific task or solve a problem -- or setting the technology aside because, in the end, we will be better off without it -- we have equipped them with a skill set that will serve them throughout their entire lives.

You talk about being a connected educator in chapter 17. What would you narrow down your social media to if you had to pick only 2-3 things? I know teachers that spend so much time searching for new ideas that it consumes them and they aren't doing anything with integrity. How do you know when enough is enough?? -- Amy Hoover

First, if I had to narrow down my social media use to the bare essentials, here's what I would do. My social media of choice is Twitter. That's because it is built for interaction and there's a critical mass of Educators sharing quality ideas there. I would find some specific hashtags that relate to what I do in education. For instance, if I were an elementary teacher, I would pick one of these hashtags that fit my role: #kinderchat #1stchat #2ndchat #3rdchat #4thchat #5thchat. for Middle School and High School teachers, there are hashtags for the content areas that you teach as well. I would search those hashtags and find people who were saying things that were helpful to me. I would follow as many of those people as I could. The more that you find new people who have something helpful to say, the stronger your Twitter feed becomes. Then, after I had built up a strong Twitter feed, I could check it at any given moment and come up with good ideas. It could be 2 minutes while I am in the car and checking on the app on my phone. It could be 30 minutes at my desk on my laptop. When you have a strong body of people to follow, it turns your Twitter feed into a customized Daily newspaper of ideas you can use.

If Twitter sounds appealing to you, I have a free ebook that will help you learn the lingo, get started, and thrive.

It's important that you highlight that your social media time can become unproductive. I think designating a certain amount of time for Gathering ideas and learning is important. However, because Twitter and Facebook and many other social media can continuous scrolling forever, we have to put limits on their use ourselves. When we know what we want to get out of social media and have a plan in place, it is less likely to manipulate us.

What advice do you have for helping teachers who are reluctant to use technology? (Stuck in the same routine) How can I help motivate them to try something they aren't comfortable trying? -- Chad Kennelly

I just wrote a post about this! Actually, I have a couple things that may be helpful.

In this post, I talked about how it is easy to become overwhelmed by all of the tech options that are out there. however, I have found that being overwhelmed isn't the problem of having too many ideas. It's not knowing where to start. In the post, I give three suggestions for getting started. Start small. Start with passion. Start with impact.

In this post, I talk about how important it is for other teachers to see what their fellow colleagues -- people in their building -- are doing with success. Sharing articles online is good and can work. Bringing in presenters can work. But for some teachers, they don't believe it until they know someone who has done it successfully. That's why I am a firm believer in shining a spotlight on the teachers doing great work in the building so others can see it.

I just read Chapters 8 - 22. I am totally amazed at your insight and ideas! Your mind must go on overdrive! Where did you get so many cool ideas! I am totally excited reading your book. A lot of what you write about is so practical and can be used in the classroom. Thank you so much for adding positiveness and a can do attitude to the education world! -- Lori Kreykes

Thanks Lori! I get lots of ideas by following other great Educators on Twitter, reading education blogs and books, and talking to other teachers. It's a fun creative outlet for me, so my mind is thinking about teaching and learning all the time.

A lot of teachers are very apprehensive about using new technology in their classroom and taking the plunge to try something new. What advice do you have for those teachers who are afraid to dive in and try something new with technology? Also, did you have a hard time getting your administrators on board when you were creating your new plan for your classroom? -- Wendy Quam

For the first question, just scroll up and read what I wrote to Chad above.

Honestly, I didn't have that hard of a time getting my administrators on board. When I decided that I wasn't going to use my textbooks as much -- or at all -- I had building principals who we're kind of asleep at the wheel. They weren't out in the classrooms very much. They also implicitly supported anything I was wanting to do as long as it wouldn't get them in trouble! When I started making these changes, parents would see that their kids would come home and be able to speak in Spanish. They weren't able to do that

before, and when the parents were students, they weren't able to do it either! Because they were able to see measurable results, I didn't have very much pushback. However, I can see this from two different sides now. I know that it would probably be good for me too keep my administrators apprised of all of the changes I was making. That's one side. But on another side of that decision, I can also see how important it would be to start making very small changes early and keep an eye on the results. Once I had built up a body of results showing that my ideas were working on a small scale, that would give me the justification to continue to make them bigger and bigger.

How do you meet the challenge of resistance when working with teachers who just don't want to change the way they do things? What are some good questions to ask them? -- Ali Sauter

Again, check out my responses to Chad above. (Nobody knew what anybody else would ask in these questions, so I'm not surprised that we have some duplications!) Good questions to ask? Here are a few off the top of my head. One is, what are your goals for this activity? Or lesson? Or unit? When you but it is they are trying to accomplish and don't assume, you can help them meet their goals with some new ideas -- as long as you are really focused on their goals.

Honestly, and this may not be a very popular response, getting some teachers who are very set in their ways to change may be next to Impossible. I found through teaching high school students that we can't really make anyone do anything. We can create conditions that help them to see a different future. If they buy into that future, they may want to change. Even if we are physically able to force change, often I found it it is reluctant change and it doesn't have the results that we hoped for.

What are some ways to support teachers that are hesitant of trying tech tools because the teacher feels like they will "lose control" of their students with using technology inappropriately and/or doesn't exactly match the standards in their content? -- Kelli Schulz

Ah yes, the control issue. I think many times, there is an illusion of control. We think that we have it. However, lots of things may be happening in the background or unbeknownst to us. Like I was saying in my response to the previous question, we can't really make anyone do anything. We can for students to reluctantly do what we ask, but there might not be much learning that comes out of that. If we give students some choice or help cater our classes to what interest them, there may be more desire on their part to actually learn. It's amazing how the mind is opened up when the learner is a willing participant.

And as far as the standards go, there are so many ways to meet a Content standard. Just because the textbook covers it in a certain way doesn't mean that we have to as well. I will tell you about one of my favorite examples of this. I have a friend whose students did a Skype video call with students in Kenya just for fun. After the call was over, the students did some research on their own and found out about the poverty and unsanitary conditions where the Kenyan students lived. They decided that they wanted to help those students out. My friend loves yeah I'm doing a project like that. Instead of saying that the project didn't fit neatly in the standards, he found ways to fit that project into the standards. It was one of the most memorable experiences those students had, and it all happened because he found a way to match the activity to the standards, not match standards to the activity.

What are some of your favorite retrieval strategies? -- Holly Glade

I am so glad you asked about retrieval strategies! I think this is a super powerful teaching strategy that we don't use nearly enough. I am going to refer you to my favorite website about this, retrievalpractice.Org. use the strategies tab at the top to learn about retrieval, spacing, interleaving and more.

What do you use in your grading or assessment practices, digital or other, that still keep the student engagement high and give them some control over their learning while providing you and the district with the data you need?

Enjoying and gaining great tools/ideas from "Ditch that Textbook". Thank you! -- Alexa Kongable

Alexa, this is such a great question. I wish I had a better answer for it! Honestly, grading and assessment are not my greatest strengths. I love instructional practices and building curriculum, but I have always known that my grading practices leave something to be desired. For me, grading has always been a necessary evil. I put so much emphasis on learning being a practice that is rewarding in and of itself. When we focus on the learning, I'm always hopeful that students develop that as a lifelong skill, and then we figure out the grade part. I know that this is sort of an idealistic way of looking at it.

when it comes to student engagement, I really believe that it's more than just having fun for the sake of fun in the classroom. There is lots of research behind the importance of a positive mindset and having students attention. If it means that I need to show a quick video clip, have student create something meaningful with content, or relate something to their favorite social media app, I don't see that as frivolous. I see it as an important part of the engaged learning process.

What was the culture around you like when you started your journey as a high school teacher looking to (I assume) challenge the norms of how things were done in your high school?
How did you overcome any resistance or 'nay saying' by colleagues?
How do you advise to overcome the opposite of the Share Everything mindset (Ch. 18, pg 101) when colleagues either don't want to share OR aren't open to listening? -- Tom Griffin

the culture around me as a beginning High School teacher, I believe, was very traditional. Lots of teaching straight out of the textbook. Lots of students seated quietly. It looked a lot like a lot of classrooms all across the United States oh, I'm sure. When I started teaching, I really didn't set out to challenge the Norms of how things were done in my school. I just wanted to find a way to help my students learn Spanish. As I started to find things that worked and learn more about the process of teaching and learning, I started to see how those could apply be on my classroom.

I have had colleagues that quietly disagreed with what I was doing. I'm sure that this is the way it is in all schools. Honestly, with so much of how I taught in my own classroom, I could point to a variety of different kinds of results that showed that it was successful. Even if what I was doing wasn't the personal preference of a teacher who disagreed, I could still show how it was effective.

We have touched on teachers who aren't open to listening above. When colleagues don't want to share, I can understand that. But for me, I also know how important it was in my early days that people did share. I know that I learned so much from authors and bloggers and other Educators on Twitter who were willing to be transparent. Answer some questions. Show me what they were doing. Because I got so much out of that, I felt a moral imperative to share what I was doing too. I think some of the fears come from teachers being afraid that they will be criticized or told that they are wrong or not good at what they do. I have found that the vast majority of people who see what I share online and in-person are just thankful that I'm

willing to share it. They will take what is useful to them. And if it isn't useful to them, they will just leave it behind. Some people will criticize, but I found it bats just a normal part of everyday life. It's a risk that we run no matter what we do.

I love how you mention using technology to enhance your teaching, but not making it a requirement or something you need to check off on a checklist of things to use in your room. I use google sites, youtube, google calendar, etc. and recording programs like Audacity with my students in my band room and for them to have resources at home. I have definitely found using this technology has made me a better communicator with parents and given easy to access resources to my students. Do you have any other suggestions of cool ways to use technology in the band room? -- Kendra Parker

It sounds like you were doing exciting things in your band classroom! One tool that I know music educators have said has been very helpful to them is Flipgrid. it's a simple video response tool. Music educators have talked about how students can practice and perform on video, giving the teacher a chance to see everyone's performances again and leave meaningful feedback, even video feedback.

Matt, what would you say are the best ways to reach those students whom either A - don't have access to technology or B - have access but refuse to use their data on school work? -- Matt Breitbach

this is such an important issue in the schools in my area here in rural Indiana. Lots of students don't have reliable internet access when they get home. Many of them only have cell phone internet access, and as you mentioned, using the internet with that means burning some of your data. I have found that so many of our devices have lots of powerful capabilities when you use offline. You don't have to have internet access to get some of the best features of our devices. For instance, I wrote this post about how students can get lots of use out of their Chromebooks when they aren't connected to the internet. This is important for doing work outside of school and for eLearning days, where students stay home and do work there so they don't have to make a cancel day of school up.

In what ways have you applied the "minimum effective dose" concept to your personal life? -- Amber Wetzel

I used it today in fact! As I was getting ready for this webinar, I had a few things I needed to do first. One was to get a blog post up on my website. There were a handful of design changes and other features I could have added to it. But I asked myself the same kind of question that you would with the minimum effective dose. I asked, how much would these extra changes impact the overall experience people would get from reading this post? What's the least that I can do to get the results that I want? There were a few features that I didn't add because they weren't going to change that overall experience very much. I published the post. Then I opened up this document and started answering all of your questions! I can apply to minimum effective dose to this too. I could ask, what's the least that I could do to get the results that I want here? Based on the experience that I want all of you to have with this webinar, cutting out some of the questions that I answer would not create the experience that I want. Therefore, I decided that it was important to answer every single question. Plus, I answered all of the questions using voice typing in Google Docs. I knew that some of the formatting and capitalization and punctuation would be sloppy, but again, the minimum effective dose was met. Did I need to go back and make all of those changes to have the effect that I wanted in this webinar? I don't think so! Also, I was able to repurpose some presentation slides from another presentation so that I didn't have to build new slides for this webinar. I

knew that brand new slides would not improve the experience, so those are a couple of ways that I arrived at the minimum effective dose for this webinar.

With all the tools, apps and devices, how can a teacher or school district decide what will be best for them? -- Kay Staley

I think it's important to keep a focus on what you want to achieve. You don't have to use all of the tools that are available. You don't even have to use many of them. If you can find one thing that helps you improve something that you do in the classroom, I think that time and effort well spent. I think it's also important to keep an eye on the results that it produces. That doesn't have to be grades in the Gradebook. If you can find something to measure and keep an eye on that, you will see if the tool, app or device is making an impact.

From Katie Johnston to All Panelists: 02:02 PM
Dallas Center-Grimes Middle School
From Norma Salas to All Panelists: 02:03 PM
Good afternoon to everyone! My name is Norma from Perú.
From Cara Orr to All Panelists: 02:03 PM
Newton High School in Newton, IA
From Jody Kelley to All Panelists: 02:03 PM
Greeting from Ballard
From Deb Vail to All Panelists: 02:06 PM
Link to Matt's blog: http://ditchthattextbook.com/
DitchthatTextbook.com/IHeartland
From Renee Collins to All Panelists: 02:07 PM
I see black screen
I see
From Deb Vail to All Panelists: 02:07 PM
Link to Matt's books on Amazon:
https://www.amazon.com/Matt-Miller/e/B00W8BK3II?ref_=dbs_p_pbk_r00_abau_000000
From Renee Collins to All Panelists: 02:09 PM
Thank you Matt for taking the time to answer all our questions
arrrrgggggg
From kay staley to All Panelists: 02:09 PM
arrrr
From Catherine Hines to Everyone: 02:10 PM
ARRRGG
From Patricia Slechta to Everyone: 02:10 PM
arrrrrrrrr
From Deb Vail to All Panelists: 02:10 PM
Aarrggg
From Norma Salas to Everyone: 02:11 PM
Good afternoon to everyone! My name is Norma from Perú.

From Deb Vail to All Panelists: 02:13 PM
Hi Norma
Hi Katie
Hi Cara
Hi Jody
Hi Renee
Hi Kay
From kay staley to All Panelists: 02:27 PM
my daughter just got Disney plus and gave me the password but I have not looked at it, now you have me intrigued to do so.
From Rachel Faust to Everyone: 02:30 PM
Disney Plus runs on repeat all night long and provides a lot more sanity (sometimes) for mommy while she cooks dinner!
From Catherine Hines to Everyone: 02:32 PM
Working with Spanish teacher, wel created a Twitter template in Google Slides and had students tweet in Spanish-practicing conversations
I also created a Facebook template and my students assumed the identity of a character from Death of a Salesman. They had to make posts, create friends, find images that matched the characters (we did not watch a video before this, so no pre-conceived ideas), and comment on others' profiles.
From Renee Collins to All Panelists: 02:33 PM
Love trash ket ball
From Deb Vail to Everyone: 02:37 PM
Link to Matt's blog: http://ditchthattextbook.com/
Link to site Matt made for all his webinar resources: http://ditchthattextbook.com/Heartland/
Link to Matt's books on Amazon:
https://www.amazon.com/Matt-Miller/e/B00W8BK3II?ref_=dbs_p_pbk_r00_abau_000000
From Cheryl Larson to All Panelists: 02:41 PM
Like the idea of student's moving!
I could even see that this may be a way to help students work on revising based on what they viewed on other screens. Sometimes students get "stuck" and this may be a simple way to help them move forward. (referring to the digital gallery walk)
From Jeff Glade to Everyone: 02:44 PM
If anyone is interested, as a person who loves table-top gaming, Dan Ryder is also a great resource for using popular games as models to build content-based games. @wickeddecent on twitter
From Deb Vail to Everyone: 02:51 PM
https://thenounproject.com/
From Renee Collins to All Panelists: 03:07 PM
We had our FFA advisor and one FFA student travel to Kosovo in Sept 2018 (they had to work for donations for the trip) to share about agriculture in the USA and the FFA program and learn about ag in Kosovo. They became sister schools while over there. They continue to keep in touch through technology/Skype etc. What an experience of a lifetime for all the students and Global Communication!
From Deb Vail to Everyone: 03:14 PM
Powerful Teaching
https://www.amazon.com/Powerful-Teaching-Unleash-Science-Learning/dp/111952184X
What Great Teachers Do Differently
https://www.amazon.com/What-Great-Teachers-Do-Differently-ebook/dp/B00EDN46T6
Show Your Work
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00GU2RGGI/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

From Deb Vail to Everyone: 03:26 PM
Another plus with Wakelet - I can search for other public Wakelet collections on a given topic. These are curated sets others have created.
From Renee Collins to All Panelists: 03:29 PM
Awesome Webinar! Thanks so much