

PROFILE

TRICIA FUGLESTAD, ART TEACHER, DRYDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL

>> MEANS TO AN END

To discuss how I use technology is to discuss every aspect of my curriculum. I teach digitally while the kids are creating physically. I also work with students who volunteer their time during lunch recesses to make movies—we call them Fugleflicks—that help to solve art room problems or teach an art concept to the rest of the student population. We’re using video, an interactive whiteboard that allows kids to explore, and we have an online digital art gallery. We’re doing so much with technology but it all makes sense—we’re using it not necessarily because it’s cool, but to help the students learn, explore, create, and share what they’re doing.



>> FUGLEFLICKS

An art teacher had seen a movie I had made myself and asked if I might make one about taking care of paintbrushes, an issue that all art teachers share. Thus began “Young Sloppy Brush,” the story of a once-handsome brush that succumbed to the evils of sloppiness in the hands of a careless artist. When I asked a group of 25 fifth-graders if they would like to take on that project, every one of them decided to give up recess to make it happen. They worked on a script and an original song, and put eyes on paintbrushes. They made the film in a little studio in the back of the art room. We posted it on my website and then entered it in a local festival, where it ended up winning. The kids were so excited to go on stage and explain the moviemaking process. After that, they were begging to

make movies, and there were plenty of issues to be solved. It’s become part of our culture now. Last year, our collection of Fugleflicks was nominated for an Edublog award. I thought it was amazing that these movies that we do on our lunch recess can actually make a big enough difference that other educators want to use them.

>> SPREADING THE NEWS

With our online digital art gallery, we’re sharing what we make with the world. I also have a personal learning network. I’ll tweet and post a link on my website to what we’re doing, which allows others to connect to our classrooms and do collaborative projects. Because of our participation in Artsonia, an online showcase of student art, we got to be part of a project where 100 pieces of art from all over the country were shown on a 30-foot LED screen in downtown New York City. We had 10 of those pieces in the show.

>> THE LIGHT BULB MOMENT

I went to college with an electric typewriter, and when I graduated I still didn’t know how to put together a resume on a computer. I was not a techie, and when I started teaching 20 years ago I didn’t see how technology could enhance learning. But at some point, I saw that a TV could be connected to my computer and a light bulb went off. You mean I can take something that’s on my computer and project it? Then I started

MY TOP 3...

NETWORKING TOOLS

Artsonia (artsonia.com) “Hosts our online digital art gallery, giving my students a worldwide audience for their accomplishments and tools for connecting our classroom with their families.”

Twitter (twitter.com) “I have learned so much from following smart, tech-savvy, enthusiastic, and innovative teachers from around the world in my personal learning network.”

ArtEd 2.0 (arted20.ning.com) “This is a Ning that draws creative tech-loving art teachers from around the globe into a virtual community where they can share ideas and collaborate.”

to realize that with an internet connection, instead of showing the one print that I had of this particular artist, I could show a collection of artwork, and I could set it to music and make it into a movie. So I made it my goal in the year 2000, and every year after that, to learn how to teach digitally. I’ve become a huge advocate of technology for art teachers. Even though most of what we’re doing is traditional art making, technology is helping us learn it. And it’s also allowing the kids to do new things, like animate or paint on iPads, where the experience is completely different. The kids love it. Art for them is crazy fun.

>> CREATIVE SPARK

I was recently named 2011 Illinois Art Teacher of the Year and last year I won a 2010 PBS Teachers Innovation Award. It’s really keeping me pumped up. I feel so lucky to be an art teacher. I have no textbook, just a curriculum full of concepts, and I get to invent any way I want to cover those concepts. It’s exciting to get to be creative, and my excitement sparks my students. We’re all just in a frenzy of joy.



Do you know a K-12 technology leader or tech-savvy administrator or teacher we should profile? Tell us! E-mail michaelhart@1105media.com.