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**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

“Why CUE?” is a question that’s been on my mind lately as the CUE board works on a new strategic plan for the organization. As part of the process, we’re tackling fundamental questions about what the purpose of CUE is today and what it should be into the future. In our discussions, it has become apparent that the decision during the last strategic planning cycle to drop the Computer-Using Educator definition in favor of just “CUE” left many people asking “What is CUE?” We’ve worked hard over the past 18 months to help answer that question, and as Jon Corippo so perfectly explains, CUE is certainly more than just a conference.

The bigger question then in building a strategic plan for CUE for the next three years is “Why CUE?”. To me, the answer goes to the heart of why as a teacher I initially connected with CUE so many years ago. CUE because technology fundamentally has changed the way the world accesses information, and our students need to experience that change in their classrooms if they are to be prepared for their futures. CUE because every classroom still does not have ready access to Internet-connected devices on a daily basis. CUE because the lone nuts and the first followers from across California found each other and decided to hang out and talk about edtech. CUE because as a community of educators who embrace the power of technology to transform teaching and learning, we are better together, and we can change the world.

As we continue to move through the strategic planning process in the next few months under the expert guidance of our facilitators, Spitfire Strategies, we will be asking affiliate leaders and members (new and pioneer alike) for their input to help us, as a board, answer the question “Why CUE?” so that we can develop a strategic plan that captures the core principles of CUE as well as sets the vision for CUE over the next three years.

Help shape the future of CUE by sharing why CUE is important to you on Twitter with hashtags #WhyCUE and #WeAreCUE.

- **Andrew Schwab**

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**MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

CUE’s annual Spring Conference is one of the largest educational events in the US (maybe even the world) and a centerpiece to CUE’s annual impact with educators. More than 5,000 educators flock to the Palm Springs area to share, inspire, and collaborate. And every year, almost 60% of the attendees are first-timers. Many of these educators think of CUE as an event that happens once a year. I’d like to expand on that perception.

CUE’s membership is made up of nearly 25,000 educators who are spread all over California, Nevada, and beyond. Twenty-two CUE affiliates host local events and meetups that gather more than 8,000 educators per year across the states. CUE affiliate boards are made up of almost 100 local educators who care deeply enough about education to volunteer their time to make their local schools better for educators and students.

CUE’s legislative advocacy team helped facilitate California Net Neutrality and Information Literacy legislation this year and will be working with the CA legislature on a major funding action directed towards technology refresh and professional development beginning this Spring. CUE’s efforts help fund and bring updated legislation to California educators.

CUE has several large events in addition to the Palm Spring Conference. Fall CUE hosts over 1,000 attendees in Northern CA, CUE BOLD (Blended, Online, Lesson and Design) is growing almost 30% annually, and CUE co-hosts Lead3 for educational leaders each April with several hundred administrators in attendance.

On-going, year-round professional development is also a core activity at CUE, and our team of over 200 Lead Learners (working practitioners) has trained more than 45,000 educators nationwide since 2014, helping teachers be more effective pedagogically while seamlessly integrating technology throughout their lessons. CUE professional learning has positively impacted millions of students.

Is Spring CUE a big deal? Of course it is. But CUE is so much more than a three-day event in Palm Springs!

- **Jon Corippo**

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**MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

WINTER 2019
THE QUEST TO SOLVE FOR X

by Michael Cohen, The Tech Rabbi
Category: Inspiration

To think today that you can film, edit, and produce an entire film all via your smartphone is something that barely a decade ago seemed unimaginable. The iPhone completely changed the way we can create in the world. This drive to give people the empowered feeling of being creators in the world is a core mission of Apple. Not just to consume information as status quo but in their words to think different. It can't stop at thinking though. It needs to lead to action.

Today in education we are at a point where the entire scope of human knowledge sits inside our pocket. Yet our students many times struggle to find information and the confidence to do something with it beyond answering a multiple choice question. Whether it’s finding a way to master a new skill, to learn about cutting edge technologies in professional fields, or to solve a problem about which they are curious and passionate, how prepared are our students to delve into this ocean of information and act on it?

Students no longer need to spend their days as memorization machines and human Siris.

“Hey Siri, what’s the capital of Oklahoma?”

“Hey Siri, who won the battle at Bunker Hill?”

“Hey Siri, what is x?”

Siri can’t answer x, but this isn’t a question of 3x + 6 = 11.

X is an unknown in the world that is waiting to be solved. We need to give our students the resources and the drive to solve these ‘x’s. It doesn't need to be a global challenge either. Students need to start small and look at ways that academic knowledge and skills can improve their schools, their communities, and their cities. Regardless of the mission, students need to be given the opportunity to research, find information, and use it to create content that can launch an incredible project.

A great start to any important challenge or cause is to create awareness. A Public Service Announcement (PSA) project is a way to help students learn to educate and influence others about topics that are important to them. Using Adobe Spark, students can learn the process of
visual storytelling and content creation. You can find a great example from one of my students and even more Adobe Spark resources.

Another incredible project idea is a charity sports game. Most schools have a gym or field and plenty of people who enjoy sports. By giving students the challenge of creating a charity event from scratch, you teach them incredible skills in research, planning, communication, organization, and implementation. In the end, students have learned through an unforgettable experience and brought value to others through entertainment and charitable giving.

A third project that has amazing potential involves education’s infatuation with coding. In a project like this, we put student coding skills to the test. As an app development team, students need to program and design an app that helps fix a problem at school. Implementing the Design Thinking process, students use an empathetic lens to identify real challenges at their school through surveys, interviews, and polling. As they progress through the design process from wireframe to polished app, the end game isn’t learning to code, it’s learning to improve the lives of others.

There is an endless amount of project ideas that could be created to solve an “x” in the world. The challenge is how to create the space, time, and opportunities for students to embark on the quest to solve for x.

Michael Cohen, The Tech Rabbi, is a designer, educator and creativity instigator. His mission is to help educators around the world reveal their own creative abilities so they can empower students to solve interesting problems and become positive contributors to our global society. When he isn’t traveling the world sharing his message, he serves as the director of innovation for Yevisha University of Los Angeles Boys School (YULA).
Like every #FallCUE, it is awesome to see the members of our PLN that we can’t always see IRL due to distance or availability. The power of CUE conferences comes from the people you meet and the relationships and professional connections you make. We can remember going to #FallCUE for the first time four years ago, meeting new people, signing up for Twitter, and really immersing ourselves in the CUE community. From that conference we jumped into Twitter chats, had dialogs with new PLN members online and in Voxer, and felt excited to go back to our classrooms and implement our new learning and techniques. Nothing inspires and invigorates like the #WeAreCUE family, and it was another great weekend of learning, connecting and catching up.

Tom Covington recovering High School English Teacher turned Technology Integration Specialist for Bassett Unified. His passion is teaching, and using the power of technology to get their voices heard. He is a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert Master Trainer, Tynker Blue Ribbon Educator, Leading Edge Certified Professional Learning Leader, CUE Rockstar Faculty, Flipgrid Ambassador. He co-hosts a podcast TOSAs Talking Tech for BUSD, find it here: www.bit.ly/tttbusd or www.tomtalksabout.com

Michael is a Technology Integration Specialist in the Bassett Unified School District from La Puente, California. He has been teaching and providing professional development for students and teachers since 2001. Michael is a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert, Apple Teacher with Swift Playground recognition, Leading Edge Professional Learning Leader, ClassDoJo Mentor, Blue Ribbon Educator Tynker as well as being a co-host on @TOSAsTalkinTech #podcastedu bit.ly/TTTbusd
Laurie Wong Roberts
RedlandsUSD

Post: #FallCUE sleepy selfies + one Energizer Bunny in a casino (Ann) + one bright-eyed morning after selfie (Roland) = #WeAreCUE and the fulfillment of a #squadgoal! I never knew I needed until now.

8:08 AM - 15 Oct 2018 from Redlands, CA

Katie McNamara
@kotchmann

Great times at #FallCUE Meet the Authors. ❤️❤️❤️ these fabulous ladies!

2:18 PM - 14 Oct 2018

Joe Marquez, The EdTech MacGyver
@jmarquez723

Had an amazing time in Napa for #FallCUE and thank you @annkozma723 for hosting the #CUEBOOM and allowing me to speak with and to so many amazing educators!

3:44 PM - 15 Oct 2018

Nicole Barrasso
@nicolebarrasso

Such an amazing #pin of inspiring educators of @krausecenter at #fallcue! Some amazing people in this photo but this doesn’t come close to everyone that is a part of #kcl! Such a great time learning from all of you! #merit17 #EMpowered18

7:37 PM - 14 Oct 2018

Corey Cobe
@GCExcellence

@capcue has #cucukakes for its members here at #FallCUE2018 #FallCUE Thanks @PamOien and @kshevy for the sweet idea!

11:27 AM - 14 Oct 2018

Veronica Godinez
@vdillegren

Still digesting #FallCUE notes from the 57 sessions I selected & from the few I did attend. @bocaillor did say #YourBrainWillHurt YES it still hurts but it’s all good-Tylenol will NOT help. We must DO! What did you try in your classroom? #WeAreCUE borrowed slide @CrazySciTeach

5:32 AM - 17 Oct 2018

Coach Ben
@CoachBen

Day two of great memories @ #FallCUE #mbcue #ivcue #wearecue

3:30 PM - 14 Oct 2018

#WEARECUE
WANT TO GROW AS AN EDUCATOR? PRESENT!

Author: Kristin Oropeza
Category: Inspiration

I was recently involved in a #caedchat Twitter chat in which the question was posed: “What is the value of speaking at a conference? How does one go about doing so?” This question got me thinking (as they usually do), and it motivated me to do some self-reflection. Why present at conferences at all?

1. It (not so gently) pushes you to grow as an educator. Presenting wasn’t even on my radar until this past summer when I approached one of my close colleagues, Angela Barnett, and brought up the idea of submitting a proposal to a local conference. Why not, we said. What’s the worst that could happen—we get turned down? And we did…a few times. Until we didn’t and we were asked to present (for the first time EVER) at Gold Coast CUE’s Techtober event. That first proposal acceptance snowballed into a slew of others (California STEAM Symposium, SGVCUE’s Innovation Celebration, SDCUE’s Tech Fair, IACUE’s Tech Fair, and the Spring CUE Conference). Every time I get up in front of a room full of my peers, it pushes me to step a little bit more out of my comfort zone. (I am no public speaker!) It also teaches me some very valuable things about myself as an educator of adults—patience, positivity, and passion just to name a few!

2. Represent. I wanted to start presenting because I, as a special education teacher, felt underrepresented at every conference I attended. I wasn’t seeing many SPED teachers showing up to the conferences, and I was seeing even fewer at the front of the room talking about the things that I value and want to hear about. Gandhi’s “Be the change” words repeated over and over in my head every time I saw another conference schedule that lacked teachers with backgrounds or experience in teaching students in special education. If you’re not seeing the types of presenters you want at conferences, apply, apply, apply! BE THE CHANGE!

3. Passion is tangible. I don’t consider what I do to be “innovative” or at the forefront of edtech. But I have a passion for helping students, especially students who have long been marginalized. The tools and strategies I share aren’t new. But I find that they work with the demographic I teach…and work well. I would hope that my passion and background in special education are what help bring educators to our sessions. I absolutely LOVE when I see teachers (and administrators!) get excited about the material I’m presenting! It makes me want to go out and keep presenting—to share the knowledge.

4. Network with your Twitter PLN IRL! The power of Twitter is truly amazing. I have made more professional connections via social media than I have in all of the districts I have worked for combined. Not only do I have the privilege of chatting, tweeting, and connecting with these educators online, but now as a conference presenter, I’m also connecting with my professional learning network in real life. I’m meeting individuals I follow and admire on Twitter when they fill the seats of my session or workshop. Talk about having to bring your A-game!
5. Opportunities abound. I don’t think that I ever would have had the guts to apply to be CUE’s next OnCUE blogger had I not taken a chance with presenting. Presenting pushed me—and continues to push me—into becoming a better educator. I grow a little more confident in my craft every time I present and have someone approach me and say, “Hey! That was a great session! I really learned something!” Presenting at conferences definitely will make you a better educator…and it can lead to other opportunities you couldn’t (or wouldn’t let yourself) imagine before getting into presenting.

If you’re looking to present a proposal for an upcoming conference (or just would like to attend one), check out all the CUE local and statewide events at cue.org/events.

Kristin Oropeza is a full-time Technology TOSA in Little Lake City School District. Prior to becoming a TOSA, she worked as a special education teacher in a SDC classroom for seven years. Kristin has worked in public education for over 10 years and has worked in several districts across Los Angeles County. Kristin is also a Google Certified Educator Level 1 & 2, as well as an Apple Teacher. When she’s not working, you can find her as the other half of the “Tech Tribe EDU” blogging team and presenting at teaching conferences, sharing her passion for EdTech with others!

BREAKING INTO BREAKOUT EDU

Author: Mari Venturino
Category: Learn

What exactly is this Breakout EDU thing I keep hearing about?

You may have heard about escape rooms, where you pay someone to lock you and your friends in a room, and you must collaborate to solve puzzles within the time limit in order to escape. People do this for fun! And they actively seek out escape rooms in new cities they visit!

It’s not exactly practical (or legal) to lock your kids in your classroom and ask them to escape.

Instead you are given a box locked with multiple locks. Students must find and decode clues in order to break into the box. It’s not a scavenger hunt or glorified worksheet—students must collaborate, communicate, think critically, and act creatively in order to successfully break out. Sound familiar? Those are the 4 C’s of 21st century learning!

It’s easy to get started with Breakout EDU. Purchase a kit and explore the free games on the Breakout EDU website. All of the games come with setup instructions, making it easy to play with your students.

One of the best parts about Breakout EDU is that it promotes positive failure. Often in class if students get an answer wrong, they are reluctant to try again. However, with Breakout EDU if students get an answer wrong, they pull on the lock, and it does not open. Instead of shutting down, they are even more motivated to try again and again until they open the lock. For teachers, it’s a magical experience to observe.

The following are sample clues from an 8th grade science Breakout EDU game I created for a friend’s class. Can you solve them?

Typically, Breakout EDU games have a 30-45 minute time limit. At the end of the time, students have to stop working. With your students, debrief
the activity. DO NOT skip this step! I cannot say this enough: the debrief at the end is the most important part of the game! When students don’t break out, it often leads to the best discussions (and they’re even more motivated to work harder the next time!).

Discuss the positives and not-so-positives of the group’s collaboration, cooperation, and communication. Allow students to reflect on how they contributed to the team effort and what changes they could make for the next time they play.

Please, whatever you do, don’t grade Breakout EDU games. This takes away from the fun and adventure and adds even more pressure to students. If you really must collect some sort of learning evidence, create a rubric and have students complete a written reflection.

It is important to help students validate both their successes and frustrations when playing a game like Breakout EDU. As my students are playing, I rarely intervene. Occasionally, I’ll drop quiet hints to a student who is on the game periphery. I only step into a group if students blatantly are being disrespectful to each other; even still, I wait a few beats before interrupting a group to see if another student will confront negative behavior.

It’s difficult for many students to think this way because they are so used to the question-answer formula. For teachers, it’s even harder to facilitate Breakout EDU. We naturally want to be the bearers of information and have to work extra hard to be quiet during the game. I usually find something to keep myself occupied while my students are working, like taking pictures or taking notes on positive things I hear and see during the game.

When you’re ready to extend Breakout EDU even further, try having students create their own games. It’s an incredibly difficult process, so I recommend putting students into groups of four-five, with each student responsible for one lock. Here’s how I did it in my classroom this year.

Another fun Breakout EDU option is Breakout EDU Digital, which takes the Breakout EDU fun and turns it into an entirely online game. The great part about Breakout EDU Digital is there is no setup: give students the game link and let them play. Better yet, play along with your students! Read more about how it all got started.

Want to connect with more Breakout EDU fans? Check out Breakout EDU on Twitter, #BreakoutEDU, and the Facebook Group.

Good luck, and happy playing!

Editor’s Note: Make sure to come to the Spring CUE 2019 Conference in Palm Springs, CA. Breakout EDU founder, Adam Bellow, will host an exclusive speakeasy session, and all CUE Premium Members are in the running to win a spot!

Mari Venturino is a 7th grade science and AVID teacher and Blended Learning Specialist at Mar Vista Academy in San Diego, CA. She is a Google For Education Certified Trainer and Innovator, and a National Board Certified Teacher. Mari was awarded the CUE Outstanding Emerging Teacher of the Year and ISTE Emerging Leader awards in 2017. She is a member of the ASCD Emerging Leader Class of 2018. Mari is the editor of Fueled by Coffee and Love, a collection of real stories by real teachers.
I’ve been a Teachers Pay Teachers seller since about 2012. I don’t run a store that’s making me enough money so I can retire from my day job, stay home, and focus on my TPT selling (although I wish I did!). I don’t even make enough annually to pay for a nice family vacation. I started my TPT store with the intention of putting up products that I made for my own classroom use—products that other teachers might find useful and that might earn me a couple of extra bucks. I did not start my store with the goal of leaving the classroom or making more money than I do as a teacher (which some TPT sellers do!). I simply was working my side hustle.

That being said, I have invested in my TPT store and have purchased commercial fonts, clip art, and the accompanying licenses in order to sell products that are pleasing to the eye and that fellow teachers would be proud to use in their classrooms. Fonts, clip art, and commercial licenses are NOT cheap, especially if you don’t sell tons of stuff! But I did it—and continue to do it—because that’s what a responsible seller does.

So when teachers share TPT purchases without purchasing the additional licenses, it irks me. I try to encourage my colleagues to see why additional licenses are important (and why sellers aren’t just doing it to make an extra buck). We aren’t trying to swindle you, but we also shoulder product costs that may go unnoticed by buyers.

My take on products I make in the G-Suite is a little different. I tend to want to share what I make with other educators, like graphic organizers, newsletters, and Docs templates—fairly generic items that any teacher could manipulate and use in his or her classroom. I know and understand that there are teachers who do put more effort than I do into G-Suite creations and subsequently feel the need to sell their products.

This leads to the bigger question: when do (or should) we share? And what do we share? With the way we teach constantly changing and with the need for lessons to address the 4 C’s of 21st century learning, teachers should be actively trying to work with other teachers. (The whole point behind the collaborative component of the G-Suite apps is getting “collaborators” to work on documents TOGETHER.) I think this also includes sharing valuable resources that other teachers could use in their own classrooms and inspire their colleagues to use.

I know that lessons can be a beast and that many educators want to put a price tag on their hard work and upload it to TPT as soon as possible. (I get it…I’ve been there.) But I also think of all the educators who post their hard work to share with others—Eric Curts (Control Alt Achieve), Lisa Highfill and the HyperDoc girls (HyperDocs), and the entire #TeachersGiveTeachers movement—without asking so much as a penny (just a simple “give credit where credit is due”). If educators were more open and willing to share their QUALITY resources and templates, can you imagine the effect it would have on our students?

**If you’re ready to share your lessons with other educators, make sure to check out fellow SMC Shannon Talbado’s blog post for more pointers!**

Kristin Oropeza is a full-time Technology TOSA in Little Lake City School District. Prior to becoming a TOSA, she worked as a special education teacher in a SDC classroom for seven years. Kristin has worked in public education for over 10 years and has worked in several districts across Los Angeles County. Kristin is also a Google Certified Educator Level 1 & 2, as well as an Apple Teacher. When she’s not working, you can find her as the other half of the “Tech Tribe EDU” blogging team and presenting at teaching conferences, sharing her passion for EdTech with others!

**MAKIN’ & CREATIN’**

*by Lisa Nowakowski*

**Category: Innovation**

Are you looking to start a MakerSpace at your school or in your classroom? Do you need resources and guidance to get started? Or maybe you have a MakerSpace and are looking for ideas on how to make it better. The folks at MakerSpace for Education have you covered.

MakerSpace for Education offers online professional development resources whether you are just beginning or looking to “up your game.” This site goes through the different frameworks of MakerSpace
including constructionism, the maker movement, design thinking, and media literacy.

A wealth of information can be found under the Materials of MakerSpace tab, including a list of possible tools, both tech and non-tech, to be used in a MakerSpace. There is something for everyone. This helpful resource breaks down the tools for beginning to advanced users and gives helpful hints and lesson ideas.

This amazing site continues to grow. Users are encouraged to share their lesson ideas. Happy creating!

Lisa is a Google Certified Innovator, Google Education Trainer, PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator, and presenter. She has helped others through her blog: NowaTechie.com. She is the creator of MathReps.com and co-contributor to EduReps.rocks. She is also co-hosts a podcast with Nancy Minicozzi called - T.L.C. - Tech. Learn. Coffee that can be heard the first and third Monday of every month.

**WANT MORE HOUR OF CODE?**

*by Shannon Tabaldo*

*Category: Learn*

You don’t have to stop coding wit your students just because Computer Science Week ended in December. Keep doing Hour of Code in your classroom every week.

Listen to the My Tech Toolbelt Podcast episode 18 featuring Jillian Hoffman, a fourth grade teacher in Torrance, CA, as she talks about how she started Hour of Code at her school and the grant she wrote to support the project.

After you listen to the episode, let us know how your students reacted to Hour of Code via Twitter: #hour of code.

Shannon Tabaldo is the co-host of the My Tech Toolbelt Podcast and the Founding Director of the Innovation in Digital Education & Leadership (iDEAL) Institute & Sr. Lecturer in the School of Edu at LMU. Her goal is to ensure equity in access when it comes to ed tech. A Google Certified Innovator & MIE, she delivers workshops on blended learning, assistive tech, G-suite & iPads. Shannon is a tech nerd, loves geeking out over the latest gadget & riding her electric bike. Follow her @TabaldoOnTech.

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**CUE CARES**

*by Mary Kopp, CUE Inc.*

*Category: Affiliate Engagement*

All of us at CUE saw the devastating fires in Northern and Southern California the past six months. We are heartbroken at the loss of the homes, schools, and businesses of our extended CUE family. We have set up a webpage as a resource for our members looking to help those affected by the fires and are including links to many of the organizations that we are hearing from. At this time of year we are thankful and grateful for all of you, and we stand ready to help in any small way we can.

If you have a resource or story to share, please email mkopp@cue.org or follow us on Twitter at #CUEcares.

**WAYS YOU CAN HELP**

Thank you to CUE member Randall Sampson for creating a beautiful visual page with all the CUE Cares resources!

**TAKING A (MINI) CUE FROM FALL CUE18**

*by David Shun*

*Category: Inspiration*

“Can we do this again so we can attend sessions that we couldn’t do this time?” was my favorite question my teaching staff asked. Are we talking about CUE18? No, but we could have been!

My teachers at Macy Elementary are excited for another round of our Macy Mini-CUE after attending sessions hosted by our teachers who discussed impactful topics from the 2018 CUE Conference in Palm Springs, California.

We started the PLC (Professional Learning Community) meeting with the Macy Mini-CUE
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REGISTRATION OPENS IN SPRING, 2019

Transform Teaching with MacOS
Featuring Andy Losik
presenters sharing the topic about which they were most passionate in a 30-second elevator pitch. This way, all the attending teachers were well informed about the topic session choices. The presenters offered two sessions teachers could attend, which met the needs of our staff who have a wide range of technology proficiency and met the needs of grade level relevancy.

Ms. Blackler, a speech and language pathologist, presented on using assistive instructional technology featuring the Code and Go Robot Mouse to aid assistive instruction to enhance the educational experience for special needs students.

Mrs. Pimper, a kindergarten teacher, shared the power of OSMO by offering an immersive hands-on demonstration of all the features that OSMO provides. She demonstrated a range of instructional tools such as phonics and CVC activities, coding, and the ever-popular Hot Wheels MindRacers.

Third grade teacher Mr. Mangold presented on how to use the Do Ink app to make photos and videos in combination with a green screen. He showcased how teachers can enhance students’ reports and projects by adding an exciting photo or video background. For example, for a report on presidents, Mr. Mangold placed a teacher volunteer in the middle of the Oval Office shaking hands with a host of former presidents.

Ms. Rutledge, a fourth grade teacher, brought HyperDocs to life and helped to remove the technology anxiety barrier for some teachers by sharing how HyperDocs can enhance student learning and engagement with easy-to-follow, pre-built templates to get any teacher started. Fifth grade teachers Ms. Lee and Mrs. Ornelas presented Flip Grid and Google Slides. Ms. Lee featured the power of Google Slides. Before CUE18 she thought Google Slides was just another Microsoft PowerPoint. But, after attending “Google Slides: More Than a Presentation Tool”, she was excited to demonstrate how Google Slides can be used to produce student-created magazines, writing logs, reflection journals, and “choose your own” adventure stories! Mrs. Ornelas focused on how Flip Grid can be used to scaffold, differentiate, and innovate how students present information in class. She also explained how Flip Grid can be used to create class pen pals, support absent parents, add another dimension to parent/school communication, and encourage students to practice speaking and listening skills.

Mrs. Petrakis, a sixth-grade teacher, shared Book Snaps modified for primary instruction. Our primary teachers appreciated finding out how Book Snaps can be modified to facilitate primary students’ interaction. Students in any grade, but especially in kindergarten through second grade, can create a pen and paper picture of a book they read and physically write captions that show what they know or questions they have about the book. It’s a perfect lead in to having older students knowing and enjoying Book Snaps as they progress to a technology-based Book Snap Practice. The best part is the connections the students make with books on a personal level.

After our presentation sessions, we reconvened to share “Glows and Grows” via exit tickets that were styled after Twitter tweets to celebrate our Twitter Professional Learning Network (my staff went from having two Twitter users to thirteen) and to tie into the theme of educational technology tools. In all, the shift in pedagogy and practice with educational technology in regard to the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) model, a model that helps teachers measure implementation of technology, has sprouted thanks in part to this amazing experience.
With all the challenges in orchestrating effective and relevant professional development in this time of shrinking budgets, when teachers are asked to do more with less, it was refreshing to hear all the positive conversations sparked among teachers who genuinely enjoyed sharing and learning from each other. The accolades go not only to our presenters but also to the receptiveness and motivation of all teachers who are removing barriers and being open to innovations. After our inaugural Macy Mini-CUE, Macy Elementary looks forward to many more PLC focused Mini-CUE installments.

With 21 years in education, David Shun is currently a proud principal whose vision is to bring 21st Century skills to all students. With a Masters in Educational Technology Leadership and as a Leading Edge Administrator, his core accomplishments include Presenting on STEM/STEAM topics with Discovery Education, Lowell Joint School District, and he looks forward to presenting with the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). He is published with ACSA and on the OnCUE website.

WHAT’S A CONNECTED EDUCATOR ANYWAY?

by Mike Messner
Category: Inspiration

“Well, we’re all connected educators. We’re all online, you know. There’s nothing special about that. What’s the big deal?”

That’s the response I get from teachers who are unclear on the radical new thing called being a connected educator. Apparently, the assumption is that since their classrooms are connected to a larger computer network, they must be connected educators. And sure, on some level they could call themselves connected.

But it goes deeper than that. Being connected to the Internet for the modern educator, as important as it is, doesn’t make that educator any more special than a school having a copier 20 years ago, a library 30 years ago, or electricity 50 years ago. (I’m not singling out those districts who truly don’t have those amenities—they exist, and they do need help — but they probably are not the norm, and I daresay anyone who is reading this blog post doesn’t work at one.)

Educators who think they are connected simply because of their access to the Internet might as well believe they are Olympic weightlifters because they have a pair of arms. It doesn’t qualify.

“Well,” some others have argued, “I have a Facebook account. I’m on Instagram. I even have a Twitter handle.” (In most cases, the teachers making this argument haven’t accessed their Twitter accounts since 2015 or think it’s “too confusing.”) “I’m active on social media. I’m connected.” But to whom or what? Being on social media is necessary to being a connected educator. But how are you using those social media tools? Are they part of your approach to education? Are you using them to deepen your practices or discover new ones? To connect with your students in a meaningful and appropriate way (if your district allows)? Do you communicate with other teachers to share resources and experiences or to discuss the issues you are facing with your students? Or are you doing what the majority of people on social media are doing: posting pictures of food or pets, getting into pointless flame wars over politics, or playing games?

“Well, then, what’s a connected educator?” my colleagues sigh, thinking that I’ve got to be the densest or most esoteric teacher who ever came down the pike.

It means you’re making connections with other teachers and with students.

It means you communicate with kids regularly, not just when you give the whole group instruction we all have to deliver with some regularity. It means you let them know that you are there for them: to listen, to support, to clarify, to motivate, to assist. It means you build a relationship with the students you’re teaching—not to be their buddy but to be their lifeline of sanity and practical love in a world of confusing information and contradiction. It means you use all the channels at your disposal to make that communication work and, yes, that includes technology if you are sensible and practical about it.
It means you communicate with other teachers regularly. Not just at your department meetings; not at the PD that your administrators make you go to; not on Friday nights at the local watering hole, and not in your teachers’ lounge (where often you’ll hear more complaining than constructive ideas). I mean you communicate with teachers who want to grow, who know they haven’t arrived, who would rather light the proverbial candle than curse the proverbial darkness.

How? Use that Internet connection or that social media you think plugs you into the lives of others. Join that Twitter chat. Find that Facebook group and get in it. Dive into that Voxer group. Make contact with other people who listen to that podcast about education. Look around for that PLN or tribe of teachers that are as passionate about kids and learning as you are.

“But I don’t have time for that,” my counterparts protest. “I’m too busy. I have the people here at school to talk to. I don’t need that other stuff.”

Okay, I get it. Take care of business. But don’t call yourself a connected educator.

I know it’s hard to quantify educational enrichment, and I don’t want to put myself on any sort of pedestal. Lord knows, I’m nowhere near an educational rockstar, and I’m making up for lost time in my own professional development. But I’d be willing to bet that I’ll be more enriched, ennobled, and empowered as a teacher by virtue of being more connected the way I’ve just described when I get to my retirement age than my colleagues who aren’t connected. Maybe I won’t be the teacher they make movies about, but I hope I’ll be the one who knows what he has to do in order to get better every day he goes into the classroom.

Mike Messner is a social studies teacher at Los Altos High School in Los Altos, California and an adjunct professor of history at Skyline College in San Bruno, California. He is also a member of #4OCFPLN, a Voxer-based network of educators dedicated to innovation and revitalization of classroom teaching.

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We all know that the more kids write, the better writers they are, but sometimes it's hard to get started. Here are some story prompt generators that will make getting started easy and fun.

**Scholastic Story Starters** generates writing prompts for grades K-6 that include direction on character, plot, and setting. Students choose from one of four themes (Adventure, Fantasy, Sci Fi, or “Scrambler”), then enter their first name, select their grade level, and pull the lever to get their prompt. They can spin any or all of the wheels again if they don't like what they get. The complexity of the prompts is determined by student grade level, so upper grade students see more sophisticated suggestions than kindergarteners. Students may choose to do their writing directly on the Scholastic website, which also gives them the option to include a drawing; they can then print or download their story as a PDF. Of course, they could also do their writing anywhere they normally would: in a writing journal, in a Google doc, etc. Scholastic provides a teacher resource guide that includes a lesson plan.

If your students are older, you will want to take a look at DIY MFA's **Writer Igniter**. Students can spin the wheels to generate prompts with a character, situation, and a prop, plus a photo to give them the setting. If students don't like their prompt, they can generate a new one, but they don't have the option of locking in any of the choices from their previous spin. The DIY MFA website also has several writing resources that your students may find useful.

Other less flashy but equally creative story starters for older kids can be found at the **Writing Exercises Random Plot Generator**, where students click buttons to generate two characters, a setting, a situation, and a theme. Clicking a button again changes that element. (Note: This is a UK site, and US students may not be familiar with an occasional British word, such as “registry office.”)

Looking for something even simpler? Consider the story plot generator at **Big Huge Thesaurus**, where each click of the button provides six unrelated opening sentences to choose from.

**Nancy is an Instructional Technology Coach in the Los Virgenes Unified School District. A Google Certified Innovator and Trainer and one of the hosts of the TLC Ninja podcast, she is passionate about helping other educators innovate their practices and presents frequently at conferences. Find her online at tlc.ninja and coffeenancy.com.**

The grassroots of CUE is found in our 22 affiliates all across California and Nevada. Our affiliates are volunteers who are teachers, administrators, and support staff with a passion for making a difference locally.

Local affiliates are non-profits; they serve on their board and work under their written bylaws to plan opportunities that inspire educators locally. They plan as a team to bring learning opportunities, events, and socials to teachers with the same mission and vision statement as CUE.

Affiliates plan small and large events that bring professional development opportunities that provide best practices with educational technology. These events are hosted at local schools or venues in their region. Events have presentations that are led by Rock Star teachers from the surrounding areas. Some are even certified by Google, Apple, and many others.

The affiliate community shares amazing examples of how to improve learning with the use of technology. Affiliate events can have inspiring keynote speakers along with inspiring stories.
shared at lunch. Affiliates work with exhibitors to plan hands-on workshops with Lego, Raspberry Pi and many others. The learning continues twelve months of the year in their own backyard. These local events provide a great opportunity to invite a friend while introducing them to the greater CUE community.

Our affiliates and their leadership plan events, workshops, socials, and other engaging opportunities for you to attend all year long. They meet monthly either in the evenings or on weekends in various locations to strategically plan for the needs of their members. Some events are meant just to be social. Connect and get inspired with new innovative ideas at your favorite local coffee house over your favorite beverage!

Most importantly, this is where you can connect with like-minded educators and friends who fill your bucket and inspire you. As an elementary teacher, my entry point in becoming more involved with CUE was getting involved with my local affiliate, San Gabriel Valley CUE. Not until then did I understand the community of CUE and the inspiration that comes from the grassroots. SGVCUE made me better as a teacher and brought new ideas to my classroom to inspire me to create a better learning experience for my students in the 21st century.

After the school year is over, affiliate leaders meet every year in the summer at their Annual Leadership Development Institute, where representatives from all 22 affiliates come together to share and learn from other affiliates about how they best serve their members. They prepare for the upcoming school year, map out events, and connect with other affiliate board members. This year’s LDI will be located in Pacific Grove at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in late July.

So do as I did. Get connected and find your local affiliate by visiting cue.org/affiliates. Click on their logo for their website information. You can also visit cue.org/events to see events happening in the coming months in your area. As a CUE member, you can select your home affiliate in your membership portal. If you become a premium CUE member, you are helping your local affiliate as $5 of your membership goes to help support your home affiliate.

So get connected today, find the next event, and get involved with like-minded innovators like yourself.

Jason Seliskar is Director of Affiliate Engagement and Exhibitor Relations for CUE. He taught elementary for ten years. He then served as a Library Media Specialist and a K-12 Technology Coach (TOSA) as well. He is also an Apple Distinguished Educator, Google Certified Innovator, and Trainer. Jason served as SGVCUE’s President for six years. CUE’s 2018 Gold Disk Award recipient and 2014 Outstanding Teacher of the Year.
CUE’s weekly educational Twitter chat, CUEchat, meets up via Twitter on Tuesday nights between 7-8 p.m. Pacific time. So, if you have not participated in a Twitter chat, or CUEchat, you may wonder what it’s all about. CUEchat provides a weekly dose of connection and encouragement for the lifelong learning educators, commonly referred to as Professional Learning Network (PLN). For many CUEchat participants, the Tuesday night meetups are a highlight of the week!

CUEchat’s structure is both consistent and variable, reflecting the best qualities of CUE itself. There are designated moderators for each week of the month. At the beginning of 2019, this is the current lineup.

For example, the first week is Leadership Development (#CUEldi), moderated by April Buege (@AprilBuege) and Dustin Ellis (@Dustin772). The second is the raucous and inspiring #CUErockstar, moderated by Jon Corippo (@jcorippo). The third week is a new entry for 2019, #CUEauthors, moderated by Judy Blakeney (@judyblakeney). The fourth, #CUEaffiliates, is moderated by Jason Seliskar (@jasonseliskar) and an affiliates leadership team. The occasional fifth Tuesday of the month rotates between CUE Learning Network (#CUElearns) and other thought leaders within and beyond @CUEinc. These chat moderators regularly bring in guest co-moderators to spice up and enhance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK OF THE MONTH</th>
<th>#CUEGROUP</th>
<th>MODERATOR(S)</th>
<th>MODERATOR TWITTER HANDLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Tuesday</td>
<td>#CUEldi</td>
<td>April Buege Dustin Ellis</td>
<td>@aprilbuege @dustin772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Tuesday</td>
<td>#CUErockstar</td>
<td>Jon Corippo</td>
<td>@jcorippo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Tuesday</td>
<td>#CUEauthors</td>
<td>Judy Blakeney</td>
<td>@judyblakeney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Tuesday</td>
<td>#CUEaffiliates</td>
<td>Jason Seliskar</td>
<td>@jasonseliskar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Tuesday (several/year)</td>
<td>#CUElearns #CUEspecials</td>
<td>Vaires</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can you resist? Don’t! Join us at #CUEchat for a weekly dose of connection, encouragement, and fun. Questions are posted in an Q1, Q2, etc. format. You can reply or retweet with a response starting with A1, A2, etc. Remember to add the hashtag #CUEchat, so we can see your responses. Need a Twitter lesson or refresher? Check out the website, Twitter4UEDU and hashtag #Twitter4UEDU for guidance on how to join a Twitter chat. See you on Tuesday nights in #CUEchat!

Judy Blakeney is a Google Certified Trainer and Innovator, with a passion for strength-based education. She works as a middle school English/CTE Teacher and Instructional Coach at Aliso Viejo Middle School. She has a passion for self-directed learning using social media, particularly with Twitter and #CUEchat.
Tony Thurmond, recent assembly member, educator and public school parent, took his oath of office as California’s twenty-eighth state superintendent of public instruction Monday, January 7 and said that it was an honor to lead the state’s 6.2 million students and more than 10,000 schools. The swearing-in ceremony was headed by Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. It featured remarks from Congresswoman Barbara Lee and leaders of legislative caucuses representing diverse communities of California. CUE was represented by John and Ruthmary Cradler, who spoke with prior state superintendents—Bill Honig, Delaine Eastin, and Tom Torlakson—State Board of Education members and others from the CDE. They also had an opportunity to talk to the new deputy superintendent, Lupita Alcalá, and Mary Nicely, special projects director, about ACR 268.

For details, read press release from the CDE: https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr19/yr19rel01.asp.

Lupita Cortez Alcalá was sworn in as chief deputy to California State Superintendent of Public Instruction on Wednesday, January 9 at the State Board of Education meeting after the board approved her appointment. Cortez Alcalá served for more than 12 years at the California Department of Education as deputy superintendent in the Teaching and Learning Support branch. For details, read the CDE press release: https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr19/yr19rel02.asp.

Governor Newsom’s Proposed 2019-2020 State Budget

Governor Newsom proposed increasing K-12 education funding by $2.3 billion, investing $1.8 billion in early education and $3.7 billion to help districts with rising pension costs with a one-time $3 billion contribution to CalSTRS and $700 million each in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21 to reduce the rates districts are charged for employee pensions. The proposed budget will be revised based on new legislation and recommendations from the legislature by May 15. The final budget will be signed in July 2019. Read the proposed budget at: http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/budget/2018-19/#/BudgetSummary.

Delaine Eastin is Optimistic about Newsom Administration and Education’s Future

Eastin, a former state superintendent, is a member of Governor Newsom’s transition team to advise on education and educational technology. She expressed her optimism about the budget in a Facebook post: “The focus on education, from preschool through higher education, children, low income families, healthcare, mental health, housing and the homeless in Gavin Newsom’s first budget makes me optimistic about this administration and the future of California. This is what investing in the future should look like.” Eastin has agreed to participate in the planning for the California Educational Technology Summit with CUE leadership as recommended in ACR 268.

Update on the CUE-Initiated Educational Technology Resolution

On August 31, 2018, Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 268, by Assembly Members Tony Thurmond (now state superintendent), Kevin Mullin, and Cecilia
Aguiar-Curry, passed in the state assembly and senate, and was chaptered on September 11, 2018. ACR 268 was initiated by CUE with support from other education entities. Assembly Member Thurmond tweeted:

Integrating technology in K-12 education prepares students for success in college & careers. ACR 268 sets CA on the path of leading in education tech. It makes educational technology a state priority and calls for a state summit to develop new legislative budget proposals.

The next step is to work with State Superintendent Thurmond in his new role to enable the State Board of Education and Governor Newsom to become familiar with ACR 268 and to understand that the state legislature has made a formal commitment to making educational technology support and access a major priority. Details about ACR 268 can be found in previous CUE legislative update and the full text found at: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180ACR268.

Retiring State Board Chair Suggests Funding for Teacher Training

Michael Kirst retired after eight years as president of the State Board of Education, satisfied that the key pieces of Gov. Jerry Brown’s education policies that he helped create are solidly in place. Recently, he expressed concern that a failure to sufficiently fund training for teachers and principals in the new academic standards, school climate, and other supports for students could undermine expectations for achievement and erode the public’s faith in the new system. His comment suggests possible renewed interest in supporting legislation and related state funding for teacher professional development, which is a top priority for CUE as stated in the CUE Advocacy Platform and in ACR 268.

Action on Legislation Reported in Previous CUE Legislative Updates

California Net Neutrality Legislation (SB 822) Signed by the Governor
The Net Neutrality for California bill, SB 822, authored by Senators Scott Wiener, Kevin de León, and Jerry Hill, Assemblymember Kevin Mullin, and 19 others was signed into law. CUE was a major and active supporter of this bill and of AJR 7 by Kevin Mullin, the net neutrality resolution that led to the introduction of SB 822.

Scott Wiener stated: “We passed the strongest net neutrality standards in the nation. This is about a level playing field and an Internet where we as individuals get to decide where we go on the Internet instead of being told by Internet service providers, or manipulated by Internet service providers, into going where they want us to go.”

Now that the bill has passed, it is being challenged by the American Cable Association (and others) in the U.S. District Court and will be considered during January/February 2019. Meanwhile, more than 20 other states are introducing and passing similar legislation and related resolutions. CUE continues to monitor and actively support potential federal legislation and efforts to restore net neutrality.

Media Literacy Bill (SB 830) Signed and Chaptered
SB 830 requires the California Department of Education to make available on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy. This bill was signed by the governor on September 17, 2018. Read SB 830 (Section 51206.4 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction): http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB830.

Anyone interested in being involved in supporting the CUE advocacy effort should contact Mary Kopp, CUE senior program manager, at mkopp@cue.org or John Cradler at cradler@earthlink.net. For additional legislative advocacy updates go to: http://blog.cue.org/tag/advocacy/.

John Cradler is Co-Owner of Educational Support Systems, a consulting company focused on educational program planning, development, evaluation, research, policy, and legislation. His education career began as a school psychologist, followed by district Special Projects Director, regional Teacher Education and Computing Center Director, Educational Technology Director for WestEd and the National Council of Chief State School Officers. Much of his experience was in educational technology project development, grant writing, evaluation, and research involving over 100 State and Federal projects and programs from the school district to the national level. He has served as the Legislation and Policy Consultant for state and national education associations and currently with CUE.
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Designed by Marlena Hebern

BENEFITS OF USING A CYBER SANDWICH INSTEAD OF A “THINK-PAIR-SHARE”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Replaces “think-pair-share” introductory activity for larger writing activities</td>
<td>Collaborate in pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale up &amp; down DOK levels</td>
<td>Read &amp; write notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build critical thinking and summary writing</td>
<td>Create digital Venn diagram to compare/contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss findings in Socratic Seminar</td>
<td>Write paragraphs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREE CUE CRAFT LESSON!

DOWNLOAD THE TEMPLATE!

THE TEMPLATE HAS ALL YOUR NEEDED INSTRUCTIONS.

FOUR STEPS - FIVE SLIDES. IT’S A TWO PERSON MINI-PROJECT

STEP 1
Student 1: Note taking. Read and summarize keypoints. Use short sentences
Click to open the resource document.

STEP 1
Student 2: Write your paragraph
Type your paragraph here

STEP 4
Things that Student 2 Found

Things that Student 1 Found

- Type one thing here

- Type short sentences

- Type another thing here

- Type short sentences

- Type another thing here

- Type short sentences

Cyber Sandwich features super modular design. Each student has discrete tasks that allow them to read, write, and get feedback.
CYBER SANDWICH IS A MAKEOVER FOR THE CLASSIC THINK-PAIR-SHARE LESSON, AND ADDS: READING COMPREHENSION, WRITING SKILLS, AND SCALABLE TECH SKILLS.

1 SLIDE PER STUDENT

10 MINUTE BUILD TIME

After doing some “note and notice” work independently, students do what @msMimura’s kids call “the cheesy slide” - a Venn Diagram.

To wrap up a Cyber Sandwich, each student writes a nice paragraph about their learning.

THE SLIDEDECK HAS TEMPLATES AND MORE EXAMPLES!

Resources for Cyber Sandwich

Cyber Sandwich Template
Cyber Tacos Template (High School)

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