

iTeacher: Program Brings Web 2.0 to the Classroom

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Online media and social networking Web sites - Web 2.0 standards like Facebook and YouTube - are the new tools for communication and entertainment among K-12 students. Safety and inappropriate content issues, however, mean that teachers are unable to use these online tools for learning in the classroom. North Carolina State University researchers are providing tools that advance 21st century learning, while at the same time encouraging proper instruction on the use of new media in a productive and appropriate manner.

Dr. Lodge McCammon and his team at NC State's Friday Institute for Educational Innovation have developed [FIZZ](#) - a suite of tools that allows teachers to implement safe [Web 2.0](#) environments in the classroom, similar to a private YouTube site for each school. Helping [students](#) solve classroom assignments - like math problems or learning Civil War facts - is an important part of FIZZ, McCammon explains. However, there is another lasting component - teaching students appropriate ways to interact with available [Web tools](#). McCammon is a specialist of curriculum and contemporary media at NC State's Friday Institute.

"Students are getting mixed messages about how to use sites like [Facebook](#) and YouTube. At their schools, these sites are banned - giving students the impression that the sites are inappropriate," McCammon says. "But then they go home and their parents tell them they can use the sites, but maybe for only 30 minutes a day. No one is really giving them guidance on how to use these tools in an appropriate manner. They don't fully realize that once they put content online, it is out there forever and they can't take it back."

Through the FIZZ Web site, teaching and learning outcomes can be easily broadcast over the Internet to increase [student](#) engagement and achievement, while still allowing school administrators to control the Web site's content.

"Teachers can film students in the classroom reciting a poem, or work on a music video teaching a physics concept, and put it on the school's private FIZZ site where students can go look at it from home - and show their classmates and family," McCammon says. "People love looking at themselves in pictures and on film. With FIZZ, students go home and watch these educational videos of themselves, their teachers and friends over and over, therefore reinforcing that educational material in a way that engages them."

Currently, in FIZZ's first year, teachers in 35 schools over seven N.C. counties are using FIZZ in their classrooms. Schools that sign up to participate in FIZZ receive a customized Web portal; two flip digital video cameras for easy filming and uploading; teacher training; classroom blogs; and ongoing maintenance and support of their site. FIZZ training instructs teachers on how to use video and blogging tools to enhance their existing curriculum.

Jamie Hall, a math and science teacher at Centennial Campus Middle School in Raleigh, N.C., is using FIZZ in his classroom this year. "Before teaching a lesson, I think of a way that I can use FIZZ to motivate my students to learn. Now, they are always asking if we can make a video to go along with what they are learning. The students can watch their videos at home with their parents and are excited to share what they do at school," Hall says.

"We had feedback from teachers that they had wanted to use these new communication tools that students are clearly interested in, but weren't quite sure how," McCammon says. "They needed ideas of how they could use something like YouTube as an educational tool while also being able to provide security to their students. They knew they couldn't just send their students off to YouTube - even if there was a cool video teaching them a science concept - because of other inappropriate material

on the Web site. With FIZZ, we can show them productive ways to use Web 2.0."

More information: To learn more about FIZZ, visit www.onfizz.org/demo .

Provided by NC State University

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