

A Message from Dr. Bell



My goodness! Change is messy. I'm sure this is not breaking news for any of you, but I am reminded of it constantly as we muddle through the ESU 10 continuous improvement process. It is my hope that our efforts will yield benefits and efficiencies for all of you as we "partner with our customers to meet changing needs through professional expertise, training, and support." Much is being done as we collect and interpret great quantities of data. You will be the judges as programs and services are developed and modified to hopefully better meet your many and varied needs.

I'm hoping Dr. Albert Schweitzer was incorrect when talking about the acquisition of knowledge. He surmised that, "As we acquire knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible, but more mysterious." I've been to four mystery theater events in the past few years and have yet to figure out the culprit responsible for the crime. Matter of fact, I can't even get the weapon or crime scene correct. During one session I was actually killed at the beginning and ended up floating around the room for the duration of the event as a mute angel. For those that know me just picture that in your mind. It's tough being officially clueless, so I intend to make sure the ESU 10 process provides results that even I can understand.

Each year about this time I try to remind you to be aware of actions being considered by the Nebraska Legislature. We all have opinions as to the merits of the plethora of bills that pile up in front of our elected officials. Take the time to stay informed and notify your representatives of your opinions. State Senator Galen Hadley mentioned that to me again just last week. He likes to know what his constituents are thinking. I'm sure that is the case of all elected representatives. After watching recent serious floor debate I was amused at a thought Rita Rudner shared many years ago that seems especially true in Nebraska. She said, "Men in high levels of government seldom surf." When I'm sitting in the gallery watching these fine representatives work and you see me start smiling you will know what's going through my mind as I visualize them on surf boards.

Carol Smith is the ESU 10 representative that keeps us aligned with the Educators Health Alliance (EHA) Wellness Program. The thought this month is that laughter is the best medicine. I hope this article has given you a dose of laughter. I'm sure you will reciprocate the next time you see me.

Here's hoping you have a great month.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

February 2012

- 08 [E-Rate Workday AM](#)
- 08 [E-Rate Workday PM](#)
- 08 [Social Studies Teacher Network Day](#)
- 09 [Intermediate Grades Teacher Network Day](#)
- 15 [Music Teacher Network Day](#)
- 21 [RtI Team Support](#)
- 22 [Math Teacher Network Day](#)
- 22 [Teacher Evaluation Support Standards 2 & 5](#)
- 23 [Art Teacher Network Day](#)
- 28 [Regional NWEA Members Meeting](#)

March 2012

- 02 [Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)
- 06 [Academic Quiz Bowl Grades 6-8](#)
- 06 [Teacher Evaluation Support Standards 6 & 7](#)
- 06 [Windows Server Administration \(2 days\)](#)
- 13 [Primary Grades Teacher Network](#)

MORE TOOLS FOR YOUR MANAGING BEHAVIOR TOOLBOX

by Jean Anderson, Special Education Coordinator

*A Free Training Sponsored by
Planning Region 10 Early Development Network*



February 18, 2012 (Saturday)

8:30 A.M.— Check In; Coffee/Rolls
9:00-12:00—Positive Behavior Strategies
for Early Childhood

Jean Anderson, ESU 10 Special Education Coordinator, will present a morning session on strategies for working with young children with challenging behaviors as well as general behavioral strategies that work with all kids. Positive behavioral strategies will be the focus of this training.

Target Audience: Parents, grandparents, foster parents, preschool teachers, child-care providers, college students, Early Development Network (EDN) services coordinators, respite providers, and related service providers.

Educational Service Unit 10
Conference Room B

No registration fee: Certificate of Attendance (3.0) will be provided

Contact Jean Anderson janderson@esu10.org or call 308-237-5927 for more information.

Registration: Email Polly Hays at phays@esu10.org. Please indicate that you want to register for the February Toolbox Training and include your name, address, and phone number. You may also register via phone by contacting Polly at 308-237-5927.

Deadline: **February 10, 2012.**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TEACHERS NETWORK

Join other teachers of English Language Learners at ESU 10 to connect with peers, find out what's new from Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), share best practices, and get technology tips!

April 10, 2012

*ELL Guidelines

*Correlation with LA Standards

Registration is open on ODIE

T3

Game On!

I admit it; I play video games. In the fifth grade I got an Atari. I placed second at my school's Pac-Man tournament that same year. I played the Mattel handheld football game for hours. Always waiting for that small opening to send my little red dash running back down the field. I've grown up as the systems have changed, from Atari, to Nintendo, to Xbox and the PlayStation. But can gaming be an educational adventure? I think it can.

Gaming gives student a way to work on narrative creation and storytelling, fosters critical thinking, breaking a complex goal into manageable steps, and introduces conditions and sequences, which teaches cause and effect. With some of the game sites it demonstrates that programming is a creative medium. Let's look at a few of the gaming options.

The first site is [Scratch](#), which is a programming language. The website is used to post projects, discuss codes, and explore other peoples' projects. To use Scratch, you download the software to your computer. The purpose of Scratch is to learn programming; you can design games, animation, and even artistic programs. The language is designed like Legos. You connect commands together by drag and dropping blocks in the script area. Each category of commands is color-coded (see picture for example) as a visual clue to help you build your project.

The biggest benefit of Scratch is learning to program. It is a great way to introduce programming, but is also fun for students that know how to program. Plus, a student can design a project that matches their interest; be it a game or a small animated story.

For pure game design there are a couple of cool options to look into. The first is Microsoft's game program [Kodu](#). Kodu is a visual game programming language that allows students to create Xbox games. The software is free to download on PCs and cost five dollars on Xbox's Marketplace. Kodu is like Scratch in the fact that basic commands are visual, and a student builds the game with blocks that connect to the controller. The goal with Kodu is not programming, but pure game design.



[Atmosphir](#) is a web based game design site that allows a user to build 3D games like the Super Mario games. The strength of Atmosphir is the artistic expectation of the game. A student literally builds their game world one block at a time. The screen shot shows a level based off the book Lord of the Flies that a student created two years ago in one of my English classes.

At the moment [Gamestar Mechanic](#) is popular with my sons and me. Gamestar Mechanic is also web based, and allows you to create

Lord of the flies Island

by [michealmw](#)



May the boys lost R.I.P.

top-down or platform games; like the first Zelda or first Mario Bros. game. One of the reasons I like this site is that you play a quest that teaches you about game design. The quest teaches you about game play, visuals, and other factors that make a game fun before you even make a game. As a member you are also expected to play and review other people's games.

Game design can be a way to teach programming, story telling, art, and other critical thinking lessons. Are you game? (Click on "game" to play one of the games I designed on Gamestar Mechanic... warning, it is has a 4.5 /5 difficulty rating voted by Gamestar Mechanic users.)

The Nebraska legislature has adopted a new law (79-214) for the 2012-13 school year and each school year thereafter:

The school board of any school district shall not admit any child into the kindergarten class unless the child has reached the age of five years on or before July 31 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the child is seeking admission begins. This reflects a change in the law where the child must be five on or before October 15 of the calendar year that the child is seeking admission begins.

The board may admit a child who will reach the age of five years on or after August 1 and on or before October 15 if the parent or guardian requests entrance and provides

an affidavit stating that (a) the child attended kindergarten in another jurisdiction in the current school year, (b) the family anticipates relocation to another jurisdiction that would allow admission within the current year, or (c) the child has demonstrated through a recognized assessment procedure approved by the board that he or she is capable of carrying the work of kindergarten. On or before January 1, 2012, each school board shall approve and make available a recognized assessment procedure for determining if a child is capable of carrying the work of kindergarten. The school board shall update approved procedures as the board deems appropriate.

