

John Baltrus

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Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 5:02 AM
To: jonaspb@comcast.net
Subject: News from A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education)

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E-Zine



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Dear John,



Karl Janowitz

Message from the President

It is November, that exciting month that serves as a bridge between Fall and Winter. A highlight of this month in the U.S. is the wonderful holiday of Thanksgiving. This is a great opportunity to reflect on all we have and for all that we should be thankful. It is a wonderful time to be thinking of A.P.P.L.E.'s 25th and final year and all that this unique organization has accomplished. Plans for 2015 are being finalized at the present time and a call for proposals will be forthcoming.

Have a wonderful month and thank you for your interest and involvement in A.P.P.L.E.

Sincerely,

Karl

Dr. Karl P. Janowitz
President

Mission Statement:

"The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (A.P.P.L.E.) is a volunteer international non-profit educational organization. With the support of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, A.P.P.L.E. partners with Lithuanian educators to foster the implementation of innovative educational approaches that contribute to the development of a democratic society."

Save the Dates - A.P.P.L.E.'s 25th Celebrations

At this time, we don't have exact dates or locations, but we are planning celebrations of A.P.P.L.E.'s 25th anniversary in both the U.S. and Lithuania. An April celebration to coincide with our Spring Board Meeting in the U.S. is in the works. We will publish more information as soon as it is available. We hope you will be able to join us for one of the events.

Technology Strand Reflection - Dea Conrad-Curry



Dea Conrad-Curry

Tech in the Classroom to Support Relevance in Teaching and Learning

Over the course of two weeks, I spent nine days working with Lithuanian teachers, all eager to incorporate technology into their classrooms. The expertise of the participants ranged from first-year teachers to teachers with more than twenty years of classroom tenure; the content they taught was equally diverse—from literacy to history to ethics among students ranging in age from ten to adult. Although their backgrounds were diverse, their passion for educational technology was shared.

The theme of our learning experience centered on relevance-making instruction and technology relevant not only to learning but also to life. With that in mind, we explored a variety of tools with the playfulness of toys and in that play we found relevance for building knowledge, sharing expertise, and engaging thought. Teachers worked with Google+ practicing collaborative writing using Google Docs and Google Slides. Participants found themselves working within Google+ using Google Circles to communicate thoughts and share images and videos posted throughout the week, a sharing that continues yet today. Because several of the websites shared originated in the United States, teachers learned how to use Google's translation app for quick and easy (if not totally accurate) translation for convenient reading. Google was not the only web tool we used, but it was one of the most intriguing for teachers because of the collaborative friendliness it offers for teachers and students in a classroom.

Each of the two week sessions began with an introduction to the week's project goal or objective for learning. Teachers, having the choice to work as individuals or groups, were to design a multi-step project-based learning (PBL) assessment that would incorporate their content and discipline with at least two types of technology (new to them and/or their students). Additionally, they were to devise a rubric scoring system to evaluate the component pieces of that project. The final day of class allowed ten minutes for participants to share the framework of the newly designed PBL assessment piece and the accompanying rubric. Teachers could work independently or as pairs in achieving the seminar objective. This introduction was presented using Google Slides as a demonstration of one tool they could use for their project design and/or their own Friday presentation.

Prezi was the presentation tool of choice for the second session of our seminar week. A

relatively new online presentation platform, Prezi adds a component of animation and an overview of information unavailable in a PowerPoint delivery. The Prezi session modeled the use of Prezi while introducing a variety of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 tools, primarily downloadable applications, interactive and easily embedded into presentations and classroom instruction. Among the favorites with teachers was PollEverywhere, an interactive tool that allows users to build surveys with either multiple choice or short answer responses and further...allows participants to use a laptop, tablet, or SmartPhone to respond. PollEverywhere is easily embedded in PowerPoint (but does not work in Google Slides) and replies to the poll's questions are immediately reported in a variety of forms directly on the PP slide: graphs, clouds, tickers! Teachers loved PollEverywhere! Throughout the sessions, teachers were asked to respond to PollEverywhere questions as a formative assessment driving instruction-current theory in action!

Rubrics comprised the third session of teaching and learning. Although most teachers were familiar with the word "rubric" most did not understand that rubrics are comprised of criteria, scale scores, and descriptors. Teachers appreciated several resources provided to them for creating rubrics, notably Rubistar, an interactive online tool that allows teachers the flexibility to use editable templates in the creation of customized rubrics or choose previously formatted rubrics for a wide variety of rubric scored assessments. In reality, this shorter session could comprise a greater portion of instruction. Rubric scoring is a research-supported assessment technique and for the most part, teachers seemed to see it as a checklist rather than a scaled description for progress of achievement and evaluation.

In a fourth session, teachers learned about blogging as both a reflective technique and a means by which to further engage students into content learning with technology applications. I used my own blog at Partner in Education to demonstrate how teachers could write posts related to the content taught and ask students to respond to comments. Visit the link and read comments posted by some A.P.P.L.E. 2014 participants: <http://partnerinedu.com/2014/07/02/educators-wanderlust-a-reflection/> .

All in all, the experiences of A.P.P.L.E. were valuable in terms of both professional growth and cultural breadth. The sharing of pedagogies as well as tech tools and toys expanded the vision of teaching and learning beyond the classroom and into the future.

Kind regards,

Dr. Dea Conrad-Curry, Ed.D.
Partner in Education

Lithuanian Considers Mandatory Pre-School Education

Lithuania's Ministry of Education and Science plans to introduce mandatory pre-school education for six-year-olds as of September 2015, with 5 million litas (EUR 1.45m) earmarked for the purpose in next year's budget proposal.

The ministry's plans were presented at the parliamentary Committee for Education, Science and Culture by the head of the ministry's Pre-School and Elementary Education, Grazina Seibokienė.

She cited research as proving benefits of pre-school education, adding that Lithuania is among three countries of the European Union (EU) that start mandatory education at a rather late age. To make pre-school education required for all six-year-olds of Lithuania, parliament will have to adopt amendments to the Education Law, which are still in preparation.

"Lithuania is one of the three countries, together with Italy and Slovakia, where children come to school at a very late age. In all other countries, education is either mandatory before starting school or children join the system of general education at an earlier age. In Latvia, education is mandatory from the age of five, while pre-school education is mandatory in Poland," said the specialist.

In Lithuania, 95.63 percent of six-year-olds are involved in pre-school education, with 81 percent of five-year-olds attending pre-school education institutions. Under 6,000 five-year-olds do not attend any formal education institutions

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Fundraising Corner

You still have an opportunity to make a donation to honor A.P.P.L.E. and the many volunteers who have served A.P.P.L.E. over 25 years. All donations will be expended towards 2015 programs including A.P.P.L.E. Scholar's Fund. You can make a direct donation to A.P.P.L.E. by [clicking here](#) and using PayPal. Make sure to add a note if you wish that your donation be specifically used for a Lithuanian Scholars' Fund grant.

What will different levels of donations accomplish?

- For \$100, you can provide an ink cartridge and paper so that A.P.P.L.E. can distribute lesson notes to teachers.
- For \$200, you can provide a stipend for a translator.
- For \$450, you can underwrite the distribution of our newsletter.
- For \$500, you can sponsor a Scholar's Fund Grant. Lesser amounts will be combined to fund a grant.

A minimum donation of \$25-individual or \$40-family will enroll you as a member of A.P.P.L.E. for one year. Of course, donations are still welcome by mail: A.P.P.L.E., 105 Sturbridge Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

A.P.P.L.E. is a 501(3)c organization, which means that your gifts are tax-deductible. Our tax-exempt number is 23-2682202. Because of strict IRS regulations, we cannot accept donations intended for specific people. If you would like to support relatives or friends, please do so directly. The A.P.P.L.E. scholar grants are intended for Lithuanian educators who do not have contacts in the United States.

This electronic newsletter is designed for quick delivery of A.P.P.L.E.-related news to an audience that includes current A.P.P.L.E. members, friends of A.P.P.L.E. and interested potential members both within the United States and Lithuania.

Increasing communication and the exchange of ideas among our members increases the strength of our organization and our ability to be relevant to our Lithuanian constituents. Exciting and pertinent events occur all year round, and we want to keep all of you abreast of what is happening, when it's happening.

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