



HERE AND THERE

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Member of the Association of College Honor Societies

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A Message from Erin Goepfert

National Student Representative 2007-2009
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

It has been great serving you as the Pi Omega Pi National Student Representative for the last two years. I have really enjoyed serving as your student representative and have gained so much from this opportunity. Best of luck to Brookes Mayes, the newly elected student representative from Alpha Pi Chapter at Mississippi State University.

For those who attended the 41st Biennial National Pi Omega Pi Convention that was held in Chicago on April 9-11, I hope you learned from the many outstanding NBEA and Pi Omega Pi sessions. The Thursday night social provided members an excellent networking opportunity and wonderful pizza from Pizzeria Ora. I enjoyed meeting each of you. Additionally, the presentations by Pi Omega Pi members were excellent on Friday afternoon. Congratulations!

Congratulations also to the top ten chapters for 2008. I was pleased to announce these winners at the closing session of NBEA. Thank you for your hard work this year. Continued on page 3

President's Report

Lana Carnes
Alpha Beta Chapter
Eastern Kentucky University

Congratulations to the top ten chapters in our 2008 National Competition! The following chapters were recognized in Chicago:

1. Beta Kappa, East Carolina University
2. Beta, Northwest Missouri State University
3. Kappa, Indiana University at Pennsylvania
4. Psi, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
5. Alpha Pi, Mississippi State University
6. Zeta Eta, Kansas State University
7. Mu, Emporia State University
8. Alpha Chi, Eastern Illinois University
9. Alpha Beta, Eastern Kentucky University
10. Chi, Indiana State University

I hope your members were excited about the opportunities for learning, networking, professional development, and sightseeing in the Windy City that this convention provided. I know that you worked hard to finalize your projects, complete your presentations, make arrangements for the classes you would miss, and take care of personal arrangements with family and friends so that you could attend the convention. I know the convention was worth all your efforts!

Many of you may be graduating and entering the world of teaching in middle schools or high schools. I hope you will remain active in NBEA, Delta Pi Epsilon, and other professional organizations as you continue your professional development throughout your teaching career. Good luck to you all as you make a difference in the lives of your students!

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National Council, pictured left to right: Brookes Mayes, incoming student representative; Marcia James, secretary-treasurer; Darla Stone, president; Connie Forde, president-elect; Wayne Moore, co-editor; Barbara Railsback, co-editor; and Erin Goepfert, outgoing student representative.

Here and There

Here and There is the official newsletter of Pi Omega Pi, the national honor society in business teacher education. It is published four times each competition year: February, April, October, and December.

October and December articles and news should be sent to:

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Guidelines for Submission of Articles

The following guidelines should be followed when preparing articles for submission to the *Here and There*.

1. Include a concise, comprehensive article title.
2. Check for correct grammar and punctuation.
3. Avoid the use of contractions.
4. At a minimum, include one reference.
5. Follow the APA (fifth edition) formatting and writing style.
6. A minimum word length of 300 words and a maximum word length of 750 words is required.

Student Representative Report Continued from page 1

For some of you, it is almost time for graduation. My congratulations for finishing and working so hard for your degree. For the rest of you, you are a semester closer to becoming a teacher—your ultimate goal.

Please keep in touch with me and let me know if you have any future questions. My email after graduation in May will be egoepfert@yahoo.com. Thanks,

Erin Goepfert

Pi Omega Pi Convention Highlights

The 41st Biennial Pi Omega Pi National Convention was held on April 9-11, 2009, in Chicago, Illinois. Highlights of the convention are provided in the following articles and photographs.

Panel Shares Valuable Project Ideas

The Closing Pi Omega Pi General Session featured a panel comprised of two advisers and one student. They represented chapters who have consistently ranked #1 or #2 in the national competition. A summary of the advice shared follows:

1. Ideas for *Here and There* articles include: (1) ask each initiate to submit an article for the *Here and There* while waiting for the induction ceremony, (2) in the fall ask for four volunteers from returning members to submit an article, or (3) revise an article used in a class.
2. Know the deadlines and the components required. Distribute to members responsible.
3. Meet during the summer to work on a program of work. The National Council offers a sample program of work in the handbook.
4. Host business contests in February and March.
5. Host etiquette luncheons and invite high school students.
6. Host a leadership conference and invite speakers.

7. Create an alumni newsletter.
8. Look at trends in your area and determine project topics using this information.
9. Create portals for lesson plans.
10. Conduct a survey and report results in a presentation at the National Convention.
11. Start an archive with information about what former members are doing. Compile success stories.



Panel presents at closing general session. Pictured from left to right: Erin Goepfert, Psi Chapter; Ivan Wallace, Beta Kappa Chapter; and Nancy Zeliff, Beta Chapter.

Dr. Mark Lehman Keynotes General Session

Dr. Mark Lehman, Associate Professor of the Richard C. Adkerson School of Accountancy at Mississippi State University, Certified Public Accountant, and Certified Fraud Examiner, keynoted the First General Session.



Dr. Lehman is a co-author of South-Western Publishing Company's *Century 21 Accounting Series*. Dr. Lehman encouraged future accounting teachers to evaluate content that must be taught and should be taught and to go beyond debits and credits to challenge students to choose careers in accounting.

2008 Pi Omega Pi Award



Erin Goepfert, student representative, announces top ten chapters at NBEA Closing General Session.

2008 Top Ten Chapters

1. Beta Kappa, East Carolina University
2. Beta, Northwest Missouri State University
3. Kappa, Indiana University at Pennsylvania
4. Psi, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
5. Alpha Pi, Mississippi State University
6. Zeta Eta, Kansas State University
7. Mu, Emporia State University
8. Alpha Chi, Eastern Illinois University
9. Alpha Beta, Eastern Kentucky University
10. Chi, Indiana State University

2008 Distinguished Service Awards

20 Years—Ginny Richerson
Gamma Upsilon Chapter
Murray State University

Darla Stone
Zeta Eta Chapter
Kansas State University

Service awards continued

Nancy Zeliff
Beta Chapter
Northwest Missouri University

10 Years—Jan Cooper
Delta Mu Chapter
Delta State University

5 Years—Julie Chadd
Alpha Chi Chapter
Eastern Illinois University

2008 Golden Awards

85 Years—Beta Chapter
Northwest Missouri State University

80 Years—Kappa Chapter
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Lambda Chapter
Fort Hays State University

Mu Chapter
Emporia State University

Xi Chapter
Ball State University

70 Years—Alpha Pi Chapter
Mississippi State University

65 Years—Beta Kappa Chapter
East Carolina University

55 Years—Gamma Phi Chapter
North Carolina A & T State University

30 Years—Zeta Epsilon Chapter
Central Michigan University



Beta Chapter receives second place award.



Alpha Beta Chapter presents real life lesson plans.



Beta Chapter presents on digital books.



Kappa Chapter presents on virtual enterprises.



Beta Kappa Chapter shares how to create games with Visual Basic.



Alpha Pi Chapter presents on leadership and teamwork.



Zeta Eta Chapter presents on cyberbullying.



Mu Chapter presents on the importance of student organizations as a part of the curriculum.



Chi Chapter presents on eSecurity and credit cards.



Alpha Beta Chapter presents on how to be financially savvy at 16.



Pi Omega Pi members gain valuable information from the 11 excellent concurrent sessions.



Dr. Jan Treichel, NBEA Executive Director, addresses Pi Omega Pi members at the Closing Session

Chapter Activities

Beta Chapter

Northwest Missouri State University

As always, the Beta Chapter remains busy. Recently, we have assisted in two business competitions hosted on the campus of Northwest Missouri State University. Members of the Beta Chapter helped grade and judge the very successful competitions.

We are also very excited to announce the addition of two new members of our chapter. Skyler Nicholas and Alyssa Strien will be inducted in April and we welcome them with open arms. The time has come for the National Convention in Chicago and the Beta Chapter is excited to attend and see if all of our hard work pays off.

Kappa Chapter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

During February, the Kappa chapter held a t-shirt fundraiser to raise money for the NBEA Convention and Pi Omega Pi Convention. We also planned various social events throughout March and April such as Walleyball and a trip to a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game.

Every March, IUP holds an annual Business Day where each major invites their advisory committee to provide students opportunities for networking. Pi Omega Pi not only participated in this event, but also helped with the registration for the networking and luncheon sessions. Each year we attend the Pennsylvania Future Business Leaders of America State Leadership Conference to assist with chaperoning, judging, moderating sessions, and other activities assigned by the conference coordinators. Sixteen business education majors spent three days in Hershey, Pennsylvania, at the FBLA Conference.

We are planning a service project to train Chamber of Commerce members on the use of Office 2007. We are also planning our annual Pi Omega Pi initiation ceremony and student teacher appreciation dinner.

Mu Chapter

Emporia State University

Mu Chapter members have been quite busy during the months of February and March. Jordan Hysten was welcomed as a new member. In early February members served as judges and room coordinators at the District VII FBLA contest held on the ESU campus and at the Kansas FBLA State Leadership Conference in Topeka and also continued to work on lobbying the Kansas Legislature to make personal finance a required course for Kansas high school graduation. Many POP members also competed in the Kansas PBL State Leadership Conference and four members of our chapter placed in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th in the Future Business Teacher competition. The first-place winner is looking forward to competing at the national PBL competition in Anaheim in June. Members will finish the school year by holding a new-member initiation in early May and hosting the annual luncheon for graduating ESU business education majors.

Psi Chapter

University of Wisconsin Whitewater

Psi Chapter is off to a roaring start this year with two new members and several new projects in the planning stages. In addition to the Chapter's usual pizza party and two general meetings, we volunteered as a group to assist at the WI Regional FBLA Competition in Milton, Wisconsin, with five of our members assisting in judging the competitors. As a result, the teachers running the WI State FBLA Competition have invited us to help judge that round as well. We are currently working on planning our annual Spring Banquet, a process to maintain our new website, a trip to a Beloit Snappers minor league game, and our national project. Several of us look forward to attending the upcoming NBEA National Convention in Chicago, and we look forward to seeing the rest of you there!

Alpha Beta Chapter Eastern Kentucky University

It's spring time and there is a new light in the eyes of Alpha Beta. For the past couple of months we have been fundraising. Our biggest supporters ended up being our own University. We received two different grants/scholarships. They are from the Office of the Dean and the Management, Marketing and Admin. Communication Department. With those supports, we almost reached our goal. Then we spent about two weeks preparing a packet of information about Pi Omega Pi for our Student Government Association (SGA). In the end, SGA gave us all the money we asked for, putting our total funding for Chicago at complete. It is still nice to know that after over 100 years, Eastern Kentucky University still supports Pi Omega Pi.

All of our officers are currently student teaching at high schools across Kentucky. During spring break, the University hosted a region competition for Future Business Leaders of America. All officers were on campus that day showing their support for the field. They are also going to the state competition with each of their schools. What many did not know was that not only were they there to show support for their students and promote the field, but Pi Omega Pi members were also judges in some of the competitions. When schools submitted competition materials, we help them by judging and selecting the winner.

Along with fundraising, student teaching, and promoting business through FBLA, Alpha Beta has been recruiting new members. The end of one year is approaching, but we need to prepare for the next. There are some good prospects in line, and we are excited about their carrying on our legacy. See you in Chicago and remember to come to our presentations at the conference!

Alpha Chi Chapter Eastern Illinois University

For the past few weeks, the Alpha Chi Chapter at Eastern Illinois University has been working on its service learning project. This year for our service

learning project our chapter is going to the local community center where we will teach a group of junior high students the importance of budgeting. We found that this is a great topic for students because it is never too early to start teaching students the importance how to budget their money. We are currently a smaller chapter, but we are looking forward to next semester for recruitment. We have many great ideas for bringing our numbers up and doing great things for the community of Charleston, Illinois.

Alpha Pi Chapter Mississippi State University

Our Alpha Pi Chapter has been very busy, and we will only get busier as the semester is coming to an end. At our last few meetings we have discussed ideas for our projects for the next year. We have also inducted three new members into our chapter. They were Samantha Wade, Morgan Sims, and Veronica McNutt. Two of our members will be representing our chapter in Chicago at the NBEA conference and were selected to present at the convention. Brookes Mayes is a candidate for the national student representative.

Our year will conclude with an end-of-the-year banquet at a local restaurant. Teaching interns will be honored, and graduating Pi Omega Pi members will be presented with honor cords.

Beta Kappa Chapter Eastern Carolina University

Beta Kappans have had a busy spring semester. In February Beta Kappans attended the Atlantic Coast Business, Marketing, and Information Technology Conference in Raleigh, NC. Beta Kappans assisted in the registration process, presided for speakers, and ensured that conference rooms were properly set up for the speakers. Ten new members were inducted in a ceremony at the conference. We are very excited to be attending the National Business Education Association and Pi Omega Pi biennial conference in Chicago in April. Planning has also been started for our annual Spring Banquet at the end of April.

Zeta Eta Chapter
Kansas State University

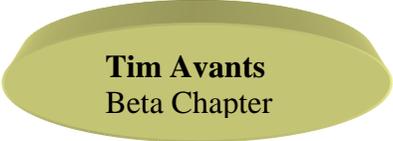
presentation and how it affects the lives of young people.

Zeta Eta has been making plans for the all university Open House to be held April 18. This is an opportunity for members to talk to prospective students, encourage them to come to Kansas State and showcase some of the things the chapter does as future business educators.

Zeta Eta chapter has been working to finalize the plans for the presentation for the Pi Omega Pi conference in Chicago. Seven students from Kansas State University will travel together to Chicago. The group has been looking forward to this trip. This will be the culmination of many months of fundraising and planning. The members look forward to teaching others about cyberbullying in the Zeta Eta

Member Articles

An Extra Year in High School?



Tim Avants
Beta Chapter

Northwest Missouri State University

Throughout the educational timeline, it has been generally accepted that students are to complete high school in four years. Recent news shows that some states are looking to use rules allowing some students to take an extra year to receive their diploma. As of right now, Washington is the only state that allows for students to gain an extra year to complete their high school requirements. After the 2005 allowance of Washington to use these rules, many states have now applied for federal permission to do the same.

What is the problem with granting another year to students? Many people fear that giving students another year will take the pressure off students to graduate in time, and they will be very relaxed while taking high school classes. Some people think that students should have a feeling of ambition when they are in high school and should want to graduate in the allotted time. If students know they have an extra year to finish their requirements, they may slack off in classes and not succeed to their full potential. Also, if students do take an extra year to graduate, it will go against the school's graduation rate. Some schools take great pride in their graduation rate and work very hard to make sure that students remain in school and receive their diplomas. These schools believe that the extra year rules will take away from all of the hard work that they have done years in the past.

A large supporter of the extra year for graduation rules are those who strongly believe in the No Child Left Behind legislation. If these laws were put in place to ensure that all students would receive their high school diploma, then an extra year should go hand in hand with these laws, according to some people. All educators want their students to succeed and to graduate; a student earning their high school diploma would be a very bright day in an educator's career.

Whether or not extra year rules will be put in place in other places around the nation is yet to be seen. One thing can be certain though, this will be a topic that will continue to earn more and more attention as time goes by.

Making Yourself More Marketable

Ryan Coyle
Kappa Chapter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

With today's economic uncertainty, making oneself more marketable than other candidates in the field should be a primary focus. Many students enter into their college career without having the slightest inclination of their overall goal. When entering into a field such as business education, the objective should not only be to secure the necessary amount of content knowledge regarding the subject, but also finding ways to stand out among the crowd. Although this sounds logical, marketability is often an area applicants lack when applying for a job. The purpose of this article is to examine a few resume builders that are commonly overlooked by education majors.

One: Diversification

In terms of demographics, students are likely to complete their required experiences (i.e. student teaching and job shadowing) and pursue job opportunities in districts within their comfort zone. In reality, doing this can potentially limit one's exposure to job opportunities. Some districts are impressive in terms of curriculum and facilities; others are mediocre. Completing experiences in a variety of districts that are diverse in size, race, and socio-economic background will greatly improve the chances of landing a job. Districts often seek candidates who will excel regardless of the classroom environment. It would be unfavorable for administration to question one's ability to manage a culturally diverse classroom at seat capacity effectively.

Two: Involvement

As an undergraduate, become involved early with extra-curricular activities such as athletics and clubs/organizations in local districts. These activities have an instrumental role in the education and networking process. From an education standpoint, they teach students accountability, teamwork, and dedication. The goal of both education and extra-curricular activities is to be better prepared students for the outside world. Potential candidates will also carry over the ability to "teach" and effectively manage the class from the field or club event. Also, involvement will aid in the development of one's teaching style and expose potential strengths and weaknesses. As far as networking goes, coaches and club sponsors are often well credited teachers in the district and are perceived as strong references on a resume.

Three: Classroom Management

Classroom management is often an area of concern for young teachers starting the job search in unfamiliar districts. Having experiences in a variety of school districts and supported with strong references can verify classroom management ability. This could significantly influence the hiring process and aid in a smooth transition into the classroom. Due to the close proximity in age, potential candidates may befriend students, and be less strict with deadlines and expectations. The only way to perfect classroom management is experience. The more time one spends managing a class pre-graduation, the better prepared they will be post-graduation. If this is an area of weakness, instructing workshops comprised of primarily older, middle-aged students may be a good experience while completing coursework. Non-traditional students tend to be less likely to propose a discipline issue. This will also aid in further development of one's teaching style. Education is not a field for which everybody is suited. If this happens to be the case, one will likely realize it at this time instead of later in the education sequence.

Four: Experience with Exceptional Students

Experience interacting with students that are identified as “exception” at both ends of the spectrum is another area that can be overlooked by potential candidates. The I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan) is a frequent reoccurrence in the classroom. Having documentation and references in a resume that prove one has at least some experience dealing with special needs students is a must. In order to gain awareness, education majors can identify one gifted student and one special needs student to shadow while completing their experiences. A minor in special education is highly weighted during the interview process. However, if hired, the probability is high that one may never set foot in a mainstream classroom.

Five: Networking, Networking, Networking...

Lastly, and perhaps the most important, networking will have an influence on one’s career. The majority of districts utilize a state database when searching for teachers to fill an open position. When it comes time to search for a teaching career, networking will likely get a candidate in the door and how the candidate performs in the interview will either keep the door open or slam it shut. It is a harsh reality that strong references of respected people in the field often outweigh qualifications listed on a resume.

For districts seeking to fill open business education positions, there are currently plenty of qualified candidates with very similar resumes. We all completed the required coursework, maintained a respectable grade point average, passed the necessary standardized tests, and been exposed to the horror stories told by those who were unable to find a job post graduation. It is important to keep in mind that it is ultimately what is done independently, outside of the college classroom that boosts one’s marketability.

Are You Ready To Fill Out That Application Form?

Ryan Norton
Mu Chapter

Emporia State University

For business education majors getting ready to graduate, spring typically means filling out application forms while applying for jobs along with many other activities. The application forms themselves contain a variety of questions asked of the applicants.

For example, one application form recently received asked the applicant to 1) indicate what he/she wanted to be doing in five years and why; 2) indicate what he/she wanted to be doing in ten years and why (are you supposed to say—still teaching at your school?); 3) discuss the applicant’s philosophy of education; 4) list the applicant’s strengths and weaknesses and how they would be a held or hindrance in the classroom; and 5) discuss the assets and liabilities of the applicant’s favorite and least favorite teachers while a student in K-12 education.

All of these are standard questions often found on education job application forms. Recently, however, a different type of question presented itself on an application. This question was in a section entitled “Staff Development” and is shown below:

Staff Development

USD #xxx implements an extensive staff development program. It is important for new candidates to have considerable knowledge of current educational, research-supported concepts. Please indicate areas in which you have a working knowledge.

- Assertive Discipline
- TESA
- Learning Styles
- Teaching Models (specify) _____
- Peer Coaching
- Mastery Learning
- ITIP
- Effective Schools
- Cooperative Learning
- Clinical Supervision

As can be seen from the above list, this is a very extensive list of “educational, research-supported concepts.” Most of them have been covered in the business education curriculum at Emporia State University, whether in business teaching methods or in an educational psychology class, secondary education class, or in classroom management. Many were discussed without the “exact title” but when one looks at the “concept” and compares it to what was taught in the various classes, the concepts were covered.

The quandary for a new teacher is knowing which ones to “mark” on the application. Exactly what is meant by “a working knowledge”? Does this mean simply having an idea of the definitions of assertive discipline, TESA (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievements), peer coaching, mastery learning, and ITIP (Instructional Theory into Practice)? Does the application want you to mark that you know what an “effective school is” because most likely you student taught in an effective school, but you cannot guarantee that you are an effective teacher? What is meant by a working knowledge of cooperative learning—does this mean they are asking if you can coordinate a cooperative learning (in terms of business education) experience for your students, or does it mean can you coordinate with other content areas for “team teaching”? And, what exactly does it mean to have a “working knowledge” of clinical supervision?

As one completes the application for this school district (and many others), it almost appears that there is a “mind game” being played with the applicants. It is very difficult to know what to mark on a checklist such as this because 1) if the applicant does not mark one of the areas and that is emphasized at the school district, will the applicant be automatically disqualified from consideration; 2) if the applicant marks it, does the school district expect him/her to have worked with this model while student teaching; and 3) if it is marked, will the applicant be expected to discuss at length during the interview?

One point is clear—it would be beneficial for an applicant for a job to be prepared to discuss these methodologies and concepts during the interview.

Wikis Can Simplify Student Group Work

Rob Thomas
Psi Chapter

University of Wisconsin Whitewater

A wiki is one of the most convenient tools now available for group work. As a result, it makes a powerful addition to a teacher's technology arsenal, but, like all tools, wikis are only as useful as their intended purpose.

For those not in the know, a wiki is a collaborative web tool designed to allow anyone to maintain a website using a simplified markup language. Basically, anyone who has learned to use a simple word processing tool can build and modify a wiki—allowing students to concentrate on the content and presentation without having to get lost in the "coding" aspects of building a website. Multiple team members have access to the website whenever and wherever they wish while also being able to restrict access to only select individuals. If the teacher is the original creator of the wiki, he or she is the controller of access, so inappropriate content can be contained and appropriate content can be released as wide as desired for viewing.

Such a tool facilitates collaborative efforts while minimizing hassle for students with access to computers. Built-in version control ensures nothing is lost, including the level of effort spent on the project. Students can make changes and reverse them at their convenience. Parents and teachers can check progress with equal ease. However, the tool is only as innovative as its planned use. It is easy to create a glorified PowerPoint presentation, but so much more is possible. The wiki developers (students) can include supporting concepts and documents that can be referenced, expanded upon, or ignored at readers' discretion via hotlinks and other mechanisms. Projects can be passed from team to team, semester after semester—each expanding the online source material for the next. The greatest innovative uses often come from the students themselves and should be encouraged by the assignment whenever possible.

Perhaps the greatest aspect of using wikis is that they are freely available. Several "wiki farms" offer educators the opportunity to create wikis and maintain them for no cost. <http://www.wikispaces.com>, <http://www.wetpaint.com>, and <http://pbwiki.com> are a few of the many such options. Using these sites, one can implement wikis as a powerful collaborative tool in the classroom. Like any tool, they merely facilitate and provide options. It is still up to the teacher to create assignments that allow students to take advantage of wikis. Given that creativity, wikis can allow the non-technical to stand on a more equal footing in our information age.

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**Why Is Shakespeare More Important in Our
High Schools Than Personal Finance?**

Jayne Radford
Alpha Beta Chapter

Eastern Kentucky University

Our world is full of firsts. Our first steps, our first tooth, our first day of school, and most importantly, our first checking or savings account. You most likely felt like an adult the day you walked into the bank and opened your first account. You felt like you were “somebody” when that personalized box of flowery, animated or sports car laden box of checks arrived in your mailbox. You just could not wait to use them, so you rushed out to the local department store with checkbook and ID in hand to purchase (insert desired item here). Then reality hit. You received that dreaded notice from the bank saying your account was overdrawn and you were being charged an outrageous amount of money, all because you were \$0.25 short of having the correct amount of money to cover that check you wrote. “But how could that be?” You ask yourself, you know you put xxx amount into the account when you opened it, but wait, you notice that three checks are gone but you thought you only wrote two! Welcome to Personal Finance 101, where balancing your checking or savings account for the first time could be a time of stress and nail biting, or laid back calmness?

If you were one of the lucky few who had the opportunity to take a personal finance class in high school, the first time you balanced your check book was probably no big deal to you. You may also feel comfortable in making decisions regarding savings and investing, managing a credit card, buying based on wants or needs and budgeting. These should be basic skills every high school senior has acquired before they graduate. However, this is not always the case. At a time when our economy is at its worse, high schools because of budget cuts are dropping so called “extracurricular programs” such as business education from their catalog of course requirements. Courses like personal finance, marketing and business law have become extinct in some schools because they could not compete with “core content” subjects when it came to delegating funds for them. But should not a basic life skills courses like personal finance be just as important as Algebra II or Shakespeare? Now, I know that every math or English teacher within reading distance right now is gasping at the thought of a high school student not taking Algebra II or not reading the *Great Expectations*. However, when you think about the number of people who will retain and use what they learned in either of these classes, and compare it to the number of people who will balance a checkbook, create and follow a budget, acquire and use a credit card, save for and buy a home, a car or a luxury item like a boat, it should make you wonder why this curriculum is not as important or required in every school.

Our economy today requires that people not only understand the basics of balancing a checkbook, but also be able to budget for future investments. Many corporate retirement plans now require you to manage and choose stocks in which to place your retirement funds. Often college graduates are leaving school burdened not just with loans for their college education, but also with maxed out credit cards they obtained while in college under the enticement that they would be building their credit history by accepting and using the credit card.

By making a course like personal finance as an important requirement for graduating high school as algebra, science, English and history, we will be helping to prepare future generations of young people with the tools and knowledge necessary for them to make competent financial decisions. By having a course like marketing, younger generations may be able to see and avoid the pitfalls of buying because we are told we have to have it as opposed to buying because it is a necessity. And, by offering a business education curriculum we may, in fact, send competent, knowledgeable individuals out into the business world armed with the information they need to make sound business decisions.

No Two Are Alike

Karen McLeod
Alpha Pi Chapter

Mississippi State University

Students are much like snowflakes; no two are alike. It is essential that we as educators remind ourselves of this daily. No two students learn the same way. Some may learn by simply hearing what is said. Others need to see pictures to fully grasp the content of a lesson. Other students may need to read or be active in order to comprehend the lesson being taught.

Before attempting to plan a lesson, it is vital to know the students, their interests, and their learning styles. This can be done using questionnaires and learning style tests such as Dunn and Dunn's Learning Style Inventory. It is also a good idea to gauge how much students know about the content to be taught by using a pre-test. Once we know our students, we can begin adapting our lessons to meet the individual needs of each unique student. Striving to meet the students' unique needs is vital. One way of teaching a lesson will never fit all students in a class. No two students will ever be alike.

Netbooks, the Latest Rage in Computer Portability

**Ryan Keyes and
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A netbook is a class type of a laptop and is used basically for wireless communication and access to the Internet. Netbooks are highly size efficient and were designed primarily for web browsing and emailing. Netbooks work with Linux and Windows XP instead of the more application-based Windows Vista. Netbooks have some advantages over desktop and laptop computers as they are much smaller and less expensive. Their size, weight, and costs are the most notable and popular advantages. They are especially a booming product in the field of public education as they provide a more efficient way to allow every student to have access to a computer. Nevertheless, the netbook cannot replace the desktop computer as it is too underpowered for popular office applications and their small screens and keyboards can make them tiring to use. Three popular brands of Netbooks are discussed here: Acer, Hewlett-Packard (HP), and Dell.

Acer Netbooks. With Acer netbooks, Windows XP Home Edition is the operating system. The Acer netbook also comes with Adobe Acrobat Reader for pdf files that may need to be downloaded. To accommodate the needs of students, only Office 2007 Home and Student or free software such as OpenOffice will be needed and possibly an external media player such as iTunes. Microsoft Word will work great for reports, PowerPoint will work for presentations, and Outlook is perfect for emailing. Collaboration tools can be found through Windows Live Messenger or other programs that can be downloaded on the Internet.

As far as hardware is concerned, Acer Aspire One comes with 160 GB of hard disk space, 1GB DDR SDRAM, and a 1.6 GHz processor. The netbook also comes with a built in microphone and webcam. Internet connectivity is still the same as on standard computers with a 10/100 Ethernet port and 802.11 b/g wireless protocols. It has

three USB 2.0 ports. A 3- or 6-cell lithium ion battery powers the netbook for up to three or 6.5 hours respectively. The net book is 2.6 lbs and costs \$349.

HP Netbooks. The HP 1000 Mi Edition has a total weight of 2.3 lbs. This Netbook is ideal for email, instant messaging, and chatting face-to-face with a built-in HP Mini Webcam. One can also work and play comfortably on the near-full-size keyboard (92% of full size). It has an 8.9" or the frameless 10.1" diagonal display from which to choose. It has 2048 MB of memory which is generally the lower end of a typical notebook. The HP mini is equipped with a 60 GB Hard Drive and one can also snap an HP Mobile Mini USB drive into the recessed port to add storage. HP allows you to build and choose from various types of hardware and software, but it is recommended to use HP Mobile Internet (Mi) software built on Linux. The processor is the Intel Atom, which is at the top of Mobile Internet Devices. Overall, the HP Mini 1000 Mi Edition is a great device at a cost of \$279.99 and is available from HP.

Dell Netbooks. The Inspiron Mini 9's small, virtually weightless design lets you travel light. The Inspiron Mini 9 provides over four hours of battery life. It comes with the Intel Atom processor and the Windows XP or Linux Version operating system and holds up to 1GB of memory. The weight is 2.28 lbs. A bright 8.9-inch glossy LED display (1024x600) presents most websites with little left-right scrolling, and the keypads are large and easy to navigate. The hard drive can be configured up to 16 GB with a solid state drive in Windows XP and 32 GB in Linux. The Inspiron comes fully equipped with three USB 2.0 ports, integrated 10/100 LAN (RJ45), 15-pin VGA video connector, audio jacks, 3-in-1 Media Card Reader, and AC adapter connector. The average price of the Inspiron Mini 9 is \$300.

The best netbook depends upon the usage of the computer. A consumer could use a netbook as primarily a travel device, where storage would not be used on the netbook but rather on other portable media such as a USB flash drive. In this case, the HP Netbook would be the best netbook with its higher amount of memory and usage of Solid State Drives which may be lower in storage; however, it allows for data to be retrieved faster and would never experience a hard-disk crash since it is solid state. However, a consumer could also use a netbook as a primary computing device where storage on the computer is paramount for its usage. In this case, the netbook for this consumer would be the Acer netbook with 160 GB of hard disk space. This netbook would allow for the consumer to store all of their files and programs on the netbook without need of external storage media. All three brands are great for traveling because of their size and weight. However, storage capability, data retrieval speed, and durability might be the determinant based on individual needs of the user.

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Does Technology Improve Students' Critical Thinking Skills

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We ask: Can technology help students to think better critically? Is it possible to use technology to foster higher order thinking skills, as in the Blogs book, in a meaningful way, or does it alter students' attention spans? After reading through chapters one and two of *Integrating Technology for Meaningful Learning*, we concluded that technology can help to improve students' critical thinking. According to the book, critical thinking can be seen as an ongoing process of gathering information. In technology this is a very important process. Basics of computers have to be learned before an Internet search can be taught. Technology is the process of adding new knowledge to previous knowledge; we feel this falls under critical thinking.

When looking at the possibilities of using technology to bring about higher thinking, it seems that the opportunities are limitless. This is largely due to the fact that technology is ever expanding and being introduced to more people every day. One of the fastest and easiest ways to implement higher thinking through technology would be by creating a blog. Following the criteria of the book's standards for higher thinking, the first thing we looked at was complexity. To create a blog, many steps would have to occur. First, writing skills would have to be taken into account. Most likely, it would be best to introduce the idea of reflective writing. Second, it would be best to begin introducing the topic of Internet safety to the students before beginning work online. Not only is this a step towards blogging, but it also falls under the criteria of judgment. It is crucial for students to learn what is appropriate and inappropriate to post online. To build on critical thinking, students must comprehend the pitfalls in posting any personal information, which could identify them in any way. By also implementing a class discussion on this topic, they would be able to listen to each other's thoughts on the matter and provide their own input as well.

Once it is felt that the students have a complete and thorough understanding of why and how to use this medium, the process of building their own weblog could begin. This would become the final steps of posting their blogs. A blog is a way to introduce the concept of being connected not only to the school and classroom, but to the world as well. This is where higher levels of thinking can really begin to flourish. Creating a blog will give students an opportunity to synthesize their thinking by organizing, creating, and composing their analysis of the topic at hand. Thus, realizing the concept of having such a large audience to read their blogs may entice them to think more deeply about what they are writing. Not only that, but it could be required or encouraged for students to not only post a blog, but to respond to other students' blogs as well. At this point, the highest level of thinking can take place where they can judge other's views, argue the validity of the point, and defend their position. This gives students a chance to reflect on each others' thoughts and ideas in a new way where the ideas are truly being valued rather than personalities in a normal classroom discussion. Getting a peer's input in writing can sometimes be one of the best ways for a student to learn.

With the posting of and replying to blogs, the criteria of effort and self-regulation of higher thinking will then organically occur. Blogging is a source to give your own input on whatever topics you see fit. Not only that, but blogs are a source of free information, sharing, and collaboration. An example, from the Blogs book, was the concept of political campaigning through blogging. It allowed supporters of certain politicians to give their input or thoughts, creativity, and their time to the cause. Given all of this, it should be easy to see that critical thinking can be achieved through technology.

Approaching critical thinking through technology is a way to relate to the net generation. According to the Blogs book, “today’s students of almost any age are far ahead of their teachers in computer literacy.” Knowledge of technology is beginning at even younger ages. To quote the Blogs book, “kids in the second, third, and fourth grade—are migrating to sites like Club Penguin and Webkinz, social networking sites with training wheels.” Being able to share information universally is not just reading, but being able to learn from others in a different way or from a different point of view. This is what makes higher learning through technology meaningful. Attention spans would be broadened through appropriately learning the benefits of the Internet. Students may be technologically advanced, but many do not use the sources available to them to their full extent or potential. By learning these concepts, it is hoped or believed that students will be more interested and challenged in this approach to education. If these techniques are not learned now, students will continually lag behind technology. However, with a clear understanding of how to appropriately use these tools students can become the leaders of creativity living and growing on the edge.

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