



## Celebrate Constructivist Learning (and get free software tools!)

By Mary Saffron,  
SIG TeleLearning  
Communications Officer

The Constructivist Consortium ([www.constructivistconsortium.org](http://www.constructivistconsortium.org)) in partnership with SIGTELE is bringing the popular “Constructivist Celebration” to Michigan! Plan to join in this pre-conference learning experience on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 in Grand Rapids. Participants will receive the day’s educational program, a hearty lunch and free software from Constructivist Consortium members, including five free tools from Tech4Learning: Pixie, Frames, WebBlender, Twist, and ImageBlender. Bring a charged laptop, a digital camera (optional) and your creativity! This hugely popular workshop, also offered as a pre-conference event at the National Education Computing Conference (NECC), sells out quickly each year. Don’t miss your chance to learn with the best at this full-day, hands-on workshop.

SIGTELE officers, Laura Cummings and I (Mary Saffron), along with three MACUL Board members (Diane Zoellmer, Eric Getsoian and Tim Kamps) experienced a Constructivist Celebration first-hand at the 2008 NECC conference.

We began the day armed with laptops, cameras, curiosity and a lot of enthusiasm joining more than 100 participants from around the world. Dr. Gary Stager kicked off the day off with an inspirational keynote address about the why and how of effective project-based learning. Then it was our turn to jump into exciting hands-on projects led by outstanding ed tech leaders. Special guests and expert faculty were also available to support us in our project development and collaboration.

The real fun began after we selected free software tools from our workshop folders and loaded them on our laptops. Imagine a workshop where time is scheduled to simply explore, create, learn, and experience! During the event Gary Stager provided more in-depth demonstrations and explanations using *MicroWorld*, while representatives from Tech4Learning, Inspiration, and FableVision moved through the packed restaurant, offering suggestions, answering questions, and providing encouragement and praise as we all explored and experimented with their software.

After lunch, we returned to our laptops to finalize and fine tune one of the projects we had started earlier that day. During this final working phase we were also asked to move around the room to view and share each other’s creations. This was certainly a highlight of the day. The level of imagination and creativity gathered together in that room resulted in the development of many exceptional learning tools, sure to inspire and motivate learners of all ages. It was only after several requests that we all returned to our seats for closing comments, reflection and discussion.

The mission of the Constructivist Consortium is to empower learners. As stated on their website, members of the Constructivist Consortium support in the following principles:

- The learner is at the center of the educational process and knowledge results from socially constructed experiences.
- Computers and communication technology create expanded opportunities for children to learn traditional concepts and additional opportunities to learn new things in new ways.
- Hardware and software are best used in ways that enhance each student’s creative and intellectual development in a flexible open-ended fashion.



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- Students are empowered by abundant access to computers and while engaged in personally meaningful projects.
- Teachers are in the best position to know how to meet the needs of their students.
- Opportunities for student collaboration, communication and publishing are at least as important as access to information.
- 21st Century students are creative, thoughtful and capable of responsible leadership in their schools and communities. Student empowerment is a key to academic success.

If you find yourself agreeing with any or all of these principles, you will want to join us on March 10 in Grand Rapids for this full-day learning experience. Projects vary but may include claymation, digital photography, video game design, animation creation, simulation building and much more. While free software is always a draw, the learning experience itself is certainly priceless. The spirit of collaboration, exploration, and the building of new learning will leave you with fresh ideas and innovative possibilities to enhance and improve the learning in your classroom. Plan to join SIGTELE and the Constructivist Consortium for the Constructivist Celebration workshop. See you there!

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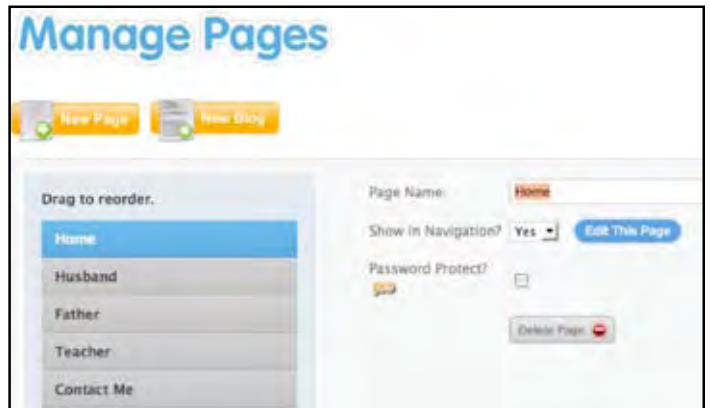


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Next, select the “Pages” tab to create more pages or manage the pages you have created. On this page you can also reorder



the pages (the order they show in your menu). To add a new page (content that won't change very often) click on the “New Page” button and give the page a name. The “New Blog” button creates a page that allows you to add new content that will always appear at the top of the page. It's a great place to post announcements and classroom updates.



Once you have these basic elements in place you are ready to publish your site. You will find the publish button in the upper right corner of the page.



And with that you have a pretty basic web site. This is just a taste of some of the excellent tools that will be shared during the SIGWEB pre-conference session on creating easy websites with free web-based tools. Please see the Pre-Conference description for more details. We would love to see you there!

Collaborate, Communicate, Create

2010 MACUL Conference

March 10-12, 2010  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Registration info and form on pages 32-33

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