

STEM Spotlight/ Bits & Bytes – March 5, 2020

Did you know that every student at SHS has an Office365 account? We use these accounts for school data management, but students begin to interact with their accounts beginning in 2nd grade. How do we use Office365 programs? How do we build on skills age-appropriately over time? Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing ways that various programs are used in different grade levels and classes- Outlook, OneNote, Teams, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Stream are all used in interesting ways throughout our school day!

Microsoft Teams:

Beyond using Teams as an organizational tool at the administrative level at SHS, Teams is a powerful tool for students that allows for communication and collaboration in a new way. A few ways that Teams might be used in a middle school classroom include:

- Teacher posts a warm up question that students reply to in order to brainstorm new ideas before learning a topic, recall prior knowledge from a previous lesson, or think critically about a problem. All students are able to share ideas simultaneously, and read each other's responses.
- Teacher posts a video or file that students can view or read to learn something new, then reply to a question about it. The teacher is able to immediately check for understanding from all students, and students can learn from each other's ideas.
- Student shares a writing sample, a screen shot of a digital assignment, or a link to their creation for peer feedback or to share their masterpiece work. Students are able to quickly share with others without needing to print, email, etc.
- Teacher posts a reminder for the following day's class or student posts a question about an assignment, if helpful to the whole class. Learning can move beyond the walls of the classroom.

But why not do these things "traditionally"- write down a question on the board, write down an answer on a piece of paper, share aloud with the class?

While the "traditional" way is still highly important in our classrooms, balance is always best! Teams allows for all student voices to be heard, even those who may not normally share aloud due to shyness or simple lack of time in a classroom. Students are able to share ideas with all peers, rather than just those sitting around them. Teams allows teachers to view student ideas quickly, using responses to guide a lesson in the moment. It even allows absent students to engage in class conversations (real time or after the fact).

Connect:

Discuss with your child, Have you ever felt as though your voice was not heard in a class discussion? Have you ever been nervous to share an answer aloud? How can technology help to ensure that all voices are heard?

Questions? Comments? Please contact [Deanna Simons](#).