Happy Columbus Day, October 14, 2013!

As we all know, "famed Italian explorer Christopher Columbus discovered the **New World** of the Americas on an **expedition** sponsored by King Ferdinand of Spain in 1492."
 (source: biography.com/people/christopher-columbus-9254209?page=2)

source: http://msugradwellness.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/technology.jpg

I am going to use the metaphor of the **New World** to give you a major HW **assignment/expedition** that is due by our last week, Monday November 18th. So this major HW **assignment/expedition** is due 5 weeks from today:

    Not next week 10/21 when I will share Lesson 5
    Not the last Monday in October, 10/28, when I will share Lesson 6
    Not the first Monday in November, 11/4, when I will share Lesson 7
    Not the second Monday in November, 11/11, (Veteran's Day) when I will share Lesson 8
    But the third Monday in November, 11/18 which is 8 days before Thanksgiving and our last week together

Got it? Consider yourself notified and warned!

Now what is this HW assignment/expedition?
Answer: I want each of you to create a project or activity with students that moves you into (if you have never done so before) or further into (for those of you who already have done so) the **New World** of using technology in the classroom and with students.

On the Wiki, I will be including your names with an abridged version of these guidelines where you can enter your specific plans and intentions due 10/28.

Why move forward into the **New World**, even though Columbus really traveled to a new place that previously existed and was of course already inhabited?

Reason #1: Because you won't know if the activity or project is useful or valuable educationally unless you do it. Piaget developed many of his theories based on working with his own children and then made observations and reflections. Teachers need to be pioneers like Piaget!

Reason #2: Because teaching is a process and trying new things is the way to grow as a professional. Without being innovative, without trying new things, teaching becomes a static endeavor. What is wonderful about teaching involves always thinking and experimenting with new approaches to try to

reach more students in different ways, respecting and acknowledging multiple intelligences and learning styles.

Reason #3: Because you are modeling behavior for students, trying new things, taking risks and doing things out of your comfort zone. Getting out of one's comfort zone is an important educational theme for students (and teachers).

Reason #4: Because you will gain skills by teaching. In fact, one of the best ways to get better at anything (music, math, art, cooking) is to teach it to someone.

Reason #5: Because every year, the NY Times reports that "technology makes no difference in our schools" and you have the opportunity to be a pioneer and see first hand by working with kids if they are correct!

Reason #6: Because technology in our schools is not about hardware or software but rather humanware. Your school needs (and all schools need) more teachers who see themselves as technology pioneers moving forward into the **New World.**

Reason #7: Because you will value seeing what others in this class are doing since it will give you ideas for what you might do after this course is over.

Reason #8: Because when you see and evaluate kids using computers, you are getting new insights into their learning styles. When I started Summercore in 1985, I used to invite Louisa Birch from Meadowbrook School in Weston MA as a guest speaker. Louisa was a Kindergarten teacher experimenting using Logo with her kids. She would tell the Summercore participants that in her 30 years of teaching Kindergarten, she never found any tool that gave her a better glimpse into the child's learning style than seeing him/her use a computer.

What activity or project should you choose or create?

Anything related to our content that you have not previously done prior to this class. Please do not do a project or activity that you have already done in the past. Please do not use an app or software program that you have used in the past with students.

• If you are in the iPad class, you can do a project or activity with any of the apps we have covered or a new one that you have heard about.

• If you are in the Google Docs/Drive course, you can do a project or activity with any of the tools we have encountered, including making a presentation to colleagues or students.

• If you are in the Coding course, you can do a teaching unit to students on certain skills of Scratch. This can be a class of students or perhaps a small group of students whom you pull together.

• If you are in the Taking the Plunge course, you can do a teaching unit or drill/practice unit on any of the software programs we have looked at or any other one you have encountered. You can do this with a full class or just a small group of students.

What about if you are not a classroom teacher?

• Plan B1 -- teach a lesson to a faculty colleague, friend or spouse

• Plan B2 -- make a presentation to a group of colleagues at your school, a group of parents
• Plan B3 -- work with a few students whom you are close to and whom you can pull together for an hour after school one day

What about if you are a classroom teacher but this project will not fit into your planning for the next few weeks?

• see Plans B1, B2, B3 above
• Plan B4 -- if teaching older students, give them an extra credit project that is due over the next two weeks; this way it does not interfere with your syllabus and normal HW
• Plan B5-- if teaching younger students, include information in a newsletter to parents and ask them to respond to you with info about what their child did at home

What does the rubric look like for this assignment/expedition?
*Please take this with a grain of salt since this is not a traditional course
and I want you to get out of this course what works for you ;-)*

cdn.slashgear.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/saltgrains.jpg

Criterion	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Exemplary
Met the deadlines				
• Due 10/28: A few sentences or bullet points onto our wiki describing your activity/project				
• Due 11/18: A paragraph or two of reflections describing the project that has been completed by now.				
The design of the project chosen				
Communication during our 30 minute talks on shaping the project				
Implementation of the Activity or Project				
The description and reflections on our wiki				

What if this 5 week assignment/expedition causes you stress or you are not thrilled with it?
Let's talk about it during our next conversation. My penchant of "F" for flexibility means that I don't want you stressed or upset. I want you making progress with technology and will help you figure out another Plan B that works for you!