

# Washington Township High School

Monthly Report

October 2008

## Teaching and Learning

### Statistics

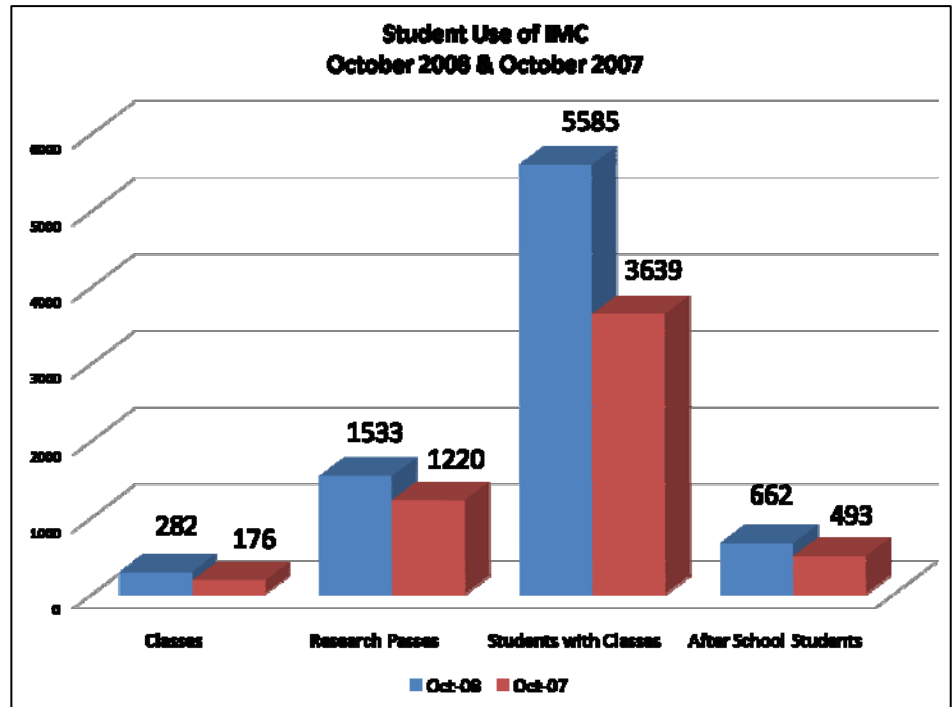
#### Classes

English	80
Consumer and Family Science	5
Science	24
Social Studies	114
Physical Education	1

Mathematics	9
World Languages	10
Special Education	39
<b>Total Number of classes</b>	<b>282</b>

#### Total number of students 7,780

Students with classes	5,585
Students with passes	1,533
Students after school	662



October was another extremely busy month in the IMC with Student Use increasing drastically in all categories. There was a 38% increase in classes taught in October 2007 to classes taught in October 2008 therefore students with classes increased by 35%. Individual students use also grew with 20% more students utilizing the IMC on a research pass and 26% more students staying after school to use the IMC.

## Information Skills

### October Highlights

After a year-long collaboration between the librarians and English teachers in which the entire freshman English writing lab curriculum was revised, the first of the freshman English classes to benefit from the curriculum change spent five days in the library researching a controversial issue which affects society. In the past, the freshmen wrote a biographical paper. The research process was greatly aided by access to the thousands of EBooks now

available in the IMC catalogs. The “Powersearch” feature allows access to over 500 sources of information for each search term.

October also found many of the students receiving instruction in the library on creating “Wikis.” A wiki, meaning “quick” in Hawaiian, is a web page which can be linked to other web pages.

The library launched an initiative to reach out to first year teachers inviting them to bring their classes to the library for research-based instruction.

### **Information Literacy Lessons**

#### **English**

- All freshmen spend one marking period in Writing Lab, a course which introduces them to the writing of research papers. As mentioned above, in collaboration with the English Department, the librarians redesigned the project to have the freshmen research a controversial issue that affects teens, rather than the biographical paper which was done in the past. The first Writing Lab classes spent 5 days in the library where the librarians taught them how to use the library resources, including the EBooks and databases, to locate, select, and retrieve information. They were also shown how to evaluate web sources and how to cite correctly to avoid plagiarism.

#### **World Languages**

- Ms. Kirk’s Spanish classes traveled to Spanish-speaking countries without leaving the confines of the library. The librarians instructed them in using IMC databases to research and create a PowerPoint presentation on their assigned country’s cultural, recreational, and culinary institutions. The students were particularly impressed with the pictures they were able to find for this project using the AP Images database.

#### **Math**

- Mr. Pinto’s Algebra II classes discovered the relevance of this subject in the real world. The librarians showed them how to explore the career databases to find jobs that rely on knowledge of algebra. They then used the IMC computers and the Publisher program to create a tri-fold brochure about a specific job that they were interested in for the future. Showing how math is used in the career was an essential component of the project. Many of the students expressed surprise that algebra was important in hundreds of jobs and careers, and they had difficulty choosing just one career to research.

#### **Science**

- Ms. Constans’s Physics classes came to the IMC to research some of the most important mechanical inventions in history that did not include optics, electromagnetism, or chemical reactions. The librarians guided them in using the IMC EBooks, as well as the Science databases to complete the project.
- Mrs. Carcel’s Biology classes explored careers in biotechnology by using the IMC’s career databases. The librarians showed them how to search these resources to find salaries, job outlook, education requirements, earning potential, and web sites for additional information.
- Mrs. Naval’s Biology classes researched the food web using an IMC Pathfinder.
- Ms. Wiles Environmental Studies classes created presentations on the issues of fuel emissions and global warming. The librarians had created an Environmental Studies Pathfinder which guided the students to the IMC resources they needed for their research. The students then searched the databases and catalogs to present causes, effects, and remedies for these important environmental issues.

## Social Studies

- Mr. Callaway's AP History classes used the IMC laptop computers, as well as IMC resources, to write their research papers.
- Mr. Barnshaw's AP US History classes researched information for this marking period's formal document essay using IMC databases and other resources.
- Mrs. Carchidi's AP History classes are frequent visitors to the library as they research information for use in their position papers.
- Mr. Gorski's Social Studies Classes used the Campaign 2008 Pathfinder on the IMC home page to research the presidential candidates and their views on the issues. Each of his classes will hold a presidential debate.
- The librarians showed Mr. Kirkwood's U.S. History I classes how to research the History Resource Center database to learn more about the administrations of past presidents. The student used this information to create a composite of "the perfect president."
- The librarians worked with Mr. Saia to create a Wiki for his U.S. History II class. They then helped his students to create their own wikis on which they shared their research on famous Americans who have made important contributions to America and to the world.
- After reading My Forbidden Face, a biography which described life in Afghanistan during the time of the Taliban, Ms. Mason's Sociology classes came to the IMC to learn more about that country. The librarians showed them how to use the library's databases, EBooks, and video streaming resources to gather information about the history and culture of Afghanistan. The results of their research will be published on individual wikis which the librarians showed them how to create and to link to Ms. Mason's wiki.

## Special Education

- Mrs. Blistan's Special Education classes improved upon their information literacy skills while researching people that they would nominate for the New Jersey Hall of Fame. The librarians showed them how to use IMC technology to create such products as wikis, Power Points, movies, and slide shows to promote the selection of their nominees.
- Mrs. Holmes's Special Education classes received an overview of IMC services and resources during their five-day visit. The librarians showed them how to use books, Ebooks, and databases to create a PowerPoint about the country they were assigned to research. The students were particularly impressed by their ability to find pictures using AP Images and insert videos using United Streaming to add interest to their presentations.

## Information Access and Delivery

### Statistics

Books/Audio visuals checked out  
1,860  
Magazines/articles requested  
106  
Interlibrary loans requested  
35  
Interlibrary loans returned  
36

### Technology Update

The IMC's subscription to a new audio book database through the South Jersey Regional Cooperative now allows students and staff to listen to audio books on their iPods. This greatly expands the accessibility

of these books since previously they could only be downloaded to a computer or an MP3 player. iPod users have enthusiastically embraced this new way to access literature.

The library's catalog of books has grown significantly due to the addition of thousands of EBooks this past summer. All of the EBooks have now been catalogued and are available through a "powersearch" of the IMC's catalog

The Student Book Club has a new web page. Providing links to the club's Eboard and Email, the page also allows students to preview the book selections for the upcoming year, as well as learn more about the authors. Since this year the club decided to read books that fit into a monthly theme, a webpage featuring a list of additional titles that correlate with each theme will be added monthly.

The IMC librarians, along with the Technology Department and Elementary Library Supervisor Joanne Robertson, have scheduled a meeting with Follett to explore the use of Destiny Quest, a Web 2.0 version of our online catalog.

### IMC Homepage

In addition to the Student Book club selection, another addition to the page this month was a link to the Staff Book Club page. Novel selections for this school year, as well as meeting dates and links to discussion guides, are posted to make it easier for faculty to participate.

The IMC Eboard now has a "wiki" section. The wikis of all classes who worked on their student projects with the librarians and their teachers are now posted.

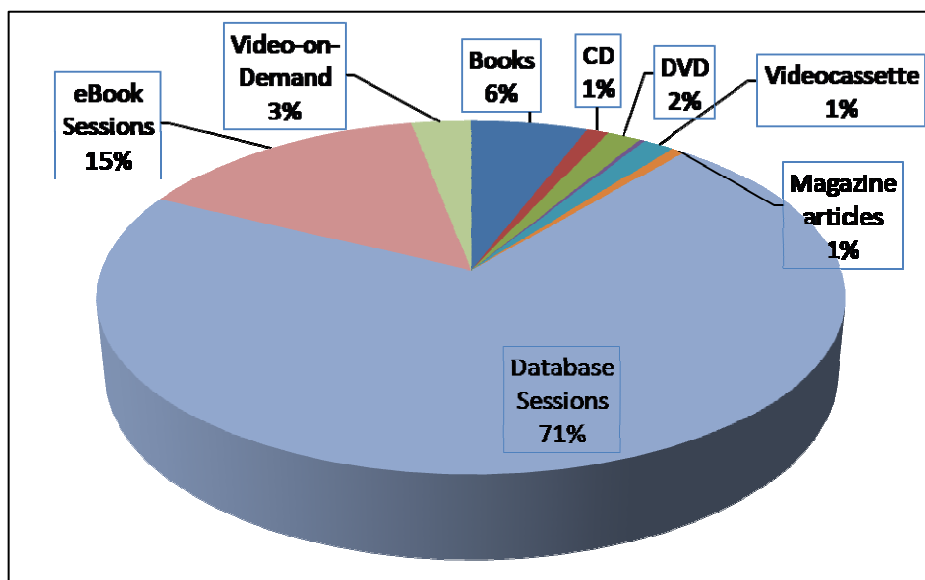
### Reading Promotion/IMC Displays

The library extended its "Books with Bite" theme to include the very popular vampire books on the hall bulletin board. Another "bite" themed bulletin board inside the library featured cookbooks. The homophonic "Books with Byte" glass case display featured books about computers, the Internet, and other technology-related issues.

Books about the election, the parties, and the presidential candidates were prominently displayed in another of the library's bookcases.

Flyers about the Staff Book Club were emailed to all of the high school staff to encourage their participation.

Distribution of IMC Materials Accessed by Type  
September & October 2008



The librarians, in cooperation with the English and Special Education departments, are encouraging students to enter a contest sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. This national reading and writing promotional program is calling the contest "Letters about Literature." Students are encouraged to write a personal letter to an author, living or dead, explaining how that author changed the student's way of thinking about the world or about himself or herself.

### **Student Book Club**

The student book club met on Wednesday October 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher and their freedom to read. This meeting fell during Banned Books Week, so the students enjoyed talking about the importance of having access to this book and many others that have been challenged over the years. The discussion was also continued online using the group feature of the Shelfari website.

The Book Club Executive Board met on October 22<sup>nd</sup> to plan the upcoming book discussion meeting and how they felt the monthly theme of *Books with Bite* should be addressed. They also discussed possibilities for fundraisers and service projects for the 08-09 school year that include selling handmade book marks, holding a used book sale and designing t-shirts that promote reading.

The month ended with the *Books with Bite* meeting on Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup>. The club discussed *Interview With the Vampire* by Anne Rice and the recent increase in popularity of vampire books. It was a lively discussion that hit on the historical and mythical aspects of vampires, how vampires have been portrayed in movies and on TV and what the students felt made a good horror story.

The book club will be reading *Beastly* by Alex Flinn for their November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting which will focus on Stories of Old- Retold.

### **Program Administration**

In collaboration with Special Education teacher Marie Blistan, Librarian Ann Hill wrote a unit plan to teach students about the New Jersey Hall of Fame. Sponsored by NJEA, the unit plan will be used by teachers throughout the state and is available online at <http://njhalloffame.com/>

For their participation in the establishment of the New Jersey Hall of Fame, Ms. Hill, along with Ms. Blistan and her students, was recognized by the Washington Township Board of Education on October 28. See picture at right.



IMC Secretary Jean March and Library Assistant Karin Partridge attended workshops to learn more about Outlook and Jersey Cat.

Since this is the curriculum revision year for both the Science Department and the Art Department, the IMC has ordered additional resources for them.