



Meet. Share. Spark Innovation.

Dear Colleagues,

Let your faculty meetings be a time when information and conversation spark innovation.

The *ISACS Spark* is an initiative to provide our member schools with quick and engaging professional development opportunities to spark conversations in 15 minutes or less. These “sparks” can be used as food for thought or as opportunities to engage in larger conversations among peers. ISACS will be sending Sparks throughout the school year and we hope you will find them helpful in stimulating conversations around exciting research related to teaching and learning.

December’s Topic – Maximizing Learning Through Inquiry-Based and Project Based Learning (PBL)

Project Based Learning (PBL) and Inquiry-Based Learning are hands-on learning approaches involving real-world problem solving and challenges in order to gain a deeper understanding. Projects become the center of the learning experience often driven by open-ended questions to guide learning experiences. Here are some inspiring videos to help you get started and a suggestion of how to evaluate the students’ experiences.

Videos:

- **Clip #1: [Inquiry-Based Learning: From Teacher-Guided to Student-Driven](#)** - Ralston Elementary School is creating a culture of inquiry to nourish 21st-century learners, *Edutopia*. (5:25 minutes)
- **Clip #2: [Assessing the 4C’s of Project Based Learning For All Grade Levels](#)** - [EdLeader21](#) (3:12 minutes)
- **Clip #3: [Hip Hop Genius: Remixing High School Education](#)** - Sam Seidel is the director of the student experience lab at the Business Innovation Factory and author of *Hip Hop Genius: Remixing High School Education* Seidel speaks internationally about innovative solutions to challenges facing schools, community organizations, and prisons. (4:23 minutes)

- **Clip #4: [Marc Lamont Hill on Using Hip-Hop in the Classroom](#)** - Marc Lamont Hill on using hip-hop as an innovative learning tool in the classroom. Marc Lamont Hill is an American academic, journalist, author, activist, and television personality. (1:32 minutes)

(Length of time for the four clips: approximately 14 minutes)

We hope these ideas ignite thinking and conversations in your school.

Regards,

The ISACS Professional Services Committee & the ISACS Professional Development Team

The ISACS Spark has been developed by the Professional Services Committee (PSC). The PSC is comprised of teacher leaders from around the region who are passionate about professional development. All sites and clips have been reviewed and deemed appropriate for sharing.

PAST SPARKS

Please visit www.isacs.org/ISACSSpark to view all previous ISACS Sparks.

November 2016 ISACS Spark

November's Spark focuses on the Changing Path to College Admissions (and beyond!). The fall, November specifically, is a stressful times for high school seniors (and their families) in the college admission process. Many early applications to colleges are evaluated and decisions begin to be sent to applicants at this time. As this process can be stressful to all, It may helpful to hear about new thinking in the path to college acceptance.

Videos:

- **Clip #1: [New report suggests ways to revolutionize college admissions](#)** - Administrators from top colleges and universities are endorsing a report from the Harvard Graduate School of Education that could fundamentally change the college admission process. "Turning the Tide" examines the college application system and offers specific improvements. (5 minutes)
- **Clip #2: [Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be](#)** - Frank Bruni discusses his book and the madness of the college admission process. (8:25 minutes)
- **Clip #3: [Is Middle School Too Early to Talk about College?](#)** - How soon is too soon to talk about college? Can middle schoolers begin to take steps to prepare for college? What can parents do now to give their kids the option to go to college? (2:08 minutes)
- **Clip #4: [College Admission Standards Changing to Emphasize Community Service](#)** - As high school students wait to find out if they got accepted, dozens of schools announce wide sweeping reforms. (8:33 minutes)

(Length of time for the four clips: approximately 24 minutes)

Additional articles of interest:

- [Before You Scream at Your School Counselor](#), *Huffington Post*
- [7 Reasons why You Shouldn't Go To College and 4 Things to Do Instead](#), *Huffington Post*

October 2016 ISACS Spark

October's Spark focuses on Parent Teacher Conferences. In many schools, this is the time for Parent Teacher Conferences. Are you prepared for difficult conversations you might have with parents or students regarding their progress? Here are some suggestions to consider as you prepare for upcoming conversations.

Videos:

- **Clip #1:** [Having Difficult Conversations with Parents, National College for Teaching and Leadership](#) - Dr Fiona Davidson shares her top tips on how to prepare for and conduct difficult conversations with parents effectively. Some conversations, by their very nature can be challenging, but by planning ahead and following a few best practice principles, they needn't be a cause for anxiety. (5:19 minutes)
- **Clip #2:** [Michael Grose interview with Steve Francis, Happy Schools](#) - Steve Francis from Happy Schools and Michael Grose discuss how to have difficult conversations with parents, how to listen, understand, and make a plan for how to resolve the issue. (4:59 minutes)

(Length of time for the two clips: approximately 10 minutes)

Additional article of interest:

- [10 Tips to Deal with Difficult Parents Effectively](#)

September 2016 ISACS Spark:

September's Spark focuses on Failing Forward. Is school a safe place to fail? Do students see failure as valuable feedback? Fear of failure in school can negatively affect a student's motivation and ability to learn, according to a study led by the Bilkent University (Turkey). As teachers we are constantly battling both parents' and students' fear of failing. Here are compelling reasons and strategies to create a safe space for all to learn from both successes and failures.

Videos:

- **Clip #1:** [Kid President tells us how to support each other as we learn by identifying the 20 Things We Should Say More Often](#) (3:31 minutes)
- **Clip #2:** [What Do You Think We Should Say More Often?](#) - Here are suggestions sent to Kid President (4:59 minutes)
- **Clip #3:** [Audri's Rube Goldberg Monster Trap](#) - Watch an enthusiastic seven-year-old attempt to make a complex Rube Goldberg machine work. Audri doesn't let his first few failures slow him down, and his exuberance when he succeeds is infectious. (4:06 minutes). Great to share with students!
- **Clip #4:** [Famous Failures](#) - How to deal with failure (2:58 minutes)
- **Clip #5:** [What Fear Can Tell Us](#) - In telling the story of the whaleship Essex, novelist Karen Thompson Walker shows how fear propels imagination, as it forces us to imagine the possible futures and how to cope with them. (11:30 minutes)

(Length of time for the five clips: approximately 27 minutes)

Additional article of interest:

- [How Can Adults Help Students Buck the Pressure of Perfection?](#) *New York Times* - An article about the increase in suicides on college campus' and what we can do to help.

This email has been sent to heads of school, division heads, assistant/associate heads, deans of faculty, deans of studies, directors of professional development and ISACS teacher representatives.

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