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## Making the Grade

Aly Tapp | York Suburban School District

Aly Tapp is a technology support specialist and English teacher at York Suburban School District in York County, Pennsylvania. She taught English for nine years before being named the district's technology integration coach, which was a position required of all districts by a Pennsylvania state grant called Classrooms for the Future (CFF). The grant provided laptops and other technology in schools, as well as professional development in how to best utilize digital technologies for learning.



In her role as technology support specialist, Aly assists teachers in the planning of instruction and management of technology resources including Moodle, Google Apps, WordPress, and other instructional tools. She also teaches English IIICP, the school's junior-year American literature survey course.

### A new challenge

*"I was craving a challenge and wanted to put some of my ideas into action, so I requested part-time classroom work and am now teaching three English classes on top of my technology support responsibilities,"* Aly said.

Aly and two fellow math and science teachers applied for a York Suburban Education Foundation grant and were awarded monies to pay for Camtasia Studio licenses, cameras, and USB microphones. Each has committed to flipping lessons in their classrooms this academic year. They meet monthly to discuss best practices and are also collecting feedback from students to help evaluate their progress.

*"Technology allows for so much more class community."*

-Aly Tapp

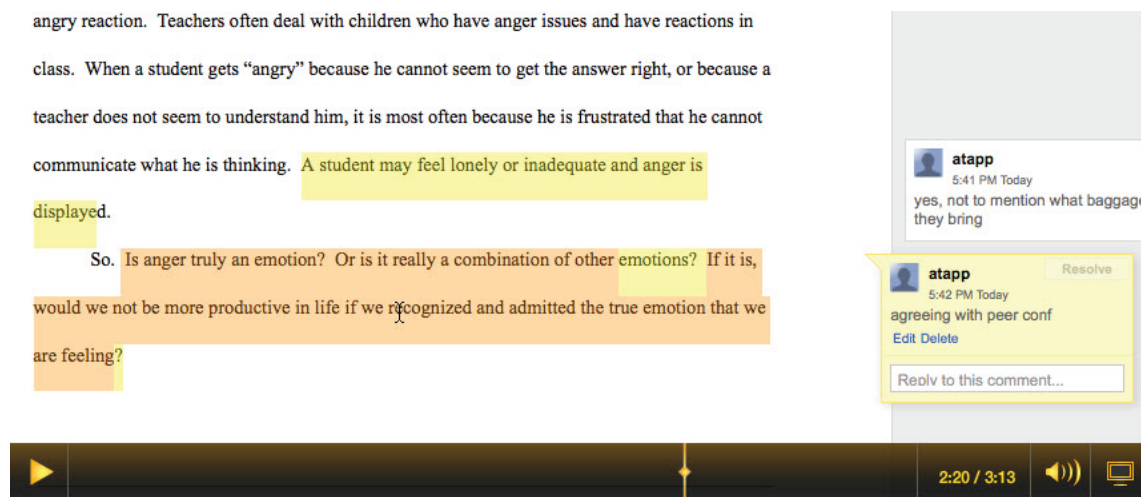
## Putting ideas into action

Aly is blogging about her teaching experiences this year at [www.alytapp.com](http://www.alytapp.com). Recently [she blogged about using TechSmith's Jing to grade students' papers](#). It took her about 10 to 15 minutes to grade each paper, but she said the response from students made it totally worth it. *"It wasn't just that they liked it--the vast majority liked it—it was that most students LOVED the feedback and were eager for more. For an English teacher, this is magical!"*

After students listened to their personalized screencast in class, they wrote a 10 minute reflection. Aly said the students really responded well to this. *"I was amazed at how focused and thoughtful they were in their reflection,"* she said. *"Their faces while writing were worth a million."*

### View examples of Aly's Jing feedback to students:

<http://alytapp.com/2011/10/27/assessment-feedback-via-screencast-examples/>



## Creating a community

Using Google Docs has helped Aly's students collaborate, and screencasting has helped them provide meaningful feedback to each other as well. Aly has challenged her students to reflect in ways other than writing. *"I'll ask them to read a piece and analyze it verbally while recording with Jing. It challenges them to express their thoughts on a piece in a new way,"* she said.

Aly also loves that her students can create their own screencast presentations so that she can review them on her own and not spend three or four days of class time on presentations. *"It forces students to be brief, focused, and have a planned script, since Jing allows for only five minutes of recording."*

In addition to her personal blog, Aly maintains a class assignment blog for parents to follow. She also set up a text message service that sends reminders to her students about the upcoming week's assignments on Sundays. *"Technology allows for so much more class community,"* Aly said.

**Visit Aly's website:**

[www.alytapp.com](http://www.alytapp.com)

**Explore TechSmith's Education Community:**

<http://www.techsmith.com/education.html>