

August 2003

VITAL News

Virginia Initiative for Technology and Administrative Leadership



Teaching Digital Literacy

Several VITAL principals were in attendance at a recent workshop in Virginia Beach where technology advocate and thinker Alan November discussed the need to teach students “digital literacy.” He urged educators to skip doing PowerPoint presentations and electronic worksheets and focus instead on helping students learn to “read” the web.

For instance, November demonstrated how to find out the name

of the person or organization sponsoring a website. He used the example of <http://www.martinlutherking.org> which would seem to be a website about the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. However, by searching on the URL at All the Web (<http://www.alltheweb.com>), we find out that the owner of the website is actually a white supremacist group dispensing misinformation about Dr. King. While it would not take an adult very long to figure out that something was wrong as they navigated the site, students may be fooled by the site if they are not adequately taught digital literacy skills.

November also encouraged educators to use the web to share student writing. He introduced workshop participants to Fan Fiction (<http://www.fanfiction.com>), a website where young writers publish original fiction written in the style of various authors from Hemingway to Rowling. Readers are encouraged to post comments about the work. The site is filled with student writing, none of which was required. Young people are writing because they want to and they are eager to get feedback.

If you want to learn more about Alan November and his ideas about how technology should be integrated effectively, you can visit his website: <http://www.anovember.com>.

Feature Web

NAESP

[The National Association of Elementary School Principals](http://www.naesp.org) has an extensive website geared towards elementary and middle school principals.

If you want to use the web to network with other principals, the NAESP site includes an [open forum](#) where administrators are encouraged to discuss issues with each other in a question and answer format. Here’s your chance to learn from others while offering your own expertise.

Membership in the NAESP includes subscriptions to Principal magazine and several other newsletters. You can read selected articles online: <http://www.naesp.org/pubs.html>

Newsletter Contact: Karen Work Richardson
karen@ivyrun.com

What's Your Plan?

Now that the state technology plan has been published, school divisions are updating their local plans. If your school doesn't have its own technology plan, now would be a great time to begin to develop one. If you already have a plan, congratulations! When was the last time you reviewed it with your school's technology committee? What? You don't have a technology committee? Guess what the first step of technology planning is...organize a committee.

VITAL has put together a web resource to help you with the planning process. It outlines the seven steps of technology planning, provides action plan worksheets and evaluation forms, and includes an interactive introduction to the Virginia State Technology Plan. The URL for the site is <http://www.ivyrun.com/techplan/START.HTM>.

Since being able to evaluate technology use is one of the targets for administrators in the new state plan (see the sidebar), the planning site also features an introduction to the Levels of Technology Implementation (LoTi), a scale that measures technology integration.

Finally, the website includes a webquest for educators that helps them through the process of identifying and evaluating both software and web resources.

Workshops covering technology planning, evaluating technology integration using LoTi and other scales, and locating and evaluating instructional technology resources are available for participating VITAL schools.

If you are interested in scheduling any of these workshops, just email Karen Richardson, karen@ivyrun.com, to set up a date.

REMEMBER: Failing to plan is planning to fail!



Administrators In the Plan

The Virginia State Technology Plan recognizes the importance of administrators in the successful integration of technology.

The first goal in the area of Integration is "to improve teaching and learning through the appropriate use of technology."

The first three targets under this goal relate directly to administrators:

Target 1: Administrators have a vision and a plan for technology use and integration.

Target 2: School leaders provide support for integration of technology into instruction.

Target 3: Leaders can effectively evaluate instructional uses of educational technology.

The VITAL program strives to provide professional development to help participants in all of these areas. Upcoming issues of the *VITALNews* will feature resources related to each of these areas. Don't miss the [technology planning website](#) that's designed to help you meet the first target.