

VITALNews

Virginia Initiative for Technology and Administrative Leadership



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Encouraging Technology Integration

The University of Maryland business school is handing out Blackberry devices to its full-time MBA students this fall. A group of second graders are using web logs to share their learning with the world. Local school divisions throughout the United States are giving laptops to students instead of textbooks.

Technology seems to be everywhere, integrating itself into our lives and our classrooms, changing the way we teach and learn. Creative educators are tapping the power of technology to give students exciting new opportunities for learning. Research tells us that as access to technology increases, teachers move from using technology to support traditional instruction to using technology to design student-centered learning

that promote higher order thinking skills. Administrators can do several things to help encourage teachers to move along the continuum of technology use from traditional to innovative.

Provide robust, reliable access. Teachers only have to get burned by a downed network or broken computer once or twice before they stop using technology.

Provide time for integration. Integrating technology thoughtfully and carefully doesn't happen without lots of work. Teachers need time to locate and evaluate resources and create technology enriched lessons plans.

Provide a little gentle pressure. Make it clear that technology integration is an expectation. Encourage reluctant teachers to find simple ways to integrate technology such as showing digital video or brainstorming using Inspiration.

Neo--the new Alphasmart-- Now Available

AlphaSmart, Inc., a provider of technology solutions for education, announced that Neo by AlphaSmart, the newest addition to its family of computer companions, is now shipping in time for the back-to-school season. Designed as a simple, affordable solution for one-to-one classroom computing, this lightweight, rugged device also appeals to mobile professionals who find its full-size keyboard and expansion capabilities ideal for writing and information gathering.

“AlphaSmart computer companions have earned a reputation within the education community as a writing tool that allows the creative process to take place virtually anytime, anywhere,” said Manish Kothari, president of AlphaSmart. “With Neo, our goal was to enhance the features that make the writing and editing process easy and efficient, while also building new functionality into the device to extend its use for keyboarding instruction,

classroom quizzes, outlining, and more.”

Based on the updated SmartApplet architecture, Neo is lightweight (two pounds), rugged, easy to use, and features more than 700 hours of battery life (on 3 AA alkaline batteries). It provides twice the memory and storage capacity of the AlphaSmart 3000, and a 50% larger screen with support for variable font sizes so users can see more of their work on screen without scrolling. Learn more about the Neo at the [Alphasmart website](#).

Leadership Conference Scheduled

Technology: Turning Barriers into Gateways is the theme of the 10th annual Educational Technology Leadership Conference. The conference will be held December 1 –3 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

This conference, designed with building level and division leadership in mind, offers breakout sessions, hands on workshops as well as an excellent opportunity to network with administrators from all over the state. To learn

more and to register, visit the conference website. Advance registration ends November 19.

Report on Charter Schools Released

Using data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) released a report critical of charter schools. The report’s analysis of achievement data shows that charter school students often under perform students in regular classrooms. You can read the report [online](#). (You’ll need the free Acrobat reader.) The [NAEP data](#) is also available.

Website Provides School Funding Info

ACCESS is a national initiative of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc. that seeks to strengthen the links between school finance litigation, public engagement, and the standards-based reform movement.

The ACCESS website provides information about school funding including state by state data. Visit [ACCESS online](#) to browse policy briefs, No Child Left Behind updates and other school funding news.

Data Shows Tech Use and Access

In the March 2003 *VITALNews*, Chris O'Neal, the director of the Virginia Initiative for Technology and Administrative Leadership, reported on the results of the TAGLIT (Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology) needs assessment survey, the Gates Foundation's official tool to be used in each state's Gates Foundation Leadership grant. Thus far in Virginia, the TAGLIT survey has been used to assess approximately 800

principals, 27,000 teachers, and 35,000 students.

A comparison of the current results to those reported in March 2003 shows little change in teachers' reported use of technology in teaching and learning. In 2003, 6.8% of teachers said they did not use technology at all. 38.5% of teachers said they were just beginning to use technology and the same percentage reported that they were making an effort to use technology effectively. Finally, 16.2% said they used technology naturally.

The current results are shown in the table below. While the number of teachers using an effort to use technology

effectively increased by nearly 9 percent, the percentage of those reporting natural use decreased by 3%. Those who reported not using technology remained around 6% while those who said they were just beginning to use technology decreased by 5%.

Student data reveals that nearly 75% of students have a computer with Internet access at home. Teachers report nearly 86% access to computers with Internet access. Finally, leaders report spending an average of 11% on professional development. The No Child Left Behind legislation recommends 25%.

Technology Use in Teaching and Learning - Overall

