

Putting “action” into on-line learning

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According to the International Society for Technology Education (2002), "Being prepared to use technology and knowing how that technology can support student learning must become integral skills in every teacher's professional repertoire." With over 4.4 million computers currently installed in America's classrooms, this may be considered an understatement. Since 1984 the ratio of students per computer has dropped from 125 to 10 (Coley, Cradler and Engel, 2000). How are these computers being used? How should they be used?

Reeves (1998) notes that the effects of using technology vary depending upon whether one is learning from technology or is learning with technology. When technology is used as a tutor, or to learn from, students may be more motivated and class instruction time may be decreased. When technology is used as a cognitive tool, or to learn with, learners are engaged in real world tasks and construct knowledge rather than reproduce it. While both learning from and learning with are valuable, designing appropriate instruction to maximize the benefits is critical. In a meta-analysis of 122 studies, Lou, Abrami and d'Appollonia (2001) note that positive effect on individual achievement and group performance is more dependent on how the assignment is structured than on the type of technology used. Pedagogy is the key, not the technology. Just as ISTE posits, knowing how technology can support learning is paramount.

Often teachers newly entering the profession are assigned to schools that are least desirable to more senior teachers. Schools with high poverty rates, rural schools, and inner city schools are frequently the first jobs new teacher graduates land. By providing preservice teachers with the requisite skills to effectively use the technology available in these schools to achieve maximum benefit we may begin to close the digital divide.

The NCATE 2002 Professional Standards state, "the new professional teacher should be able to integrate technology into instruction effectively." Teacher educators must provide the resources that will enable our students to be successful. Using the ISTE standards, this presentation will examine each standard and provide concrete suggestions and examples for achieving the ISTE standards in preservice education programs. Participants will be provided with examples of activities, strategies, software, and websites that are both innovative and easily accessible.