

introduction

By Kavita Rao

Technology has become an integral part of contemporary life. In the past decade, we have seen computers and telecommunications networks connect people across the globe in an unprecedented way. As citizens of this global community, we are constantly developing ways to realize and extend this potential.

Along with these opportunities comes a unique challenge: how do we educate a generation for whom the rate of technological change far outpaces that of any previous era? By the time our kindergartners are ready for the job market, the jobs available and the skills required will be drastically different. How can we prepare our students for challenges we can only guess at?

Educators have begun to address these challenges, building technology infrastructure in the schools and providing professional development for teachers, who must learn how to use these technologies in meaningful, pedagogically sound ways. Standards have been established that outline the ways in which technology can be integrated in relevant, project-based ways into the more traditional disciplines of math, science, language arts, and social studies. Teachers are incorporating those standards into curricula by providing students with opportunities to do research on the Internet, communicate via email, make multimedia presentations, videoconference with other classrooms, and publish information on websites.

This issue of *Pacific Educator* celebrates the many ways in which today's technologies support improved learning for tomorrow's citizens.

Databases make it possible for teachers to identify students' learning needs to select appropriate instructional strategies and for administrators to identify professional development needs of staff and priorities for school improvement. (See "Profiling Student Reading Levels," p. 11, "Educational Data Management," p. 16.)

Through DVDs and CD-ROMs, teachers have convenient access to resources and professional development experiences. In addition, teachers and their students can use multimedia formats for classroom projects and create curricula unique to local cultures (see "Pacific Voices," p. 6).

The Web offers unlimited opportunities for research and collaboration (see "earlyreading.info," p. 9). While Web-based distance learning has long provided professional development opportunities for teachers in remote and isolated areas, new Web-based software provides a means of supplying individualized support to small numbers of students in widely separated locations who share the same specialized learning needs (see "NEARStar Goes Into Orbit," p. 5).

In our efforts to increase students' use of innovative learning aids, however, we must not forget that all of us have much to learn from more traditional technologies. "Pacific Voices" (p. 6) and "From Navigation to Nan Madol" (p. 13) emphasize the importance of integrating traditional technologies and other traditional knowledge into curricula. "Explorations in Algebra" (p. 12) describes ways to use the graphing calculator to promote conceptual understanding for students who do not have strong numerical skills.

Technology is bringing the world together, connecting us in a global society that will continue to transcend distance and make the world a more interconnected place. Providing our children with the kind of education they need to use these tools effectively will prepare them to become informed and capable citizens.



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