

PUTTING THE NEW LITERACY TO WORK

Author David Warlick and Mary Colombo, curriculum director for the Somers (CT) School District, offer 14 ways administrators can move teachers and students into 21st-century learning.

1. Create a story that effectively illustrates the changing nature of information and the need to integrate contemporary literacy into all teaching and learning in your school(s)—and tell that story at every occasion.
2. In all staff development, assure that teachers are gaining skills so that they are concerned with information and communication issues rather than the operation of technology.
3. Provide a mechanism for staff to share best practices for including new literacies in their curriculum and instruction so they can learn from one another.
4. Assure that all curriculum leaders have received staff development in contemporary and new literacy instruction and are integrating that into their materials, practices, and communications.
5. Communicate with parents about the new literacies and what your school or district is doing to emphasize them.
6. Arrange supervised after-hours access to computers for students and families who do not have convenient access at home.
7. Establish an annual 21st-century learning fair for your district. Arrange booths where teachers and students demonstrate their digital work and discuss what they learn and teach in the process.
8. Look for opportunities to showcase examples of each to your community and leverage those opportunities to improve your teaching and learning environments.
9. Expand your acceptable use policy (AUP) into a broader guidance document that includes all aspects of information (ethics, copyright, e-mail, web-publishing policy, etc.).
10. Actively encourage all professional staff to use their web sites as an explicit part of doing their jobs. Make sure that all teachers are communicating with their classroom stakeholders through the web.
11. Think of your school(s) as more than a building. Include in the vision of the facility all of the information products (text, images, songs, video) that are produced by students and teachers. Help the community to include these products in their vision of your school(s).

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