Technology Newsletter
Nettle Creek School

The Nettle Creek technology classes are using a new curriculum that focuses on four basic strategies to make students technology literate.

• Vocabulary

• Keyboarding

• Digital Citizenship

• Research

Even in a technology rich society, words continue to be the most important element of communication. Knowing the lingo of technology is a crucial aspect of understanding technology.

Keyboarding remains a vital part of using technology even as tablets and voice recognition become more common. Students need to be able to use a keyboard in high school, college, and beyond. This year keyboarding has been expanded to include virtual, tablet based keyboarding in K-2 classes.

Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use. With the explosion of social media and the countless websites available online, the ethical side of technology is ever more important.

Research is one of the most important ways to nurture the learning experience. Gathering data, analyzing data, drawing conclusions and presenting those conclusions is a basic aspect of education in the age of the internet and technology productivity tools.

So far this year we have focused on all four of the basic strategies. The younger students have learned the parts of computers and tablets, how they work, how we interact with them, and how to use the keyboard and iPad's touch capabilities. A primary focus with the younger students is learning the user interface and developing the kinesthetic and spatial skills necessary for using the interfaces.

The older students have done a project that used internet research to teach Google Doc skills, bulleted lists, and data organization while gathering, analyzing, and presenting data on different breeds of cats and dogs.

Other lessons have included how to develop a sense of where data on the web comes from and how to determine it's validity, the ethics of internet usage, and repetitive keyboarding activities on the home position and proper posture and technique.

Future projects will include spreadsheets, powerpoint style presentations, as well as ongoing vocabulary, digital citizenship, research, and keyboarding lessons.

In addition to the four strategies the curriculum focuses on, another focus as the year progresses will be on coding. Coding doesn't just teach the mechanics and protocols of coding, but also nurtures problem solving, collaboration, and creativity skills.

Finally, it is my hope that a handful of lessons will focus on using technology for creativity. Technology is a wonderful tool for art, writing, and music. The repetitive nature of learning keyboarding can occasionally get tiresome. If time allows, we will try to squeeze some creative stuff in to keep it fun for the students.

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