The Use of Technology with Middle-School At-risk Students

The Problem

At-risk students comprise one diverse group of students that have received a great deal of attention in recent years. Computer technology provides the means to make learning more interesting and rewarding for students who often find traditional classroom activities boring and irrelevant. This presentation will focus on the broad range of uses of the microcomputer with at-risk students, and a number of courseware programs that have been recommended by educators for use with this student population. These programs include word processing, graphics, drill and practice, tutorials, telecommunications, and multimedia.

The objectives of the presentation are to: delineate a profile of the major characteristics of at-risk students; identify strategies for using computers and other modern technology as teaching tools for helping at-risk students achieve their full potential; identify computer hardware/software that can be used effectively with at-risk students.

What was Done?

The purpose of this poster session will be to share a unique, enrichment curriculum approach which has been developed to improve achievement and technological awareness for at-risk middle school students. During the presentation, the presenter will provide an overview of educational programming curriculum components that provide enrichment opportunities for at-risk youths to use technology in the classroom. Additionally, achievement data that illustrate the success of the program will be shared.

The enrichment program for at-risk youth consists of a three-week summer institute followed by five follow-up Saturday academies. The curriculum for the summer institute and follow-up Saturdays is derived, modified and enhanced (to reflect some college level expectations) from a number of nationally recognized and researched programs that include: Project Wet, Project Wild, Project Wild Aquatic, Project Learning Tree, Tribes, and the National Science Curriculum Project for High Ability Learners developed by the College of William & Mary.

Why is this Important?

This program is very beneficial to at-risk students because it provides an opportunity for them to explore different options with regard to their future professional careers. Its focus is on providing them an awareness and readiness for undergraduate programs. Students are provided an opportunity to use technological advances in an effort to help them reach their professional goals.