Teacher Training and Support of the Technology Curriculum:
What to Do After the Network is Unpacked and Connected

Robert J. Clinkert, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Woodridge School District 68, 7925 Janes Avenue, Woodridge, IL 60517, U.S.
Clinkertr@wdgst68.dupage.k12.il.us

As school districts grapple with the related problems involved in implementing their technology curriculum, the biggest problem (after the funding battle is won) is training. The familiar refrain is: Now that we have the necessary funding for our technology hardware and software, how do we jump-start the new curriculum? Getting the network infrastructure in place and connected to the internet is only half the battle. Hiring a technology coordinator may keep the network "up and running" but it will not guarantee curriculum integration of technology into classrooms, which are understandably often under the leadership of a techno-phobic teacher who needs immediate, intensive training and support. There is a clear-cut need to discuss this aspect of technology education among people who have successfully implemented creative strategies, and people who would like to benefit from the experiences of others. A special interest group should be available for sharing training and support solutions. Our school district would like to share two of these solutions which have helped our teaching staff immensely. Two critical approaches should be used in training and support. First, use teachers as trainers who already exhibit an interest and aptitude in technology. Such teachers are perfect mentors because of their enthusiasm for technology. Concentrate further training on these teachers first. Then utilize them as trainers of the remaining staff. Role models are just as important as skill training during the crucial birth period of your technology curriculum. The second urgent strategy is providing teachers with expert support service "at their elbow" as they launch their technology curriculum. Accomplishing this may be simpler and less expensive than imagined. One of the best ways to help teachers implement their technology curriculum may surprise many educators who overlook a nearby, untapped, inexpensive resource - their own students! The reason for this blindspot is that educators naturally view students as the consumers of the educational process rather than as part of the team of producers. In Woodridge School District located in suburban Chicago, a select few students from each school who demonstrate "high tech" aptitude are given formal, advanced technology training in special summer school classes. The advanced topics they learn are not those found in the normal technology curriculum. They include how to create web pages, hypermedia and trouble shooting.