



Professional Development at Your Fingertips

Jeff Woodbury, program director for Education Leadership,
discusses online opportunities for educators

It is not hard to recall the excitement and energy I felt in San Antonio during NECC 2008. The venue, the people, the ideas, and the exchanges brought sparks of insight and admiration.

The heady environment of NECC recharged us with the positive message and knowledge gleaned from all we experienced at the conference. Part of that excitement and exhilaration as I returned home was wondering what I could do to stay current with developments in educational technology and how it could most effectively transform teaching and learning. ISTE is working to respond to this question by developing an online professional development environment geared to the needs of educators.

Professional development is vital to our long-term professional welfare: It enhances our individual work, our workplace, and our professional communities. We increasingly recognize that online professional development is a practical way of remaining current with the manifold aspects of our professional lives. Our exposure to exemplary concepts and techniques for teaching and learning can be greatly

enriched through effective online professional development.

It is not uncommon to hear how the Internet dissolves the constraints of time and place by offering a seemingly endless choice of options anytime, anywhere. However, the overwhelming number of choices raises the question of what makes an online professional program or resource worthwhile. ISTE's answer is to provide learning modules created by educators who are leaders in their fields and deeply familiar with the National Educational Technology Standards.

The theory and objectives of the NETS guide the creation of the practical information and objectives contained in these new learning modules. In fact, both experience and advice from educators tell us that a practical approach is needed in online professional development, thus ISTE's online professional development will present modules to inspire classroom instruction by embodying the NETS.

In early January 2009, ISTE will release its first series of learning modules dealing with Web 2.0 learning environments. The goal of these modules will be to offer educators the

necessary skills to identify and support effective use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

Professional development threads will include:

- Digital age learning environments
- Technology standards and essential conditions
- Creative approaches to instruction
- How teachers learn to use technology

ISTE will initially offer its online professional development as self-paced modules. In mid-2009, ISTE will release its mentored professional development courses. This will expand the scope of ISTE's professional development services from its signature webinars and institutes to a broad range of resources and services that respond to the needs of today's educators. Our goal is to continue ISTE's commitment to leadership, professionalism, and community in an online venue throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing you online in 2009! Look for us on ISTE's Web site under Professional Development. What better way to stay connected, energized, and ready for ISTE's 30th anniversary in Washington, D.C., June 28–July 1, 2009.