



Maybe the Best Ed Tech Tool Is Not a Tool at All

Derek Kelley, a coordinator of instructional technology training and software, initially joined ISTE in 2000 so he could get *L&L* magazine.

“*Learning & Leading* helped me to develop a broader understanding of different grade levels and content areas as well as how people in different parts of the world were using technology to enhance instruction,” he said. “*Learning & Leading* also opened my eyes to some of the larger issues and concerns surrounding instructional technology.”

Kelley works for the Instructional Services Department of Fairfax County Public Schools in Falls Church, Virginia. He has attended NECC four times, and he lauds the diverse sessions.

“You can go to one session and see very practical applications of technology by teachers at all levels. You can go to another session and learn about the next big idea in ed tech and then go to a third session and learn about how to influence the policy makers and be an advocate for issues surrounding instructional technology,” he said.

Kelley is enrolled in the Johns Hopkins University/ISTE Administrative Certificate Program. He believes school administrators need to push for technology integration to support instruction.

“The most influential ed tech tool is not a tool at all, but a person,” he said. “The most influential person in instructional technology is the teacher or the school administrator who understands the importance of students developing 21st-century skills and understands the power of technology for helping students develop these skills.”

Kelley expects to see educational technology expand toward one-to-one access. So far, the high cost of hardware has stymied growth and has prevented students from accessing the Internet and using the expanding wealth of educational technology.

“I think that less expensive mini-computers that are somewhere between a handheld device and a full-sized laptop offer great potential for students and can help bridge some of the challenges that school divisions have faced in implementing one-to-one programs,” he said.

“I also see great potential in using technology to track student mastery of the curriculum. Technology can be used by teachers to identify areas where intervention is needed as well

as areas where enrichment is appropriate. It can then help teachers provide specific targeted instructional resources to meet the individual needs of each student.”

Kelley has had firsthand experience seeing the effect technology can have on student learning and development. He recently attended a presentation on blogs by a group of first, second, and third grade students; their teachers; the school-based technology specialist; and the school’s principal.

One of the first graders told a story about how he used a rubric that his teacher created to make sure all of his sentences began with capital letters and ended with a period.

One of the second grade students talked about how blogging has made her a better writer. She recounted that she used to start her paragraphs in the middle and didn’t have a beginning or an end. As a blogger, she has learned to include opening and closing ideas in her paragraphs.

“It was exciting to see these young students using Web 2.0 tools that had been integrated into the instructional program, and also to see instructional technology having a strong impact on very young students,” Kelley said.

—*Kaya Hardin is an ISTE intern and a journalism student at the University of Oregon in Eugene.*



To mark the 30th anniversary of NECC and ISTE, *L&L* is focusing on three members who embody ISTE’s commitment to honor the past, celebrate the present, and envision the future of educational technology. In this issue, we profile Derek Kelley, who is in the Johns Hopkins University/ISTE Administrative Certificate Program.