

Mentoring in the Age of Technology

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Does all the attention on technology use in the classroom have you wondering whom you can turn to for ideas and help, or are you one of those teachers who have already had successful adventures with technology use? If so, then read along. We are going to look at mentoring from the viewpoint of teachers attempting to use current technology in their classrooms.

As with most things in life, the best way to overcome technology use jitters is to just get in there and do it. But it is certain that along the way you will run into situations that you will not have the experience to know how to deal with. That is when having someone handy to help you out is really a necessity, not just a luxury. If you have a person in your school who has already become proficient in technology use, then chances are that they will be willing to help you (as long as you don't abuse their generosity). But if you are not that lucky, there is still hope. What better way to learn about technology than to use it in the process. There are several programs either in place or in development that aim to provide a mentor experience for teachers struggling in this area.

One such program being run by the Vancouver School Board is called the Information and Communication Technology Mentors. Each of their mentor teachers have set up a web site with teacher resources, and make themselves available to area teachers by e-mail, phone or fax. A school district in New Brunswick has a similar program making mentors available. If you are interested in participating in this sort of program, or would like to explore the possibilities more, then check out the following site. (*site no longer exists*). This comprehensive guide to mentoring provides a thorough look at the desirable traits of a mentor, and guidelines for developing a mentor program.

A great resource site that offers much more than just mentoring information is CanadianTeachers.Net. This site offers "Live Chatrooms" and "Teacher Chatboards" where you can post questions and have them answered by other users. If you take a quick look through some of the message threads in the Chatboards, you will see that the participants share valuable information quite freely in the true spirit of Internet communications. This has to be the next best thing to having your local resident expert. Here also is a list of links to many organizations and resources designed to help in getting teachers in contact with each other and sharing information ([Planning for Professional Growth](#)).

Here are a couple other sites that have been set up by teachers acting as mentors. Dave Clausen (<http://www.lcusd.k12.ca.us/lchs/dclausen/>) has made available basic computer class materials for word processor, PowerPoint, and even music classes. Barry Sweeny, a master mentor, provides great information on mentoring at <http://www.teachermentors.com/>.

If you think you would like to participate in this type of a program for Canadian Adventist teachers, I am sure that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, Office of Education would appreciate your feedback. I believe that we have enough enthusiastic teachers in Canada to make such a program work. We already have an assembled team that is available for help. Please feel free to also contact me (chill@cauc.ab.ca) about any of your technology questions, or to suggest future topics for this column.