

## **FEAR NOT**

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How many of us fear the technology age? We have computers in the classrooms that are possibly collecting dust, used for playing games on or just feared because of what we may have to do with them. I believe that fear of the unknown is holding some of us back from really using technology in the classroom to open up a new information system and knowledge for our students. I know it was for me. Technology was advancing and I was just hanging on by a thread. Computers were there for functional uses such as doing the school newsletter, keeping my lesson plans on it, typing correspondence, tests, etc. but not really using it in a way to enhance the learning of my students. I did however, discover 'Grade Machine' to help me with my grade book and report cards. I have found it to be an excellent program and so easy to use. But that was it. Could I really use it to help me with teaching?

*“DO NOT fear the winds of adversity. Remember: A kite rises against the wind rather than with it.”* This became my motto. I needed to take a stand against my fear of advancing technology. I must say that even though we have the computers in our classrooms; they are only now getting hooked up to the internet and will be ready for use in January 2006. So for the last six months I have been planning, getting ideas, researching and finding out that maybe it won't be so bad.

I my latest research I found many fantastic websites that I want my students to get into. One that I happened across is for references, [www.refdesk.com](http://www.refdesk.com). Another one for us teachers, [www.teachers.teach-nology.com](http://www.teachers.teach-nology.com). There is one that was sent to me from a teacher at my daughter's high school that is fantastic—especially for students to find out information about their local areas. The website is [www.FoundLocally.com](http://www.FoundLocally.com). This site has Canadian communities from Victoria to St. John's and it is also a safe site for students. Some of my other favorite websites are [www.discover.com](http://www.discover.com) and [www.sitesforteachers.com](http://www.sitesforteachers.com).

In the past the computers have been used just for typing tutor, typing up essays and reports, making cards and general game playing for reinforcement of lessons taught, but it was never really used to teach and enhance learning. Now it is. I needed to know more, so I enrolled in the AVLN on line course, Technology in the Classroom. It was an eye opener. I didn't realize what I or my students could accomplish on the computer. It was a real learning tool. I gained so many great ideas and am very excited about using them starting this January. Yes, one year later, I am getting on board doing this. I have a management schedule in place that includes the 10 Commandments of Computer Ethics and a computer usage contract for parents and students to sign. You may view this plan and others on a website entitled "Technology Integration Projects and Units Created by AVLN K-12 Teachers"< [www.avln.org/resources/k12units.html](http://www.avln.org/resources/k12units.html)>. You don't need to re-invent the wheel to get started.

Safe surfing the net is important in the classroom and I want my students to learn safe net surfing for information and how to carefully communicate on the internet. The first class in computers will be on the ethics of computer interaction. I have also begun to make a file box, which will be placed between the two computers, with safe websites to explore. In this file box are index cards

with different SAFE websites that they may enter to find information. The index cards are filed according to subject or content. Also I will plan weekly on getting them to explore more safe sites.

So, are computers feared anymore in my classroom? Well not by me and definitely not by my students, who are anxiously awaiting the use of them. So be not afraid to venture into the unknown for you may just find something out there of use to you.