

Managing the Internet in the Classroom

SOME GENERAL STRATEGIES THAT HAVE WORKED IN CLASSROOMS

The following strategies are divided into those having to do with planning, set-up, and students.

Planning

Give yourself enough time to adequately plan to use the Internet with your students.

Begin small and gradually increase Internet usage in your classroom.

Think of ways to integrate the Internet into classroom management structures you already use, such as activity centers, workshop, writing process activities, thematic units, cooperative learning groups, and so on.

Talk to your colleagues who have had experience integrating the Internet into their classrooms. Find out what management strategies work for them; determine the ones that feel comfortable for you and try them out!

A number of list serves are available that offer communication with teachers all over the world. Tap into these resources for tried and true strategies for managing the Internet. A link to a comprehensive list of K-12 education discussion lists and electronic journals is: <http://www.ibiblio.org/edweb/lists.html>

Feel free to borrow ideas and change them to meet your needs and those of your students.

Be adventurous and flexible! Try things out - that's the only sure way to see if it works for you and your students!

Plan to incorporate learning about navigation and searching with engagement to subject-matter. There are a number of scavenger hunts available to assist with this. Check out this wonderful site: "Scavenger Hunts: Searching for Treasure on the Internet." There is also a terrific site on searching (written by a curriculum team from Wit 99) that is appropriate for the middle grades entitled "Super Sleuths."

Set-up

Set the "home page" on the browsers on your computers to a page you have designed that gives access to selected sites only.

Place a "bookmark" to your start page on each computer.

Students

Always provide students with starting points and goals for their work on the Internet. Students must have a structure to work within; otherwise their time won't be well used.

If students will work in partner pairs or in small groups at the computer, make sure each student has a clearly defined role such as keyboardist (operates the keyboard), recorder (takes paper based notes), or navigator (plans the next step in the search or project). This division of labor works best if group members rotate through each role as the search or project progresses.

When using the Internet with very young children, small group usage with an adult present works well. Pairing young students with older students is very effective, as well.

Place a plastic cup (red works well!) at each computer station. When assistance is needed, the student places the cup on top of the monitor. This alerts you yet keeps the noise level down.

Review, as necessary, the rules for using the Internet with your students. See the Chicago Public Schools Internet Use Policy.

Many schools have an Internet Use permission form that both parents and students sign. Check with your computer lab teacher or your principal to see if your school has a policy that requires student and parent signatures prior to Internet use in your classroom.