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Resources to Support the Teaching and Learning of Young Children Using Technology

This school year, consider some new approaches to using technology in your classroom. Four NETC resources that you may freely use and share look at how technology tools such as computers, tape recorders, and cameras can be used to support and encourage the development and learning of preschool and primary age children. Based on current research, and developed as collaborations between NETC and NWREL, these resources guide the selection of appropriate technology tools and the creation of learning environments essential for meaningful technology use.

Visit NETC's **Early Connections: Technology in Early Childhood Education** Web site, www.netc.org/earlyconnections, to connect with these and other pertinent resources:

Technology in Early Childhood Education: Finding the Balance, offers suggestions on how to take advantage of the power of technology tools to enhance children's learning and development, while avoiding potential problems.

Learners, Language, and Technology: Making Connections That Support Literacy, explains the role that computers and other technologies can play in support of literacy development.

5 Effective Ways for Young Children To Use Technology, describes five effective yet simple applications of technology that can enhance classroom learning for children in preschool and the primary grades.

FOCUS ON: Technology in Early Childhood NETC Resource Review

During the past three years, the Northwest Educational Technology Consortium's Judy Van Scoter has been collaborating with the other centers and programs at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory on projects that examine the potential value and appropriate use of computers and other technologies to support the teaching and learning of young children.

Since it was first posted in 1999, the **Early Connections: Technology in**

Early Childhood Education Web site has been a popular resource for teachers who want to bring technology into their classroom. For help planning or developing a program, or ideas on using technology more effectively, or links to other pertinent Web sites, we invite you to visit *Early Connections* at www.netc.org/earlyconnections.

The booklet, **Technology in Early Childhood Education: Finding the Balance**, discusses factors critical to a balanced approach to technology integration and directs thoughtful planning

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that provides for the important needs of childhood. Guiding around potential problems, it leads the way to take advantage of the power of technology tools to enhance children's learning and development. It examines the philosophy behind a successful program, explores effective strategies, and profiles sites around the Northwest that are successfully using technology to support learning in early childhood.

Since it was first published by NWREL in June 2001 as part of the *By Request* series of "hot topic" reports, NETC has disseminated thousands of copies and granted permission to educators throughout the Northwest region to use this material in early childhood and elementary education programs.

NETC collaborated with NWREL's Language and Literacy Program team on the development of **Learners, Language, and Technology: Making Connections That Support Literacy**, a book that examines the use of computers and other technologies to support literacy development. This work explains the role that technology can

play in early literacy by supporting social learning, encouraging play, adding to print-rich environments, and furthering language development. Developmentally appropriate classroom strategies guide teachers to incorporate computers, digital cameras, tape recorders, portable keyboards, and a wide range of other tools to enhance learning.

Research tells us that several forms of technology play a positive role in literacy development by providing opportunities for oral language and storytelling, and encouraging writing and reading text. And, that technology holds valuable promise for students with specific learning needs such as English language learners, struggling readers, and the many students who stand to benefit from a wider variety of assessment methods.

Learners, Language, and Technology addresses literacy beyond the early years and provides examples of projects with many ages, and connects with families and communities. It is filled with the kinds of stories from the often messy real world of the classroom that gives teachers the substance needed to "put it all together." Many of the best examples of integrating these new tools into learning projects come from creative teachers who understand children, not from "computer teachers."

We developed our new brochure, **5 Effective Ways for Young Children To Use Technology**, in response to increasing inquiries about the application of technology to early childhood educational practice. This "how-to" brochure speaks directly to classroom teachers in support of

ongoing efforts to improve the teaching and learning experience. The brochure describes five effective yet simple applications of technology that can enhance classroom learning for children in preschool through primary grades. While the examples are written with the classroom in mind they can easily be adapted for use in other settings. In each case, the technology is not the purpose or focus of the activity. Instead, technology supports the learning goal, providing additional learning opportunities and expanding and enhancing the learning experience.

NETC and other NWREL programs collaborate to address broad aspects of educational improvement and school reform. In this context, we help educational systems align the use of technology with their school improvement programs. Our mission at NETC is to help teachers integrate technology into the curriculum by offering high-quality professional development, technical assistance, and print and electronic resources. We are committed to helping ensure both equitable access to learning opportunities for all students and the use of technology to support fundamental shifts in teaching and learning.

We trust that you will find these materials useful. As your Northwest regional resource, we are here to provide you with a wide range of products and services. Please freely use and share our materials. Let us know about your needs. Share your accomplishments. We are here to support your efforts on behalf of the children in our region. We wish you a great year.

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