

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the 21st century educators have a difficult challenge to meet: providing children with a solid foundation of literacy to prepare them for adulthood and today's world. We have an increasing body of knowledge on how children develop literacy skills, along with a rich literature of effective practices to nurture and increase student involvement and learning. We recognize the importance of relating education to students' experiences, and of enhancing communication and collaboration both among students and between school and community.

Teachers are creative in their use of strategies and materials to reach students. As they are demonstrating daily in their classrooms, integrating technology into learning can offer real benefits to students. These benefits include opportunities to explore in ways not otherwise possible, to connect students with people outside the classroom, to reach a wide audience through publishing in print and on the Internet, and to link learners with others, enriching the connection to the community and the larger world. As suggested by the National Research Council, these new tools can:



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- Provide scaffolding and tools to enhance learning and help children solve problems
- Provide more opportunities for feedback, reflection, and revision
- Build global and local communities

Taken together, the tools of technology offer flexibility and individualization to help reach an increasingly diverse student population, provide experiences that engage their interest, and respond to a range of needs. To be successful, use of these new tools must take into account children's need to be active and involved, learning with both their bodies and minds. When it is used appropriately, with thoughtful planning and clear goals in mind, technology can be a powerful tool to motivate and stimulate creativity and learning, and foster connections with families, the community, and the broader world.