



MERIDIAN

A MIDDLE SCHOOL
COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES JOURNAL

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Editor's Note

Maintaining a Focus in the Midst of Constant Change!

Completing its' fourth year, Meridian continues to pursue its' mission to promote the discussion of research and practice of middle school computer technologies and a legacy of publishing well-respected writers in the field. The beauty of being an online journal allows Meridian's past issues to be archived on the web-site. This gives readers immediate access to all past issues in their original format, as well as, the chance to experience the evolution Meridian has undergone as new technology develops and the expertise of our board evolves.

This Summer 2001 Issue unveils our new design layout. Subject matter of articles has progressed as the knowledge of best practices for educational technology spreads. True movement towards technology integration is starting to happen! It is exciting, unpredictable and many have helped us identify the word we had not considered, change! This change is being experienced in every aspect of our lives as more things are integrated with technology. All change effects those that experience it thus we move in a state of dis-equilibration.

Equilibration is being defined as "the balancing act between the old and the new.....between perceptions and experiences" (classnotes Dr. Alan Reiman, ECI 709F Adult as Learner, fall '98). Based on this definition dis-equilibration is a miss-match that puts heavy emphasis on the new unfamiliar experiences. It is important to realize that dis-equilibration can be stressful and those experiencing it need support. Technology demands that users be comfortable with a certain tolerance for

dis-equilibration, however, well-planned staff development that includes specific strategies must be available.

A few researchers that have studied change and the phenomena of technology integration into k-12 schools are Michael Fullan (1992) and Jean Buddington Martin (1998). Whether you read the thoughts of these researchers or others, it is important to acknowledge the importance of your school/district to understand change. Traditional research along with action research is helping administrators, teachers, technicians, superintendents, and parents make decisions and outline plans for technology integration. Research has indicated that those schools that have experienced success have been able to form committees, identify and understand stages of change that their entire staff are experiencing, implement technology planning & effective staff development, stay abreast of best practices for integration strategies and deliver funding and budget strategies. Many sources have devised models that schools and districts can follow to facilitate successful technology planning. Two great sources of information are Planning for Technology (Bailey & Lumley, 1997) and Staff Development in Technology (Bailey & Lumley, 1997). These texts will give step by step references along with links to helpful web resources.



Image provided by the author.

With all that we have learned about educational technology in the past 6 years it is good to step back and be sure that we are maintaining the focus of our vision. The fast pace change of technology makes the transition to the Information Age a challenge for educational institutions. The biggest obstacle being the constant drain of funding that technology requires for maintaining minimum software and hardware requirements. Thankfully we have many heroes who spend endless energy coming up with creative solutions and strategies that have allowed the cause to move forward. With all of the trends that come and go in education sometimes it is hard to remember the organization of things and the way in which educational policy is generated. In short we are bombarded with so much information it is easy to forget what you already know. The good news is technology makes it easy for all educators, no matter what your technical skill, to understand the educational policies in regards to educational technology standards on both the state and federal levels. Watching trends in educational policy and the emergence of new technologies can give planning teams excellent foresight into the future for technology planning. The best place to start piecing this ever-changing picture together is the U. S. Department of Education, access their web-site found at <http://www.ed.gov> and go to the link for the Office of Educational Technology <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/index.html>.

The information found here deserves ample time for cruising, as there are links to reports, statistics, grant information etc. Located on this site are a few major documents to examine; The first national educational technology plan devised in 1996 *Getting America's Students Ready for the 21st Century: Meeting the Technology Literacy Challenge* <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/Plan/NatTechPlan/>, the current national educational technology plan *E-Learning putting a World Class Education at the Fingertips of all Children* <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/elearning/index.html>

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Former Co-Editor, Meridian

2000-2001

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