

Chapter 2

Teachers as Models of Internet Use

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ABSTRACT

As the use of computers increases in schools, students' primary role models in computer use and the internet are their teachers. However, teachers themselves are still learning their way through technology in education and how to best use technology to support student learning. This chapter discusses seven issue areas in relation to cyber ethics and decision making online that go beyond the pedagogy of technology in learning contexts. In particular, the chapter is focused on how teachers can model and conduct best practices in digital copyright, student privacy, student access, digital citizenship, digital communication, social media and empathy, and digital literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Cyber ethics is a growing area of concern for our increasingly connected society and a very specific concern for our K-12 schools. Cyber ethics, in general, is concerned with the decision making of computer users and how those decisions affect other individuals and society. In providing students with opportunities to create and explore online environments via school-provided computers, teachers are arguably the most present role model in computer usage and ethical behaviors online. The current International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for students list a set of seven standards that encourage student voice and student-driven learning. The seven standards are empowered learner, digital citizen, knowledge constructor,

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innovative designer, computational thinker, creative communicator, and global collaborator (ISTE, 2016). As Nguyen (2009, 2011a) and Bennett, Aguayo, and Field (2016) argue, teachers have a tremendous amount of power and responsibility to nurture a student's sense of exploration online.

In encouraging teachers to facilitate student learning so that students can thrive in the changing technological landscape, schools should also support the teachers in their own professional development on computer and internet use. There are some honest misunderstandings of copyright laws as well as a blurring of professional and personal lives online. Following is a set of seven topics in a professional development series developed for teachers in the state of Hawai'i that was part of a pilot program to implement 1-to-1 device programs in eight schools.

BACKGROUND

The Pew Internet Life study has been tracking internet and broadband usage since the 2000s. In their first survey in 2000, about 52% of Americans were online; the figure in 2016 was 88% (Pew Research Center, 2017) and the age at which people are exposing children to internet-connected devices is getting younger (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). Societal use of the internet and computers are also shifting, where people watch television programs on computers or mobile devices, bank only online instead of visiting a bank itself, socialize more online than in person, consume news from social media feeds instead of from newspapers or news programs, and conduct all their holiday shopping online instead of in stores.

Where adults are generally able to self-monitor the time spent on devices and how they make decisions online, children are less able to self-moderate their own behavior (Chein, Albert, O'Brien, Uckert, & Steinberg, 2011). Their decision-making skills are not fully developed because of both brain development and the lack of life experience. Their sense of ethics, or what is right and wrong, is still strongly influenced by adults--namely what mom, dad, and teacher tell them is right and wrong. Yet, children are given internet-enabled devices as early as the age of two, and sometimes earlier, and many are able to search for cartoons that amuse them or even place an actual call to grandma by mimicking their parents. Adolescents, however, are more influenced by their peers and less so by adults. There is a strong risk-taking culture in the adolescent years (Chein et al., 2011). A study with grade 6 students by Lim, Tan, Nizam, Zhou, and Tan (2016) demonstrated that students given devices with no teacher instruction or modeling led to cheating in games, cyberbullying, and visiting inappropriate websites. Research has shown that seeing a positive role model demonstrating positive behaviors is critical in the adolescent

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