



S.K.I.L.L. 21

Successful Knowledge Integration
Learning with Laptops for 21st Century Skills



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This update is provided to the BASD Board of Directors in an effort to communicate the progress of the SKILL21 laptop initiative. It is the intent that these updates will occur on a weekly basis and will highlight one or more instances of integration each week. Please feel free to contact Robin Lutcher, Director of Information Technologies (rlutcher@bethsd.org), or Evon Zundel, SKILL21 Coordinator (ezundel@bethsd.org), if you have any questions.

Mr. Dave Beck, the librarian at Northeast Middle School, uses Power Library, a collection of web-based information

resources, when he works with students and teachers on classroom research projects. His role as a librarian has changed as a result of the SKILL21 initiative, because he can now travel to the classrooms to work directly with the teachers and students.

Some of the Power Library tools Mr. Beck uses with students are Searchasaurus, the AP Photo Archive, and SIRS Discoverer. Searchasaurus is a student-friendly search tool that students can use to research animals, current events, and other curriculum topics. If students have a home e-mail account, they are able to e-mail electronic versions of magazine articles to themselves so they can read and study them offline. Mr. Beck used the AP Photo Archive with Mrs. McCullagh's class when they were reading Richard Peck's A Year Down Yonder, a historical fiction novel about the 1930s Depression era. To help students visualize the setting, the students found pictures showing conditions in the cities during that time period. Although this could have been done with a book, the archive gave a more complete representation of the conditions, which leads to greater understanding of the time period. Mr. Beck also used SIRS Discoverer with Mrs. Majczan's class to search periodicals when they were researching authors. For each author, the students were able to find a biography, pictures, and a list of works.

Because it is a comprehensive research tool, Power Library has enabled students to conduct research more efficiently than using generic search tools available on the internet. As students move through high school and college, they will be expected to use these kinds of resources because of their reputation as reliable, scholarly sources of information. Power Library's resources make information readily available, which helps to enrich the curriculum rather than distract from it.

In the Pennsylvania Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening, these research activities address Standard 1.8.8, Selecting, refining, and organizing topics for research, and in the Science and Technology Standards, these activities address Standard 3.7.7, applying online research techniques.