What Do You Want to Learn Today?

If you're anything like me, you probably have a long list of topics you want to explore for professional growth and personal interest, and maybe even both at the same time. But you end up spinning your wheels on such big questions as: Where can I possibly find the time for one more thing? And where, in the midst of the information overload that has taken over my life, do I start?

It’s a conundrum that a lot of ISTE members face. That’s why we launched a new online professional development (PD) program to help. It’s called ISTE Learning (http://istelearning.org), and we designed it specifically to make PD both fun and more easily accessible for busy educators.

Yes, we know there are plenty of other PD programs out there. And we know that you probably already have quite a few tools in your professional learning network (PLN). So what makes ISTE Learning different?

For one thing, the NETS for students, teachers, and administrators are the cornerstone of everything we do. All of our PD activities and resources incorporate and model the NETS so that you can see how they work and how you can implement them in your own classrooms, schools, and districts.

We also listen. ISTE members have told us through direct contact, on surveys, and at the conference what they were most interested in learning, and we pulled that information together into a comprehensive online community where anyone can find the right professional development to meet his or her own needs, interests, and schedule.

Want to know more? Come with me on a tour of the hotspots in the ISTE Learning community: the Commons, Learning Labs, ISTE Café, and ISTE U.
What makes ISTE’s new online professional development program different from everything else out there?

Here’s a hint: It’s all about the NETS.
Welcome to K12IMC.ORG

Over 2,200 carefully selected and annotated resources provide you with the tools you need to create exciting, topical lesson plans and curriculum. Like an Instructional Media Center in the real world, you will find...

- a solid foundation for supporting standards and assessment practices,
- classroom projects, lessons, units, field trips, extended studies, and international databases in almost every subject and across subjects,
- references and projects to challenge your students,
- ideas & resources to integrate the new media tools,
- tips for school, family, industry, and community partnerships,
- tools for planning, using and managing your own environment,
- professional development and publishing opportunities.

The Commons is the place to start getting acquainted with the ISTE Learning community. If you’ve got a couple of minutes, you can learn something new with one of our quick, free multimedia chunks of information.

All of the learning opportunities in the Commons—which range from full-length L&L articles and ISTE book chapters to podcasts and webinar excerpts—are free, immediately applicable in the classroom, and rooted in the NETS. My favorite feature is the NETS Flipside, where you can see how a unit or lesson aligns to the NETS for Students (NETS•S) as students participate in the lesson and, on the flipside, what that same unit or lesson looks like to a teacher using the NETS for Teachers (NETS•T).

Another favorite is ISTE Learning’s blog, the Buzz, where staff from ISTE’s Education Leadership Division offer insights into projects we are working on, our views on professional development, and where we see educational technology heading in the future. For example, in “The iPad and Professional Development” blog post, ISTE Learning’s project manager, Kelli Harrington, reflects on her active discussions with educators who use the iPad and how it might be used as a tool for professional development and in the classroom. These thought-provoking posts give you the chance to join in the discussion directly with ISTE.

When you’re ready to go deeper, you can head over to a Learning Lab for an in-depth lesson, to the ISTE Café to connect and learn with other ISTE members, or to ISTE U for a facilitated online course. Unlike the Commons, which is free to all, entry to these three areas is exclusive to ISTE members and costs approximately $20–$200 per activity.

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The K-12 Instructional Media Center is chockfull of the best-of-breed resources for designing, implementing, and refreshing lesson plans and curriculum.

Your One-Stop Resource For Curriculum And Professional Development.

Used as a professional development resource by the Stanford School of Education and the Exploratorium, K12IMC.org is a non-profit resource, maintained by Dr. Bonnie Tenenbaum.

Check it out today!
http://www.k12imc.org/iste
Each Learning Lab is a private site centered on a single topic with background information, real-world examples, and hands-on activities, all based in the NETS.

Learning Labs
The name might suggest wild-haired scientists, but the Learning Labs are not so much about chemical explosions as they are about hands-on exploration set at your own pace. Each Learning Lab is a private site centered on a single topic with background information, real-world examples, and hands-on activities, all based in the NETS. Right now, we have a variety of topics to choose from, including Web 2.0, project-based learning, games and simulations, and digital citizenship.

And as ISTE Learning grows, so will the topic choices.

No matter which topic you choose to dive into, as an ISTE Learner you will get to experience a lesson firsthand before applying it in your classroom. In the Web 2.0 Learning Lab, for example, you might create a Vocaroo voice recording and an Animoto presentation to explain why digital age skills are important. During these activities, you will receive hands-on practice with several Web 2.0 tools while incorporating the NETS™ 1: Creativity and Innovation, demonstrating creative thinking and constructing your own knowledge using technology. The emphasis is on the student experience, but you will also examine the purpose behind the activity and determine how it might help you meet the NETS™.

Of course, you’ll also need to know how to develop lessons that incorporate the tools you’ve been training on. That’s why the Learning Labs provide real-world examples and a lesson-planning process to help you integrate what you’ve learned in your classroom in a way that meets the NETS. Each grade range has its own example that details what a lesson looks like in the classroom as well as the products that real students have created as a result.

Connect Theory to Practice

ISTE journals help you make the connection.

- Stay on top of current trends and challenges in educational technology
- Apply specific, research-based applications
- Discover a forum for sharing research and developments

For pricing and more information, visit www.iste.org/publications
As you would find in any university, the learning opportunities at ISTE U are facilitated, pedagogy-driven courses that can help you master a variety of subjects.

You could also opt to participate in a discussion at a Round Table, where participants can delve into answering a different broad but thought-provoking question each month. Table mates work together on an answer to the question during the month using any collaboration tool they choose, and at the end of that time we publish their conclusions in the Commons so educators around the world can learn from and respond to it.

**ISTE U**

ISTE U is the culmination of the ISTE Learning experience. As you would find in any university, the learning opportunities at ISTE U are facilitated, pedagogy-driven courses that can help you master a variety of subjects. But here you’ll also participate in fast moving activities, ongoing communities, and opportunities to develop, maintain, and transfer digital age skills to new situations.

The first of ISTE U’s offerings is our NETS Leadership Academy. These courses are for anyone interested in the NETS and change leadership. Each class consists of three to five modules that use both asynchronous
and synchronous hands-on learning. You will graduate from the NETS Leadership Academy with a better understanding of what the NETS are and why they are so important to the future of education.

Future ISTE U courses, which will be facilitated and last six to eight weeks, will focus on such timely topics as Web 2.0, project-based learning, action research, and digital assessment. These courses will also be offered on our sister site, www.isteonline.org. ISTE Learning is working toward offering continuing education units and academic credits through partnerships with colleges and universities.

**What Do You Want to Learn Today?**

ISTE Learning is meant to be a multi-faceted learning experience, and there is a lot to see, learn, and do throughout the community. But don’t get overwhelmed. Just take a deep breath and answer this: What do you want to learn today? Then have fun exploring ISTE Learning, where you’ll find the answer to that question and the knowledge you’re looking for.

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**Resources**

- ISTE Learning: http://istelearning.org
- ISTE Online: www.isteonline.org

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Watch for ISTE Board nominations to open after the first of the year!