Grade 4 - Lesson 7

Uses the Internet competently, safely; evaluates/judges sites for legitimacy, appropriateness

This is a difficult lesson to teach completely within the LAUSDnet, or other school district Firewall, as inappropriate web sites are, for the most part, blocked for students' safety. Students at this age, however, must begin to understand that there are 'strangers' out there on the Internet. Some are pedophiles pretending to be children or teenagers trying to make personal contact with our children after luring them in through on line conversations.

These are very dark and troubling issues to discuss with students. Some schools and school districts have prescribed programs on Internet Safety. Other schools rely on classroom teachers to address this issue. Still others provide parent education that helps spread the word on such dangers, though the success of such efforts depends on parent attendance at these presentations.

There are also many free on line sites that have information on Internet Safety. Here are a few:

http://www.isafe.org/

<u>http://www.staysafeonline.org/index.html</u>

http://www.cybersafety.ca.gov/

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/

Many of these sites, such as I-Safe, offer video clips that illustrate dangers on the Internet. Please view these videos yourself first to determine if the content and comprehension level of the content is appropriate for your students.

In addition to personal safety issues, these sites also discuss other important topics such as copyright infringement (including illegal music and movie downloads) and plagiarism. Students should understand that using copyrighted materials without permission is illegal, and the punishments are real (including

large fines and possible prison time). It is important for students to know that performing a copy/paste of biographical or other information from a reference web site without proper citation in a school assignment is plagiarism. The penalties for that include a grade of "F", an

incomplete, or further sanctions by the school.

Elementary school is the time to learn, or we may end up sending students to college with the mindset that this type of behavior is permissible.

See image and this web link:

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/weekinreview/10mcgrath.html



One more aspect of this brief conversation should include the reliability of the information students find on the web, and of the reputation of the site's publishers. Most web sites that contain offensive content, such as racist, sexist, or hate group content will be blocked within the school district's campuses. There

will be exceptions, however, as new sites that have not yet been discovered by filters come on line nearly every day. Many sites camouflage themselves to draw impressionable children in.

See images and this web link at this hate site frighteningly entitled, "Martin Luther King Jr. – A True Historical Examination":



<u>http://martinlutherking.org/</u>

Students would not be able to see this site if they typed "Martin Luther King" into a Google search. But if students attempted to perform such a search from a home computer with no filtering employed, they would likely find it and might believe some of the words on the site to be true. We, as teachers, have to

help students understand that just because something is on the Internet, doesn't mean that it is true. There are likely thousands of sites like this on line. Knowing this helps us understand why filtering is necessary in school, and also understand why it is important to teach students to be aware consumers of content on the Internet.