

**Des Plaines Valley Region
IT Committee
Mid-Year Report - 2020-2021**

Teaching IT in Pandemic Conditions

Committee members discussed the various strategies being used to teach technology in our current pandemic situation. Most discussed they are in a fully remote or hybrid/remote combination environment.

Given that much of the technology classes taught revolve around hands on activities and performance based learning - it has been a challenge. Simulation software, technical certification prep software and a heavy use of LMS platforms has allowed all members to continue teaching courses - but all agree that the courses cannot be the same in a remote environment. Many shared their strategies and failures with the group in an effort to be more productive going forward. Breakout rooms, online tutorials, TestOut and Cengage Mindtap were discussed as ways to engage students.

Current Technical Certification Efforts

The committee discussed their current approach and updates to their technical certification efforts. Much was discussed regarding the numerous reports regarding the decline in enrollment at colleges and universities nationally - and what we as technical educators can do to adapt. Leyden discussed their most current efforts in piloting the Google IT Certification route which was presented to them by Google. Google will not only provide the curriculum for no cost - but they will also provide test vouchers and possible job placement assistance.

Leyden and Triton discussed the possibility of launching this program together in the Fall of 2021 and looking at dual credit options.

Most recently, there has been a retirement of numerous Microsoft certifications. All members currently offer the basic Microsoft certifications (Word, Excel, etc.) and will continue to do so. There was not much discussion on looking at the upper level Microsoft certifications in the near future.

Conference Attendance and Learnings

With all conferences now being virtual, most members were making an attempt to attend where possible. One advantage of virtual conferences is the ability to attend sessions when possible - but many conferences record the sessions, making it easy to go back and watch/learn at your own pace. Members were attending Connections and more specific conference offerings. No members were attending IBEA or NBEA as of our conversations.

eSports Initiatives

Leyden discussed their current efforts in the area of eSports. Besides being advocated by students, Leyden attended a Dell webinar that outlined how to institute this initiative at your high school. The idea is to start with a formal club -but eventually integrate this into marketing, video game design and technical support internship classes. This initiative will be piloted in April of 2021. Other members showed interest in learning how it goes to see if they themselves may be able to integrate into their institutions.

Other Considerations and Conversations

- Members discussed moving forward with programming and computer science offerings.
- Members discussed stackable credentials and how those credentials can be positioned to employers. The discussion of increasing dual credit opportunities was continually discussed in this area.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tony Pecucci
Business/IT Committee Chairperson