

CHAPTER 11

What Technical Assistance Resources Are Available?

INTRODUCTION

Technology applications technical assistance resources and supporting roles are provided by numerous local, district, regional, and state agencies. In this chapter the major state entities that provide technical support are listed and briefly described.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following have been the most frequently asked questions about assistance and resources regarding the Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The answers have been provided by the Texas Education Agency.

1. Where can I get assistance in interpreting the Technology Applications TEKS?

The START videotape and/or slideshow will help you to understand the general purpose of the START package and the Technology Applications TEKS. Other resources include:

- the *Technology Applications Companion (K-12)*
- the START CD-ROM
- the START web site
- your regional education service center (ESC)
- TEA Instructional Technology Division

2. How can I learn to use the computer so that I can take advantage of the START CD-ROM and Web Site materials?

Check with your local technology expert for assistance. In many cases this may be a technology coordinator, curriculum director, or a librarian.

Take advantage of the many technology awareness and training sessions offered by your ESC. Take advantage of other learning opportunities such as conferences and special training sessions.

3. How do I get my computer set up to access the materials on the START CD-ROM?

Most of the information on the START CD-ROM requires nothing more than an Internet browser such as Netscape or Internet Explorer. To begin viewing the START materials, run your web browser and open the file START.HTM from the CD-ROM. For those who do not have a browser, installation files for Netscape Web Browser and Microsoft Internet Explorer have been included on the CD-ROM.

In order to view the enhanced materials such as video and audio clips and publications you will need to install some additional programs that are included on the START CD-ROM: a movie player such as QuickTime Movie Player, RealAudio Player and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Installations instructions are included in text files named inst-w95.txt, inst-w31.txt and inst-mac.txt. These files can be opened in any word processor.

A live connection to the Internet is not needed to review the resources available on the CD-ROM. However, there are many clickable links to the World Wide Web which give added value to those who have Internet connections.

4. What if I have a problem with the START CD-ROM or want to obtain a personal copy of some of the components of the package?

Contact TCET by phone at 940-565-4433 or email tcetinfo@www.tcet.unt.edu.

5. How can I find current information and resources about the Technology Applications TEKS?

The START Web Site will be updated regularly with contributions from educators. Bookmark the site at <http://www.tcet.unt.edu/START/> or at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/START>. The site will be a dynamic place to learn more about the Technology Application TEKS and how others are implementing them within the classroom.

6. How can I share my ideas such as teaching materials, unit/semester plans, or planning resources with other educators?

You can send your ideas to TCET through any of the following means:

- visit the START Web Site at <http://www.tcet.unt.edu/START/> or <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/technology/START/>

- email TCET: tcetinfo@www.tcet.unt.edu
- fax TCET: 940-565-4425
- byMail: TCET - UNT
PO Box 311337
Denton, TX 76203

7. What role can the library play in Technology Applications?

The library serves as the resource center for students and staff and can be used as the focus for students' acquisition of the TEKS in technology applications. The library provides information in all formats, locally as well as from outside the school building, through such mechanisms as interlibrary loan, networking, and online database searching. In most districts, the librarian has received training in the use of technology and the application of technology in accessing and using information. Teacher/librarian collaboration can play an integral role in fulfilling the Technology Applications TEKS.

8. How can I find out more about state, regional, and national initiatives?

You may contact the ESC contacts for regional information (see Chapter 10) or visit the TEA Web Site for state resources: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/technology>. The South Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SCR*TEC) maintains an extensive web site at <http://scrtec.rtec.org>. The technical assistance section can help you answer questions you have about computers and the Internet. Use resources at the site to find the best software applications for the classroom. Resources on the SCR*TEC Site include:

- software directory
- glossaries of technical terms
- technical assistance documents
- Internet and networking
- technology planning

The US Department of Education maintains a list of technology initiatives at <http://www.edu.gov/>. Through projects initiated under the Improving America's Schools Act and other long-term programs, the US Department of Education promotes the use of technology in school, libraries and communities to achieve its mission of ensuring equal access to education and promoting educational excellence throughout the nation. Some examples of the types of information found at the web site are:

- Technology Innovation Challenge Grants
- Universal Access (E-Rate) information
- Resource Guide to Federal Funding for Technology in Education
- State and regional technology web sites

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided resources for technical assistance. Included has been information on how to get technical assistance with the Technology Applications TEKS, with any of the components of the START package, or with state, regional, and national resources. In addition, educators that already are implementing the Technology Applications TEKS may provide assistance for others by sharing resources through the START Web Site.

This START package was specifically designed to assist with the implementation of this comprehensive K-12 curriculum and give teachers a START. We hope that these resources are helpful as educators dialogue with peers, prepare instructional lessons, and watch students learn about technology tools and their application in all types of daily activities. In addition, we hope that schools, ESCs, CPDTs, and CEDs share with TCET “What Works” in the classroom, school, district, and region. TCET’s hope is that the *Companion*, START CD-ROM, and START Web Site will be used often as knowledge and expertise grows in this area. The START Web Site will be updated regularly. As a part of the START project, a form has been provided in Appendix E for schools, ESCs, CPDTs, CEDs, and others to share how they are implementing this technology applications curriculum.

The print, electronic, and web examples of resources provided in this section are not intended to be inclusive. Rather, they are offered as ideas and networking contacts to get educators started with the Technology Applications TEKS and this curriculum. We hope these resources and ideas will be a good place to START!