

# Instructional Success Stories

for educators of Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties

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## this issue

Digital Citizenship in  
Franklinville **P.1**

10% makes the difference **P.2**

Be a Mentor **P.3**

The Ultimate Challenge in  
Cattaraugus-Little Valley **P.4**

## A New Approach in Franklinville

By Don Watkins and Katie McFarland

Today's students face a myriad of opportunities, challenges and pitfalls with all of the technology tools available to them. Inquisitive young people use cell phones, social networks, and the Internet like second nature. Most of today's teens spend more time on the Internet than they do watching television. We want these experiences to be positive and productive, while also being safe.

At the end of last school year, Franklinville Junior/Senior High Principal, Mr. Thomas Kopp, approached Don Watkins, his Technology Integrator, about designing and teaching a class

that dealt with digital safety for students in seventh and eighth grades. "Digital Citizenship for Middle and High School Students" was born.

The course covers nine basic areas of digital citizenship as they are defined by the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE). This year the class will look at digital access and how access is so important to today's learners. Students will also examine digital communication in its various forms including social networks, cell phones, and electronic mail. They cover topics like digital etiquette and what is appropriate and not appropriate

when using technology. Throughout the year students will explore digital literacy, digital law and copyright, security and why it is important in an online environment, and individual digital rights and responsibilities.

The key to this curriculum is a focus on student self-esteem, and each student is encouraged to write about the positives that are occurring in their young lives each day. Mr. Watkins says, "The last two periods of each day are the high point for me as I spend it with this year's seventh and eighth graders preparing them for digital citizenship."