

All Kinds of Connections

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What does it mean to be a modern learner? VASCD is exploring this question in 2013, culminating with our annual conference in Williamsburg in early December. Our conference theme, @modernlearners, brings to mind images of students accessing information and connecting with others digitally from their classrooms (or from anywhere). We are reminded of the importance of teaching students to analyze and evaluate content when it comes not from one textbook and one teacher, but rather from that information fire hose, the internet. Today's teachers are helping students harness and focus the power of the devices they carry in their backpacks and pockets, so that they can learn what they need to know efficiently- any time and anywhere.

Supporting teachers as they work with students in technology- rich environments is a strong interest of VASCD's. We also recognize that students need far more than an internet connection to be successful. Certainly when students use connected devices to download irrelevant, static content with the goal of passing a test, we would not describe them as modern learners. It's what students do with the connections they make- both personal and digital - that matters.

Today's students need our support as they learn to collaborate with peers, communicate across diverse audiences, engage in their neighborhoods and communities, and live out the concepts of citizenship and social justice- whether these interactions occur online or in person. As we build our picture of today's classroom, we not only see digital learning environments, but also community service, teamwork, student leadership, essential questions and authentic problems.

In the coming months, VASCD will offer opportunities for educators to think and learn together about the opportunities and challenges we encounter as we work to support modern learners. We invite you to stay connected with us! Watch our facebook page, follow us on twitter, read our *occasional* e-mails to members, and stay tuned to our website. We look forward to hearing from and talking with you.