>*Safety is now about responsibility, appropriateness, and common sense as well. If we ask our students to publish, even if we know they are publishing outside of the classroom (which they are), it's our obligation to teach them what is acceptable and safe and what isn't.* Richardson, 2010 (p.12).

I conducted a basic Google search for internet safety and health for students. Much of the information is basically the same as what Richardson offers, but there were a few standout suggestions for teaching kids about internet safety. I agree that computers need a location either in a common space or a high traffic area of the home or classroom. Even though my computers are in the back of my class, they are stationed between my desk and the coat/book bag rack. Kidshealth.org suggests bookmarking favorite or acceptable sites for easy access. As a K-2 teacher of students with disabilities (SWD), I found the video at Brainpop.com kid friendly and infused with timely information. One of the safety tips offered by the character Annie is not to open email messages from unfamiliar people. She was able to explain how viruses can infect computers in a way that the youngest web 2.0 user would understand. Annie also cautions Moby to create unique passwords using letters and numbers and to keep them private. Teaching students that best friends should respect each other's password privacy is important at all ages. WebMD warns that "last semester's BFF may be this semester's frenemy, and your child may want to bar certain "friends" from seeing her personal info." WebMD (p.4). Finally, the University of Michigan Health System offers links for a quiz on internet safety, games to teach safety, and a sample contract for kids and parents to sign. Internet safety is serious and we need to teach students as early as possible so that they decrease their risk of becoming victims of online predators or identity theft.

Safety is somewhat of a non-issue for students in low performing schools especially if one factors in *digital divide* which basically points out the disparity in technology access between opposing groups: boys and girls; wealthy and poor; talent and gifted (TAG) and students with disabilities (SWD), and even native English speakers with English speakers of other languages (ESOL). Creighton (2003) believes that students in lower performing schools spend more time on computer-based drill and practice skills whereas students in higher performing schools use technology more creatively- for data collection and analysis, and multimedia presentations for instance (chapter 2). I do not disagree, nor do I have all of the answers, but the following none exclusive list of suggestions is a good place to start closing the digital divide among groups within the same building.

Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms.* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.
Creighton, T. (2003). The principal as technology leader. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

http://shanyonstorey.weebly.com

http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/net_safety.html

http://www.brainpopjr.com/artsandtechnology/technology/internetsafety/

http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/internet-safety-for-kids

http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/internet.htm

A lower performing school could implement the following changes:

1) Provide extended access to technology- one hour before and/or two hours after school

2) Assign gender-based technology mentors for groups of (five or fewer) same gender students

3) Teach Math and Science in gender-based classes infused with authentic technology application (e.g. WebQuests and Web 2.0 tools)

4) Encourage SWD and ESOL students to join the technology club

5) Use web-based tools for project management (Weebly, Wiki, Edmodo, etc.) thus freeing up classroom computers during class time for students who do not have access to technology at home

6) Sell refurbished computers (and related technology equipment) to families for a nominal fee opposed to discarding it.

7) Offer basic technology workshops to parents and guardians

Instituting some of these changes will not make the digital divide go away completely; however it could possibly break the association between low performance and low socioeconomic standing.

Who decides that a school ranked low in socioeconomics also has to rank low in performance?

Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms.* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.
Creighton, T. (2003). The principal as technology leader. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.
http://shanyonstorey.weebly.com

http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/net_safety.html

http://www.brainpopjr.com/artsandtechnology/technology/internetsafety/

http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/internet-safety-for-kids

http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/internet.htm