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Technology today gives us the ability to communicate, collaborate and solve real world problems faster and more efficiently than our counterparts just ten years ago. With this ability also comes planning and proper leadership to ensure technology is being implemented and used appropriately. Davies makes the statement, “Technology literate people know what the technology is capable of, they are able to use the technology proficiently, and they make intelligent decisions about which technology to use and when to use it” (Davies 2011). What about those that call themselves technology illiterate? Many of our teachers use this common term “computer or technology illiterate” to escape the fear that technology may replace them or to avoid the inconvenience of learning the skills to implement the technology into the classroom (Creighton, 2003).

Technology leaders, administrators and teachers as a whole have to come together to design a technology plan to implement technology in their schools. When designing this plan, they must consider many aspects of how technology should be used in the classroom. Technology leaders must guide administrators and teachers when designing this technology plan to help them understand some of the specific aspects that have to be addressed in order to have successful technology implementation. Some of the goals that must be included in a good technology plan are: good leadership, collaboration and a good investment (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Even though there are many subcategories that will be a part of that plan, those are the basic ones that will ensure success.

When developing a technology plan, a school must first answer these questions. How will the technology be used in the classroom? How will our teachers learn to implement this technology? Once that picture is painted clearly, then the technology plan can be developed and successfully implemented. Prior to developing the school’s technology plan they must first have

administrators and leaders on board, invest in good professional development for teachers and tie this plan to the schools overall vision (Creighton, 2003).

As a school develops and implements this plan, there must be a good understanding of what is to occur in the classroom. Some of the things that administrators and teachers must see occurring in the classroom are problem solving skills, collaboration, research, and creativity. ISTE sets forth standards to guide administrators through the understanding of using technology for teaching and learning. By using these conditions they can learn the essential facts that will enhance their technology plan and improve their school's overall vision. For instance, ISTE states that you must have trained professionals and ongoing training for those professionals to have a successful technology plan (ISTE, 2008).

Once the technology plan is in place, the teachers are trained and comfortable with the technology then the administrators and technology leaders should spend time evaluating technology in the classroom. If the groundwork has been done and the plan implemented, then there are two essential things that must be carried out next, ongoing professional learning for teachers, administrators and technology leaders and successful technology integration with curriculum standards.

There are many ways that a school can keep the professional development ongoing such as conferences, mentoring and incentives (Carter, 1996). Conferences for teachers always bring new ideas and allow teachers to venture out and learn things that they can bring back to the classroom. Even if a teacher just learns one new thing from a conference and successfully uses it in the classroom, it is a triumph. Mentoring that is used as professional development can have a positive impact in schools. Teachers respond well to their own peers as opposed to technology leaders, trainers and administrators. If a teacher sees his or her peer implementing technology

they are more than likely going to ask how to do that in their own classroom. When technology leaders and administrators design a technology plan they should appoint a “Technology Liaison” to mentor teachers on their level. A technology liaison is a teacher who is a trailblazer, one that ventures out with technology with no fear of failure (Creighton, 2003). Good technology integration teachers will have the understanding that some things may go well and some may not. Technology liaisons can help teachers to understand that and empower them to feel comfortable using technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

Some administrators have used incentives as a way to encourage teachers to train themselves, implement and integrate technology into the classroom. With school budget cuts this can be an encouraging factor. If an administrator offers a prize of \$100 for classroom supplies or an iPad to use in their classroom, a teacher will jump at the chance to learn, grow and implement that technology. Once teachers get a good handle on how to use the technology comfortably they will begin to use it more in the classroom. Incentives can give teachers that push to learn and use technology more.

There is a specific understanding of how technology should be used in the classroom. Many teachers, administrators and parents will think that researching and doing basic word processing documents is good integration but that is not really the case. Technology should be used as a tool to enhance a higher order of thinking; help solve “real world” problems; influence academic performance; and improve motivation (Roblyer and Doering, 2010). Creating a classroom environment enriched with project-based learning will allow students to have that open-ended learning where they can be as creative as their minds will allow. As teachers learn to move away from the traditional classroom, and see what technology can do for their teaching, the technology-enriched classroom will come more easily.

Technology should be used in the classroom as a tool for teaching and learning to enhance a child's education. Technology creates that differentiated learning to give each student the skills to solve real life problems. Incorporating challenge-based learning gives them the opportunity to gain the knowledge they will need in the real world once they enter into adulthood. An article written by the Edutopia staff explains the importance of how it should be used, "Effective technology integration is achieved when the use of technology is routine and transparent and when technology supports curricular goals" (Edutopia, 2012). The most important reason for using technology is to gain access to many different types of learners. Having open ended projects that coincide with the curriculum can give students of all levels the ability to learn the material that their level without leaving those behind that struggle and pushing those back that are advanced.

Once technology has been integrated into the classroom, technology leaders and administrators should spend time evaluating each teacher's use of technology. Creighton states that assessing teachers can identify their technology development needs as well as improve their performance (Creighton, 2003). As technology teachers know and understand that they are only facilitators, classroom teachers must also engage in this practice as well. Technology should support the curriculum in a way that enhances it, not replaces it. Teachers and technology leaders should design a curriculum that will provide the students enriched project-based learning that will give them the ability to show their creativity while learning the material. As we move away from that traditional classroom and apply 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning, each school must have a vision that incorporates technology into every classroom.

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