LM5040

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Personal Reflection

In my “What I Hope To Learn” essay at the beginning of this course, I stated that I needed to learn how to create a following for blogs and wikis, how to utilize the smart tools available with smartboard technology and to become familiar with more of the Web 2.0 tools available. I still see myself as a role model blazing a trail from novice to master with technology. I also hoped to learn how to integrate new technology with actual books so that students can experience and be intrigued by both. I envision a library where books and computers function together not as separate and disparate entities. I’d like to see children reading books online and then finding that book (or another in the series or by the same author) in the stacks and checking it out to take home. I want kids to use the computer to do more than just play games or lookup where to find a book in the electronic card catalog. I see children finding interesting information in books and then going online to find the latest information and continuing their learning. After reading the ***2013 Horizon Report for K-12 Schools*** (Johnson), I see that there are many areas where my hopes dovetail with what is expected to become the norm for technology. That being said, as the Library Media Specialist and/or Technology Integrator, I need to use the report’s data to impact technology integration in my future school by being prepared to fully implement cloud-computing and mobile learning while informing stakeholders on learning analytics and open content as well as introducing and spurring excitement about 3D printing and virtual/remote laboratories.

Johnson’s report cites cloud-computing and mobile learning as near-future technological advances. I use cloud-computing and mobile learning almost daily myself including Dropbox, Diigo, Pinterest, Kindle, Edmodo, Youtube, Prezi, and Wikispaces. My students benefit from my use of cloud-computing as I have files and presentations available wherever I have Internet access regardless of equipment available. I can create collaboration opportunities through Edmodo and share books through Kindle to help create positive reading experiences. I like being able to take photos with my iPad and then upload them to Dropbox to be used in other applications. For me it is much easier than trying to use the camera on my phone and with classroom sets of iPads available, it would facilitate a whole class activity working from those pictures. Finding collaboration projects that could be used in the school is just one benefit of cloud-computing with the Global Curriculum Project just one source for a study of culture through collaboration. Having iPads, netbooks, and/or Chromebooks allows for mobility and on-the-go computing, some resources (specifically Chromebooks) would require internet access which does put some limits on how “on-the-go” the computing can be, but could be resolved through use of other technologies such as smartphones or iPads for such things as field trips or off-site investigations. Those are some of the issues that I would need to be prepared to deal with on a daily basis as the “go-to” tech person on site. It is my responsibility to find ways to use the apps kids love to support reaching the standards required and to make educational connections with those apps that support engaging learning experiences. While class sets of iPads, netbooks, or Chromebooks may already be in place, it is still my responsibility to find ways to use the equipment to maximize learning opportunities by sharing apps and lessons that I come across in my research with fellow teachers and to make myself available to investigate areas that colleagues ask for help with.

Moving to the short-term technological advances of learning analytics and open content, it is my responsibility to be aware of how those topics can affect and even ease day-to-day teaching. I need to be preparing now for those advances to be part of the regular stream of information so I can be an advocate and a “more knowledgeable other” for the everyday users. In addition to researching software that allows individual tracking, it is essential that I discover ways to incorporate the data available from many sources to help teachers analyze and use information to help differentiate instruction. It is my duty to locate and publicize, to my colleagues, different open content resources that teachers and students may find useful.

Looking further to the future, I need to become acquainted with 3D printing and the idea of virtual/remote laboratories, finding ways to spearhead initial adventures into the newest technology while trying to work through the obstacles that will be presented by naysayers and by the technology itself. Before advocating for school or district-wide implementation, it is essential that I become intimately familiar with the processes involved so that I can be an informed advocate for new technologies.

While doing all the above, it is important that I keep my eyes/ears to the horizon looking for the newest technology that will be racing towards education while being aware of the nuances involved with the aging of what was today’s new, hot tech searching to find ways to seamlessly move teachers from one app or method to newer, better apps/techniques. My colleagues should look to me as a resource and be assured that they will receive relevant information and thorough support just as I would expect from any other LMS/TI if I were a classroom teacher. While I may not be a classroom teacher, I will certainly have teaching duties of my own which will give me the opportunities to share with students and model for teachers while offering occasions for collaborating and team-teaching. I will be expected to speak knowledgeably to administrators and school board members as well as informing the parents and public-at-large of initiatives regarding technology being undertaken or discussed. In my new position, I will become more than just a teacher – I will be looked to as an expert in my field and will need to be prepared to represent not just myself or my school, but my district and my profession as whole and to do that to the best of my ability means that I must be constantly looking forward, while keeping a firm hold on understanding the present and working towards integrating past, present, and future into a healthy collaboration of experiences where teachers can take advantage of my foundation-building to help every student use technology to reach new heights of success in their climbing the ladder to their potential.

In the end, I need to become the person that blends books and technology, alleviate teacher frustration to make way for teacher success, create opportunities for students to excel with all their teachers, fashion a school community that embraces technology while building district and state-wide connections that help keep technology current with a public-at-large that understands and values the benefits of that technology. I will be part of many circles that will depend on my understanding of the technology we have and will look to me for guidance on technology of the future so it is my responsibility to read the Horizon reports every year, adapting to changes before they are forced upon us to enable users to move forward while avoiding many of the pitfalls inherent in new technology. All this needs to happen above and outside me while still staying true to my beliefs of what it means to work with kids because technology should never be used just for technology’s sake. It should always be used with the understanding that it is a collection of tools to make a student’s education more engaging and successful. Education is all about the kids after all!

Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Cummins, M., Estrada V., Freeman, A., and Ludgate, H. (2013). NMC Horizon Report: 2013 K-12 Edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium