4-1-2010

Gain of technological fluency will prepare present day teachers to lead any arena along the Leadership Horizon.

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Recommended Citation
Deb, Papiya (2010) "Gain of technological fluency will prepare present day teachers to lead any arena along the Leadership Horizon.,” Academic Leadership: The Online Journal: Vol. 8 : Iss. 2 , Article 22.
Available at: https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol8/iss2/22

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Introduction

Human innovation that involves the generation of knowledge and process to develop systems, solve problems and extend human capabilities is Technology. Education Technology is the process of using multimedia technologies or audiovisual aids as a tool to enhance the teaching and learning process. Education technology in its global sense includes the entire process of the setting of goals, the continuous reforms of curriculum, the tryout of new methods and materials, the evaluation of the system as a integrated whole and resting of goals on the basis of the findings of evaluation and innovations. But this is often identified with various devices and processes which makes possible the recording, storage, manipulation, retrieval, transmission and display of data, information, printed and photographed materials with an efficiency and speed unheard of even ten years ago. If these capabilities are considered as part of a broad curriculum for research and development design, they have tremendous potential in education.

Culture and Technology

Culture is an all-encompassing tapestry. Technology is reweaving because it changes the rituals that educators use to express their values. New dimensions are being added to traditionally recognized teachers’ functions. Expression and reinforcement of values is no longer delineated by the walls and spaces of the educational institution. Education professionals are carrying conversation beyond the usual classroom teaching into virtual forums, e-mail exchanges, and groupware sessions. What will show through with increasing intensity on the Leadership Horizon is the successful mourning of the existential losses of the days of water cooler chats or mailbox meetings. Leaders will embrace the new venues where educational culture is created and they will be fluent enough in the medium to lead others in that migration. In doing so, they will become the heroes of the new tapestry of educational culture and respected members of the technologically-infused society.

The Change in the teaching-learning process

Processes are set of actions carried out to achieve predetermined results. Examples of processes in education include teaching-learning, evaluation, planning, and feedback on performance, guiding and counselling students and so on. Processes are generally complex and are linked to proceeding and following actions i.e., processes are linked to inputs (preceeding actions) and outputs (following actions) of a level in a system. For educational institutions to be more accountable, it is necessary that the teaching-learning process develop a continuous and shared commitment and dedication to quality.

A revolutionary change, uprooting our old educational belief, has in the recent past taken place in the educational sphere. The new system of education like the old one retains classes but requires recognizing a student’s individuality and making efforts to provide necessary facilities for his development. A technologically better quality in education will produce citizens in the next generation who would be productive, responsible and satisfied- identifying desirable student outcomes: cognitive,
One force that is driving the change in culture is the influx of data. A little more than a decade ago, most states were not able to collect, analyze and report data on individual institutions, now they can. With the individual institution as the unit of accountability, it becomes difficult to defend dysfunctional local politics and the usefulness of locally centralized governance and administration. The information made available by technology is, in itself, incredibly powerful. The more transparent education becomes, the more respect teaching will receive. Society criticizes what it does not know about, or what it feels is being withheld. Access to data, facilitated by technology, will dispel much of the fuel for these tainted impressions of the professions. Furthermore, good data is required to exert power well. Thus teachers who can wield technology to document and analyze data will be better equipped to lead well, and this will accelerate the shift in society’s opinion of teaching towards one that is more positive.

With the emergence of digital teaching and learning environments that link teachers and learners in institutions across the diverse sites, teachers are increasingly using collaborative technologies, a significant dimension of which is the potential to integrate classrooms, teachers and learners. This integration of information and communication technologies and in particular the increasing presence of internet in teaching and learning, challenges traditional educational considerations of time, distance and location. It also challenges traditional notions of the educational institution. The flow of information and communication technologies in education systems enables teachers and learners to form new tele-teaching and tele-learning relationships. The development of internet based technologies and the choice provided by synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning has encountered some teachers to reconsider the objective for educational institution as well as the nature of the classroom work.

Technology has the potential to transform society’s impression of teaching. However, until teachers, begin to consider technological fluency as a critical asset for their careers; they will remain less powerful and less qualified to lead. The digital divide is not only about technology, it is a profoundly human divide. It separates those who already have cultural, educational and informational literacy from those who do not. There must not exist a digital divide between society and education. If there is, teaching will continue to be considered a second-class profession because educators will be perceived (not necessarily unjustly) as less-than qualified to prepare students for a technologically-woven society. In the years ahead, digital fluency will become a prerequisite for obtaining jobs, participating meaningfully in society, and learning throughout a lifetime. Teachers must possess technological fluency if they are to lead education in fulfilling its responsibility to society.

Teaching profession, leadership and technology

The term ‘leadership’ is used very often in our daily conversation. Most definitions of leadership involve three components- influence, group and goal (Morrison 1998). First, leaders are individuals who influence the behaviour of others- usually subordinates or followers. Second, leadership is usually examined in the context of a group; specially work groups. Third, research on leadership stresses a group goal that has to be accomplished. Leadership is the process in which an individual influences other group members towards the attainment of group goals (Gardner 2007). The concept of leadership is a vital ingredient of educational success within the context of the turbulent changes taking place within educational system. In defining leadership and identifying those who are the leaders in
achieving educational excellence, there is always an argument for a model of distributed leadership. Such an approach should be concerned with seeking transformational change leading to a total quality education approach. This in turn should contribute to institution effectiveness, in improving teaching and learning and the management of educational change.

Teachers who want to be leaders beyond the four walls of their classroom need to be technologically fluent. Today, teachers who understand a range of technologies are deemed ‘specialists’ and are awarded certification that reinforces the concept that this skill set is somehow separate from the fundamental requirements for educators. The role of technology will not diminish over time, rather it will become more and more pervasive in every arena of society, and that by default, will also be the case in education. This is not to say that technology will be the most important element in education. It will be a ubiquitous layer that everyone involved in this field will have to work with- much like the presence of paper in our lives today. Educators are responsible for preparing students for the society they are expected to contribute to.

Conclusion

The new Leadership Horizon will become evident as education becomes more transparent and less compartmentalized. Education’s infamous ‘isolation’ and ‘closed-door’ characteristics have stymied reform after reform. This is changing because technology is intrinsically opposed to that culture. The most effective response to this parochialism, which is a direct outgrowth of the isolation of teaching as a vocation, is to surround practitioners with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of examples of systems that have managed to design their institutional structures around large-scale improvement. Technology has helped to document these examples of strong models and practice, and the internet, databases and groupware programs have helped ‘surround’ educators with this information. The Leadership Horizon, as it is developing, requires that educators know where this information is, or at least how to find it, and that they are dexterous using the mediums in which it is presented.

If today’s teachers gain technological fluency, they will be well prepared to lead any arena along the Leadership Horizon.

References


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