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Digital Literacy and Its Impact

How will the advances in digital learning affect your classrooms and the way that students are taught and learn? What technologies do you have or are forthcoming that will change the classroom and what are their impacts? What other topics might impact digital literacy in the near future?

Recently Pat Alexander, Instructional Services Division Administrator with Kern County Superintendent of Schools, gave me a book to read called *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work: New Insights for Improving Schools* by Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Rebecca DuFour. I highly recommend reading this book because it dissects all of the parts of an education system that impact or influence improving the education of each individual student. From our CETPA member viewpoint, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) forced the importance of digital literacy for every person working in your district.

Reading this book from the IT perspective, every chapter describes and gives a direction to follow for the role of technology. At the core of NCLB is the mission for the teacher to assess, teach and now prove that what is taught actually impacts student growth. The expectation is that if a concept based on a state standard was not learned, the teacher will immediately see the data, work with other teachers to figure out why the concept was not learned, apply remediation, and assess for effectiveness again. This accountability rides on the technology we provide at the classroom level.

You may be fortunate to work in a district that does not have schools that are in some form of state improvement. From an instructional and technology standpoint, I can only deduct that what school improvement sites are doing to improve student learning should be on everyone's radar. If a teacher must give instruction in a manner that enables student data to be input into a program to assess that particular lesson, you have a teacher who must now be engaged in technology. The argument is no longer that adding Internet resources will improve curriculum. Teachers now must embrace using advanced technology systems as a core function of their job.

Teacher accountability has a direct correlation to student achievement and engagement in this digital age. When teachers articulate that a particular technology is needed in order to boost student performance, the IT department must respond with the best implementation. I see this often on the EdTech list with questions such as what is the best digital projectors and interactive board technology. These demands are bringing IT people into the mix of education curriculum into the classroom. Like each department in a school system that supports learning in a classroom, we have basic responsibilities such as network infrastructure, business systems, SIS, telephones and Internet that are expected to always function. These technologies indirectly support the learning environment but are not often observed by the school site unless those particular systems are not functioning. The IT department must find ways to get involved at the school site level in classroom instruction if for no other reason but to prepare for up-and-coming technology requests at the local level. This is a role that is changing, from sending a technician into the room to fix a software issue to involvement in the curriculum decisions that will impact technology resources.

Although we do not expect teachers to learn about our technology terms, reading *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work* will help you understand the current responsibilities and challenges our classroom teachers, principals and superintendents are being held accountable for. If you can accomplish this with one well-written book, I believe reading this author's insight is time well spent. ■

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