

## Memo on Aligning Technology with Pedagogy

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Primary school teachers have twelve iPads in their classrooms for student use and a generous budget for the purchase of accessories (cases, headphones, stylus pens) and apps. Since their introduction, many teachers have begun to integrate iPads into their classroom programs. As a school, however, we do not have a focused, shared vision of how educational technology can improve student learning and support our progressive pedagogical values. As a result, student experiences with the iPads vary across classrooms and iPads have not transformed our teaching practices. Teachers have different levels of comfort and knowledge with this technology and training/professional development has been inconsistent. Simply having the educational technology does not ensure its effective and meaningful use.

For educational technology to do more than merely reproduce traditional teaching practices and for it to have a meaningful impact on student learning, we must begin to align technology integration in ways that support our strong pedagogical foundation. As Daccord and Reich (2015) explain, “The best technology integration tends to take place in schools created around a focused pedagogical vision.” According to the mission of our school, we value experiential learning that allows children to be active, engaged and empowered to explore their own ideas, questions and interests. Learning activities are designed to be authentic and meaningful, with a focus on creativity, collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking. With our pedagogical vision clearly established, it will be “much easier to define and measure how technology can support learning” (Daccord & Reich, 2015).

One of the biggest challenges, as described by Benjamin Herold (2015), “is in expanding teachers' knowledge of new instructional practices that will allow them to select and use the right technology, in the right way, with the right students, for the right purpose.” Before teachers can begin to align technology integration with the pedagogical vision, they must have confidence and knowledge with the technology. A first course of action is to provide ongoing professional development that is relevant to the daily activities of the classroom and curricular goals. Teachers need the time and support to “gain the comfort and confidence to develop new teaching practices (Daccord and Reich, 2015).

A second way to support the alignment of technology integration with the pedagogical vision is to introduce teachers to the theoretical framework, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). Because we already have a focused pedagogical vision and skilled teachers who are experts in their content areas, TPACK empowers teachers to use what they know best - pedagogy and content - as they learn

begin to make choices about technology integration. According to Koehler, Mishra, and Cain (2013) TPACK allows “teachers, move beyond oversimplified approaches that treat technology as an ‘add-on’ to focus instead, and in a more ecological way, upon the connections among technology, content, and pedagogy as they play out in classroom contexts” (p. 18). Utilizing this framework school-wide will help us make better choices about technology integration that support our progressive pedagogical values.

### References

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