Tantalizing Timid Teachers with Technology

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“When I concluded that my primary task was to give workshops to encourage teachers who are often reluctant to use the technology and are not comfortable with the frustrations involved in the learning phase. Simply, availability does not assure use.”

Arden Rauch, 1995

What are they afraid of?

- Children will lose their ability to relate to other human beings.
  - Technology is simply a tool used by people to solve human problems. It is only one of many tools. It does not replace interaction with peers and with the teacher.
- They will become dependent on technology to be able to function.
- They will be exposed to inappropriate materials.

Why use technology?

Educators and researchers can debate the effects of technology in terms of higher test scores, but the crux of the matter is that part of our job as educators is to create successful members of society for the future. It is clear that the ability to use technology tools assists in the future success of our students. Technology is a tool. Computers can be used to stimulate and develop writing skills, collaborate with peers in foreign countries, do real research, and do types of problem solving that would otherwise be impossible.

- **Dispel the myths and mystery.**
  - Equity and low SES students – does a comparable computer-student ratio equate equity for low SES students?
  - Is there an agreed upon standard for what is considered “best practices” for technology integration?
  - Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) vs. Using the computer as a tool
  - Take an old hard drive and let teachers look and touch.
  - Tear apart a floppy and explain how it works.
  - Once a teacher learns to use a computer, they can teach with technology.
    - Reassure teachers that it takes time to become comfortable with technology before starting to integrate. It’s ok to go slowly at first.
  - Stay away from hype. Reassure teachers that you know technology is neither a panacea nor a substitute for good teaching. Address tough questions from teachers head-on. Talk about down to earth solutions. Admit when you don’t know the answer.
• **Show teachers the “big picture”**.
  o Show how technology tools fit within the bigger scheme of what they teach. Show ways technology can actually help meet standards in content areas as opposed to adding another item they have to teach.
    - Web resources and on-line tools.
      - [http://www.bioc.rice.edu/precollege/k12resources](http://www.bioc.rice.edu/precollege/k12resources)
    - Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Databases
    - Stay away from specific computer programs that are not universal.

• **Stay away from the technical jargon**.
  o Demystify technological terms. Think of plain English ways to describe terms. Talk about applications where you click the image, picture, graphic, or icon as opposed to GUI apps. You may provide a cheat sheet of sorts with techy terms. Make fun of the acronyms and allow them to laugh with you.

• **Start slowly and give the teachers opportunities for success**.
  o Don’t be overly ambitious in the beginning. If teachers are given experiences where they feel successful and see a way technology can be a useful tool for them, they will be more likely to want that same experience for their students.

**Specific Tools Particularly Accessible To Novice Teachers**
Teachers can use each of the tools below effectively with little or no computer experience. In less than one hour a teacher can have a useful tool that will actually enrich the content they are teaching in a meaningful way. This can be a springboard from which teachers begin to explore meaningful technology integration.

  - E-boards - [http://www2.eboard.com/](http://www2.eboard.com/)
  - Quiz Star - [http://quiz.4teachers.org/index.php3](http://quiz.4teachers.org/index.php3)
  - Rubi Star - [http://rubistar.4teachers.org/](http://rubistar.4teachers.org/)

On-line resources for technology workshops:
[http://www.bioc.rice.edu.precollege/k12resources](http://www.bioc.rice.edu.precollege/k12resources)

**Marty Daniel**, Instructional Technology Specialist
*Rice University Professional Development Programs*

martyd@rice.edu

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