

Educational Technology Leadership- Style and Substance in the Coming Decade

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## **Educational Technology Leadership- Style and Substance in the Coming Decade**

### Background

Educational technology leaders are faced with challenges to prepare students with the technical tools needed in order to compete in a global society. The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the several leadership styles and the latest technologies for grades K-12.

In order to be an effective leader, one must find your passion. There may be times when you may not know what you want out of life or how to achieve your goals. According to (Robinson, 2013), take notice of your aptitudes and interests now and after retirement. There are two worlds. The one is the inner you; the talents, feelings, inner thoughts and sensations. Then there is the outer world, the one that's been in existence before you were born and will be here after you have departed. It is up to you to take your passion and talents and discern how you can leave an everlasting impact on the world.

Having passion in your life feeds your spirit, and this is what makes life meaningful. For example, wanting to become a teacher because of your inner passion and love for children not just for employment. Because of that love, you search to see what is required to become a teacher. You enroll in school and take all the courses needed to become a certified teacher. The trends of education are changing at a rapid rate. Studies show that all children learn differently. Education is not a one size fits all plan. Children learn at different rates and some need different methods of instruction. Some are auditory learners while other may require lessons to cater to the tactile learner. Different techniques are needed for your students to prepare them to be life learners. Also, they need access to resources to compete against a global society. It is significant

for the educational leader to be aware of the challenges students face when developing an academic technology program.

### Family Crisis

Children in today's society are faced with many challenges. There are children who have emigrated from other countries. The children who are illegal immigrants begin their lives in America at a disadvantage in terms of applying for grant money for higher education. Some children may not know how to speak English and are in need of additional instruction to learn the language. Poverty is a factor that plagues 21% of all children. The poverty level in 2014 is \$22,050 for a family of four. For a family of four to receive their basic needs in order to survive, their basic income would have to be \$45,000 (Amandeo, 2014).

Unemployment is on a rise because of the shift in the economy. The US is decreasing how many products it manufactures, yet in order to keep the cost down, businesses are purchasing products from other countries at a lower rate. People are obtaining degrees and leaving college with large loans to be paid, yet cannot find employment. Some parents are forced to send their children to a low performing school because they cannot afford to send them to better schools.

Child obesity also has an effect on a child's ability to excel in school. Children who are obese have a tendency to be picked on by other children. The action of being picked on fosters low esteem and the child may experience loss of motivation to interactions with their peers when working on group assignments. Obesity also leads to health issues causing students to perform low in physical education. Children who attend schools in low income and urban areas are not in a safe haven. The streets are riddled with violence and crime. High school students are exposed

to images depicting smoking as “cool”. There are a high percentage of high school students who use drugs and drink alcohol in results in poor grades and attendance. Single parent homes have increased over the years, making it difficult to raise children under these trying economic times.

According to (Northouse, 2013), leadership is defined as an influence process that assists groups of individuals toward goal attainment. Leaders have the ability to influence others to attain goals or carry out duties. There are many different types of leaderships styles, and how you manage your style will reflect on how you engage and motivate others to serve in any organization or school setting.

### Leadership Styles

The Transformational Leader has a charismatic and effective element. This type of leader has the ability to change and transform people. This leader is concerned in holding himself/herself to the highest standards. Morals, emotions, values, and long term goals are what drives this leader to perform to the best of their ability. The Transformational Leader is a caring individual who gives people the utmost respect and treats people the way he or she would want to be treated. The Transformational Leader has the ability to bring the preeminent qualities out of an individual so he or she may perform to their highest potential. One example of a Transformational Leader is President Obama. He has a way of reaching out to people from all walks of life. This is what makes him a popular president.

The Servant Leaders is concerned with how they can put others first. They are driven to empower others and help them develop to their fullest potential. Their focus is to put the organization, community, and society before self. They want to serve others and value other people’s opinions. An elected official is one example of someone who portrays the

characteristics of a Servant Leader. He or she are voted into office and empowered by the people to serve the community.

The Authentic Leader is concerned with interpersonal qualities such as self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept (Northhouse, 2013). There have not been many studies on the Authentic Leader because it is fairly new concept. The Authentic Leader is morally stable and concerned for other's needs and values.

Leadership in organizational work teams has been proven to be successful. A team of people working together for a common goal each bring their unique skills and balance to enhance and build a strong foundation for the team. In the school district, The School Leadership Council, The Parent Teacher Association, and The Needs Assessment Team are examples of the leadership in an organizational work team. This team in a school setting is successful because everyone works together for a common goal. The first team members work in groups to diagnosis the problem, while another group plans an action to solve the problem.

The descriptions of the above leadership styles can be applied to an educational setting in conjunction with characters the in the story entitled, "*Who Moved My Cheese?*" The story is about how the decisions made in life will have an impact on how you live. The characters in the story can also relate to the classroom teacher. The story begins with four characters, two mice named Sniff and Scurry, and two little people name Hem and Haw. They live in a maze searching for cheese. The cheese is a metaphor of what you may want it life, whether it's a job, relationships, education, or peace of mind.

In a school, you have students and staff. The school's staff varies according to experience and teaching style. Hem the mouse was not a risk taker. He remained behind while the others were in search of cheese. You have those who are complacent and will not do anything to

enhance their instruction. For example, there are teachers who began teaching before computers entered the classroom. They are afraid to use them for fear of the unknown. Their self-esteem is lower than those who are technically inclined.

How does the story fit into the presentation? As an educational technology instructor, you will work with all types of teachers. You will need to help raise the school to the highest standards in terms of infusing technology within instruction. For example, if you are a Transitional Leader, your mission is to try to identify specific skills of your staff members who are complacent and afraid to take risks. The Transformational Leader will encourage the teachers to attend professional development technology workshops. It will not only educate the teachers on how to utilize technology effectively, but it will also help build their self-esteem and confidence. Teachers who are considered tech savvy may be willing to enroll in Instructional Design Courses. That teacher will then have the capability to design assignments to upload on the internet in order that students and parents may have access at home and on the Internet. The Transitional Leader places the responsibility on the teachers to make him/her feel in control.

Scurry was a mouse who ran around the maze looking for new cheese. He was a risk taker and did not mind exploring new things. This is similar to looking to staff members who are always looking for innovative ways to motivate children to learn, for example, a teacher is not fearful of using the latest technologies in the classroom. The teacher will enroll in workshops and courses to keep abreast of the newest technologies. A Servant Leader would take the back-seat approach and allow the teacher to play the role of leader. The teachers who use creativity to create a classroom environment also engage students to learn in cooperative learning groups.

The moral of the story is that you will have those who will adapt to change, and will take the initiative to go beyond and venture out to learn the latest technologies available for their

students. You will also have those who are familiar and comfortable in their surrounds; those who have no interest and are doing a disservice to the students by not providing a learning environment where technology is used to motivate children to learn.

To be an Educational Leader, you must know the National Standards in Education so your staff can prepare their students with essentials learning tools to be engaged in learning the effective implementation of technology. Teachers need to use their knowledge of the subject matter, teaching and learning experience, and technology experience when crating a learning environment. The classroom setting should consist of learning centers. The center facilitates the student's ability to advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both a face-to-face and virtual setting.

As Robinson, Brown, & Green (2010) stated: Teachers: promote, support, and model creative and innovate thinking and interviews. Engage students in exploring real-word issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources. Promote student reflection using collaborative tools to reveal and clarify student's conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative process. Model collaborative knowledge construction by engaging in learning with students, colleagues and others in face-face and virtual environments. (p. 125).

Educational technology leaders and educators' roles are changing. Educator and leaders are expected to keep abreast of the best approaches to deliver instruction, collaboration with other educators within and out of district and to learn strategies to engage students in learning activities using technology resources. Teachers are using online resources such as webinars, social media, online courses, and online tools as a form of professional development.

## Latest Technologies

The following are the latest technologies that teachers can use to motivate children to learn. BYOD is known as Bring Your Own Devices. Students and staff members bring laptops, tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices to school for academic use. BYOD is a global trend because many people have access to the Internet. Teachers using a projector connect to a monitor and are able to send questions to the student's devices. Teachers are able to use real-time instruction and receive responses immediately. This method has been proven to help students who are struggling in their academics.

Today's youth are using mobile technologies for entertainment and socialization. These learners are using mobile devices to access information and multimedia materials and to communicate with family and friends. This new generation of learners does not perceive technology as something "foreign". They readily accept technology and consider technology to be part of their everyday lives. Students are able to use their mobile devices, cameras, microphones, and other tools to create rich media or complete class assignments. Students are able to record interviews and collect data for experiments. Evernote and Edmodo are examples of applications which make it possible to create and exchange notes, assignments, drawings, videos, and more among colleagues and peers.

Children have fun while learning with these devices. As an example, students using mobile applications such as Edmodo, Evernote, and Skitch took photos of fish and documented their observations. After writing a report, the students will have the capability to share their observations with their peers.



If you want the capability to access and save documents and photos in order to retrieve them at any location with internet access, you can store them in the “clouds.” The “cloud” is a service and tool used to store data in cyberspace. Students can work on assignments and store them in the “clouds.” It is beneficial for those who are working on group projects. A student may go to a friend’s house and retrieve the project in order to continue to work on it. A project can be stored and retrieved at school for submission.

Makerspace is a physical location where educators and students can use their creativity to collaborate on projects, network, and build objects. The spaces are a source of emerging technologies where students experiment within libraries, schools, community centers, or recreational centers. Some of the objects you may find are recyclable items, computers, 3D printers, and welding tools. Students are not only able to work with teachers, but this give them the ability to share their creativity and collaborate with their parents, family members, classmates and friends. The students are able to use hands-on mechanics to build projects. The projects remain undisturbed in the Markerspaces for further use.

Many years ago and still today, Lego blocks were used to build things such as houses and cars. Professor Bers conducted research and found children as young as early childhood can learn science, technology, engineering, and math if given a rich technology leaning environment to explore. Children are able to design, build, and program their own robot using the latest LEGO kits. The LEGO Education WeDo Robotics Constructions Set gives the students the ability to build and program 12 model robots. It comes with a motor, tilt sensor, and motion sensor. The program helps develops the children’s fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, as well as teaching them how to play using technology.

The teacher must provide a technology-rich, design-based learning environment. The Technology Circle is an activity the teacher can initiate with children and parents at an Open House event. The teacher asks the parents and children to sit on the floor and form a circle. Next, the teacher places the LEGO parts on the floor or table. Prior to construction, the students and parent discuss the following questions: What worked as expected and what did not? What are you trying to accomplish? What did you think you needed to know in order to make it happen? The purpose of these questions is to highlight some of the powerful ideas demonstrated by the project. It also provides technical information prior to the construction of the model verses a teacher giving a lecture to explain what the groups will need to do in order to construct their model. Projects such as this one promote information seeking, problem-solving, and discerning how to find help and resources. These are activities that most professionals engage in on a daily basis.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, to be an effective Educational Technology Leader, first look within the inner you to find your passion. Once you define your vision and goals, take your passion and decide what leadership style best fits your persona. Your audience whether staff, students, or teachers, will want to assist you in making your vision and goals become a reality. In order to prepare the students to compete in a global society, you will want to create the best educational technology program to cater to each individual learning style. You will have the ability to encourage your staff to initiate the best practices to assist students to perform to their highest ability.

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