Understanding and Overcoming Teacher Reluctance

There is certainly not a lack of reasons why teachers do not incorporate technology into their lessons. From the perspective of someone who enjoys utilizing technology, these may seem like excuses, but are valid reasons. One of those reasons is self-efficacy.   Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to incorporate technology when they believe they can execute its use successfully (Ormrod, 2016, p. 130). They may be motivated and somewhat knowledgeable, but if they do not believe they can use technology, they will refrain from doing so.   Teachers need to put aside the belief that they will not be able to use technology successfully in their classes.

In many classrooms, the lack of computer literacy in teachers constitutes a major impediment to student and teacher success (Tsai, 2015). Technology is not always necessary to have a successful class, but the resistance against it may cause teachers to miss out on engaging learners. Students often prefer course material to be delivered electronically, reporting that they found more time to reflect on the information and discuss much more effectively and interactively in class time (Willis et. al., 2013). Instead of just listening to a lecture or reading to himself or herself, technology allows for interactivity in the lesson and can improve student learning. The use of computers should be so infused that the students think that technology is part of the natural learning process (Hopkins, 2013). As digital tools continue to grow in almost every aspect of our lives, students need to become accustomed to utilizing technology for more than just posting on social media or taking pictures. This understanding begins in the classroom.

Sometimes teachers are motivated and willing, but lack the ability to integrate technology into their instruction. If so, they might not consider technology integration as part of an effective teaching method and even develop a negative attitude toward technology integration (Tsai,

2015). A negative attitude may force them to lose interest and motivation. When attitude hinders progress, teachers need support and encouragement to continue or even begin to gain the ability to integrate technology.

Education World (2012) compiled a list of various tools to support and encourage teachers to further use technology in the classroom. Some suggestions included adding more training in the form of webinars, online training and meetings with experts. Currently in my district, each school has at least one technology specialist to support the teachers. The specialist is able to meet with various teachers to help them incorporate new digital tools and resources into their current curriculum.

In addition, teachers are invited to attend webinars and staff training meetings to assist them with their technology goals. The most essential aspect of the aforementioned meetings that lead to a change was their focus on not only the how to use technology but the why (Johnson, 2012). As teachers begin to understand why different tools assist their students' learning, they begin to look at the tasks of incorporating technology in a new way.

The field of education and its processes has drastically changed with the help of technology and its advances in the last few years. Various tools have been replaced by digital tools recently, with arguable success (Willis, Kestell, Grainger & Missingham, 2013). Even using the tools already supplied to teachers would be a small but effective start to incorporating technology. Although many teachers are not utilizing the tools provided to them, the supplication of adequate support and training will allow for confident implementation of technology in classrooms (Willis et. al., 2013). Even if teachers have the tools and the support, they need to understand how to use it successfully. Administrators must also ensure that teachers have access to expertise on how to use these tools effectively (Willis et. al., 2013).

Sometimes it is the little things that help teachers overcome their fears and resistance. Education World (2012) argues that sharing incentives will assist teachers with their concerns with technology use. At my current district, teachers are encouraged to use Google Apps for Education for all of their needs. In return, they are able to save and access all of their files from anywhere and also have access to Flubaroo, which grades their papers for them.

Additionally, Hopkins shares the idea of using students as resources. Students go into classes, teach some students an application or software. Those students in turn teach others and the learning continues (Hopkins, 2013). During instruction, teachers can turn to student experts for assistance. Teachers do not always reach out to the resource right in their room, students. Doing so would help them with using technology more often. Addressing the concerns of reluctant teachers is an important task for all districts. As technology begins growing, so must our teachers grow along with it.

The review of multiple solutions has produced an idea that may address the resistant teacher. The Pro Camp is a new support program that allows teachers to meet with a co-worker to discuss a new goal each month. Teachers will pull a resource from a database to learn together and use in their classrooms for two weeks. After implementation, they return to discuss results and share with two other teachers what ideas they have for the tool. Once more, teachers return to use the resource in their classroom. Each month, they choose a new tool and as they do, they receive rewards or badges. Each level achieved includes rewards. The Pro Camp can also be used toward Professional Learning Community and Professional Development hours.

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