

BOOK REVIEW

INSPIRING THE SECONDARY CURRICULUM WITH TECHNOLOGY: LET THE STUDENTS DO THE WORK

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This book is about how teachers can inspire their students to use technology for their subjects. It is not about what softwares or hardwares can be used in secondary curriculum. It is about how teachers can inspire students to use apps found in their personal devices like smartphones and tablets efficiently and responsibly in their subjects. It is not to ban the technologies or devices to classroom but to motivate students to utilize these technologies. The students should be engaged to use technology for their school subjects' learning apart from entertainment and socialization. This book is to harness the power of students' technology knowledge and skills in their lessons. The writers have clarified the fact that this book is not about teaching databases, spreadsheets or word processing. It is not important for the teachers to have technical knowledge of some particular technologies related to that subject but more important is that how they teach and advise their students to use technology responsibly and efficiently in their subjects. This book is to inspire the students to use the technology as a problem-solving tool through hunting the internet for open-source softwares, download applications and solve the problem.

This book has three focuses. One is to take away from teachers that they need to keep up-to-date constantly with new technology in ICT. Second is to show teachers that how can they get their students to focus on their lessons and learning with the same zeal as they do in gaming, social networking and other technology. Third is to develop pedagogy that can help to cope with ever changing nature of technology. A teacher is not a font of all knowledge and technology; rather she has to construct opportunities for students to transfer their own skills in technology to her subject. It is not that teacher should learn new technologies it is to make students use their knowledge of technology in their learning. This book encourages

those teachers also to be inspirational who have very little knowledge of technology to harness their students' knowledge of technology.

It is how to utilize students' devices for the classroom learning rather than banning those devices. It is to make the students inspire to do the work rather than teacher does the work for them. The writers has related their concept of use of technology with different subjects at secondary level, that how can they use technology or inspire students to use technology.

This book consists of nine chapters which are introduction; blended learning, mobile technologies and their impact on the secondary curriculum; developing interactive students; student safety; eportfolios and virtual learning environments; the extended school, embedding ICT in practice; and conclusion.

The teacher has to create the scenarios. Instead of seeking technical knowledge teachers should seek the knowledge of trends and opportunities. The teachers should blend their basic subject pedagogy within these trends to contextualize ICT skills. It is all about to harness future trends, technology and softwares and embed them into different subjects teaching. Throughout the book it is reinforced that the teacher has to be inspirational in using technology in the classroom. As we all know that when a student is inspired the learning accelerates and becomes effective. The writers have drawn our attention to the fact that technologies are improving day by day. As the new versions come the old versions and technologies become outdated and obsoletes. So it is impossible for a teacher to keep her updated with technology. It is overwhelming and an extra burden on the teacher along with other responsibilities on her. More important is that that the teacher should have the knowledge that how can she put her students to put the same energy and focus into her lessons in the classroom as they do use their devices or screens outside the school.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter starts by highlighting the importance of inspiring students. Because everyone knows that if students are inspired they attain better and achieve better. Moreover, it is much better for a teacher to teach inspired students. The inspired students feel that they have been given permission to feel enormous passion for a subject. It is that a teacher has created such an environment where he discovers that a stream of dopamine and positive endorphins can be experienced while exploring and learning the skills and knowledge of a subject. A teacher creates such an environment by taking something that a student already likes and uses this to refocus his perspective of the subject. The chapter highlights and suggests those ways through which non-schooling life of a student can be converged to the content of the course. It is to makes students realize that courses they have in school are not decontextualized but they are relevant and genuine part of their life. It is to give a student a confidence to use that knowledge and skill they have already mastered and help their learning in school lessons.

The technology is not to get rid of books but it is to give space to both ebooks and traditional paper books. The book suggests that a teacher should construct opportunities for students to read a book by incorporating students' desire to interact through social networking. The students should be encouraged to read ebooks and share these books' on facebook and blogs. The students should be asked to write a review of that book and share it with their peers. This will provide them the opportunity to learn through collaborative learning in their undirected own time for classroom reading.

The authors have pointed out to the facts in the introduction that future is in mobile computing. The authors have asserted that instead of spending so much money on such less interactive resources which are available on students' smartphones and screens like

dictionaries or calculators. As these things are already available in apps these resources must be used somewhere else. A smartphone at the same time can be an ebook reader, a GPS tracking device, a survey device etc. In short a smartphone can be anything that can be imagined.

The chapter has highlighted the fact that there are a lot of schools who have attempted to stop the infusion of mobile technology by banning all electronic devices from the school and have tried to impose the artificial learning environment of late twentieth –century. They say that society has upgraded in the way that everywhere the technology has replaced the manual work whereas some schools and teachers are struggling to cope with this upgrade. They assert that there is a great need to change such kind of mindset and bring technology into classroom teaching. They recommend teachers to embrace change and encourage students to use their knowledge and skill of technology to enhance their learning rather than banning the technology.

The chapter also signifies the fact that society has become disposable. Everything within no time becomes outdated and if in such a scenario we force our students to spend their precious time on learning and recalling such concepts that are available 24/7 in the form of a smartphone, that time must be utilized on some other constructive activities. So if the student forgets the date of signing the Magna Carta, it is not a big deal as they know that they can google it whenever they require from their smartphones. It is a poor approach to invest students' energies in learning those facts or knowledge which will might never need again, we should encourage the learners to learn core knowledge and skills that are required on regular basis.

Moreover, the chapter has drawn the attention of the reader to the facts that as softwares are constantly changing, therefore it is a foolish approach to learning all new versions of softwares. The authors encourage the teachers that instead of learning about the technology or the softwares it is more appropriate to introduce your students with the notion of temporary skills and knowledge. So each time the learner explores a new area within their subject, the teacher should coach them to ask that does there any technology exist right this moment that could solve this problem. So the responsibility is not on teachers but on students to explore options and justify bringing in technology to solve a problem.

The authors have very inspiringly drawn the attention to the fact that there is a dire need for a teacher to accommodate diversity of learners in her class. The students with visual impairment as well as a student with autism can be found in the same class as schools are making every effort to be as inclusive as possible. Utilizing technologies which are already in students' possession are the best way to make classrooms as inclusive classrooms and providing maximum opportunities of learning to students of diverse needs and achieving the aim of maximum parity.

They have also focused on the importance of digital footprints. They suggest the teachers to explore that how online technologies have affected both in school systems and private social networking systems.

The authors have used two terms technophile and technophobes. Technophile means those people who are keen of technology and technophobes mean those who have fear of technology. They say it is a wrong assumption that all students are technophile and all teachers are technophobe. The success lies to not to be afraid of technology but use it efficiently and effectively. They have quoted Franklin D. Roosevelt's words that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Therefore, teachers should use the known environment to teach the unknown skills and knowledge to students. They should encourage the students to

use their existing knowledge and skill of technology to explore new knowledge and skills related to a particular subject. Moreover, the authors has provided the explanation of some common terms in a very easy and comprehensive way like android, app, BYOD, cloud computing, cloud storage, drag and drop, external memory, and world wide web etc.

Chapter 2: Blended Learning

In the chapter two Shea and Stockford have explained that what it means by blended learning. They say that blended learning is a term used to refer to a teacher blending online learning opportunities with physical learning opportunities. Homework is the part of an online structured learning experience. It also blurs the concept of time and this blended learning is beginning to have impact on a range of teaching strategies.

The concept of flipped classroom is also explained. They say that in a flipped classroom learning takes place outside the formal teaching environment and the critical reflection and assessment takes place in a physical lesson. They suggest a different philosophy of pedagogy of inspiring students and enhancing learning. They assert that the notions of 'in class' and 'outclass' can be blurred to include more than one location and multiple points in time. They have suggested that as students are using technology at their home on their smartphones and apps in their personal life then why not teachers encourage them to use same technology, and smartphones for their learning of subjects. As they enjoy unsupervised learning of their interest that is why they should be encouraged to study the subjects and transfer their skills to their subject which they have learnt in their personal time. Blended learning does not mean that a teacher should upload homework on blog or website and ask the student to log on and find homework over there. It is not the purpose of blended learning to use technology for the sake of just using it but it is to make the learner more interested to and more inquisitive to learn. Blended learning should ensure more learning in less work. The teacher should blend online learning with the classroom learning. The teacher job should be to help students to select the high quality guides and write interesting reviews about a story and provide sensible peer reviews.

The authors are of the view that learning can occur at any time and this should be reinforced by teacher. The teachers should encourage students to have more collaboration within blended learning. The inspirational teacher should be thinking about designing activities by the capacity of ICT to enhance the notion of learning community. A teacher should develop group work beyond the classroom. Through online interaction a teacher can harness these extended learning opportunities. They have given examples of different subjects like history that how teacher can engage students in blended learning through encouraging students to work in structured groups on different areas of the same theme. The book also suggests ways to create a relationship between online and classroom learning.

Chapter 3: Mobile Technologies and Their Impact on Secondary Curriculum

This chapter has started by informing readers about arrival of mobile technologies. They have pointed out that as tablet computers, mobile phones and ebook readers have been around at least ten years. But three specific market changing mobile devices have fuelled mobile technology use through the tipping point. These three devices are iPhone, iPad, and the Kindle. What was unique about these three products was that they were inspirational. The book suggest that instead of investing so much money on PCs and their updating after a small time, the schools should go for purchasing mobile technologies. The school should give students smartphones. The students may install only those apps that are relevant to them. The book also describes about Kindle and how it help in improving reading. It has also suggested a certain mobile technology policy for schools, and convergence in mobile technologies to compete with the once powerful desktop PC. Shea and Stockford have compared traditional teaching and modern teaching through mobile teaching. As mobile

technology makes the lesson interesting, improves curriculum, and improves status of teacher. It provides the students better ways to create a poem than traditional teaching. Mobile technologies can better be used as specific source of personalization of curriculum.

Chapter 4: Developing Interactive Students

The authors have started chapter 4 with introducing a notion of 'interactive students as the key to all the work a teacher does to inspire her students through technology. They say that the future of learning lies in interactive students in class. They proclaim that a teacher should not be frustrated that his school will not spend so much money in purchase of ICT. One should be confident that this technology is not something that his students are not familiar with. They all are using ICT for their social networking and there is always a space in social networking for learning. The students are already interacting to help themselves perform well through mobile technologies. They suggest that there is a great need to recognize and improve the students' current online social networking through behavior for on line learning. They have also highlighted the characteristics of a typical interactive student very eloquently and succinctly. The authors suggest that a teacher should compete with students' social networking by offering her own online learning. Then the authors has suggested a teacher that she need to think laterally about how her notion of 'lifelogging impacts on her subject' and how can she use this information to inspire her students.

Chapter 5: Student Safety

Shea and Stockford have focused on a possible question that any one may ask when a teacher does something with ICT in her school. The question that will be asked to a teacher will be: what about student safety? The answer is, that students are already using these technologies by filming one another, and posting comments about other friends. They are interacting not just with their friends but also with complete strangers, online and with pictures and videos and all in a fairly unregulated arena. No doubt, they are exposing themselves to risk and danger regardless of whether you choose to have them undertake a safe version of this interaction in your lesson or not. The safe practice can be ensured by setting certain standards for home and in school.

The authors have also discussed cyber bullying and what steps should a teacher take when a child is experiencing cyber bullying. They suggest that immediate and quick online reaction to bullying may be required and teachers should be ready for such events. Every possible action should be taken against the bully. The book also highlights the BYOD security and safety. It recommends also that a school should train students in cybersafe practice. The book highlights common security threats in a simple language and also suggests to design a code of conduct policy.

Chapter 6: Eportfolios and Virtual Learning Environments

The authors have compared advantages of eportfolios over traditional portfolios, coursework or 'controlled assessment', and then have explained in a simple sentence that portfolio is an online interactive storage of students' work and learning. Then the authors have described the connection between eportfolios and virtual learning environments. They have suggested that a teacher should prepare students for technology at their next level of education. A suggestion is given by them is to mimic the type of activities that the students are likely to have in higher education. One of such activity can be to give students some work with virtual learning environment. The students should be supposed to write and then upload it on turnitin an anti-plagiarism tool and to guide the students how to improve their written expression. The authors have also suggested different other activities related to VLE in school.

Chapter 7: The Extended School

In this chapter the writers have firstly given an introduction to the extended school and the online extended school. An extended school is one that considers the range of services or activities that it provides and how well they matched up to the needs of the local community as well as their students. Technology again can be very helpful to extend its reach beyond the physical boundaries of school and provide such support that is needed by society. It may be in term of having a good website with lots of helpful information, or maybe it is to provide valuable resources related to parents to help their children in studies. Again the writers have emphasized that let the student do the work. They say again that teachers and students should be looking to recognize that schools' digital footprints both in terms of online offerings and physical media devices can be utilized to help promote opportunities within local community.

Chapter 8: Embedding ICT in Practice

Shea and Stockford again reinforce that being a teacher one should ensure that learning experiences are undertaken by the students, whether they are done through traditional pedagogies or through modern pedagogy of using ICT. They say that instead of fearing students' knowledge or skills of ICT a teacher should harness it. Then the Authors have suggested different guidelines on ways to approach both planning to use ICT and delivering it in the classroom. Then they have given certain core strategies for making a lesson with technology a success. They also suggest four point strategy to keep the students attention in the teacher. They have advocated use of headcam or digicam, In-car cam, digital voice recorder, decibel (noise) meter and the smartphone. These all devices are engaging for the students and helpful in students' learning. They have again pointed to the fact that a teacher should always keep in mind that she is not the one with specialist knowledge rather she is specialist at evaluation and decision making. The teacher job is to create opportunities and letting the students to do the work to solve a problem.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The last chapter highlights the fact that ICT, or technology changes at an ever increasing speed. The main players today google, facebook, apple, Samsung and Microsoft are all purchasing such app or startup companies which makes an instant success. The authors highlight the fact that young people are at the forefront of this rapid progress. They are often the first adopters of new technology. They say that the mobile technology is competing with PCs. Two obvious reasons of keeping PCs in schools were access to fast internet and powerful pieces of technology. Now with mobile broadband and wi-fi the mobile phones have given an opportunity to move the office into the mobile world of the user. There are many schools which still are using technology of 19th century, but outside the world is quite changed. We see young people clustered around tablets and smart phones, interacting in groups and online, this is what future will look like for education. The writers assert that technology is changing with bewildering speed. But school pedagogies are still the same. There is the great need to design pedagogy that can withstand the disruption from the fast-moving technology medium.

The authors have ended up the book while giving brief hints of the concepts discussed and sticking to the mantra: let the students do the work. They say that a teacher has to inspire students to love learning and to love a subject in the way we have all learned to do. The teacher to be inspirational and this inspiration will result in an appreciation from the students.

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