

Matt Harris, Ed.D.

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Digital Citizenship is the Bridge to Contemporary Teaching and Learning

📅 1 September, 2015 👤 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

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I have vivid memories of my doctoral studies when we talked about the antiquated educational approach of putting students in rows. The practice was designed to acculturate and prepare future factory workers. It was used as a counter example to the needs of good teaching practice in the 21st century. Of course, we never talked about the reality of contemporary society and the fact that our current pedagogic approaches have equal flaws to that of the factory style classroom.

In secondary school, we teach a series of (often) discrete content areas that may or may not have applicability or value to students' personal lives or careers. Few really know whether knowledge about cellular biology or the quadratic formula will be useful to students as they move on to university or in to the workforce. Yet, we still teach every subject as we did 100 years ago.



My real problem lies in the separation of the content areas and their glaring weakness. I find it to be the norm that schools separate their faculties by

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Thanks for the retweets this week @AdamWallach @krissipie1 @nicashgrove @Kidsmathtalk much appreciated :) (via [commun.it](#))



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Thanks @TeacherCast @brholland @pharding2 @MargaretMarie12 for being top engaged community members this week :) (via [commun.it](#))



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Thanks for the recent follow @BenGeneration @bigguyinabowtie Happy to connect :) have a great Wednesday. (insight by [commun.it](#))



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department and content area rather than looking for cross-disciplinary projects to connect learning across the curriculum. A student studying writing mechanics, will not have their skills (purposely) reinforced in a Geography class or a Math class or a Science class. Further, our teaching and learning model in the secondary focuses so much on knowledge and so little on skill. We teach students the what most often, leaving the how and the why to the back burner.

Also, look at our assessments. We quiz, mark, and evaluate the knowledge students attain not the process by which they learn or accomplish tasks. And as the old adage goes, “You assess what you value.” What does that say about what education thinks is important?

Now, let’s talk about the realities that await our students outside the classroom door. They are not expected to be experts or stewards of retained knowledge. Their success will not be gauged on discrete or summative assessments. They will not be asked to perform. Rather, their work and personal lives will be governed by communication, information literacy, creativity, task analysis, and collaboration.

This encompasses a subset of what are known as the 21st Century Skills. Read that word: skills (ignore the 21st Century bit, we are after all 15% of the the way through it already). These skills, and the ability develop more skills, are what researchers have been telling us are the important foci of education for student success in contemporary education. I suggest that they real goal should be skills and knowledge taught as a holistic approach to living and learning.

Luckily, we live in a time when we have a tool to

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bridge our recent past with the needs of contemporary teaching and learning: Digital Citizenship. Digital Citizenship comprises the skills, attitudes, and basic knowledge students need to have in order to be safe, effective, and productive users of the Internet for work and life.



Many people see it as fancy way to talk about Internet Safety, but it is so much more. The tenets of Digital Citizenship include safety, information literacy, online persona, creativity, communication, commerce, and collaboration. Sound familiar? These are the skills students need to be productive. (Note: There are several definitions of Digital Citizenship. None are definitive...this one is a quick mash-up of other's ideas.)

What makes Digital Citizenship so valuable is that it can be taught and assessed in schools. There are curricula, lesson plans, pedagogic frameworks, and standards based rubrics for assessment on all the areas of Digital Citizenship. Which means we can treat it like we would PE, Physics, or Humanities and put it on the same report card.

Beyond this, though, Digital Citizenship is not a standalone subject. Much like reading for comprehension or expository writing, Digital Citizenship is a subject area that transcends ALL content areas. It can be taught as an integrated part of other subject areas or as an add-on lesson to any

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instructional unit.



By being a connector of content areas, assessable, and a set of skills students will need and use, Digital Citizenship is an ideal bridge for educators to move their practice into contemporary times. This allows us to draw upon the knowledge-based successes of 20th century teaching and learning and give students a strong skills foundation to excel in their current and future realities.

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 21st century skills, bridge, curriculum, Digital Citizenship, Edtech, learning, Matt Harris
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Celebrate Failing

8 August, 2015
 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

**I have not failed. I've just found
10,000 ways that won't work.**

Thomas A. Edison

I had a busy summer professionally (and personally, really). I got to attend several conferences where I connected with a ton of educators across the US and around the. I was at ISTE, the Lausanne Learning Institute, ASCD's Leaders 2 Leaders conference, and the Apple Distinguished Educator (ADE) Institute in Singapore.

Though there were a host of professional learning takeaways for me, one stood out as a real actionable item. Funny, this same theme came up at every conference I attended: Celebrating Failing.

**Success is not built on success.
It's built on failure. It's built on
frustration. Sometimes its built on
catastrophe.**

Sumner Redstone

“Failure is not an option” as the old NASA adage goes. And I agree with that if you are talking life and death situations or even aggressively finite timelines. But we're in education, which at its core is about learning for all, and as such the need for failure is paramount. Learners need to experience risk taking that leads to unfavorable outcomes, they must grow from their mistakes, they have try, fail, and learn the resilience to keep trying.

**An essential aspect of creativity
is not being afraid to fail.**

Edwin Land

At ISTE, we talked extensively about the Maker Movement. The Maker Movement is predicated on the ideas of creativity, tinkering, and problem solving. For a learner to grow in any of those spaces

they must try and fail, then try and fail again. Learners who organize and participate in maker activities understand that the learning doesn't move towards a specific end, but that the journey of trying and doing develops a set of attitudes, competencies, and grit that transfer to all aspects of academic life. Without the experience of failing the learning would have little meaning.

The season of failure is the best time for sowing the seeds of success.

Paramahansa Yogananda

In Memphis, at the Lausanne Learning Institute, I met an administrator who had incorporated celebrating failure into his school culture. He called it The Golden Plunger award someone would earn the award for trying something and failing miserably. During his/her acceptance speech the recipient would recount the activity, laugh about the failure, and then discuss the learning that came out of it. The next winner is always identified by the last, so the stigma of failure is removed and learners are encouraged to improve through experimentation and support.

Age wrinkles the body. Quitting wrinkles the soul.

Douglas MacArthur

At the ASCD L2L conference, we talked a lot about the central tenets of the organization: Growth Mindset. Within the framework of Growth Mindset (see Carol Dweck's work) the idea of perseverance and fortitude are central to breaking barriers and improving. However, to do this a learner must

embrace the failures s/he has endured. The organizers believed this so much, they asked program leaders to go around the room talking about how their projects had failed. Of course, each of these failures led to a discourse of development and reflection, but what was most impressive was regardless of how big the failure the learners themselves showed tangible improvement.

It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all, in which case you have failed by default.

J.K. Rowling

At the Apple Distinguished Educator Institute, we had a practice of vocally celebrating failure. When someone went off cue or fumbled a slide, the whole crowd would shout “Wooo!” It was a recognition that failure is a measure of learning and progress not a destination or negative. The “Wooo!” was a means of congratulations and support that something was tried and something learned. That person is a better learner and a better achiever because s/he failed. Of course, the waiter that dropped the plate of glasses at the closing dinner might not have found 400 people “Wooo!”ing at him very well supported.

**Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.
Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.**

Samuel Beckett

This is what the best EdTech people do: fail better.
We live in a world governed by complexity,

pedagogy, learning, and ever changing technology. We are bound to fail and do so publicly. I have a vivid recollection of a project where a 6-year-old student searching the Internet stumbled upon some pornography. That was not in the plan. But we stopped the lesson and reflected as a group on what would be the best way to respond if this ever happens again.

It's fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.

Bill Gates

In Educational Technology, the greatest learning in our classrooms is borne out of the ashes of these failings. EdTech people have learned to embrace mistakes in all learners, including ourselves. We encourage people to keep trying, to share their mistakes with others (maybe even blog or tweet about them), and to do better next time...until you realize that next time will be different and you'll need to fail all over again to make learning meaningful.

A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying.

B.F. Skinner

I wanted to close with BF Skinner, the noted educator. I chose this because I would like to put a charge out to school leadership out there: Celebrate Failure. Failure is the seed learning far more than standards or test scores. As our mission is to take all

learners forward, leadership has to lead the effort by having the tenacity and courage to say that the normal metrics we use in schools will not eliminate opportunities for learners to try, fail, improve, and reflect. Failure on a multiple choice quiz or an of year exam provides little lasting learning that can be taken to the next school, job, task, problem, challenge, or whatever. We need to allow learners to tinker, try, and fall and when they do fall celebrate and honor that being a key part of the process towards mastery, success, and intellect. But do it in yourselves first.

Lastly, I want to note that I deliberately said “learners” throughout this piece, not students...or even teachers. Regardless of where we work in this system, we are learners who benefit from and should be encouraged to fail.

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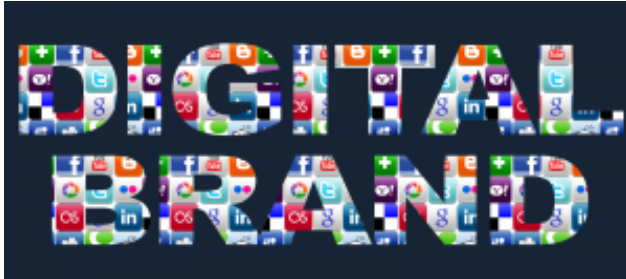
Authored Materials ADE2015, ASCDL2L, celebrate failing, Edtech, Education, failure, ISTE2015, learning, LLI15, Matt Harris 1 Comment

Digital Branding is Key for Everyone in Education

29 July, 2015 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

I was preparing to do a keynote with a colleague of mine a few years back and we were talking about inspiration and sharing in EdTech. I won't go into the details of the conversation, but this takeaway

has always stuck with me. He believed that one of our biggest barriers to sharing and collaboration in education was teachers' reluctance to self-promote. In short, teachers rarely share the great work they are doing even though they are the first to share when their students accomplish something great.



I reflected on this quite a bit during my conference tour this summer. I attended three different conferences across the US of varying sizes and subjects. At all three, the topic of self promotion in the form of Digital Branding came up as a central theme. Through my reflection, I think I can say with confidence that everyone in EdTech, from As to Ts to Ss (to use Twitter Ed speak), needs to embrace and understand digital branding.

As an EdTech administrator at a site level, coupled with my work with schools around the world, I have found the benefit of having a presence online to be invaluable. This blog post alone will go out on my website, through LinkedIn, and off to all of my twitter followers. It will do exactly what I want it to do: represent me as someone who talks about EdTech, has experiences and opinions of value in the field, and is someone looking to spark a conversation. As a leader, I spread my wings through social media by producing content, curating EdTech articles and links, consuming the great work out their by those I follow, and talking to folks from all over the globe. And when I went to these conferences, I furthered my connections with people I only met on Twitter and added a whole lot more

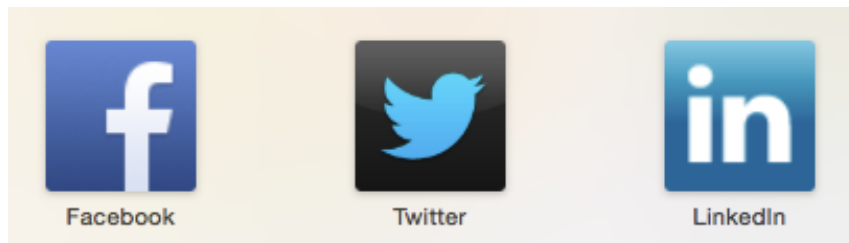
with whom I have started new discussions. The connections made here have improved my administrative work in my school and in outside responsibilities and projects. It has become a central part of what I do by showing the world who I am and what I want to talk about.



Similarly, a number of the f2f conversations I had over the past weeks about branding was with teachers was around expanding their reach beyond their classrooms. I am pretty lucky in my professional and consulting lives to work teachers doing (or wanting to do) amazing things. The most impactful ones I have found encapsulate their great ideas and share them online. They know what they want to offer to their students and talk about it with others, both within and outside their building, through digital formats that allow for asynchronous yet instantaneous exchange. I met folks who had changed their whole teaching models because of the work they'd seen produced by others and now were highlighting their own practice through blogging, tweeting, or other social media. And again, they branded their work with their own signature thus personalizing the impact they hope to have. Most interestingly, nearly all of these teachers looking externally and self branding online do so not for own fame or financial benefit, but to improve the conditions in their classrooms. They speak out and

share in order to improve within and learn. Different model than we're used to, right?

Finally, the need for students to create a brand also bubbled up everywhere I went. The discussion was born from the idea that everyone has a digital footprint and that footprint will have an impact on how a person is seen. So, whether a student manages his/her footprint or not, it is still there and it will have an impact. This suggests that students need to take an active role in how they are portrayed online. They need to craft the message, choose the photos, and manage the discussions in which they are involved. They need to avoid defaming materials and work on promoting their strengths. But it is deeper than that. I equate it to student dress. Students express themselves by what they wear. They try to influence what other think about them and how they are perceived by their clothes and haircuts. And this self expression has deep root impact on students' social and emotional development. The same holds true online. The choice of speech, avatars, content, comments, pictures, or whatever are their choice of dress and their online self-expression. For students to influence the narrative that is how people see them online they have to control their "brand." They have to spend time planning and organizing what, how, and why they post online. It's now a part of growing up.



The interesting part for me is that I am new to this practice myself and I wonder why. Though I have present at conferences for years and worked with

colleagues from all around, I have never really branded myself. Over the past 8–9 months, I have worked to improve my LinkedIn profile, build a website, add accounts on about.me and the like, start a vlog (which needs more care and feeding at this point to be honest), and to embrace Twitter (which I have avoided for 5 years). My approach has been to be consistent in talking about #EdTech and #EdLeadership from my view as an international educator. I have shared my resources as I have come across them and curated them on my site. I have put my picture out there and my contact information where I go and strangely my Twitter handle is the only thing people really care about.

Through this conscious approach to my digital brand, I have:

- Extended my reach in the field
- Honed my message and in turn my work as an educator
- Assembled or authored resources of value to the EdTech field
- Opened doors to new opportunities for myself and my school
- Connected with brilliant people and learned from them
- Connected with brilliant people and helped them grow
- Raised the profile of my school, my organizations, and the people within them
- Become a better leader within my team
- Helped my students promote their work and manage their messages
- Learned A LOT

I recognize that this whole post sounds like self-aggrandizing and I will be honest that this a worry I have as an educator. We don't do that. But my

experience and my conversations have shown that Digital Branding is not shameless, egotistical, or arrogant. Digital branding is about altruism and reach. A person cannot engage in conversations that will impact students if s/he doesn't open up their own vault and offer something to discussion. That's what this is about. Build your tribe and learn together.

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Excellence – It's Why We Gravitate to EdTech

21 July, 2015 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

Warning: Stream of passionate consciousness ahead.

In the post #ISTE2015 haze, I have had some time to reflect and to get back into my EdTech work not directly tied to my job as a practitioner. I have been thinking about why people are so drawn to EdTech and I have come to conclusion that is revolves around excellence.



Think about it. What drives us all in this field? We want excellence in our practice as educators and the learning outcomes for our students. We strive for connected learning, deeper understanding, and more effective pedagogy. Educational technologists use tools and connections to break free of the traditional boundaries of learning towards the goal of achieving excellence for all.

I was doing an interview the other day with someone new to the field and she commented on the collective and individual brilliance of



those in EdTech. She observed that we have a deeper understanding of curriculum, learning, pedagogy, and human development than other fields. Of course, I agree highlighting the work on SAMR or TPACK or inquiry or social constructionism. These are not perfect scholarly works, but they push us all towards thinking about what is needed to allow

students to drive their own learning, to create, and to move towards innovation and excellence.

I added that we also share this knowledge freely and our collective skill, knowledge, and intelligence grows. Just look at the collaborative endeavors we have accomplished through social media – global connections, #geniushour, EdCamps, #MakerEd, and the million other things that we do outside of our own schools and districts.

However, our drives towards excellence go beyond attitude and accomplishment towards grit. Very few of us in the field have spoken to colleagues or policymakers spouting, with support of evidence, the value of our collective works in resource enhanced learning without being dismissed, discouraged, or degraded. We have learned that excellence in learning is not something everyone is ready to embrace and it is our job to show true grit by wedging our field into the overall education landscape. We know our approaches and our outcomes best prepare the students for the world that awaits them by developing skills, competencies, attitudes, and abilities. We are growth mindset in a fixed mindset profession.

**“OVER TIME, GRIT IS WHAT SEPARATES
FRUITFUL LIVES FROM AIMLESSNESS.”**

JOHN ORTBERG

© Lifehack Quotes

Just look around. Our schools have pockets of excellence that align (or overlap) with the EdTech community. Our most progressive thought leaders at

the site and district level speak the language of collaboration and innovation we espouse in EdTech and often those people celebrate technology infused learning as much as any of us. Our biggest push at the policy level comes from the Educational Technologists that understand the crossroads of learning, achievement, budgets, and excellence must be sealed through political action.

And if you want the great connector around the education world, look to EdTech folks. We may speak different languages or engage in disparate curricula, but the passion, drive, and brilliance that comes through resource enhanced teaching and learning is universal. All of us are working to make learning better for all and to achieve excellence in all that we do.

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Authored Materials Edtech, Educational Technology, excellence Leave a comment

The Educational Digital Divide – A Research Synthesis of Digital Inequity in Education

13 July, 2015 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

Digital equity is a central element of the field of

Educational Technology. EdTech's promise is the development of learning potential in all fields through resources enhanced teaching and learning. However, without equitable access to technology, its uses, and its effects, EdTech actually deepens and broadens the effects of digital inequity. Thus, it is imperative for all us in the field – students, teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, leaders – to ensure our technology and our learning are positioned to help everyone, especially those who need it the most.

As I talk with people throughout my work, whether in connections with ISTE or Ministries of Education or districts or individual schools, the need for digital equity is consistent. People are talking about and putting a lot of money and effort behind it.

However, I have found there is a lack of understanding the full scope and impact of digital inequity. I have found that most people try to overlay our understanding of the Digital Divide on Education thinking there is a parallel effect. This is not true. The short term and long term impacts of inconsistent access to technology is deeply rooted in social and economic reproduction. Most people see this simple as an issue of having and using.

So, I wrote an article titled: **The Educational Digital Divide – A Research Synthesis of Digital Inequity in Education.**

Sadly, I submitted the article for publication and was rejected. Admittedly, some of the accompanying research is 5+ years old. Yet, I do think there is merit to the article and I thought my website would be the best forum for publication.

Here is the abstract:

“The Educational Digital Divide describes the

differences of access and usage of technology for learning that result in social inequity. Most prevalent between socioeconomic groups, the divide has three levels – access, classroom use, and student empowerment – each the product of the level below. In the first level, inequity is felt in computer, Internet, and software access across the institution, then moves to learning practices in the classroom and ends with students themselves. However, simple equity of technology access will not eliminate this divide as students need to use and leverage technology in similarly transformative ways to enjoy equal benefits.”

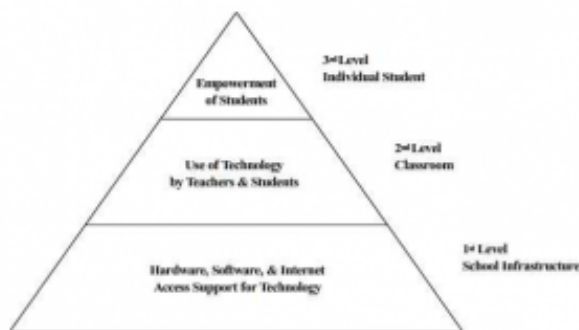


Figure 1. Hohlfeld et al.'s (2008) model of the Educational Digital Divide

[PDF] [The Educational Digital Divide: A Research Synthesis on Digital Inequity in Education – Matt Harris, Ed.D.](#)


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If you would like to discuss The Educational Digital Divide, please contact me through the channels listed on this site.

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Digital Inequity, Educational Digital Divide, Literature Review, Matt Harris, Research Synthesis  1
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A Review of #ISTE2015 from My Viewpoint as Chair-Elect

 5 July, 2015  Matt Harris, Ed.D.

Well, it has been a couple of days since I left Philly after an amazing conference. I said this on Twitter, but it bears repeating: #ISTE2015 was a life-changing event for me because it opened me up to the breadth and depth of EdTech. I had the opportunity to meet with so many people with influence and effect in our field. It was truly an honor to be in that position.



Now, I would love to take you through the whirlwind that was my experience at the conference, our board meeting, and the pre-conference I keynoted because it was something to behold. My experience is not a testament to my work, per se, but rather the importance ISTE has in the education community. However, if I went through every detail the Internet would break.

So, what I'd thought I do was talk about a few

highlights and takeaways:

1. **#Futureready.** For those of you who haven't taken a look at this program run by the USDOE Office of Education Technology, in conjunction with several thought leaders in the field, really should. The ethos of creating schools and districts that think and plan for students' needs in their futures rather than our present is the basis from which all of us should be operating. It's a program that has applicability to all schools...all schools.
2. **Make.** The idea that students should learn to solve problems, build, and be creative in a constructionist frame is concept that has taken our field by storm. There are so many ideas for conceptual and practical application of the maker movement that schools have no excuse for not even looking at the body of available materials. Push your school to think about this as Making is the basis of what we want learning to be.
3. **Data usage and privacy.** I moderated a panel of experts on the topic that moved from collecting to using to protecting student data. This is an incredibly salient topic as the tools for using data are at our fingertips, yet we don't take advantage of it. Yet, people are expecting educators to do so and to do so well. Pair that with the breaches of school networks we all know about (and those we don't) and the topic becomes more important. Think about your data, end to end!
4. **Check out products and services.** Every ISTE has an expo hall that daunts. It's acres of products,

vendors, services, startups, and everything in between. These are the resources we use in our classrooms and they need focused attention. I just wish I had more time.

5. **Find your tribe.** I used to say network or connect. Now, the word is “tribe.” Those who align and share with that have the same ideals and passions while providing you a breadth of expertise and support. Be it twitter or face-to-face interactions, your tribe is perhaps your most valuable EdTech resource. During the conference, I worked to link more of my tribe through meetups with friends, twitter conversations, resource sharing, and a few get-togethers after hours. My tribe has grown quite a bit and with it my abilities to serve my school and ISTE. I would suggest engaging in real conversations that grow your tribe.
6. **Linkage.** Our board did a great job of connecting with people, but there is more to do. We had a lot of great feedback that we were all attentive and approachable and people enjoyed taking selfies with us. But after talking with seasoned ISTE members and the new attendees, I realized that the board needs to continue its effort to fully serve the needs of the membership. Perhaps even take the time to connect these two groups, ensuring the history of our field is intact while supporting and mentoring those who will shape in the coming years.
7. **Teacher Ed and Evaluation.** During our board meeting, we had the opportunity to meet with local professors, school administrators, and teacher ed students. In short, there is a big gap in training, especially in prepping teachers to

use tech and libraries in teachings. I also served on a think-tank panel looking for solutions to this gap. This is a long standing problem with deeply rooted cultural and operational challenges, but I actually think that these meetings are helping. Also, if we can base some of our evaluation and training on ISTE standards, both in teacher prep and school level PD, we can have a unifying strand from entry to action.

8. **I can play.** There is a line in Good Will Hunting where he talks about his ability to do complex math and science as Beethoven's ability to "just play." I am not going to self aggrandize to point where I think I am at that level, but I did surprise myself during the conference. My context and situation changed hour-by-hour and with that the messaging I needed to produce. I was often thrown into big speeches, thank yous, or, in the case of the final day, coming on stage for the closing keynote. I am not sure how or where it came from, but I seemed to be able to articulate and deliver coherently and appropriately. Evidently, I can play.

Now, of course there are million other things I am missing from the great people, the award winners, the keynotes, IGNITE and pitchfest, the sessions, the PLNs and Affiliates, the focus on Digital Equity, and everything else.

A red rectangular box with white text that reads "IS YOUR SCHOOL FUTURE READY?"

But, it must be said that #ISTE2015 was amazing on

all levels. As I said in the closing keynote, most people who I spoke to during the conference were positive and often went to the point of calling this one the best ISTE yet. To be a part of that as Chair-Elect and seeing the depth and breadth of ISTE was very special. I really feel honored and take deep responsibility for the work ahead.

What stories do you have to share?

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The Gap in Educational Technology Leadership

28 June, 2015 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

This is a topic that has been on my mind for a while now: growing and cultivating EdTech Leadership. From where I sit in an international school in SE Asia I see a large pool of talented educators and leaders in international schools, but those that understand the multi-leveled complexity of Educational Technology seem to be rare.

What I often find is people are strong in one element of EdTech leadership, but not all.

For example, you go to international schools and find technology managers that are former IT professionals or engineers. They have strong



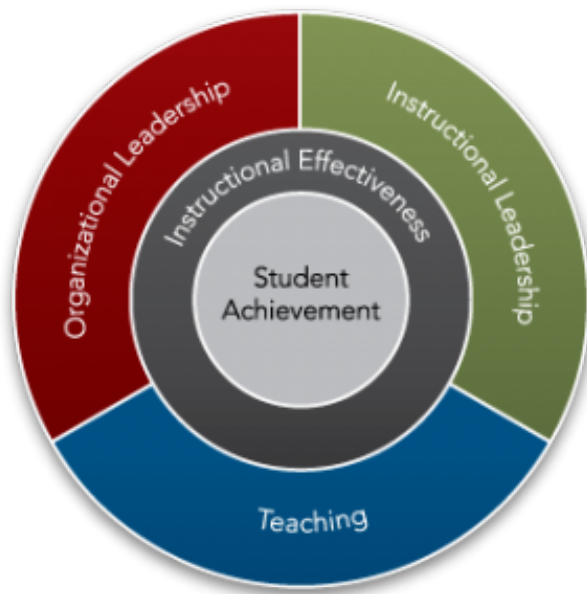
networking,
client/server,
and systems
skills. The

infrastructure needs at those schools are well attended to, usually within a well maintained and planned budget. However, these managers often lack the understanding of curriculum and pedagogic needs.

Then I find another side as well with former teachers who have moved into a technology integration role and on to leadership. The folks have a clear connection between technology tools and the teaching and learning activities. They understand very well what good resource infused learning looks like and can show effectiveness through authentic assessment. Yet, their understanding of deep IT terminology, strategy, design, and maintenance is often insufficient to maintain large systems found in international schools.

Still, there is another type of leader I find in schools: the senior admin given the technology department. These administrators usually have some other area of responsibility within the school – finance, academics, etc. – and have little experience with technology for learning or infrastructure. They are strong at leading their teams and tying decisions into schoolwide goals, but IT management and on-the-ground planning is lacking.

This is not to say these three examples of school EdTech leadership are bad for a school. In fact, I find that schools hire people with skills in the tech field to meet their most immediate needs and they are usually quite pleased with those appointments and the results they achieve.



The gap I find is in long term impact on schools and the field in general. I believe a good EdTech leader need to be grounded in IT skills, educational technology integration into learning, and leadership capacity. I'll talk more about that in a later post.

What this really brings me to is need. I find there is a need for leadership development in the EdTech field. We need a professional development or certification system to helps aspiring EdTech leaders identify their strengths and fill in their gaps. We need a mentorship network where those rare leaders that have skills and experience in the aforementioned areas can help other grow. We need a framework for staff evaluation to help school identify where their leaders need to grow and to identify the key characteristics for potential employees.

Now, there are some programs that do this already. The CTET program through CoSN is one that comes

to mind. I have read through the course materials and met several graduates of the system. These people have found a lot of value in the CTEL certification in their work in the US, mostly at public school districts.

Further, I am sitting next to a woman who runs a CIO/CTO workshop as part of the pre-conference festivities for ISTE. She has a number of existing and hopeful district administrators discuss leadership and salient issues related to EdTech policy in their districts.

Yet, these don't fill the needs in SE Asia where I live or in Europe or the



Middle East and Africa. These are good programs with strong content and I am sure there are several more, but they are location limited.

I am hoping we can develop a program and network that is independent of space and time where people can connect with an assigned mentor, complete self-evaluations, or take courses within their own contexts. I would like us to create materials that are focused on international school needs. I would like us to draw upon our collective resources to improve the leadership capacity in our school around EdTech.

How do we do it? Please send me a note if you're interested in sharing, learning, or whatever.

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Authored Materials CTEL, data, Edtech, Instructional technology, IT, Leadership, Learning and

Technology, Matt Harris  6 Comments

Learning Organizations Must Operate Simultaneously in CREATION, MAINTENANCE, and INNOVATION

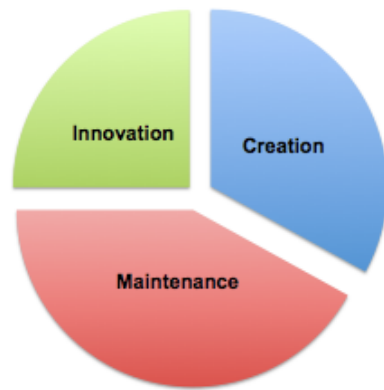
 24 June, 2015  Matt Harris, Ed.D.

When I was in college, I did an internship at Microsoft. Amongst several life-altering experiences, I had the pleasure of hearing Bill Gates speak on a few occasions. I even met him at his house once and, intentionally, made a fool out myself. But that story is for another day.

During the annual company meeting held at Safeco Park in Seattle (yes, Microsoft rented the entire stadium for a meeting) Bill talked to us about the history and future of Microsoft from a strategic perspective. One of the biggest takeaways I got from his talk was around nimbleness of a successful tech company.

Bill said (or at least I remember him saying), “For a tech company to be successful, it must simultaneously in the areas of Creation, Maintenance, and Innovation.”

I have taken this idea and repurposed it for EdTech leadership in the schools and organizations in which I have worked. I call it the CMI Model of Education Technology Management.



Our Intended Distribution of Man-Hours and Intellectual Resources

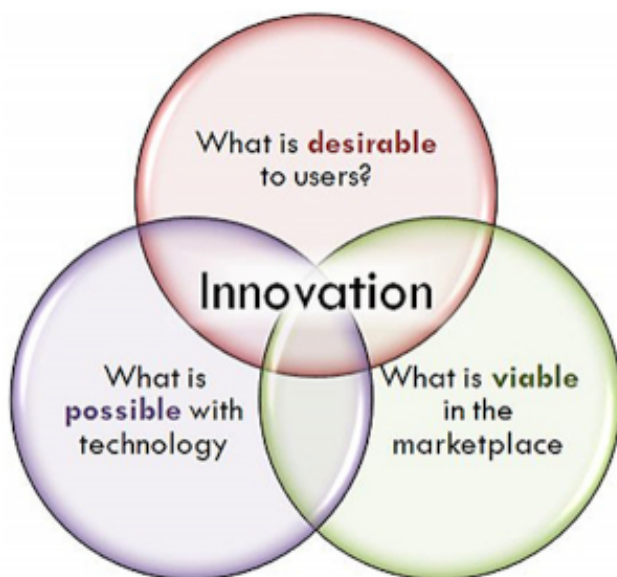
"For a [learning organization] to be successful it must operate simultaneously in the areas of Creation, Maintenance, and Innovation."
- Bill Gates, 2000

CREATION – At all times, an EdTech team must be creating technology programs to enhance teaching and learning or school operations. Whether this is introduction of an iPad program, a new data system, professional development curriculum, or introduction of assessment tools. At no point, can the team move away from direct improvement through introduction of created materials, systems, and programs. Without focus on this area, the school becomes stagnant, falls behind, and will have to invest far more resources to make up ground later than would be spent now.

MAINTENANCE – The team must ensure their existing systems, resources, and offerings are operational. The servers must be running, the technology integration must be providing results, the data systems must be operational. However, beyond this the team must be constantly evaluating system to ensure they are still valuable to the school and sunsetting those that are not. Without focus in this area, school will lose trust amongst their community as systems won't be seen as reliable or useful.

INNOVATION – In conjunction with creation and

maintenance, both of which look at the now or the near future, teams must look downstream and plan strategically. They need to figure out the longer term directions the tech offering at the school will go. Will we create an integrated data system? Can we remove all location-tethered devices, such as desktop computers? Are we able to move all operations to the cloud? These conversations feed the creation of new systems and the value of existing systems. Without focus on this area, schools will not meet the mission of long-term improvement, operational efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and the ever-increasing expectations of educational impact.



This begs the question of how much time and resources do you spend in each of these areas? I don't think there is a one sized fits all answer to this.

What I have found is that distribution changes by organization, context, needs, and time of year.

Some schools are in need of focusing resources on maintenance to ensure continued operations. They will spend much less time (5-10% each) on creation or innovation. Others find they are blessed with a rich internal and external community that helps them look at new ideas and evaluate old ones where

they are able to evenly spread their time. And often, schools will spend more time in the innovation stages during budgeting, creation during non-teaching time, and maintenance when students are on campus.



What I suggest is that leadership in schools make it a priority to identify the need to operate in all three frames and make a conscious effort to allocate time and resources for all of them. Don't trust the next improvement will come just by going to a conference. Don't think that hiring another technician will fix your system problems. Don't believe a governance level strategy session will set you up for the next 5 years. All of these areas require care and feeding, both formative and summative. They need attention and focus.

I will say that when I visit schools, the most "successful" one in terms of EdTech can articulate their efforts in Creation, Maintenance, and Innovation. Whereas the more immature or less successful organizations tend to allocate most of their time, energy, and resources towards Maintenance.

Where I have found the most success here is to make CMI a part of goal setting, staff evaluation, and reporting. And, I literally put a copy of graphic shown above on the wall of my office and at various locations within the school.

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 Authored Materials  Bill Gates, Creation, Edtech, Innovation, Leadership, Maintenance, Matt Harris, School improvement  Leave a comment

Getting Ready for #ISTE15

📅 12 June, 2015 👤 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

I mentioned in an earlier post that I hope to use this blog to document my path to the ISTE Chair position. I haven't talked about it much in the past few months though quite a bit has been going on. Our work on the board intermingles with our personal and professional lives, so I think it is natural for me to forget about the uniqueness of this opportunity.

Well, in the past week or two, much of that has changed. ISTE 2015 is right around the corner and with it come preparation for the board meeting, finalizing of session presentations, and the daunting task of managing our schedules.



This coming board meeting is like many of the others where we look at the Ends our organization is working towards achieving, but there is something special about the ISTE board meeting. During these meetings we get to talk about connecting with people and organizations at the conference. We make sure to meet with as many people as possible by making ourselves available, visiting with vendors, and of course holding meetings that are strategic as much informative. At no other time in the EdTech calendar do we, the EdTech community, actually get to come together and share en masse. The board

talks about this at length in the run-up to the conference and in depth in the two days before in our meeting. If you're going to be there, please make sure to talk to the Board, share your thoughts, and listen to what's happening.

Of course, it is a time of excitement for me in particular because I get to see the fruits of ISTE's work come



together in such spectacle and scale from the front row. With this excitement though, comes a schedule of activities, appearances, meeting, and the occasional meal that is pretty substantial. There are multiple parts of my calendar that have parallel events where I am required to be in two places at once...and I am not even Chair yet.

As I write this, it sounds negative and exhausting. The latter is true, but the former is not. Those mountains of meetings provide me as a swath of EdTech professionals that go far beyond the scope I really expected.

We will talk with

- Local district leaders
- ISTE volunteers
- Corporate members
- US Department of Education representative
- International Ministers of Education
- Policy makers working across continents
- EdTech gurus
- Social media stars

- Affiliate leaders
- Young Educators
- EdTech Entrepreneurs
- Non-ISTE contacts from around the world
- Teachers
- Students
- Old friends
- New friends
- And more and more and more

It's thinking about these connections and this concentrate passion for improving learning through resources that gets me pretty jazzed for our ISTE work, the conference itself, and my role within it. Just don't ask to look at my calendar...I don't want to make you feel sick.



And lastly, I am working on my presentation. Only one this year as my time is limited, but I must say I am proud of it. I get to talk about sharing your spark in an ISTE Ignite session. This is where I get to talk my excitement

about the field and about what ISTE does and talk about it without referencing ISTE or the field. Right now, I am sharpening my message and my deliver a bit so hopefully people in the audience give that push to encourage their colleagues and themselves to open up and share. To steal from Sheryl Sandberg, I am hoping to spark a little EdTech LeanIn.

Now off to a few more Skype calls and googledocs.

I hope reading this sparks an interest in someone at ISTE to come up and talk with my board compatriots or me. But honestly, writing this was a bit more intentioned for me than for others and it has gotten

me even more excited and I can't wait to get to Philly.

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Authored Materials board of directors, Chair Elect, International Society for Technology in Education, ISTE, ISTE15, Matt Harris, Presentation, Schedule Leave a comment

Data in schools: Workflows and analysis, not products and systems

27 May, 2015 Matt Harris, Ed.D.

The medical system has figured it out.



Governments seem to be focusing on it. And you know MNCs (Multi-National Corporations) live it: Data is the currency of the modern age. Organizations must know how to connect, flow, analyze, and leverage their data to best realize their purposes and meet their visions. No longer can you rely on the efforts of hard working employees or managers to move the needle forward.

So, why haven't we realized this in schools?

What I have found, is that most schools are focused on getting the right Student Information System (SIS) or Learning Management System (LMS) before they know what they are looking for and how they will use the systems. Vendors come in peddling their products, highlights the amazing things a school can accomplish for the paltry cost of \$10 per student per month.

And this is the Ready Fire Aim paradox. Instead, schools need to focus on the following in order to best for their missions of educating students:

- Learn what data you have, need, and want...get the right data
- Establish your workflows of data
- Identify how your systems will connect together
- Forecast a longer term plan for using your data to improve conditions

Data, the right data that is, is a powerful commodity. Schools need to record information that is useable to draw conclusions about instructional efficacy, student demographics, financial conditions, and long term strategic planning. For private institutions, this also include admissions pipelines, marketing efforts, and alumni relations...plus the million things I haven't mentioned. However, relying on standardized tests or non-standardized grading procedures, failing to record formative assessments or cohort performance, or ignoring former students or inquiries from new students put schools behind the curve. Thus, the first step schools need to accomplish is to identify the most salient information within their organization they need to learn about their organization.

Next, schools need to think about processes and flow. Where does data come in for new students? Which positions touch assessment data and what do

they do with it? How do we track financial outlays and ensure vendor compliance? You'll notice I didn't talk about people here. Schools would be best served to outline their processes as workflows of information from systems to systems and positions to positions. Again, gone are the days where we can rely on star performers to make sure the organization keeps going. We now have to learn how our schools perform as interconnected processes and find leverage points to make things more efficient and effective. If someone leaves, we need to retain knowledge (data) and manage change.



After this, there is a need for culture shift. We need to see departments, especially their data, not as silos. We need to realize that every data system we buy needs to feed from the same trough. Centralized data that feeds the network of systems is the only way to ensure that our “right” data has integrity, useful, and security. Your product can't connect to our central database? Sorry, we can't move forward with you. Schools need to think about the ecosystem of databases, not isolated products that solve individual problems for isolated units. Once combined, data will be consistent and reliable across all parts of the organization.

Not only that, but the right data that flow through our ecosystem can now to be used for school improvement. Imagine extrapolating cohort

performance on mathematics that allows you make curriculum changes for the coming year. Think about connecting financial data with curriculum data and human resources to create a professional development for staff target at the learning needs of the whole school. What if you could use data to track the pipeline of your admissions inquiries through to your alumni matriculation. With the right data, you can use the big data engines that corporations rely upon to make schooling better in a single site or among an entire district.

This is where we need to head: away from individual products that meet our short term departmental and budgetary needs to an ecosystem of data that is purposefully built and utilized for improvement. Do that and your departmental needs will be met and your budget will free up a lot more space.

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Authored Materials analysis, big data, data, data ecosystem, database, Matt Harris, schools, workflow

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