The Influence of Teachers' Technology Use on Instructional Practices

The **connections** between the "Influence of Teachers' Technology Use" (Schrum, 2011, Chapter 6) and Cuban (2001, p. 180) questioning the worth of computers are the first writings I have read concerning the valid purchase and use of technology in the classroom. Too often technology is put into the hands of teachers and those teachers are then expected to transform the learning "magically." Both writings comment on how teachers are expected to use technology and not have a strategic plan on how to effectively use technology to drive constructivist learning opportunities. As Cuban explains in his book, the Teacher-led Technology Challenge (TLTC) is not about the technology but rather about the learning. Technology needs to provide opportunities for higher-order thinking skills and allow students an opportunity to collaboratively and constructively form their knowledge of the content. Teachers need to embrace change and welcome new and efficient methods to motivate and students to be 21st century learners.

The breadth of technology integration is becoming more widespread as schools are looking to find ways to change the way teachers, present and deliver instruction. The "Influence of Teachers' Technology Use" **extends** and broadens my creative use and deployment of new technology to teachers for their use in the classroom (Schrum, 2011, Chapter 6). Since working on my master's I have become more aware of how wasteful some purchases of new technology are. I have a vested interest in this issue as I have heard my school is a Title I school again and will have money available to purchase new technology. My goal or focus as a campus master trainer is to help my school effectively use any newly acquired technology to assist and compliment our students' current learning. I see many teachers that are confident in their own personal technology use; however, they do not know how to effectively use technology to create a student-centered learning environment.

The teacher's ability to proficiently use a computer is a step in the right direction when trying to effectively integrate new technology into the classroom. I **challenge** this because only so much of my own ability can transform my classroom into a constructivist environment without adequate training. The knowledge and skill of technology does not create a new type of learner that is able to solve problems on their own (Cuban, 2001). My own technology skills need to be channeled with proper training of how to implement technology effectively for my students. Teachers need to be sufficiently trained in understanding the epistemology of transferring knowledge effectively with the use of computers and other available technology. This process will be a continual improvement process for

teachers with technology integration as technology rapidly changes. Technology needs to provide opportunities for higher-order thinking skills and allow students an opportunity to collaboratively and constructively form their knowledge of the content.

Development of higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills are key **concepts** needed to counter the current focus on standardized testing. With the focus on test scores and school ratings, students are not developing skills needed to construct knowledge or solve problems. Students drill and practice to the test and then the knowledge is not retained for the future. The need to scaffold the learning is a necessary process to build a foundation for knowledge to build and support later learning. Students need to be able to explore and learn in a constructivist environment.

The **change** in action for educators is the "cart before the horse" syndrome discussed in the text. Teachers confident with their personal knowledge and effective use of computers does not transform them into champions of technology in the learning process for students. New technology integrated into the classroom cannot be expected to transform the learning without sufficient training and an understanding of how to use new and powerful technology. Technology needs to provide opportunities for higher-order thinking skills and allow students an opportunity to collaboratively and constructively form their knowledge of the content.

References:
Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused: Computers in the classroom*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Schrum, L. (2011). *Considerations on educational technology integration: The best of JRTE.* United States: International Society for Technology in Education.