

Educational Technology Leadership Vision

Lindsay Luft-Dixon

Social and critical thinking skills are paramount in 21st century society. Technology continues to revolutionize how we interact with each other and the world around us. As educators, we can only imagine many of the careers and jobs our students will have over the course of their lives. Preparing all students for their futures requires less memorization and rote information than before. Critical thinking, creative thinking, and positive technology and human interactions are imperative for turning our learners into leaders.

We must start at a basic human level. Currently, many people express themselves without empathy for those around them, especially online. With the growing number of diverse learners in our classrooms, we need to encourage our students to empathize with others and understand when equity is called for over equality. We must understand the individual experiences and needs of our learners and help them communicate in respectful ways that value the experiences and perspectives of others. Partnering with parents to develop social-emotional learning goals through conferences and surveys and creating resources to explore in and out of the classroom will help our students and the community grow together (Shafer, 2018). Continuing to develop these resources as we grow will help us meet our population's changing needs.

As we consider the futures of our learners and their role in society, we should be preparing critical and creative thinkers. Pedagogical approaches have been shifting towards more active learning in the classroom to help improve information retention and build higher-order thinking skills (Freeman, Adams Becker, et. al, 2017). Focusing on these skills requires a change in our grading, focusing on these creative and critical thinking skills. As Shively, Smith & Rubeinstein share, "oftentimes, [rubrics] emphasize what is easy instead of what is important," (2018). Educators and administrators will need to work together to learn about these skills and how we can accurately track progress with grading.

The critical thinking skills that are developed need to be inclusive of how we utilize technology as individuals in a global society. There are so many shiny new technologies around, but sometimes the best tools already exist. Educators and students need to understand how technologies work and how to manipulate them, regardless of their age. As a millennial who educates students in an increasingly digital society, I have seen that we are not the "digital natives" we are touted to be. Colleagues and students alike have demonstrated skills limited to the possibilities and use of basic office and socialization (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017). To further our own and our learners' abilities to use technology for learning and problem-solving, we must train and provide resources for our educators. Creating professional development that explores what our learners already understand about technology and how we can strengthen their ability to use technology in a learning capacity.

By focusing on how we utilize technology to meet our needs, expand our perspectives, and communicate differences, we can form a more empathetic society. Think about friends and colleagues you have collaborated with because of today's tools. If we use technology as such in our classrooms, how would that change how our learners interact with digital tools and each other? When we start with understanding and prepared minds, what will we accomplish?

My pledge to living this vision as an educational leader

I will grow and continue to learn to empathize in person and digitally, continue to think critically and creatively to form decisions and encourage it in others. Modeling is one of the best ways I can show what I want to put out in the world, and I will do my best to live by what I want to see.

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