

**CREATE
FUTURE-READY
CLASSROOMS,
NOW!**

MEG ORMISTON



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INTRODUCTION

PEDAGOGY SHOULD LEAD TECHNOLOGY USE IN THE CLASSROOM

In September 2014, I toured a high-performing suburban high school. The rules I saw posted in a classroom included the following: *no phones allowed, no computers open, and no touching the SMART Board*. The students, seated in traditional rows, frantically tried to write down everything projected on the slides as the teacher stood at the front of the room reading the text aloud. This approach was not an anomaly used by just one department. After walking the halls and peering into several classrooms, I discovered that this sit-and-get model was the rule rather than the exception. I began to wonder if the digital slideshow-guided lecture would ever die.

The new superintendent took me on this tour to show me what her teachers collectively considered good teaching and learning. In her short tenure in the district, the superintendent repeatedly heard teachers say, “Why should we change? Our test scores are good.”

This visit struck me to my core and made me really think about the connections among good teaching and learning (the pedagogy), technology, and systemic change. I wrote this book with the teachers I observed and all others who use the stand-and-deliver method in mind. These teachers teach the way they were taught instead of the way students learn today.

The superintendent has a lot of work ahead of her to help teachers who measure student success by test scores instead of engagement shift their thinking. In order to make such shifts, educators need to start by connecting pedagogy, technology, and change. School systems have long compartmentalized these concepts with different departments working in their own silos of isolation. In the old model, the technology department managed the technology, the curriculum office owned the pedagogy, and the administrators knew about and implemented change. Those traditional roles have become blended. With technology, pedagogy, and change connected, the possibilities are limitless.

The leaders of this movement are the students. They are at the forefront of technology use in education. Teachers need to use their support and guidance to empower all students, regardless of their age, to solve challenging, real-world problems. These trusted teachers are more important than ever, but the large changes necessitated by emerging technology scare many educators and administrators. They must be willing to work together to design and implement a new model so they can provide vital support to their students. When they correctly connect pedagogy, technology, and change, everyone in the school becomes a new teacher, exploring ways to teach and learn in this technology-rich world.

These forces of change, pedagogy, and technology are coming together. Closing the classroom door and repeating the lesson plans of the past is no longer a viable option. Learning becomes transparent, and the world becomes the classroom. There are no limits on learning in this exciting new world! Educators must adopt new teaching methods or pedagogies to transform learning and prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing world and society in which authentic global collaboration and the capacity for continuous learning and relearning are requirements for success. Technology is the connection tool. Pedagogy is how to create change.

Michael Fullan's (2013) book *Stratosphere: Integrating Technology, Pedagogy, and Change Knowledge* is the first place I read about integrating the three forces. I devoured every word of *Stratosphere*, highlighting like crazy and taking copious notes. I loved the message, I understood the purpose, and I agreed with almost every point. Fullan has long been known for his work on change in schools, but this was the first time I had read his work about educational technology. He brought a fresh perspective to the ongoing conversations in the educational technology community by directly connecting teaching and learning, technology, and systemic change. His work helped me clarify my own thinking about the connections and better articulate the relationship between technological tools and learning how to learn. On this connection, Fullan (2013) writes:

The solution lies in the concentration of the three forces of pedagogy, technology, and change knowledge. If you want to head off destruction, we need to make it all about the learning (the pedagogy part), let technology permeate (the technology part), and engage the whole system (the change part). (p. 74)

With Fullan's work as my foundation, I wrote *Create Future-Ready Classrooms, Now!* as the next step for individuals and school districts who want to connect new pedagogies with current technology to produce the immediate changes they need to prepare students for lifelong learning in a global society. In this book, educators learn about

new methods or pedagogies for teaching and learning. It provides the missing link between educational technology theories and effective classroom instruction strategies for the day-to-day use of this technology to enhance learning. Most important, this book teaches educators about learning how to learn in a technology-rich world.

Exploring Technology Use in Classrooms

There is a magical feeling in a classroom when technology is used correctly to engage and empower students and teachers and help them become partners in learning. There is excitement when students have the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to solve real problems that impact others beyond their classroom. Fullan (2013) writes about the importance of this atmosphere of learning:

Creativity, passion, and purpose must also flourish. We can do all this by gradually building a pedagogy where as they get older, students are more and more steeped in real-life problem solving, guided by teachers as change agents or mentors. (p. 75)

This palpable excitement and energy require the magic of a great teacher. To be great, teachers need all the support they can get from within the system and from experts across the globe. Today, one's personal learning network (PLN) includes not only friends and colleagues but also valuable connections through numerous social networking sites, like LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook, among others.

BYOT, One-to-One, and Technology Potpourri

One school district's bring-your-own-technology (BYOT) model makes headlines in the local newspaper, while the private school across town pilots a one-device-for-each-student program, often referred to as *one-to-one*. Some districts have placed laptops in the hands of students for years, while others still struggle with old desktop computers in lab settings. Nearly all districts are in some stage of technology adoption and are exploring different devices, apps, and computer models. Often left out of the conversations around technology are important pedagogical considerations and the change movement.

With this technology potpourri in schools, no single solution will be perfect for all computing needs. Each school within a large district might have a different equipment configuration, making device management a real challenge. Fortunately, devices constantly get smaller and cheaper, making it possible for districts to acquire more of them. The ways devices connect to the Internet are also changing. More districts are working to make buildings wireless, creating even more opportunities for learning unrestricted by location or time.

Reading This Book

Create Future-Ready Classrooms, Now! formalizes the connection between effective instruction and the meaningful use of technology in classrooms. Based on the findings of current research, it integrates the most critical pedagogies with cutting-edge technology, identifying specific instructional strategies and matching them with the most effective technology solutions for immediate classroom implementation.

This book helps teachers understand what these pedagogies look like in the classroom and how to use the digital tools available. Keeping the focus on quality instructional strategies is essential. *Create Future-Ready Classrooms, Now!* is filled with instructional strategies and technology resources explained in language accessible to a wide audience with varying levels of technological knowledge and skill and is adaptable to classrooms with any configuration of technological devices.

I structured this book like my face-to-face professional development sessions, and I organize my professional development sessions like I would run my classroom. In my direct instruction, I strive for engagement every four or five minutes, using a balance of conversation, reflection, summarization, creation, research, exploration, and establishment of global connections. My purpose in writing this book is to share my passion and present the information in such a way that readers can replicate the strategies in their own classrooms and adapt the pedagogy to their curricular needs. I designed this book to be practical and useful to busy teachers everywhere.

You can use this book with collaborative teams in professional learning communities (PLCs) or during short segments of professional development time, like early start days or shared planning time. Groups of teachers are invited to select a section of the book to highlight during a faculty meeting that will be helpful in creating desired school-wide change. To help spark discussion, at the end of each chapter, reflection questions encourage deeper thinking on the topics.

The chapters in this book are organized in a way that scaffolds the skills, beginning with technology tools teachers can start using immediately. For example, chapter 1 discusses specific tools, apps, and strategies for providing specific and timely feedback. As the book progresses, the reader will gain information about additional technology tools and instructional strategies to use in the classroom. The content is organized in a practical way, making it easy to immediately apply the ideas, concepts, and strategies to your work as an educator.

Chapter 1 details instructional practices for giving useful feedback to students and provides research-based evidence to support the importance of this feedback as well as connecting to the global community. The feedback loop designed to increase student achievement includes websites, technology tools, and devices. Center stage in this

chapter is the concept of backchanneling, including multiple technology platforms that allow teachers to start providing effective feedback immediately.

Chapter 2 furthers the concept of providing quality feedback and focuses on helping students create nonlinguistic representations using a variety of technology tools. Students can use media for deeper learning and explain ideas by creating multimedia projects. This chapter details the ethical use of digital resources, including copyright-free images. It also covers locating, creating, and editing podcasts and music as part of the video creation process and explains the digital storytelling process, along with suggestions for how students can create their own digital stories using various websites, apps, and software resources.

Chapter 3 introduces new technology-rich strategies to provide formative evaluation feedback to students. Some of these follow a game-show-type of format, while others allow students to draw pictures and submit them to the teacher through an online interface. This chapter also covers creating and sharing pencasts, or digital, interactive note taking, as another way to provide formative evaluation feedback with technology. Educators also learn how to freshen up the exit slip instructional strategy with new, easy-to-manage technology solutions.

Chapter 4 discusses metacognition, or thinking about one's own thinking. It also reviews the concept of screencasting (that is, the capture of action on a computer screen) and follows with information on creating one's own projects. In addition, it presents a variety of additional tools to help students visualize their thinking, including creating tag clouds, graphic organizers, and infographics.

Chapter 5 offers a whole new twist on recognizing and reinforcing student efforts. I introduce technology innovations, including the major concept of engaging students with the typical elements of game play, also known as *gamification*. Creating and issuing digital badges and encouraging students to collect them is a hot new way to recognize students, and several technology resources are available to bring the idea to the classroom and beyond. This chapter also includes the topics of streamlining the feedback process and using social media to broadcast great news.

Chapter 6 features the concept of collaborative and cooperative learning. Collaboration is a theme throughout this book, but in this chapter, I introduce new technology tools and resources to prepare students for success in higher education and careers. I also cover creating, managing, and providing feedback to cooperative groups using technology. By building global cooperative groups using social media and video conferencing, teachers can extend learning beyond the walls of their classrooms. This chapter also discusses sharing the work of cooperative groups using social media and technology.

The epilogue concludes this book by looking ahead and realizing the possibilities for teaching and learning in a digitally rich world. It reiterates the importance of collaboration in a constantly changing society, as well as the necessity of providing quality feedback regardless of the technology platform. Here, I remind educators that the tools, apps, software, and websites they use are in continual flux, and the only constant is change itself.

Finally, a handy appendix lists all the technology resources from this book. I have organized the resources into categories and listed the websites for each resource, along with a short summary of the app, website, software, or platform. When my PLN shares a new technology resource with me, I will share it with you online. Let's continue to learn together!

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