

Table of Contents

About the Authors xi

Preface xvii

Eight Administrators Walk Into a Classroom xviii

The Series xix

Introduction:

The Future Is Ready Now 1

Teaching Before Technology 2

The Race to the Device 2

This Series 3

This Book 4

Conclusion 6

1 The Why:

**Creating and Communicating
a Vision for Change** 7

Establishing Growth Mindsets 7

Supporting Stakeholders 9

Developing a Vision 10

Conclusion 14

2 The What:

Planning the Launch 17

Communicating the Plan 17

Creating Teacher Activators 21
 Conclusion 24

3 The *How*:
Defining and Deploying
Essential Resources 25
 Defining and Deploying Personnel Resources 26
 Defining and Deploying Technology Resources 29
 Defining and Deploying Financial Resources 30
 Conclusion 31

4 The *Then What*:
Providing Professional
Development and Sharing
Your Story 33
 Professional Development 33
 Connecting With the Community and
 Showcasing Student Work 38
 Conclusion 41

5 A Shifting Vision 43
 Remembering That Change Is Constant 43
 Assessing Success 44
 Looking Ahead 46
 Conclusion 47

Appendix A:
Grade-Band Books at a Glance . . . 49

Appendix B:
Glossary of Tools and Terms 59

References and Resources 83

Index 87

Introduction: The Future Is Ready Now

When you walk into a magical classroom, such as the ones we described in the preface to this book, you see change in action. Students lead most of the conversations, and all decisions start with the specific short-term goals that the students formulate. The teacher uses formative assessment data to support students, helping them to make connections as they collaborate on a variety of tasks to meet their goals.

Are there digital tools in the classroom to support the students? Yes, but there are also paper and pencils, books, and much more. In other words, the focus is not on the tools, but on the student-driven learning. All students are laser focused on their personal learning goals as they work on rich, real-world problems that are important to them.

You can feel the energy in these magical classrooms, which we call *NOW classrooms*. We selected that term because our students deserve to thrive in rich, learner-centered classrooms *now*, not in a few months or years. We believe schools are ready to create this type of NOW classroom, typified by technology-supported teaching and learning, and the evidence we've seen bears this belief out. Our goal with this book and this series is to help you create it.

Teaching Before Technology

When computers first became available in schools, students in K–8 could typically only use technology once a week during scheduled computer lab time due to a lack of hardware, infrastructure, and wireless access. Although home environments changed dramatically in the years that followed, few school systems had the finances necessary to replicate the technology-rich environments that students were quickly becoming accustomed to at home. Therefore, access to technology via scheduled weekly computer labs remained the norm for some time, and students' experiences in school could not come close to equaling the innovative creative projects they often engaged in outside with immediate access to a wide variety of devices. In fact, Bill Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, often explains this clash of cultures by saying that students leave their homes, where technology is integrated into their daily lives, and then enter the museums we call schools. Similarly, Gayle Gregory and Martha Kaufeldt (2015) claim that most of what adept digital natives commonly have access to at home is prohibited in school.

Outside of school, students have ownership of their learning; whenever a question occurs to them, they can research the answer using technology, or they can imagine and use digital tools to create whatever inspires them at the moment. Such authentic, integrated experiences engage students in learning. As Patti Drapeau (2014) states, "Students are motivated when they feel there is meaning behind what they are doing, which results in taking action" (p. 63). Engagement is inevitable, according to Gregory and Kaufeldt (2015), whenever students communicate, research, analyze, and problem solve real-world, authentic tasks. And as Bob Sullo (2007) tells us, "When teachers and kids are having fun, learning is deeper and stronger, and students maintain the keen desire to learn" (p. 9).

Yet this sustained engagement is in sharp contrast to the way that many administrators and educators structure schools and classrooms. In many schools, this model is changing as devices become more available, but the change has not been an easy one for teachers to adjust to. However, transforming teaching and learning is essential to start preparing students for the demands of today's workplace. Therefore, our team hopes to inspire classrooms, schools, and districts to shift their focus to promoting sustained engagement and collaboration among students.

The Race to the Device

Our broad, shared vision starts with a shared frustration. Over the years, our entire team has experienced many different forms of what we call *the race to the device*. There have been many different devices of the year: tablets, Chromebooks, interactive whiteboards, specialized software, subscription services, and other innovations. In many districts, there is such a focus on acquiring and delivering these miraculous devices to students that they leave many other technology-rollout details to chance. Yet as our

co-author Steve says, actually purchasing devices is the easiest part of the process. The big picture of teaching and learning involves a far greater number of factors than the choice of hardware and software platform.

This book is not about educational technology as an end in and of itself; it's about transforming the entire culture of teaching and learning, and technology forms only one part of that overall change. One of the key purposes of this book, then, is to help school leaders completely shift the conversation about technology adoption, moving it out of the technology department and instead working to include all of the school district leaders in a collective vision of change.

As we walk around the building as school leaders, we hope to see groups of students collaborating and creating using technology. What we don't want to see is students or teachers using technology for low-level tasks that aren't directly tied to instruction. For example, we don't want to stop and talk with a group of students about what they are learning, only to have them answer us with the name of an app and nothing more. What we do want to see is students using technology in varied ways to meet learning targets, collaborating with one another, and connecting with students and professionals outside of the school walls. When asked what they are learning, students should tell us about content or skills, not tools. A school must start by devising a vision for teaching and learning. Once that vision is in place, it's time to look at ways to incorporate technology appropriately, using digital tools, apps, or websites to enhance the essential lesson. We cover this visioning and implementation process throughout this book.

This Series

This book, intended for school leaders, is one book in a five-part series. Practicing educators in the Chicago area wrote the other four books. One of our authors, Meg Ormiston, had already written several books before she approached the rest of our collaborative team of twenty-six coauthors about writing this series.

Early in the process, we decided that the project would comprise five books: this one, which is primarily directed at school leaders, and the other four, which are practical, grade-band books for grades K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12 teachers. Although the content in each grade-band book is different, they are all structured in the same way.

Many schools have added technology into classrooms without seeing student engagement increase. To avoid this issue, we decided to focus heavily on lessons that teachers could begin to use immediately to transform the learning in their classrooms, without necessarily requiring a technology upgrade. We know from our work in schools that teachers and students are at a variety of skill and comfort levels using technology, so we designed our books to meet people where they are and help them develop new skills, ensuring that the focus remains on the quality of the teaching and learning.

Each of the lessons includes age-appropriate technology tools organized using the NOW framework.

- *N* stands for *novice*
- *O* stands for *operational*
- *W* stands for *wow*

Teachers can select lessons in various sections depending on the learning objective they want to achieve and their students' sophistication level with the technology tools involved. For example, in *NOW Classrooms, Grades K–2*, there is a photography lesson titled Snapping and Sharing Photos. It includes the following NOW lesson structure.

- **Novice:** Taking Pictures With a Camera App
- **Operational:** Sequencing Pictures
- **Wow:** Demonstrating Learning Using Pictures

Teachers may, of course, modify the sequence of these lessons to better meet their specific instructional goals. In addition to the lessons, the books provide content connections to all subject areas, including special subjects such as art, music, and physical education. The books also contain classroom management tips, ideas for communicating with parents, teaching tips, and advice on technology use.

Each chapter in the grade-band books ends with a series of discussion questions. The books are not research heavy. The lessons and discussion questions are based on our personal experiences in schools and classrooms. We believe that the discussion questions are valuable for ongoing personal professional development, as well as helpful for clarifying innovation plans. Professional development teams might also use these questions during late-start mornings, early-release days, or other time blocks devoted to on-the-job embedded professional development. They can be useful for personal learning networks as well.

Unlike the grade-band books, this book is specifically structured to help school leaders create and sustain systemic change.

This Book

We have seen the good, the bad, and the ugly in the process of incorporating technology in schools, and, in this book, we've tried to share our practical, honest experiences with the change process and offer real stories drawn from our journeys. Each of the educators involved with this project started with different challenges: demographics, technology, teachers, curriculum, culture, communities, or administrators. That diversity of experience helped this book avoid becoming merely the story of one district and its specific challenges.

We designed this book so that each district and school could customize its basic framework to meet its specific needs. The process we describe—the *why*, the *what*, the *how*, and the *then what*, followed by any necessary rethinking or revision of any of the pieces—may not happen at the same pace, scale, or sequence in all districts. Changing any educational system is complicated. Our hope is that you will find success in helping your team look beyond the technology tools and stay focused on answering teaching and learning questions by deploying the following framework on which we structured this book.

- Why?
 - Seeking support
 - Establishing the visioning process
- What?
 - Communicating the plan
 - Creating teacher activators
- How?
 - Defining and deploying personnel resources
 - Defining and deploying technology resources
 - Defining and deploying financial resources
- Then what?
 - Implementing professional development
 - Connecting the community and showcasing student projects

In this book, chapter 1 starts with the vision itself, or the *why*, which is the most important part of the entire process. The important parts of the framework include the process of seeking support from key stakeholders who will support your innovation throughout its implementation, and the visioning process itself. This chapter also discusses the idea of a growth mindset, which is critical to any innovation's success, as well as the SAMR model (Puentedura, n.d.) for designing and assessing learning opportunities. SAMR, which stands for *substitution*, *augmentation*, *modification*, and *redefinition*, is a reflective model intended to help educators integrate technology in purposeful ways.

The planning continues in chapter 2 with the *what*. The key parts of this stage involve communicating the plan to staff, stakeholders, and all other involved parties, as well as creating a small teacher-activator group to begin implementation. This is where the vision from chapter 1 begins to flesh out and the innovation starts to take some serious shape. This chapter also introduces the idea of *getting it out the door*.

Chapter 3 investigates the *how*. This involves defining the essential resources for the implementation of your plan—personnel resources, technology resources, financial resources—and deploying each to good effect.

Chapter 4 discusses the *then what*, a topic that our team believes is a too-often neglected aspect of any successful innovation. This is the plan for encouraging ongoing learning and professional development, as well as for sharing student work, outside of building or district walls, with the community.

Chapter 5 discusses the importance of shifting the vision by revising and updating your innovation over the long term to take best advantage of technological advancement, as well as using data and formative assessment techniques to measure its impact on your building or district.

Finally, we include two appendices. Appendix A provides a full listing of the lesson plans offered in the other four *NOW Classrooms* series books, giving administrators an easy reference for individual grade bands. In appendix B, we've included a list of hundreds of resources, including apps, technology tools, and websites, as well as potentially unfamiliar technology terms. For each listing, we've provided a short description, web link, or other information that teachers and education leaders might find useful in deciding how to incorporate these resources into a classroom.

Similar to the grade-band books, we have included discussion questions at the end of each chapter that can be used for personal reflection or collaborative work with colleagues.

Conclusion

After talking with educators from a variety of schools that have successfully cultivated what we've termed a NOW classroom, we learned that there is no single right way to achieve that result. Every school and district is at a different starting point, and all of them face different challenges. Because of this fact, we wrote this book as a *choose your own adventure*, assuming that leaders would jump to the chapters that best apply to their situations. Your building- or district-level administrative team may also select chapters that specifically address its concerns about technology readiness or effective instructional coaching, as the case may be.

Whatever path you choose to start with, we hope it leads to creating a school full of classrooms where student learning is active, engaging, and purposeful. We suspected we were on the right track with our approach when one peer reviewer told us, "This book should be given to every teacher in a 1:1 classroom." We believe you will agree.

The *Why*: Creating and Communicating a Vision for Change

CHAPTER

1

When contemplating any instructional innovation, the most important question a school district can ask itself is, “Why are we doing this?” That *why*—an inspiring and instructional vision for innovation—needs to be at the very heart of a district’s purpose. Yet all districts wrestle not only with the best way to articulate that vision but also with the best way to communicate it to the stakeholders who will support its implementation. This chapter discusses the importance of stakeholder support and offers advice on beginning the visioning process. We begin by addressing the challenge of helping everyone in a school building adopt the growth mindset necessary for successful innovation.

Establishing Growth Mindsets

The process of building NOW classrooms begins with changing your school community’s underlying culture. As a building or district leader, you can’t simply decree that the culture must change; you need a cyclical plan that cultivates it. The plan involves:

- Creating a vision for changing classroom culture and incorporating technology
- Implementing experiments to build that vision