

## Learning the Technique of Technology

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"Computers 8, 9 and 10?" When I heard that I would have to teach Computer classes at Deer Lake School, back when I was hired 6 years ago, I would have to admit that I was a bit nervous. I mean at the time, I knew as much about computers as the average person did. At first I was overwhelmed, thinking I would never be able to pull it off; however, teaching computers ended up being a blessing in disguise. By having to teach the students computers, I taught myself as well. At the time I was hired, schools were moving in the direction of increasing the accessibility of technology not just in their computer labs, but also in each classroom. Also, teachers had to incorporate the use of technology into their lesson plans. Over the years I have taken numerous technology classes; as well, I have been able to teach myself how to use and operate the computer quite effectively. I have had the opportunity to advance with technology by teaching the new applications and programs in my computer classes. Soon I found myself incorporating technology in all of my classes! I have had the best of both worlds and it has been amazing!

Technology is slowly taking over the classroom with computer-led instruction including PowerPoint based material, Internet based activities and other multimedia presentations. How can we empower every teacher with the necessary computer skills to make technology in the classrooms effective? Not everyone can spend all day in the computer lab. However, in the future I think every teacher will have to become a computer teacher in their own classrooms. A teacher can be thrown into a classroom filled with the most modern pieces of technology known to man. But unless the teacher takes the initiative to educate themselves on how to utilize the technologies, their intended potential and applications will never be fully reached. One solution is attending workshops, seminars and classes that focus on computer skills that are practical for you and your classroom. I really have enjoyed the technology classes and workshops I have taken within and outside the conference. I have been able to apply a lot of what I have learned into my classes. However, a lot of the time teachers end up taking technology classes that are not really practical to their classes. Or, they are serious about the class at the time they take it, but when they return back to their classrooms, there is not really any application or follow through of what they had learned. More teachers need to go beyond their limits, out of their comfort zone and rethink how they are going to change their routine of teaching and incorporate technology. Unless we as teachers try effectively to learn more about technology and actually apply it into our classrooms and our teaching methods, our schools will not be able to move in the direction that technology is heading towards. And in the end the students will be the ones left behind trying to keep up with the technological tools needed to compete in the real world.

I commend the BC Conference for initiating a technology plan that was put into place to give each teacher the opportunity to purchase a personal computer. In giving the staff this opportunity, slowly but surely everyone at Deer Lake got involved in becoming aware of the new direction technology was heading towards in the classrooms. Although I think a few teachers were overwhelmed at first, the initial shock slowly faded as teachers had hands on experience with their own computer. At Deer Lake, we are blessed with a fully functioning lab of 23 computers. As well, we are lucky to have a technology plan placed in our school, where we have close to 25% of our computers upgraded every year, (hardware and software). Each teacher at Deer Lake has the opportunity to use the computer lab at least once or twice a week with their class, instructing their students. Our school also has the privilege of having high speed Internet which has been truly amazing for everyone at our school. The convenience of retrieving information quickly and with such magnitude has been very resourceful for students as well as teachers. I

depend a lot on the Internet for sources of information as well as for sharing information with friends, colleagues and family. I can say that the teachers at our school have capitalized on the use of Internet both at home and school.

The use of PowerPoint in the classroom has been very effective in my classes as well. I have access to a CD containing PowerPoint presentations of published curriculum for Math 10. It is all curriculum based and is used to accentuate my classroom notes and teaching. It's great for a visual change, providing graphics along with detailed steps that are presented in an orderly fashion. As well it provides remedial and review slides which students have access to on their computers. I have mastered PowerPoint personally, making it easier for the students to master the technique as well. With this skill the students have successfully and confidently prepared and presented slides in a lot of their other classes as well as at functions like graduation, assemblies etc. Our school has access to LCD projection units, and with these, several teachers and administrators have incorporated PowerPoint presentations into their meetings, assemblies, and various presentations. It has served as a most invaluable tool. I can truly say that every teacher at Deer Lake has become very computer literate over the past couple of years thanks to a lot of effort put forth through the conference and the individual teachers.

Technology in our classrooms will only be a success if we put in the effort to keep up with it. Through professional development days, conventions, seminars, workshops and classes, we must try to maintain, develop and fine-tune our skills as often as we can. Conferences everywhere have been trying to offer classes, workshops and seminars as best as they can in hopes that teachers will make the effort to upgrade their computer skills. All schools are different with respects to finance and resources, therefore, schools and teachers all need to come up with technology plans that can be practical and useful in their classrooms and schools. We need everyone to try their hardest to be technologically updated, not just the computer teachers. Technology can only be used to enhance student performance if we use it to enhance our performance first. Then and only then can we effectively incorporate technology in the classroom.