

It is my vision that education should always be goal oriented with learning and good teaching at its center. When student learning is the goal all other elements of education stay in their proper balance. This is especially important in today's world where educators are moving rapidly to integrate technology into the classroom. Instrumental thinking often overwhelms districts moving to implement technology in the classroom. Good teaching pedagogy is being compromised for the sake of incorporating technology in the classroom. Missional thinking is needed to keep the goal of student learning at the center.

Design thinking is an important element in breaking out of instrumental thinking. To promote missional thinking one must first recognize their mission and design their instruction to accomplish their mission. Instructional models such as the TPACK framework maintain missional thinking and help keep perspective in the classroom. Emphasis is placed on the balance between technology, content, and pedagogy. Technology should remain in its proper place as a tool to promote good teaching and student learning. Design thinking ensures learning will be at the center of good teaching and that technology will support this mission. Katz (2000) argues that "...thinking creatively about how it might contribute to their basic educational mission..." (p.47) is far more productive to the educational outcome. By keeping technology in its proper balance missional thinking can maintain focus on student learning.

Educational leadership is required to combat instrumental thinking. Administrators must promote missional thinking and maintaining a clear vision that keeps student learning at the center. Leadership provides the roles that stakeholders such as teachers must play and explains how the vision will be achieved. Good educational leadership should ensure that learning is always at the center and that all stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and parents are working together. Nagel (2011) states in his article Bringing Teachers Onboard with tech "the leadership communicates openly, finds time for teachers to work together, and can trust the staff to expect much of themselves." (p.1) Good leadership holds high expectations for stakeholders and keeps the goals clear and at the center. All of these elements are necessary to maintain missional thinking with a clear focus on student learning.

Ongoing professional learning is crucial to developing and supporting missional thinking. Professional learning that is centered on student learning will ensure technology remains a tool in education and not the goal of education. Educators need to be taught how to integrate technology into the classroom while keeping student learning as the central mission. Katz (2000) argues that "To many campuses, though, are leaving it to student and faculty to educate themselves on how to best use technology" (p.49) Proper methods of incorporating technology in the classroom must be taught to educators and students if technology is expected to be used in education properly.

Missional thinking is an extremely important element to overcoming instrumental thinking. For that reason goal oriented learning and good teaching are more important now than ever. Maintaining a proper balance and perspective on education with design thinking and the TPACK framework are critical elements to supporting good teaching. The importance of this balance

must be made clear by administrators. Administrators must communicate clearly and make sure that all stakeholders understand their role in achieving this goal. Once roles have been clearly communicated and defined ongoing professional learning can be engineered to develop thoughtful educators and prevent instrumental thinking. All of these elements will be critical to promoting missional thinking in education and maintaining a focus on goal oriented learning and good teaching.

References:

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