

Technology

Mark Geary

The path to integrating technology into the school curriculum has not always been clear cut. Working for my first middle school principal (17 years ago), Bobby Rainey, I was surprised one day to see him in his office reading the book, *DOS for Dummies*. I asked him how he

liked it, he said it was a little hard, but “we need to get going with this technology stuff”. I gently pointed out that since we were an all Macintosh school (which does not use MS-DOS), there might be more useful books to start with. Two months later an infrastructure grant opportunity was announced. Bobby Rainey assembled a team of teachers to be grant writers to work on the project, and paid substitutes for five half days for five teachers on the grant writing committee. As a member of the committee, I was well aware, as were others, that getting paid subs for our time was an extraordinary measure. We were somewhat envied by other teachers, and felt the peer pressure to create a successful grant.

As we worked, we learned a lot about grants, grant writing and how to submit a grant. We agonized over the wording of sentences, struggled to frame our ideas in ways a grant review committee would find acceptable. We learned that active phrases were more powerful than passive ones, that what we were going to do for students was much more important than the actual “things” we were hoping to get. Two months later, we were told that we had won the

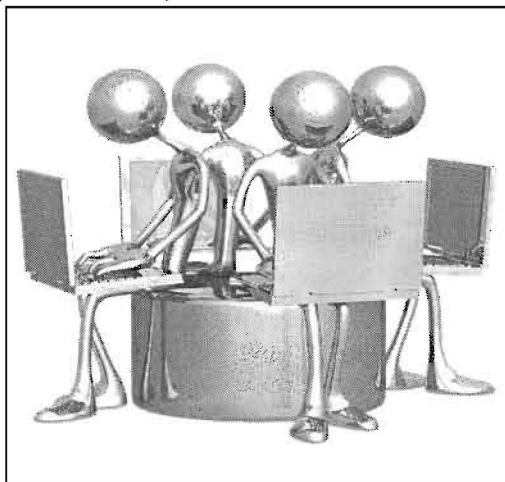
\$200,000 grant, and that ours was the only middle school to successfully apply. We were able to get needed wiring infrastructure for our school, along with computers that did change how students learned.

As I have reflected on the process, it became clear to me that I was fortunate to be at that middle school at that time, for Bobby Rainey leaves some examples that may still serve us today.

1. You do not have to be a technology guru to lead a technology revolution. I am not sure Bobby Rainey ever learned to read email, but he did know his staff, and he selected and encouraged people to learn more and share what they learned.

2. Bobby did not come to his staff and say “I need you to do this grant in your free time”. He set up a specific task, carefully selected people to do it, and provided in-school time to make it happen. We knew then that it was important to him, and it became important to us.

When getting started with technology, I encourage people to look at *Bloom’s Taxonomy*, as it was revised in 2001. Much of Bloom’s higher order



thinking skills have been incorporated into 21st Century thinking skills, such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity. In addition, we can see a subtle but important shift that is helpful in understanding technology. The nouns became verbs. Synthesis became creating, evaluate became evaluating, analysis became analyzing. At first brush, these may seem to be simple changes, but applied to technology, they become significant.

In technology, the nouns are an ever growing, ever changing list. Whether it is a website, a blog or a wiki, the goal is still sharing and communicating information online. Whether students are using concept maps online, such as bubbl.us, or Kidspiration, or cmaptools, the goal is still the visual organization of information. Whether students are using photostory, xtranormal.com, iMovie or Windows movie maker, the students are still creating information in the 21st century format. Vygotsky offers us some practical advice for implementa-

tion as well. Start small, and scaffold up. Getting one teacher who will help model the implementation of a technology is worth ten seminars by outside persons on how great something is. Finally, teachers need to ask for across the board implementation of worthwhile technologies that can be supported. A child's education should not be left up to random chance of teacher selection.

As I think back to the grant written 16 years ago, much of what we were looking to do then would still serve as a starting point for technology implementation today, and we were both well served by focusing on the verbs of technology, what is going to happen for students as they use it.

Author's Note: Florida Education Leadership made the leap with a new technology section, and I am proud to be a part of it. Hope you find the technology section of interest. If you have an article that would interest others, please send it to us. Enjoy!

Innovator Awards

The deadline for nominating any Florida educator for the FASCD Excellence Award is May 1. Details of the award procedure are available on our website: www.fascd.org.

Any FASCD member may nominate any Florida Educator in recognition of their outstanding contributions to education. In addition, nominations are also extended for the Outstanding Legislator Award which recognizes any Florida elected official (state or national) for their contributions toward the improvement of education.

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Application may be obtained from:

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Florida Educational Leadership is a peer-reviewed journal for its major articles. Articles are solicited for three distinct sections of the journal:

Perspectives: Articles which focus on contemporary issues and hot topics. We are looking for a variety of viewpoints on these issues and topics, including historical perspectives. Some ideas could relate to the grading of pre-k-12 public schools, new standards for teachers, new teacher induction, new standards for students, vouchers or charter schools.

Research in Practice: Articles which focus on research in classrooms, colleges, universities. What can we learn from research activities? Ideas might include a self-study of teacher, an effort to try a new program or curriculum, effects of testing on retention. Both qualitative and quantitative studies will be accepted. Single subject or large population studies will be considered. There is no predetermined format for the research. We are looking for something that is interesting and useful for Florida educators.

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Articles can describe new ways to use technology, newer technologies that can motivate students, frustrations and successes.

Florida Educational Leadership will also accept book reviews and short informational items. The deadline for submission of materials is June 1 and January 1. All manuscripts, book reviews or short information items should be sent to:

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