Analysis of Vignette #2

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Personalized learning is taking center-stage in educational discussions and integrating technology is making it easier to do this.  Schools are revamping their educational plans and not realizing that in order to transform a school, let alone a system, everyone involved needs to be on board.  In Vignette #6**,** “How does a whole school move towards integrating technology**?**” the Education Technology department head in a secondary school shares her perspective of the process of the integration of technology. She describes a situation that is similar to many schools in North America where the decision to integrate technology is pushed down from the ministry of education, and school administration takes on the lead role in implementing the new policy.

Gallant (2000) believes that qualities of the technological and operational support infrastructure of an institution is an issue and that we must communicate “a vision of how and why changes are being planned or implemented, as well as ensure that changes are driven by learning and teaching issues rather than by ‘the imperatives of economic rationalism or the ‘silicon veneer’ of technological determinism’” (p. 73). Similar to the case in this vignette, it is easy for administration to purchase the “latest and greatest” for their schools without fully considering the affordances of such technologies.  This school did have an Educational Technology department head in charge of the change process, and a committee representing the rest of the faculty, but not every voice on staff was heard.  This lack of planning and oversight is what leads to technological determinism and little “buy-in” from certain staff members.

Creating a committee that explored the level of knowledge currently available at the school, teachers' interests as well as the vision of the administration was a positive step forward in the planning stages for this school. I feel student voice was missing in this representation and if there, would have made valuable contributions to the discussions.  Coniavitis, E., Järnefelt, C., & Wojewoda, N. (2005) state, “It is an understatement to say that students as a whole are an important stakeholder in education, since it is in fact the students that are the actual recipients of education” (p. 431).  Students should be taking part in the shaping of their education as they have new and innovative ideas and offer a fresh perspective.

Teachers have many questions that need to be considered and reflected upon when finding ways to incorporate technology into their different classes.  This requires teachers to have time for professional development so that they can work through the change in their pedagogy.  Gallant (2000), speaks to the way most professional development looks like in schools and states, “these “one-shot” training sessions are not the most effective” and that “Professional development, especially that which is squeezed into already busy schedules, will work best if it is designed as an ongoing incremental, and cumulative process, a continual cycle of ‘renewal and growth’” (p. 324). If the idea is to empower teachers to develop best practices for using and integrating technology, it needs to come from the ground up rather than being imposed from top-down. Support from leadership and time to share and connect with colleagues is necessary in order for teachers to consider integrating technology in their teaching methodologies.

References:

Gallant, G. M. (2000). Professional development for web‐based teaching: overcoming innocence and resistance. *New directions for adult and continuing education*, *2000*(88), 69-78.

Coniavitis, E., Järnefelt, C., & Wojewoda, N. (2005). Involving the students: outcomes and experiences from the participation of the board of European students of technology in the thematic network E4. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, *30*(4), 431-438. Retrieved from ERIC database (EJ837732)