Integrating technology into teaching: exploring a teacher learning community for teacher professional development

Haojing Cheng, Doctoral candidate, Michigan State University
Mary Ann Robinson, Technology Outreach Coordinator, Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District
.

Abstract:

The push for integrating technology into k-12 curriculum from social and political forces has exerted tremendous pressure on schools and education support institutions to provide adequate professional development opportunities for teachers beyond just fundamental technical training. According to OTA (1995), less than half of American schools provide teachers with training on basic computer skills, let alone the training on instructional uses of computers. It is not a surprise to see not many teachers actually use technology regularly in their teaching (OTA, 1995; McKinsey, 1996). Such conflicts between the call of the reforms and the reality of the teachers' work require teacher learning opportunities that directly address the emergent problems that teachers confront in their practices.

The importance of learning communities for professional development is much discussed in literature (Schwab, 1976, Lave and Wenger, 1991; Hallwa and Lindy, 1999, Putnam and Boko, 2000). In the past 10 years, the calls for a commitment to alternative means of inservice teacher professional development have increased exponentially. This is considered as the key to any and all educational reform (Wilson & Berne, 1999).

This paper intends to examine the role of a teacher learning community in relation to teacher learning for technology integration and professional development. By focusing on the content and conditions of teacher learning through this teacher support group, this study will deepen our understanding of the role of teacher learning community for professional development of inservice teachers.

References:

Lave, J. W., E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, R., & Boko, H. (2000). What Do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking Have to Say About Research on Teacher Learning? *Education Researcher, Vol. 29, No. 1*, 4-15.

Wilson, S., & Berne, J. (1999). Teacher Learning and the Acquisition of Professional Knowledge: An Examination of Research on Contemporary Professional Development. *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 173-210.