GREAT TECH IS NO MATCH FOR GREAT TEACHERS

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As we continue to grow and develop as a society, so to do our technological advancements. Many years ago, a single computer lab would have cost a school several thousands of dollars if not more. Today, for roughly the same price, a school can outfit almost all of its classrooms with computers. This is due to the innovations in technology. Other innovations allow for students to have access to a nearly limitless amount of information right at their fingertips. Computers and the programs that run on the computers have become so inexpensive and user-friendly doubled with the rise of internet-based applications for education have allowed many new possibilities for learning in the classroom. *What does this mean for the teachers?* This is a common question and source of debate when dealing with adding and integrating more and more technology into the classroom. The shift from relying solely on a trained and experienced teacher has increased dramatically. These teachers must now accept the new technology, often without the necessary training to be proficient with it.

There are many teachers who are several years, even decades, older than the students that they teach. They did not grow up being surrounded by the same technology that is used today. Due to this, they are not always proficient, or able to become proficient with all of the new technology that is being pushed into the school system. In a research paper written by Stephanie Longman, she states that “Because of this increase in student engagement in the classroom due to technology, pressure to integrate technology has also been on the rise” (Longman 2013). This pressure has led to technology holding a pivotal role in the modern classroom. This pressure has also led to stress on the Teachers to become technologically savvy and learn to integrate the new technology into their teaching style. This “Technostress”, prevents teachers from being able to successfully integrate technology into their classrooms. With the major push to integrate technology into classrooms, many teachers feel that “felt they were not provided with the necessary support and professional development needed to successfully integrate technology into the classroom to its fullest potential” (Longman 2013). This undue stress brought on by the rush to fill classrooms with technology could have been prevented by taking the time to train teachers on how to use the technology and allow them to develop their own styles of using it.

“Veteran” or “Seasoned” teachers are those who have been teaching for quite some time. This means that they have a plethora of experience and have most likely developed their own habits and methods for teaching students. Many of these methods probably do not work now that today’s classrooms are flooded with technology. Having had the time to develop these skills, the arrival of the new technology forces them to adapt and to become proficient with it. This does not always happen. Novice teachers, or those who have not been teaching for very long are often times younger, and thus are more tech savvy. “Recent research suggests that veteran teachers use such technology less than novice teachers and demonstrate less proficiency in its use (Jones 2013). The less proficient the teacher is on the use of the technology correlates directly with the impact on the students and the value of the education they receive from it.

One of the largest roadblocks to successfully integrating technology into the classroom has been the teacher’s ability to adapt to change as well as their own ability to learn and understand the technology that is being pushed into their classrooms. The teachers who have formed habits over the course of many years, and often that are older, have a more difficult time integrating technology into their curriculum. “Without doubt, integrating technology into classroom instruction requires the merger of tradition and innovation” (Knight 2012).