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Module 1 Assignment

In my short career I have worked in several different environments. Each has had a different classification on the Florida Center for Instructional Technology (FCIT) matrix (2011). Of those environments, three stick out as particularly applicable to the matrix. The first is the Information Technology department at The Bigelow Tea Company where I worked as an intern. Next is Hopkinton High School where I worked as a Technology Integration Specialist. And lastly is the Information Technology Group at Harvard Business School.

At Bigelow Tea I worked on several projects, namely a Skype deployment to the sales staff that included some training and demonstrations. It was during this project that I observed the Active-Adoption environment that is present at the company. As the description by FCIT states, in the Active-Adoption environment, "The teacher controls the type of technology and how it is used. The teacher may be pacing the students through a project, making sure that they each complete each step in the same sequence with the same tool." (FCIT, 2011) This was certainly the case at Bigelow where the IT department, as the teacher, determined what tools the employees, as students, would use and then gives them very directed steps to use the technology. In the case of Skype we wrote up very detailed documentation and steps for installation and use. We then gave it to the sales staff and other users for them to do on their own. Once they completed the installation they initiated a video call with me to show that they had completed their "work" and then I directed them

how to use Skype in some very basic ways. They were not encouraged to explore, or use the technology in any way other than to video chat. This was a classic example of how the Bigelow IT department worked. This was not true only for the Skype deployment but for just about every other technology that they chose to implement.

After Bigelow Tea I worked at Hopkinton High School as a Technology Integration Specialist. The environment at Hopkinton High Scholl was Collaborative-Infusion. According to the description of Collaborative-Infusion, "Technology use for collaboration by students is regular and normal in this setting. Students choose the best tools to use to accomplish their work." (FCIT 2011) This was the case in numerous settings, but particularly in one Environmental Science class that I worked with. Each student at Hopkinton High School has a Google account and therefore can use Gmail, Google Docs, Google Sites, etc. The students were asked to create an advertisement for an advancement in environmentalism that they had researched. They could use any type of technology to do this. Some students used Google Sites, some created a Google Slides presentation, and others created a video and uploaded it to YouTube. There was a significant variety in the technologies that they used. Regardless of the tool the students used, they all showed a great deal of collaboration throughout the project. For example, some students created a Google Doc on which the group could outline their project together without having to be in the same room. Some students used a Wiki on Wikispaces to organize their ideas. Some others simply used Gmail to communicate back and forth about their project. The best part and the most indicative of the Collaboration-Infusion categorization is the fact that the students all used these technologies without direction from the teacher. They either knew

what they wanted to use, or they knew how to find tools or resources that would tell them what to use.

Lastly, in my time at Harvard Business School I worked in a small group that frequently supported classroom simulations for business classes. This environment is in the category of Authentic-Transformation. It is truly amazing to see this environment at its best. One particular simulation that the students work with is called the "Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest v2" (Harvard Business Publishing [HBP] 2011) simulation. In this simulation students are in a group of 5 students climbing Mt. Everest, each of which has a particular role and responsibility. The students have to work within their roles as well as with particular items given only to their particular role in order to successfully climb the mountain and achieve the maximum number of points for their group. (HBP 2011) As the description of an Authentic-Transformation environment states, "The teacher encourages innovative use of technology tools in higher order learning activities that support connections to the lives of the students and the world beyond the instructional setting." (2011) In this case the faculty have taken advantage of a very complex and intense computer program to put students into this pretty realistic simulation. Obviously, Harvard Business School could not facilitate 900 students climbing Mt. Everest, but it realizes the benefits of team building that such an experience could provide. The simulation provides an experience far outside of the instructional setting that students would not be able to get otherwise. This environment is replicated using other simulations throughout the students' two-year MBA program. It is a fascinating example of what technological innovation can bring to a previously static and traditional education experience while at the same time making it much more tangible to the students.

These three environments differ vastly from one another. What sets them apart from each other is a desire to innovate and having resources with which to do so. It is not always the fault of the IT or technology department that innovation is not possible. Often the organization at a top level has to make the commitment to it and allow that commitment to flow down. However, in the case of Harvard Business School, once innovation proves itself to be useful, like in the case of the simulations, leadership tends to continue wanting more and more of it. When this happens it becomes more likely that a Goal Directed-Transformation environment can be achieved.

References

Florida Center for Technology Instruction. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://fcit.usf.edu/matrix/matrix.php

Roberto, M., & Edmondson, A. (2011, July 26). *Leadership and team simulation: Everest v2*. Retrieved from http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/product/7000-HTM-ENG