

Digital Divide/Digital Inequality

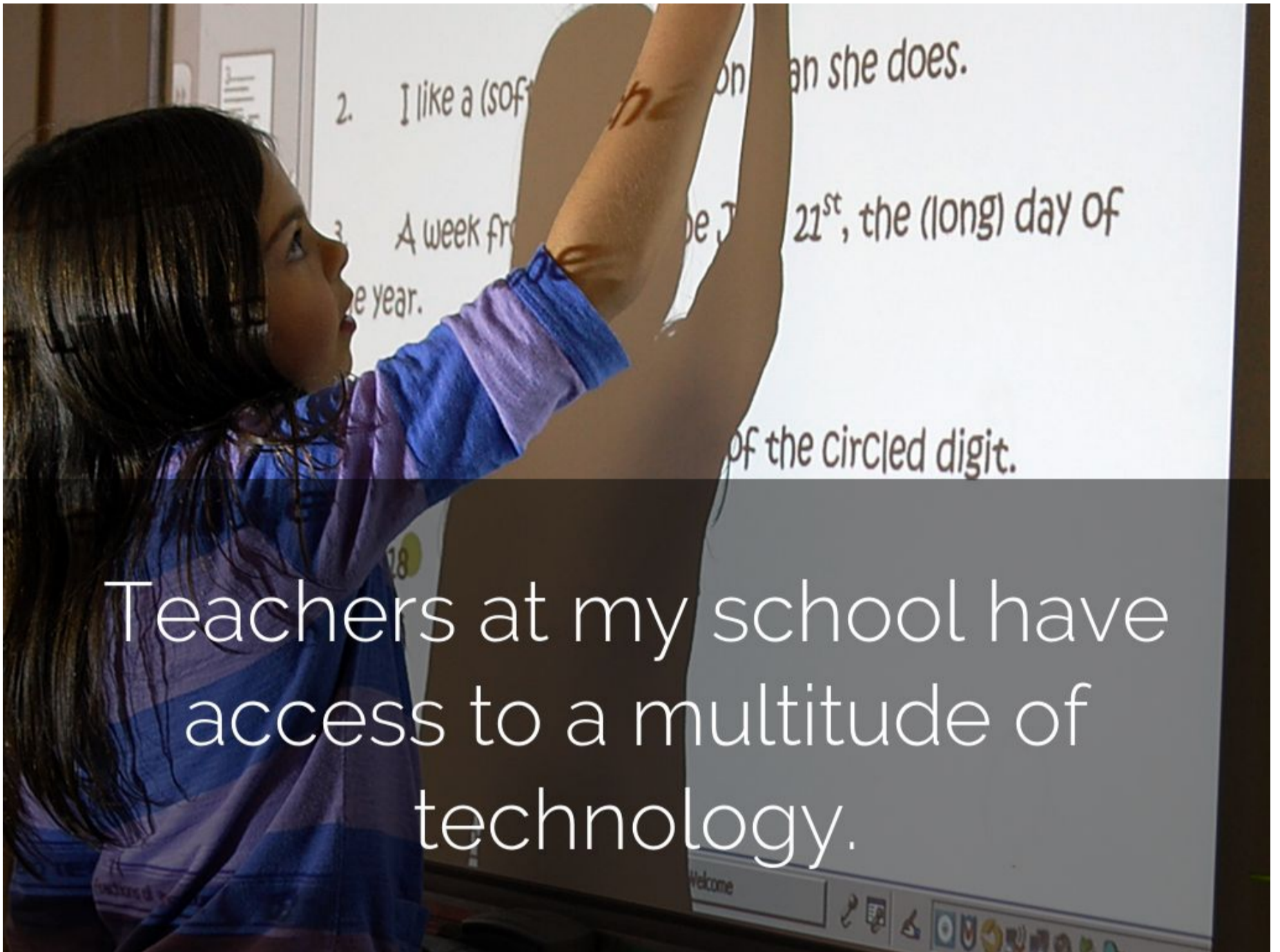


501: Digital Divide Assignment
AECT Standards:
3.1, 3.5, 3.6

What is the digital divide?

- Lack of access to the internet or technology
- Lack of understanding, training, or desire

When I think of the digital divide, I think it is when professionals do not have access to technology or to the internet in the classroom to increase student learning and engagement. I would consider digital inequality when teachers are lacking the understanding, training, or desire to use technology or Internet access.



Teachers at my school have access to a multitude of technology.

I think--actually I know--that all of the teachers have access to technology, but they do not take advantage of this.

Desktop computers, laptops,
starboards, iPads.
Two computer labs, mobile
laptop cart, mobile iPad cart.

Every classroom in my school has desktop computers, laptops, and starboards. Some classrooms have small sets of iPads. Two teachers have classroom sets of iPads (me included). There are two computer labs that the teachers have access to. There are two mobile laptop and two mobile iPad labs that teachers can check out.



There is an abundance of technology, so why do we have digital inequality? Why are teachers not taking full advantage of what has been laid at their fingertips?



Time

Issue 1

What's the problem?

- Technology takes a lot of time to set up and manage
- Training, troubleshooting
- Principals will only allow certain amount of time for teachers to leave their classrooms for trainings
- Researching appropriate apps

Time: It takes a lot of time outside of school time setting up, managing, updating, and troubleshooting the technology. Principals won't allow enough time for training--only 4 half days allowed to TeConnect members for training. Not only does it take time managing the technology, but also designing the lessons differently and researching apps.

How can we fix it?

- More time to learn from colleagues
- Time to observe others
- Tech assistance
- Summer trainings and classes

Teachers at my school want more time to learn from colleagues. They can share ideas in staff meetings and Professional Learning Communities. Teachers could combine classes or find a para or I.F. to cover so that they could observe others successfully using technology. Tech assistance should be readily available for all teachers. They need to know that the Technology facilitators in the district are there to help and bounce ideas off of. Teachers could also have the option of your the summer to set up the technology and research apps. There should be trainings and classes that are available, but not mandatory.



Money

Issue 2

What's the problem?

- Classroom teachers cannot afford class sets of iPads from their budgets
- It is inconvenient to check out the mobile labs and wheel them down to the classroom

Teachers at my school want more laptops and iPads in the classroom. They do not want to have to check out a mobile lab or reserve a computer lab. It costs a lot of money to get every teacher a classroom set of iPads. It is a pain to check out the mobile labs and wheel them down to your classroom in the middle of the day.

What can we do?

- Apply for grants
- Set up funds
- Apply for TeConnect

In our district you can apply for grants. There are teachers that have received a set of 6 iPads from grants. Building administrators can set up funds for small group sets of iPads. Our district is doing a 1:1 initiative and accepting 25 teachers to get a classroom set of iPads next year. This will be the second year the the TeConnect initiative.



Fear of "Loss of Control"

Issue 3

What's the problem?

- Giving students the power
- Teacher not being in charge
- Will the students complete the learning objective?

Some teachers are afraid to give the students the control of learning. The teacher will not be in charge of every step of the lesson. How can teachers be sure that the students meet the learning objective if the students are in control?

What can be done?

- Collaboration with colleagues
- Observations
- Take classes
- Follow blogs
- Students create to demonstrate understanding

Teachers can get ideas of how technology can be used in different projects from teachers that are already successfully implementing technology. They can learn from colleagues by observation. They can take classes through the district or online. Blogs are also another powerful tool to get insight on releasing the control and making lessons engaging. Students can create a project of their choice to demonstrate understanding of the learning objective. This gives students the freedom to use a design of their choosing to express their learning.



Most of all, they need to let go that you need to know it all before you let your students use the technology. Let them teach you!

We must address the issues now!

- "...people without ICT access and knowledge will be unable to compete in the new global 'knowledge-based economy.' In this new economy, the sources of competitive advantage are high knowledge-intensity and fast adoption of new technology" (Web 2.0).

Citation:

Web 2.0 and Emerging Learning Technologies/Digital Divide. (2009, July 29). In WikiBooks. Retrieved February 8, 2015, from http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Web_2.0_and_Emerging_Learning_Technologies/Digital_Divide

Technology:

- Motivates
- Enables
- Inspires
- Personalizes learning

Outside school, students are free to pursue their passions in their own way and at their own pace. Why should they not be allowed these same opportunities at school? As educational professionals, it is our duty to bring the same access to technology and Internet into learning to enable, motivate, and inspire all students. This opportunity will provide personalized learning and enable continuous and lifelong learning. understanding in a way that they choose.

Technological Skills:

- Benefit students for the rest of their lives
- Are necessary to compete in today's society
- Allow students to express themselves

These skills will not only benefit students for the rest of their lives, but they are also necessary to compete in today's society. We should put students at the center and empower them to take control of their own learning by providing flexibility on several aspects. Every student learns differently and at a different pace. Every student should be allowed to express their understanding in a way that they choose.



Let's give our students the
opportunity for a brighter
tomorrow!

The younger we can start the children building the skills to take responsibility and control of their learning, the brighter the future we will build for tomorrow (Adkins).

Sources

- Adkins, D. E., Bennett, J., Brown, J. S., Chopra, A., Dede, C., Fishman, B., & Gomez, L. (2010, November). Transforming American Education Learning Powered by Technology [Electronic version]. National Education Technology Plan, 7-12.

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