

Project 3A  
Challenges

Time management is one of the biggest challenges facing teachers today (Scholastic, 2010). Time is a precious commodity and teachers have to ensure that the most time is spent on the most important activities.

But what are those activities? In the article “Time Management” by Scholastic.com from 27 to 40 percent of the school day is spent on non-instructional activities. Those activities can include time spent changing classrooms, answering emails, restroom breaks, and gathering materials (Wagner, 2004).

Time isn't the only challenge teachers have to contend with. Many school administrations require that teaching be aligned with standardized tests (Lewis, 2010). Teaching material to ensure testing success does not mean following the “traditional” teaching methods. The subject matter can be presented in a manner that is engaging and causes the student to think outside the box. According to Judy Jeffrey, director of the Iowa Department of Education (Shea, 2008), schools should put emphasis on learning skills that will help students succeed in the modern workplace such as problem solving and literacy in a variety of subjects. Perhaps these new skills would translate into passing standardized tests.

When it comes to technology in the classrooms and teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills the Digital Divide is a big factor. The Digital Divide splits the population into two groups, those that have access to technology and those that don't. The causes of the divide are many and include economic status, race, special populations, and geography.

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Approximately one third of the poorest youth have Internet access in contrast to roughly 90% of the high income youth. The race divide is just as stark, approximately 30% of minority youth have access compared to almost 60% for white youth (Dickard & Schneider, 2002).

Less than 32% of the special population has access to technology (Miller, 2003). This access includes barriers to Internet usage such as unfriendly websites.

In Clifton, Texas the geographic divide is as much a concern as other types of divide because urban youth are better off technologically than rural youth (Eggerson, 2009).

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

The U.S. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Commission reports that 21<sup>st</sup> century American workers have to learn 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy. The new worker will understand complex material, analyze information, and be native-like with technology (U.S. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Commission, 2000).

Schools have to teach student core skills (reading, writing, math) so that complex skills like analysis can be done. Rote memorization of facts for the sake of knowing facts is not necessary in the Google® age (Wallis, Steptoe, & Miranda, 2006). Learning 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy is not exclusively taught with technology. But technology use is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill.

### Profile of Students

The profile of students today depends on which side of the divide they stand. Those students that are on the connected side of the divide have had technology as part of their lives. These students are used to being connected to the world. This connection has created a student

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who collaborates on projects, prefers to learn anywhere, and is teched to the nines (Prensky, 2001 & Evans, 2008).

Those students on the other side of the divide have had less exposure to technology but from their experiences they are very much like their counterparts in that they are more interested in learning that has real life application (Prensky, 2001 & Evans, 2008).

### Mission Statement

The Technology Department's mission is to improve faculty and student education by infusing technology into the curriculum to prepare them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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Citations

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