

Chapter 1

Teaching with Technology— Introducing TPACK



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If you are reading this book, you are either new to teaching, new to teaching with technology, OR you are searching for those tips and instructional methods that will make integrating technology into your daily teaching practices successful—and by successful, we mean that when you teach with technology, your teaching results in the desired student learning outcomes!

You are in the right place. The purpose of this book is to break down the world of technology into just a few key ingredients so that you can start teaching those successful technologically-enhanced lessons immediately! These key understandings are essential for the design and delivery of powerful lessons that promote higher order thinking skills and engage students, but they are only a beginning! This book will discuss the basics—the basic computer skills you need, the basic pedagogical understandings needed to teach with technology, and the basics of instructional design necessary to create those GREAT technologically-enhanced lessons! There is so much more! We encourage you to continue exploring and trying new technologies to build further knowledge and skills—this book will help you get started “on the right foot!” Your own explorations will keep your feet pointed in the right direction!

So, if the goal of this book is to provide you with the nuts and bolts that will help you teach with technology successfully, expect to be learning WITH the tools, too! Teachers who LEARN with technology are the best teachers with technology!

However, because our students are our focus in all of our teaching, we will begin with a word about your students!! To do this, we will turn you over to The Professor! Who is The Professor? *The Professor* is a fictitious character whose tips and comments are a combination of all the many technology specialists, teachers, and colleagues who have shared tips and valuable suggestions with the authors throughout the last ten years! Because of the time constraints most teachers face, these chapters were constructed for easy, non-technical reading, by presenting just the facts—those basics that, hopefully, you will find familiar. However, the purpose of these conversations is to take what is familiar to you and reframe it into a perspective that allows you to teach WITH technology rather than teach THE technology! You are not expected to be able to DO all of the technology we discuss, but you need to KNOW about all of the technology discussed here, so that you have a complete picture of how technology can be integrated into teaching and learning! Enjoy!



A Conversation with The Professor: Preparing to Teach 21st Century Learners

Your students are of a different generation than you—not a very profound statement as this is true for all teachers; however, YOUR students represent a unique generation! We refer to them as “digital learners” because they were born into a world with fast-speed interconnectivity and instant access to resources through the Internet. They will never experience waiting for a web page to load on a dial-up connection, standing in line to register for a class by handing the registrar slips of paper, thumbing through a card catalog to locate a book, or sitting in one place to talk on a phone attached to the wall.



These digital learners live in a world surrounded by technology. It is all they have ever known. Even if they do not have immediate access to the tools, they are immersed in that world. They have seen these tools used, have worked with the tools owned by their friends or schools, and have developed working/thinking strategies that naturally integrate these tools into their everyday lives. Marc Prensky (2005), who coined the phrase “digital natives” in 2001, describes them as “native speakers of technology, fluent in the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet” (p. 9). You may recognize yourself as you read through the next few paragraphs—perhaps you are a digital learner as well, but be prepared! Your experience is still different than that of the newer generation!

As teachers of this new generation, we may never be able to work with the tools as easily or effortlessly as our learners, so abandon the idea that you must be the expert. ***Do that RIGHT NOW!*** Get that thought out of your head! You will not always be the expert.

There is too much technology out there for one person to know it all, so we are ALL learning—ALL of the time. You **DO** need to have a willingness and openness to learn and be taught by others—even students! You **DO** need to have a willingness to try something over and over until you get it to work OR be willing to seek out help! You **DO** need to be willing to ask questions anytime you cannot figure out what to do! You **DO** need to be expecting to learn something new every day!

This is part of the skill set your 21st century learners possess. They do this naturally and will not be surprised by the fact that you do not know everything! No one will expect you to be the expert, but your learners will expect you to model problem-solving and best practices of computer use for, and to, them. You must be able to incorporate tools into the learning environment that your 21st century learners have already adopted—including: