Vincent Lindquist
(Michigan State University) CEP 815

Vision Statement

My vision for education involves teachers and students working collaboratively on discovery and inquiry learning. Teachers must constantly be updating their pedagogy and content knowledge. Students must have opportunities to take control of their learning and seek answers to the many questions they have. A great education must equip students with 21st century skills and the ability to think critically about the world around them. A 21st century education does not mean using technology for "technology's sake". As educators and leaders it is vital that we make the distinction between "instrumental thinking" and "missional thinking". "Instrumental thinking" consists of a technology first approach, whereas "missional thinking" focuses on the objectives and how technology can assist in accomplishing these objectives. In "Don't Confuse a tool with a Goal", Stanley Katz explained pursuing the fundamental goals of education is the first priority and how technology can best serve those goals, thereafter. In my opinion, great learning experiences are fostered by educators who pursue answers to the following questions: 1.) Who are my students? 2.) What do I want them to know? And why? 3.) How will I know if they know it? And 4.) What will I do if they do not? I strongly believe that technology can become an essential tool in answering each of these questions.

First, teachers and students must build strong relationships in and out of the classroom. This speaks to the initial question of "*who are my students*?" Teachers need to take the time to understand individual students needs and interests. Strong relationships with students will encourage communication, transparency, and clear expectations which are essential for learning objectives to be achieved. Technology can play an important role in bridging this gap between teachers and students seamlessly, such as through class websites and online communication technology. Students and teachers may communicate professionally and interact with content outside the walls of a classroom in new and different ways due to the use of technology. Even before students step foot inside the classroom, they come in with having perused a wealth of resources. The increased use technology has the potential to reach students more effectively which can produce positive connections between the home and the classroom.

Second, 21st century learning must include student interests in curriculum planning. This addresses the question of "*what do I want my students to know and why?*" With information so readily available, content must be more than a simple recall and regurgitation of knowledge. Some may view technological advancement of information as a problem for students learning, however it is important that we utilize these advancements to accelerate learning and draw upon student interests. Using the technology to dig deeper into content and develop critical thinking and research skills are key attributes of life-long learners. Teachers and students must craft questions that lead to more inquiry, discovery, and

exploration of phenomena. We need to re-consider ["Bloom's Taxonomy"](#) in technology age to help us create a more meaningful and personalized curriculum.

Third, an excellent education must include frequent formative assessments. Teachers and students must use analytical data to cultivate positive changes in curriculum to meet students' needs. The question of, *"how will I know if my students understand?"* is a challenging task for teachers. Traditionally, teachers may randomly call on students and ask one question. This method fails to fully assess the progress of all students on all content learned in a given time period. New technology tools, such as clickers enable teachers to evaluate student learning much more effectively, efficiently, and in the moment. This also helps students assess their own understanding and provides instant feedback which is impossible for one individual instructor to do in the aggregate. Another example might be the gamification of these formative checks to make the process fun and stress free for the learner.

Finally, in terms of student growth and understanding, determining how to assess students can be achieved using technology resources. Throughout schooling, one of the most challenging questions we see is *"what do I do if my students do not understand?"* after instruction. Communication with peers via the web may provide a unique solution to this complex question. Students may feel more comfortable asking questions on anonymous message board and gain better understanding through collaboration with their peers. Although, when learning objectives are not achieved educators can grow frustrated. In the past, teachers might ask another teacher at their school about other methods of instruction, but would be limited to only the individuals that they personally know. Now, we have the ability to connect with others in our content area via social media. The collaborative ability has expanded exponentially due to technology. Sharing successes and failures in an online community makes professional development for educators more accessible and effective. Teachers can utilize these resources and borrow them for further instruction to reach the students who fall behind. Overall, technology allows a more personalized curriculum. It should be used as a tool in achieving the learning objectives and creating lifelong learners.