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Chapter XII

Mentoring and Technology Integration for Teachers

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the acquisition of technology literacy skills through the use of a variety of mentoring programs for educators. A case is made for mentoring all individuals in an institution in order to improve the overall integration of technology in a variety of settings. The chapter also provides concrete examples of three models of technology mentoring: Technology Champions, Technology Collaborators, and Technology Cohorts. Characteristics of effective mentoring are discussed as well as future trends in mentoring through the use of online technologies. The authors believe that through coming to an understanding of the factors influencing implementation of mentoring plans and the benefits and drawbacks of several mentoring models, the reader will be able to select an appropriate mentoring model to meet organizational and individual training needs.

Introduction

Many of us remember a mentor who has touched our professional lives and the qualities that made the mentor great. This chapter examines mentoring, its value in technology instruction, and the elements key to choosing an appropriate mentoring model. It also describes models of mentoring and elements of successful mentoring programs. Additionally, the role of a mentor is defined and the need for mentoring as a supplement to other types of professional development programs is examined. Through building an understanding of the role of a mentor, the need for mentoring, and the importance of technology mentoring, the reader will be able to select a technology mentoring model that meets diverse needs. Three models for mentoring, *Technology Champions*, *Technology Collaborators*, and *Technology Cohorts*, are presented as well. Finally, future trends in mentoring are shared.

Current thinking on technology integration points out the need for personnel to have "…easy access to professionals with expertise in technology and pedagogy" (SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium, n.d.a, para. 21). On the surface it may seem as though the availability of a technical guru or curriculum expert would be sufficient to meet the need of individuals trying to integrate technology. Closer examination of the problem, however, reveals a greater benefit to implementing technology training through mentoring. Unlike the gurus and experts, a mentor is someone who is personally invested in the success of his or her protégé. By implementing a technology mentoring program, institutions can support the development of ongoing collaboration while also providing technical and instructional support.

A Definition of Mentorship

What is mentoring? For the purposes of this chapter, mentoring will be defined as a type of situated professional development in which an experienced individual (the mentor) guides an individual with less experience (the trainee or protégé). While often seen as a tool for initiating new employees, a more thorough definition of mentoring includes opportunities to improve the practice of experienced individuals as well.

Why Technology Mentorship?

One obvious reason for implementing mentoring is to address the differing levels of technology proficiency within an organization. The Apple Classroom of Tomorrow (ACOT) study (cited in SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium, n.d.b), identifies five stages of technology incorporation: entry, adoption, adaptation, appropriation, and invention. As individuals move through these stages at differing rates, organizations may need to address all five stages at the same time. In order