Examining the Intersections of Traditional Learning, Character Education, and Educational Technology

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case examines how elementary education majors at a private Christian university prepare to implement educational technology into the capstone classroom management plan assignment using SAMR and TPACK frameworks. Also, the emphasis placed on character education and education majors' preference to be placed in traditional Christian-focused schools as part of field experience/practicum hours in preparation is unique to the Christian university setting. The classical/traditional school model's emphasis on literature and teacher-directed instruction prompted this study to equip preservice teachers with research-based frameworks to make informed decisions about instructional technology use. Based on the exploratory findings, adjustments in the instructional approach using such educational technology frameworks, particularly in classroom management courses, will be implemented during the next semester.

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, Pope John Paul II selected Isadore of Seville as the patron saint of the Internet because of Isadore's goal of acquiring knowledge from books around the world, reflecting the knowledge that scholars and learners seek in online, networked

spaces (Kelly, 2010). Maintaining a broad view of how technology and innovation will be implemented may provide educators with greater autonomy when seeking to blend content - in this case, religious subject matter with technological pedagogical content knowledge pedagogy - to ensure that teaching candidates utilize reflective judgment, inquiry, and objective evaluation integrating digital technologies into their instruction.

Baker Christian University (BCU) is a tech-savvy university, home to a total of 25,200 students attending in person with an additional 92,995 students enrolled online. The university invested 1.7 million dollars between 2009-2022 to improve the academic and technology infrastructure over 13 years.

BCU's faculty consists of approximately 92% adjuncts which is considerably higher than the 50% national average as of 2015 (Anthony et al., 2020). Such a high percentage can present both advantages and challenges. In this case, the high percentage of adjunct faculty may contribute to the inconsistencies in how educational technology is addressed in instructional methods courses for teacher education programs. There also may be a lack of communication on the expectations the university has with faculty regarding educational technology.

Before this case study was conducted, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE, 2024) Standards had been the main resource for covering the topic of educational technology in the ELM-250 course, which has a primary focus on matters of classroom management. Primarily, the only emphasis had been on the topic of digital citizenship, since it directly related to the topic of classroom management.

Common practice for a course like classroom management is to include resources from the ISTE since these standards have been adopted by approximately 50% of states to support teachers in educational technology use (Hamilton et al., 2016). The 2024 ISTE Standards for Educators not only address digital citizenship and ethical uses but also instructional matters. For example, the ISTE Standard 2.6.b (Facilitator), which is labeled as Foster Classroom Management of Tech, states to "manage the use of technology, and student learning strategies in digital platforms, virtual environments, hands-on makerspaces and in the field." (para. 7).

Even though technology is an emphasis, traditional and classical approaches to teaching and learning are emphasized at BCU since the mission of the university embeds the competencies of character education. In this case study, additional educational technology frameworks of SAMR and TPACK were utilized to provide elementary teacher education majors the opportunity to leverage digital technologies in their classroom management plan capstone assignment. The integration of these two additional frameworks was examined to see how it impacted the modifications needed to construct a comprehensive classroom management plan since technology integration still plays a significant role in elementary education regardless of the

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