New Teachers and Technology: Positive Factors

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Each of us involved in encouraging technology for learning can list factors that inhibit the use of technology in schools. The lack of skills, confidence and tools are the usual suspects. When all these are present, many teachers still choose not to use technology. This study looks at five first year teachers who are using technology in order to determine the factors that encouraged them to be active technology users.

The subjects were selected from a pool of recently licensed teachers from eleven teacher education programs who are members of a PT3 consortium in a western state. Each program nominated teachers who were believed to be using technology in their first teaching position. Those nominated were selected based on their self-described use of technology, location in the state, grade level taught, and the students they served. The five subjects selected all are high technology users and represent the range of grade levels, locations, and settings.

The subjects will be observed twice, once in the fall and once in the winter. During these observations, the teachers, their colleagues, and their supervisors will be interviewed. The data will be analyzed to determine which factors lead to the teachers using technology in their first year. The ISTE/NETS list of Essential Conditions will serve as a starting point. We will also consider factors from the literature on the adoption of innovations and compare the strategies used to teach these teachers about technology.

Data collection will be completed before the SITE Conference. The purpose of this short paper will be to share our preliminary findings and receive feedback from the session participants.