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Pre-service Teacher's Perceptions of Technology Integration in their Future Classrooms

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McKenzie Scoffield and Jennifer Wimmer, Teacher Education

Introduction

Due to the increase in technology in schools, teachers are required to understand how to use the technology, and how to integrate curriculum with it. Technology is incredibly diverse and holds limitless possibilities to the new design of innovative learning. It is also becoming increasingly more common in classrooms through interactive whiteboards, computers, projectors, IPADS, chrome books, etc (Carr and Martin, 2015). However, most in-service teachers say that in order to incorporate this technology into their classrooms, they need to be well versed in how to combine technology with their curriculum (Kara and Cagiltay, 2017). The purpose of this quantitative research was to understand the perceptions that pre-service teachers at BYU have about technology integration in the classroom.

Methodology

To better understand preservice teacher's feelings on technology integration, I conducted a survey with a variety of questions. These questions followed the pattern of Hutchinson and Reinking's (2011) study *Teacher's Perceptions of Integrating Information and Communication Technologies into Literacy Instruction: A National Survey in the United States*. These questions were reworded to give us a better understanding of the educational needs of preservice teachers. We also wrote questions that would help us "understand respondent attitude" (Mcpeake, 2014), so questions were given on whether preservice teachers think technology integration with New Literacies is important to their instruction or not.

Participants

My participants for this survey included all elementary and early childhood education majors at Brigham Young University. This survey was sent through email, where it was readily available to all students. Of the 300 students, 36 percent, or 109 students, consented to participate. 107 of these respondents were female and 2 were male. These students were in a variety of different programs within their major including, 1st and 2nd practicum, student teaching, and general classes.

Data Analysis

After administering the survey and retrieving the results, I looked for general patterns and variation of the survey responses through descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2008). My analysis was focused on the 22 questions from the survey. We began our analysis with understanding how much information about technology they had already obtained, through their various stages in the program. We then analyzed the different questions in order to understand their perceptions towards the importance of technology for the teacher and student, and how adequate they feel using it in integration. These responses helped me focus my analysis to better understand how changes in preparing preservice teachers can be met. My mentor and I then met to discuss our results, focusing on these categories and the role of technology in teaching.

Results

This survey brought interesting feelings and perceptions of technology to my attention. When preservice teachers were asked how prepared they were to integrate technology into the curriculum, 50% said that they felt hardly prepared. When given a free response question asking what would help them feel more prepared, the overall conclusion was to actually see the technology being used in a classroom, and using the technology themselves. The survey continued to provide insight through the questions given addressing the importance of technology. When asked questions involving the technology the students should be using, the results told that the only technology deemed as useful to students were interactive learning games, and searching the web. Other than that, the majority of the results showed that preservice teachers believe that technology should stay as close to traditional and print methods as possible. When questions were presented about the importance of technology in the role of the teacher, the responses were quite opposite. The majority said that a variety of technology for teacher use is important to a large extent.

Discussion

Based on these results, I have found that preservice teachers feel that technology is an important part in teaching, but not with interacting with the students. Through the data analysis, I was able to see a common theme that preservice teachers want a sense of control in using technology. Many are afraid that putting integrated technology into the hands of students will not be beneficial for student learning. That is why technology that stays as close to print based education was suggested for the students to learn to use. Through further analysis, I found this sense of control and fear of technology mainly stems from a lack of understanding in how technology can be used. A common theme of knowing how to use technology, but not knowing how it can transform teaching was found. Through my own experience using technology, I have found that it is easy to follow a traditional method of direct instruction, using technology only to amplify the print based lessons. However, through further education in technology integration, I have found that the more prepared I feel to integrate technology, the more interaction with technology, and other differentiated modes of education, I provide in my classroom.

Conclusion

My take away from this is in order to ensure that technology is being used to its full integrating potential in future classrooms, preservice teachers need to be instructed more in their programs. Teaching them techniques and strategies in using technology before they enter the classroom will lessen fears of being able to integrate, and will provide more opportunities for students to learn through interaction. Professors, programs, and classes, in the education program should turn more focus towards integrating new and improved modes of teaching, and branch away from a traditional print based classroom, so preservice teachers can feel adequately prepared.

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