

## INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN ADDRESSING CULTURAL INERTIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper draws on the understanding that an educational reform can be brought by the effective use of technology in confronting cultural inertia, specifically by transforming teachers and their beliefs by catering to their professional development with a concern to foster innovative changes in classroom practices and by moving towards more student centered, glocalized and technology supported teaching as a way to prepare better students for the future. To make this happen, professional development and spirit of collaboration and experimentation are indispensable to the integration of technology into pedagogical innovations and advancement.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational, Transforming Teachers, Professional Development

“Anthropologically culture is a continually changing pattern of learned behavior and the products of learning behavior, including attitudes, values, knowledge and material objects which are shared by and transmitted among the members of society.”

~By John Cuber

In a circumscribed form culture means a fabricated organization which propagates explicit habits of thinking and living, explicit pattern of social interaction, explicit way of eating, dressing, sustenance, religious and scientific mindset and various material objects together with political and social customs, traditions and ornamentation of behavior which progressively satisfy various needs of human beings. In its broader sense, culture refers to all comprehensive habits of thinking which shape human deportment in all its aspects and in all fields of human activity. In totality, culture encapsulates the benchmark of human belief and behavior.

What if, thus acquired, natural, distinct, utilitarian, totalitarian and ever flowing Culture suddenly halts or chases? A culture which is meant to be zestful and diversified comes to stand still because of some rigid and fixed patterns surrounding the same. When something gets going it requires less effort to keep it going that way. Antithetically, if something is heading in a given direction at a greater speed, it takes a lot of energy and effort to make it go in another direction, which is the notion of inertia. The point to ponder upon is about how this applies to the culture of Teaching Fraternity. Once a culture, good or bad is established it is hard to change and it takes little effort to keep it the way it is, your profession is subject to “Cultural Inertia”.

“Whatever one believes to be true either is true or become true in one’s mind.”

~John C. Lilly

Beliefs not only affect how a person departs but what she/he perceives in her/his environment. “Believing is Seeing” is the new mantra instead of the old saying “Seeing is Believing”. When a person believes something is correct, her/his perception will look for some facts supporting that belief. Beliefs customize expectations as per one’s perceptions. The way a teacher’s teacher had taught them becomes her tradition of teaching.

Suppose, if teachers are told to use an innovative program based on a premise and if the program is in sync with what they believe they will acknowledge the means by which the program performs. On the contrary, if they believe, it is not worth it, they will look for some substantial loopholes reinforcing the same. So, it becomes vital to identify that the same event can be interpreted in different ways by the teachers. They entitle different meaning to their experience in order to reinforce their previously existing beliefs. Hence, belief is one of the significant components of culture which results in Cultural Inertia. According to Deng (2014) “Teachers' sophisticated beliefs about the source of knowledge were aligned with constructivist pedagogical beliefs and constructivist use of ICT, with one belief highly related to another”.

Cultural inertia refers to those blind perspective, convention and traditions which come down to us from our forefathers, in terms of teaching from our teachers and which we stick to immutably and irrationally thinking them as impervious and indelible. This kind of outlook makes us fixed and resistant to any change. The outcome of this inertia is that our society remains primitive in many respects and am resistant to modernization is quite apparent. Only education can break and should break this sort of inertia and inflexibility in order to bring a cultural reform.

Once an undesirable culture has been established it takes a lot of endeavor and energy to turn it around. Teachers are not merely the educators, but facilitators who can bring the change by confronting Cultural Inertia. Teachers have to pledge to it and ensure the resources and leadership is provided for as long as it takes to make the change. One teacher can’t do it alone, on the contrary abundant of teachers together working towards the same goal and it can be furnished completely.

Homogeneously, creating a better culture takes effort, but once it is established it is easier to maintain. Once it is engulfed, it has its own cultural inertia and it pulls people along with it. Teachers need to invest time, innovation and great endeavor in creating a positive cultural inertia and we can surely foresee its benefits. Due to prompt progress of scientific inventions and discoveries and technological advancement material aspect of culture has gone ahead of the non-material aspect. To eliminate this cultural lag and to bring about a cultural/educational change one has to intelligently integrate technology in pedagogical settings.

“Education must, be not only a transmission of culture, but also a provider of alternative views of the world and a strengthener of the will to explore them”.

-Jerome Bruner

The educational system should be framed according to the cultural pattern of a society we live in. If it is materialistic we should look for provisions to seep in the same. Persistently innovation is about a change in perspective or culture. Innovation in educational process doesn’t certainly require flamboyant and tangled answers. It can only be found out moving hand in hand and focusing on the following aspects with Technology:

- Technology inclusive pedagogy

- Globally driven, but Locally available-Glocalized
- Technology Rich Professional Development
- Social Networking as forward driving force

A hassle free remodeling and concoction of technology in pedagogy is essential to bring about a reform in the present education system. Intelligent use of technology in the classroom setting can be achieved by schools only if they solely focus on child-centered pedagogy instead of rote learning which is lecture based and maintained by “teacher-centered instructional pedagogy” where technology is mostly used to display the content and not as the vital element and hence no involvement of the child takes place.

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), (2009) summarizes that “incorporating technological tools in the classroom led to positive academic results and increased technological literacy for students”.

A more recent SETDA report, National Educational Technology Trends: 2012, identifies “four critical areas that need to be addressed in order to successfully transform teaching and maximize benefits”:

- “Infrastructure” – Requisite broadband affiliation must be provided at the appropriate time and place by the school, which is an essential resource for students and teachers.
- “Educator Effectiveness” – Efficacy of a teacher can only be enhanced by using coaching for teachers, repositories of education and a conducive and synergistic learning abode.
- “Innovative Learning Models” – In order to fabricate a worthwhile enlightening know-how, schools must take into account digital and online matter.
- “College and Career Preparation” – Technology supported teaching should provide a room to develop an attitude that can pave way to better prepare students for the future.

To make students more focused, marketable and in vogue, they need to be techno-master. They need to learn on their own as technology inclusive pedagogy requires some extent of child’s responsibility and self-driven learning as both student and teacher are in different shoes now. Teachers are mere facilitators and child has to explore a different horizon of his/her own capacities. Students can select their issues and topics, however teacher sets the goal for each child to achieve. Discovery of knowledge by active participation and self exploration will foster lifelong and substantial learning and to develop leadership qualities. Learning will also be experiential, exciting, self-paced and independent with a support system facilitated by a teacher and school authorities. Not just learning, but assessment can also be done online by further tailoring it out by the teachers smartly, keeping in mind the flexibility across the curriculum and to scrutinize children every step-up to the ladder towards their goal. Genuinely, to bring about this kind of cultural shift, teachers must learn to employ technology for effective instruction. According to Wong, et al. (2008), “Pedagogical innovations must be rooted in teachers' experiences of moving away from a teacher-centered approach to one that is more student-centered. Leadership and the climate of collaboration and experimentation are fundamental to the integration of technology into pedagogical innovations”.

A teacher can propagate cultural diversity by establishing a global community. Students doesn't only exchange their thoughts and learn from another country, but also can travel across for some purposeful collaboration using internet which is locally available. Global and local concerns have been brought together by technology and facilitated by the teacher. One can surely pick up technologies and devices which are prevalent, commonly used and easily accessible and forms an integral part of a child's life, for example, social networking sites, blogs, forums for discussion, online games, apps, etc. Globally driven-Local entities/devices can be made a part of it which in turn will open the gateways of Glocalized realm. Social networking in recent times has opened new windows and gates for learning from each other. It's important that these opportunities are used effectively to challenge your own stagnant ideas and practices.

Integration of technology is dominated by numerous factors which are directly or indirectly related to the teacher and the school scenario. To bring about an educational reform it is mandatory that "Teacher Professional Development" should be paid exclusive attention not just to infuse technology, but to enhance the learning experience of children engaged in it. According to Tondeur, et al. (2016), "Teacher Professional development (TPD) is a necessary element in educational change, especially for more effective application of technology to enhance learning".

Case studies by CISCO (2010), suggests that "Use of familiar technology can help students engage more directly with learning and gain confidence in their own skills". This type of inclusion has shown results for those who have not transcended in traditional classrooms. Teachers can integrate simple to use and understand technologies in a novel way, which in turn make teachers confident.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) notes that "Learning **with** technology is more important than learning **about** technology". Teachers will be more competent and confident in employing technology in their pedagogy only if they are well versed with it during their own learning experiences. This is affirmative extensively for technology which is novel and unique for a classroom setting. The teachers who want to employ technology at their own pace can make use of some "centralized online repository" easily available by some private companies.

## CONCLUSIONS

Culture is a very nebulous term. Culture is not a fragment of Education but it is education itself. The situation of the present student is extensively different from the previous generation student as the latter used to rely on the chalkboard, flash cards, flip books, chart-busters and unaided at times. The education pattern remained the same in spite of the introduction of slide shows and Television. Enchanting children with the novel and unique technology, flipped classrooms, simulation, etc. To name a few, will lead them to become a successful, updated and techno-sound generation of today and tomorrow.

According to Brad Kuntz (2012), "As teachers, we have the opportunity to foster positive changes to the everyday experience in our schools. Investing time in improving school culture is worth the effort".

Co-learning will take place which can further pave ways for a synergistic approach between student and teacher by active participation and mutual accommodation of ideas rather than traditional-instruction based stagnant talks. A teacher needs to become professionally and technically sound or else they will perish soon. It will lead them to objective, liberal and self-sustained life. A perfect blend of both material culture and non-material culture is the need of the hour. One person can't do it alone. Teachers are the sailors which need to collaborate with school authorities to integrate technology

in confronting the traditional ways and modes of teaching and creating a shift or reform in this cultural inertia. The efficacy of a teacher is magnified by inculcating Technology inclusive pedagogy which should be well localized supplemented by Technology-Rich Professional Development. This infusion of technology will certainly allow equal accessibility, better student's achievement and they will also get ready to confront global challenges. After acquiring finesse in technology inclusive pedagogy, teachers can make the teaching - learning process an exciting and pleasing task. Any sort of progress in Education will bring a progressive change in the culture of the society also. This form of learning will be less taxing for children. Hence, bringing an educational reform and creating a positive Cultural Inertia.

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