Failing to Support Our Struggling Readers

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Failing to Support Our Struggling Readers: Why Teachers Are Not Using Educational Technology

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Statement of Problem

– There is an increasing number of students scoring below grade level proficiency in reading/language arts.
– In 2017 51% of students scored below grade level on the English Language Arts/ Literacy assessment in California
– Despite the proven effectiveness of using technology to teach reading, 84% of teachers found that their school did not properly integrate technology into the classroom
– Although there are many benefits to using educational technology to support students struggling with reading, teachers are not integrating technology into the reading curriculum.

Citations on this page:
Roark, 2017
Milbourn & Sobon, 2018
What is educational technology?

Different electronic tools and applications that assist in delivering content and supporting the learning process while improving and facilitating teaching and learning

(Cheung & Slavin, 2013; Hasim & Gapor, 2010)
Literature Review
Benefits of using educational technology in reading

- Reading skills, engagement, motivation, and self-worth
- Reading skills: increased reading comprehension, fluency and vocabulary skills
- Students were found to have higher engagement levels, be more motivated to read, and have increased self-worth when using educational technology in reading
- The students found the technology to be fun and interesting to use

Citations on this page: (Hsin Yu, Chiang & Jacobs, 2010).
Teacher Perspectives

– Teachers were found to have both positive and negative perspectives surrounding the use of educational technology in reading
– Involving teachers in the designing process of integrating technology into the curriculum had positives effects on their perspectives.
– Teachers had a more positive experience when they had extra support.
– Teachers see educational technology as a supplement to their curriculum and not an integrated part.
– Technology integration is very complex and teachers find that there is not enough time to prepare and teach lessons including technology.

Citations on this page:
Cviko, McKenney & Voogt, 2013
Thoma, Hutchison, Johnson, et. al, 2017
Stoner, Parette, Watts, et. al, 2008
Methodology
Qualitative Research Design

School Site

• Private K-8 School
• 380 students
• 2 classroom per grade
• Average of 21 students per class
• Middle Class suburban community
• 40% students of color
• 23% of families receive financial aid to pay tuition

Data Collection

• Study participants were classroom teachers, technology integration specialist, library specialist and lower school principal
• Teacher survey sent out to all teachers
• Interviews with six participants: K teacher, 2nd grade teacher, 3rd grade teacher, technology integration specialist, library specialist and lower school principal
Research Questions

– Why do teachers fail to integrate educational technology into the reading curriculum?

– How does support or lack thereof from the school administration affect teacher’s integration of educational technology into the reading curriculum?
Findings
School’s Technology Practice

- iPads are not introduced to the students until third grade based on the school’s philosophy for technology use
- “Technology should be used to enhance and not replace what is happening in the curriculum” - Principal
- Small moments using iPads in K-2 grades during other subjects
- 3rd-4th grade: one-to-one iPads
- 5th -8th grade: one-to-one Macbook
- All classrooms have a SMART Board
- Tech is not used in reading intervention program but are recommended for home use
- These factors lead to a lack of access in K-2nd grade
Teachers’ Beliefs

1. Teachers believe that students in the lower grades are not able to use educational technology properly on their own.
   - Must spend extra time teaching students to use tech properly which they do not have time for.

2. Teachers view educational technology as something extra rather than something to help their students learn.
   - “educational technology is used as a tool to support an existing curriculum”

3. Teachers feel that it is important to maintain a balance between pencil and paper work and technology work.
   - “There are always ways to integrate technology into any subject or any project but you have to be mindful of picking and choosing the right times to apply it.”
Lack of Support from Administration

Teachers in the lower grades have a lack of support from the school administration in the form of:

• Insufficient planning time for integrating educational technology into reading
  “It is a significant time commitment to actually dig through and figure out ways to apply the tool [technology]. Especially for homeroom teachers who are teaching multiple subjects. They only have so much bandwidth for each subject.”

• Admin does not provide formal training of educational technology integration
  “You kind of have to find your own tribe to work through it with. I would learn about and how to use different things with my colleagues.”

• Lack of support in using and problem-solving technology in the lower grades
  “I think it would be great to have more tech support when problem solving needs to happen with the ed tech.”
Implications
• The school administration needs to provide teachers with formal professional development on educational technology integration with the technology they currently have.

• Teachers in K-2nd grade should be trained on how to use iPads and different apps with their students because there is a set of iPads that can be checked out from the library.

• Teachers in the lower grades should be provided with support from the technology integration specialist in finding and using different apps as well as problem solving when things go wrong during use.
Questions or Comments?