



Introduction

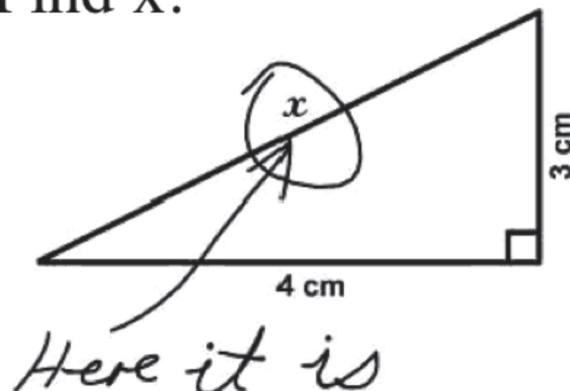
Educators today are facing perhaps the greatest challenge of their careers, both today and as the future approaches. Here's the dilemma we're in: Although we live in the digital age and in a world that continues to change exponentially, our educational systems continue to struggle with how to handle the digital revolution that surrounds us. For us to meet the needs of today's students for tomorrow's future, we must stop and consider, where are we to go from here? Are our schools preparing students for their ever-changing world? Or are they merely doing a terrific job of preparing kids for the world and the economies that no longer exist? We need to face the reality that our students today are not the same as they were a decade ago and the world they face is a much different place.

Getting It Right is written to meet the needs of district-level leaders and personnel, building-level leaders, teachers, and IT personnel who all share a goal of ensuring that the integration of technology has a direct and powerful impact on student learning and teaching practices within their schools and districts. The selected topics in this book are based on research, our own personal experiences, and the time we have spent advising districts and schools that are focused on improving learning through the integration of technology. These topics will challenge assumptions about student learning and great teaching and allow educators to learn and benefit from many districts and schools that have had successful technology initiatives change the faces of their classrooms.

The image below is found on many of the math exams that are given to students across North America everyday. Take note of how one particular student answered this question. In this case, it is a question that has no relevance to the life of a student beyond the four walls of the classroom. Ask yourself:

- Are we asking the right questions?
- Are we getting the right answers?
- Are we able to align technology and learning without asking the hard and clear questions about achievement, assessment, teaching practices, budget allocation, personnel assignments, staff development, and leadership?

3. Find x .



If we are not asking the right questions, it will be impossible to get results and outcomes from our students in 21st-century learning environments. We must make the shift beyond solving for “x” to creating, analyzing, and assessing what “x” can become.

Moving Beyond TTWWADI

Through our work, conversations, and experiences, we have connected with individuals who have good intentions but find they are stuck in the inertia of TTWWADI (That’s The Way We’ve Always Done It). This is an absolutely unconscious and unexamined attitude that exists throughout our daily lives. We find it in our various cultures, communities, core beliefs, home environments, and mannerisms. You can see it in the way we work, the way we play, and the way we communicate. TTWWADI informs our assumptions about life, especially those about the intersection of education and technology. But remember, you can do things differently. Change demands a conscious decision that requires a collective vision of what we want it to look like, the leadership that provides the mission for how we can get there from here, and the resources necessary to make the transition.

We, the authors of this book, have supervised the purchase of more than 20,000 computer systems, witnessed the installation of more than 100 networks, and observed the spending of millions of dollars on software, netware, and gadgets. Frankly, we’ve made just about every mistake you could imagine (and a few that you couldn’t imagine). Fortunately, we’ve learned a lot from our mistakes. Most important, if you take time to align your initiatives with your intended learning goals, every minute spent planning and questioning will save an hour at implementation—not to mention huge sums of money.

In *Getting It Right*, we outline the typical problematic areas of schools and districts. We also generalize situations that we observed in districts where we work or recount situations from conversations at workshops or keynotes. If there are areas in which you feel your school or district has already demonstrated proficiency or capacity, then move on to another chapter in the book.

What’s Inside This Book?

This book is designed to help educational leaders, decision makers, and teachers wade through the complexities of technology planning without getting bogged down. It will provide an overview of how you can address state, regional, or provincial standards; improve test scores; meet curricular requirements; foster relevant staff development; and provide measurable accountability for expenditures on technology. Throughout the book, you will find sidebars with advice and comments from people who have integrated technology initiatives with learning goals. *Getting It Right* also contains suggested resources, questions to consider, scenarios of problem-based learning, and examples of rubrics. It covers topics such as leadership, personal development, and strategies for integrating personnel, finance, and information technology.

It is no longer enough that we educate our students to the standards of traditional literacies. If students are to compete—and thrive—in the 21st-century culture, independent and creative thinking holds the highest currency. Students must be taught the 21st-century fluencies (Solution Fluency, Information Fluency, Creativity Fluency, Media Fluency, Collaboration Fluency, and Global Digital Citizenship), which are identified and explained in detail in this book as processes that can be learned and applied by students. We provide you with a proven multi-step process for each variable, which is designed to help you align the resources and personnel needed to support and strengthen teaching and learning goals. You can directly apply the information within your milieu, either as a complete book or the sections that are relevant to where your organization is in the implementation continuum.

Moving Forward

In our experience, we have learned that it is not enough for an organization or individual to “get it” when it comes to the alignment of technology and student learning. We are trying to ensure that educators “get it right” when undertaking the initiative to transform their classrooms and schools into 21st-century learning environments. Asking the right questions at the right time is paramount, but it is not as simple as building a plan and moving forward while merely hoping for learning to improve and instructional methods to change. We hope that by sharing our research and real-life experiences, you will gain the insight and find the solutions for getting it right for your organization.

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