



Invitation to Identify Educational Technology “Best Practice”

A happy man in a convertible drives along the road, smiling to everyone and patting the box on the seat next to him. He is proud of his computer purchase and feeling pretty smug. As he waits at a stoplight, he glances up toward a billboard on which a new advertisement is being posted. It shows the same brand of computer as is in the box on the seat of the car but advertises the latest version—newer than the one our hero just purchased. Needless to say, he is crestfallen and looks at his new computer with disdain and disbelief.

This recent television commercial provides a metaphor for the challenges educators face as they try to embrace technology (in all its forms) as a powerful way to impact student learning. One moment we are sure our classroom or our school is at the cutting edge and the next we are confronted with a new technology or a new use we hadn't known about or thought about before. Still others of us are paralyzed in our decision making for fear of being caught spending large amounts of money on the wrong things including training for teachers. One thing is certain, however, this is not a passing trend. Technology is here to stay and our challenge is to begin the process wherever we are and to keep moving in ever increasing levels of sophistication. It is with this caveat that the following invitation is extended.

As we move around the state and interact with teachers, principals, technology directors, and superintendents, we often hear stories about exceptional examples of how technology is being used to impact student learning at both the campus and classroom level. Therefore, we would like to have an opportunity to tell these stories to a broader audience in hopes that these “best practices” might inform the decision-making of other educators who are at different points on the technology adoption continuum. We acknowledge that the moment we identify and publicize a “best practice”, a newer exemplar will emerge just as a new version of the computer in the television commercial did. However, we propose that this process of identifying and publicizing best practices be dynamic: one that anticipates a new version and tells a new story each time one is found.

You are invited to look in your classrooms and at your campuses to identify truly outstanding examples of best practices in one or more of the following areas: Core Technology Skills; Curriculum, Learning and Assessment; Classroom and Instructional Management; Teaching and Learning; and Professional Development. Some concise assessment tools are attached that should help you understand our current definition of best practices in these areas. We acknowledge that there are more categories in which exemplary practice could be identified and that over time the “Innovative Practice” level will need to become increasingly more sophisticated. Consider this a starting place. Once you have used the assessment instrument and feel you have an example of best practice, submit the form nominating the classroom or campus for consideration. The following screening process will determine how classrooms and campuses will be identified as best practice exemplars.



Screening Process for Educational Technology “Best Practices”

- A. Nomination forms will be accepted for consideration during the spring semester of any school year.
- B. Nominated entities will be contacted by TCET staff via phone to confirm nominating form information and willingness to participate in the screening process.
- C. A review team consisting of ESC educational technology personnel, a TCEA representative, TEA educational technology staff, school district leadership, and TCET staff will conduct an anonymous review of the nomination forms to select a sample of the most promising best practices to receive a site visit. No more than 10 visits will be made in any semester.
- D. Using a rubric based on the criteria outlined in the self-assessment tools, a visiting team will observe, interview stakeholders, and validate nomination form information.
- E. Visiting teams will make recommendations regarding best practice exemplars in both the classroom and campus categories.

Recognition of “Best Practices” Classrooms and Campuses

Once identified as exemplars of best practices, selected classrooms and campuses will be profiled on the TCET and Technology Applications CED websites as a means of sharing such practices with other educators and to provide recognition. A special ceremony recognizing the best practice contributions of the selected classrooms and campuses will be made at the TCEA Conference each year. TCET will underwrite the cost of registration and travel for classroom teachers and principals of schools identified as best practice exemplars to attend and present at a statewide conference. Representatives from the selected sites will be invited to attend a “best practices” conference in order to dialogue with experts about emerging issues in educational technology. Representation from each preceding year’s best practices entities will serve on the screening and visitation teams for the next selection cycle.

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Classroom Best Practices Assessment Rubric

The following Assessment Rubric is designed to help campus leaders identify truly innovative and consistently high-level technology classroom practice in three key areas. Use of this rubric should precede nomination of a classroom/classroom teacher as an exemplar of technology best practice.

Directions:

1. Identify a classroom and/or teacher you think might serve as an example of innovative uses of teaching with technology.
2. Observe the classroom on more than one occasion focusing on the uses of technology throughout the teaching and learning process. Observe how the teacher uses technology, how the students react to the uses of technology, how the students use technology, and how classroom practice (management, communication, level of student engagement, etc.) is impacted by the use of technology.
3. Have a conversation with the teacher(s) and some students (where appropriate) about what you observed.
4. Complete the rubric by “bubbling in” your perception of what level (traditional, transitional, innovative) the classroom operates in each of the three categories.

Submit a nomination form (attached) for a classroom that could serve as a “best” practice example.

Core Technology Skills		
Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice
<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses computers and other technologies at a basic level; primarily for personal productivity. (Minimal use).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses computers at a more advanced level (e.g., management options, formatting features, automated features, etc.); peripherals are used appropriately on a regular basis; technology use is primarily supplemental. (Regular use).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses computers and peripheral devices transparently in the classroom; use is integral to instructional and management functions. The teacher transfers skills to new tools with ease. (Substantial use).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher is aware of instructional uses for technologies but lacks the skill and/or access to use these technologies for teaching and learning</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses technologies to support instruction similar to that which existed in the classroom prior to the introduction of technology (e.g., Internet research for a term paper has replaced library research.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses technology in unique and creative ways, invents new ways to use existing technologies to meet classroom objectives, and actively seeks out technology solutions when evidence exists that specific technologies are likely to improve student learning.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses technology for correspondence (e.g., letters, progress reports, etc.). He/she makes limited use of e-mail and other communication technologies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses e-mail to communicate across the network and navigates network environments comfortably. He/she uses a variety of network communication and resource functions to address instructional decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⊖ ⊖ ⊖</p> <p>The teacher uses network resources transparently as an integral part of everyday teaching and decision-making. He/she uses multiple communication technologies at an advanced level.</p>

Identify Educational Technology “Best Practices”

Curriculum, Learning and Assessment		
Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher primarily uses technology in the instructional program as a reward, incentive, or as an end in itself. Software is often used outside of the context of curriculum with little or no relationship to standards.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher regularly applies technology that supports the existing curriculum standards. Technology is applied in a supplemental manner.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher is skilled in engaging students in technology-enriched learning activities that are authentic, multidisciplinary, and directly related to academic standards. There is substantial use of technology-related, innovative teaching and learning strategies
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher uses teacher-centered instruction where tasks are usually subject-specific without real-world referents. Students work in collaborative teams only occasionally.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher regularly uses technology in varied ways to support existing instruction and to make instruction more engaging. The teacher uses cooperative groupings and other strategies (e.g., project-based learning) to support and engage learners.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher consistently weaves technology into many learning situations, and most learning activities are highly interactive and responsive to student needs. Students are highly engaged in learning supported by technology.
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher is aware of the Technology Applications Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) but uses these TEKS infrequently for planning and/or instructional purposes.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher regularly applies the Technology Applications TEKS to instructional decision-making; the Technology Applications curriculum is a scheduled part of instruction.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher consistently uses the Technology Applications TEKS as a part of the instructional program; technology is systematically used to teach the skills and concepts of the Technology Applications curriculum.
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher assumes the primary responsibility for classroom direction and serves in the role of “dispenser of knowledge”. (Sage on the Stage)	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher uses facilitation and coaching strategies with increasing frequency allowing for increased student independence. (Guide on the Side)	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher acts as facilitator of learning, allowing students to construct their own meaning from the learning activities. He/she is often a co-learner and collaborator with students as they use appropriate technologies to explore the curriculum.



Classroom and Instructional Management

Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher's practice is not impacted by technology; introduction of technology resources into the classroom may be viewed as overwhelming.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher is able to organize technology resources to support existing classroom instruction. He/she has adopted appropriate technology management skills and has developed schedules that allow regular access for all students to technology resources.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The classroom technology is appropriate, sufficiently available, and used seamlessly by teachers and students in the course of daily teaching and learning. The teacher and students may frequently reorganize the classroom environment in response to a change in activities.
⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher is aware of the possibilities for instructional management through technology, but lacks the requisite skills and access to make it a part of the learning environment.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher makes regular use of technology-based tools for instructional management. These tools (e.g., database and spreadsheet applications) are used to support existing practice and the teacher retains responsibility for managing and communicating student progress.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ The teacher uses a variety of technology tools to manage and communicate student progress. Students share responsibility for collection and reporting of their own progress information.

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Campus Best Practices Assessment Rubric

The following Assessment Rubric is designed to help district leaders identify truly innovative and consistently high-level technology planning, implementation, and results in Teaching and Learning and/or Professional Development. Use of this rubric should precede nomination of a campus as an exemplar of technology best practice.

Directions:

1. Identify a campus you think might serve as an example of technology best practices in Teaching and Learning and/or Professional Development.
2. Review any technology planning materials and the campus improvement plan to identify campus technology goals.
3. Verify implementation and results of any plans with a visit(s) to the campus.
4. Have a conversation with administrators, teachers, parents, and students (where appropriate) from that campus about your observations.
5. Complete the rubric by “bubbling in” your perception of what level (traditional, transitional, innovative) the campus operates in Teaching and Learning and/or Professional Development.
6. Submit a nomination form (attached) for a campus that could serve as a “best” practice example.

Teaching and Learning			
	Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice
Planning	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ There is evidence of <i>some</i> planning to use technology to provide curricular, instructional and assessment opportunities to enhance teaching and learning.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ There is evidence of <i>shared</i> planning to use technology to provide students with a variety of curricular, instructional, and assessment opportunities to enhance teaching and learning. Planning is <i>aligned</i> with the campus improvement plan.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ There is evidence of shared, <i>comprehensive</i> planning to use technologies to provide students with a variety of curricular, instructional, and assessment opportunities to enhance teaching and learning. Planning is aligned to improvement plan and <i>regularly communicated, evaluated, and refined.</i>
	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ Consistent with the plan, <i>some</i> teachers and students use technologies <i>to improve and assess academic knowledge and skills, and address individual needs.</i> Some teachers and students use technologies to gather, analyze and present information.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ Consistent with the plan, <i>many</i> teachers and students use technologies effectively in multiple ways to improve and assess academic knowledge and skills, and to address individual needs. <i>Many</i> use technologies to gather, analyze, and present information and <i>share their learning informally within the school.</i>	⊖ ⊖ ⊖ Consistent with the plan, most teachers and students use technologies effectively in multiple ways to improve and assess academic knowledge and skills, and to address individual needs. <i>Most</i> use technologies to gather, analyze, and present information. Promising practices are <i>formally and informally shared school-wide and beyond.</i>
Implementation			

Identify Educational Technology “Best Practices”

Teaching and Learning (cont.)						
		Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice		
Results	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is <i>some</i> evidence of improved academic achievement (e.g., improved test scores, writing samples, quality of student work) linked to the use of technologies.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	An increase in academic achievement is linked to the use of technologies as suggested by <i>systematically collected and analyzed results-based data/evidence.</i>	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	A <i>significant</i> increase in academic achievement is linked to the use of technologies as suggested by systematically collected, analyzed, and <i>reported</i> results-based data/evidence.
	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is little evidence that the Technology Application TEKS are consistently used for instruction.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is some evidence of use of the Technology Applications TEKS for instruction; small groups of faculty and staff use the Technology Application TEKS.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is overwhelming evidence of use of the Technology Application TEKS for instruction. Most faculty and staff work together to systematically deliver instruction on the Technology Application TEKS.



Professional Development

Professional Development						
		Traditional Practice	Transitional Practice	Innovative Practice		
Planning Implementation Results	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is evidence of <i>some</i> planning among staff for professional development in technology to enhance teaching and learning.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is evidence of <i>shared</i> planning <i>based on needs analyses</i> among staff for professional development in technology to enhance teaching and learning. Planning is <i>aligned</i> to the campus improvement plan.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	There is evidence of shared, <i>comprehensive</i> planning <i>based on identified goals</i> and needs analyses among staff for professional development in technology that enhances teaching and learning. Planning is aligned with the campus improvement plan and <i>regularly communicated, evaluated, and refined.</i>
	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Consistent with the plan, <i>some</i> staff complete skills-based technology training. There is some evidence that professional development is beginning to focus on using technology <i>as a tool for enhancing teaching and learning.</i>	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Consistent with the plan, <i>many</i> staff complete technology training and use technologies for enhancing teaching and learning. There is some <i>opportunity for practice</i> with low-risk feedback.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Consistent with the plan and <i>as a result of the professional development, most</i> staff use technologies for enhanced teaching and learning and <i>regularly expand</i> their technology skills. Staff <i>collaborates, shares knowledge, and coaches</i> each other.
	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Staff exhibits an expanding sense of confidence in using technologies for teaching and learning. Evidence (e.g., increased test scores, improved attendance, greater engagement) <i>links improved student academic achievement</i> to staff use of learned technologies.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Staff displays a <i>moderate degree of knowledge and skill</i> in using technologies for teaching and learning. <i>Systematically collected and analyzed</i> results-based data/evidence (e.g., student learning behaviors, staff development attendance) links improved academic achievement to staff use of learned technologies.	⊖ ⊖ ⊖	Staff displays a <i>high degree of collaboration, knowledge, and skill</i> in their individual and collective ability to use technologies effectively for teaching and learning. Systematically collected, analyzed, and <i>reported</i> results-based data/evidence links <i>significantly improved</i> student academic achievement to staff use of learned technologies.

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