

Mission Statement-Digital Leadership

Description

As I start my journey as a digital education leader, I must question what is going to be my driving force and what will be the guiding principles. I see it as building a house, laying a good foundation. First of all, I find a sense of purpose in serving the next generation. I feel responsible for the future they will inherit and for my children and their children. Just as wrong decisions made in the past resulted in the environmental disasters we see now; future generations will have to live in a world created by our mistakes. In this ecosystem or, more like, the food chain, whether you like it or not, you are part of the system, and whatever you do impacts the whole ecosystem (Floridi, 2010). My stand on the use of technology is “ambiguity,” meaning I have doubts and fears (Campbell & Garner, 2016). However, I cannot ignore the reality that we live in, a digital era that the next generation is being raised. It may sound cliché, but there is a struggle between good and evil, even in the digital world. There will always be people who refuse to do good. Regardless of all the risks, we must find ways to maximize the benefit of using technology and take proactive measures to reduce the possible risks. And have a digital leadership in promoting the “use of the internet and social media to improve the lives, well-being, and circumstances of others”(Ribble, 2010).

Trust

Trust in technology can be translated into trust with materials and sources, trust between the provider and users, trust between students and teachers, parents and teachers, parents, and their children, and between communities and government. You gain trust through fulfilling your responsibilities and by being honest with your communications and demeanors. I chose ‘trust’ as one of my values for the community engagement project because, in any type of learning environment, students should be able to put their trust in educators, to act in their best interest. Especially when choosing teaching materials online, educators must consider carefully to ensure the creditability of the source. Is the source created by an expert in the subject you are trying to teach? Is the information most current? Does it have any biased view? As stated in the *ISTE standards for Coaches 7c: Support educators and students to critically examine the sources of online media and identify underlying assumptions*. Parents trust educators and schools to make decisions to create a safe and healthy digital learning environment. This trust between educators and students creates the ultimate teaching and learning environment and the best outcome for the students. Trust in the two major areas; credibility and safety.

- **Credibility:** can parents trust the school on the source of teaching materials, schools abiding by laws and in compliance,
- **Safety:** online interactions and behaviors, technology usage, protection of privacy

When you gain trust, you have more freedom and security. Two of the major factors to gain trust is through having *responsibility* and *honesty* which are my next two guiding values.

Responsibility

Just as everyone has civic duties as a citizen, there are also responsibilities in the digital realm as a “digital citizen” (Ribble, 2010). With the recent increase in demand for distance learning, it has

become crucial to inform ourselves of the most up-to-date regulations on digital education. As indicated in the *ISTE standards for Coaches 7d: Empower educators, leaders, and students to make informed decisions to protect their personal data and curate the digital profile they intend to reflect*. It is not just about responsibilities in compliance but efforts to help students and educators make wise decisions on what is safe and healthy in the digital learning environment (Prensky, 2013, p138). Our goal is to equip students and educators to become responsible digital citizens and get the most desirable outcome from the use of technology. I have broken down the responsibilities of students, teachers, parents, and communities.

Responsibilities of Students – Self-control, being respectful, digital literacy, empathy, honesty

The Pew Research Center's 2011 report, *Teens, Kindness and Cruelty on Social Network Sites*, indicates that 25% of the respondents said that interaction on a social media site led to a face-to-face argument, 22% said that it ended a friendship, and 13% reported that it made them nervous to attend school the next day. (Ribble & Miller, 2013). Students must understand personal responsibility and recognize the impact of their behaviors.

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Digital accessibility – Ribble cited a widening gap between the impoverished and the wealthy, as 41% of African Americans and Hispanics use computers in the home when compared to 77% of white students. He also emphasized that educators must understand that technology is important for all students, not only those who already have access to it, in order to decrease the digital divide that currently exists (Ribble, 2010).
- Digital Literacy – teach students how to use technology
- Digital Protection – protection of personal data and privacy, following laws and compliance, having a security system to protect from the harms of viruses and spyware.
- Digital Education – examining the sources of media, finding a healthy balance of digital usage, teaching students electronic standards of conduct or procedure (Ribble & Miller, 2013), and their rights and responsibilities.

Responsibilities of parents/community

- Support – parents support the educators and teamwork with them for the well-being of a child. Parents set rules and boundaries, cultivating a character to respect others. And support students by becoming role models.
- Advocacy – Community efforts to hold social media companies accountable. Become active learners to address the issues keeping online communities healthy. Use technology to improve and solve problems. Become advocate and actively voice concerns for government to do their job. Teamwork with educators and parents in creating healthy digital communities for students.

Honesty

ISTE standards for Coaches 7a: Inspire and encourage educators and to address challenges to improve their communities. To achieve this and impact the communities, we must have honest, clear communication. How can we build strong communities on lies and dishonesty? A strong community is built on the foundation of truthfulness. Also, *7b: Partner with educators, leaders, students, and families to foster a culture of respectful online interactions and a healthy balance in their use of technology*.

Having truly authentic interactions and real experiences leads to quality relationships and networking online. Through honesty, you gain trust and respect, and communities work together to promote healthy ways of using technology. Wikipedia defines “honesty” as “a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, straightforwardness, including straightforwardness of conduct, along with the absence of lying, cheating, theft, etc.” Honesty takes courage and sometimes sacrifice; however, honesty without respect and a sense of community serves no purpose. “Students need to put a “face” to their postings and realize that they are interacting with real people, not just inanimate laptops or smartphones” (Riddle & Miller, 2013). Being true to yourself and being true to others for the well-being of yourself and others makes you a responsible member of the community.

- Expectations for Students “ academic integrity, internet usage, creating a true self-image, being honest about mistakes made online to correct behaviors

Conclusion

Recently there has been a significant shift to move students from digital citizenship to digital leadership to make a greater impact on online interactions. Though digital citizens take a responsible approach to act ethically, digital leadership is a more proactive approach (Ribble & Miller, 2013). Education for the next generation is like sowing seeds. Once I read an article about a man who started to plant trees in the desert. Everyone in his village said he was crazy and that he was wasting his time in vague. But he continued for 20 years, and later, the desert became a forest and protected the village from the issue of soil erosion and sandstorms. We may not see the profound result immediately, but still, we keep sowing seeds of trust, responsibility, and honesty into the digital ecosystem. We will see fully grown digital citizens forming a forest of healthy communities online. Just as Bible puts it, “Those who sow with tears will harvest with joy.”

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