

Professional Development Article Review

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Whipp, J., Wexler, E., & Keiboom, L. (2005). Using sociocultural theory to guide teacher use and integration of instructional technology in two professional development schools. *Journal of Computing in Teaching Education*, 22(1), 37-43. Retrieved January 15, 2010, from the ERIC database.

The article reports the findings of three educators who postulate that sociocultural theories can be used to support professional development programs in instructional technology. Their focus was on preservice and practicing teachers and their use and integration of technology in the classroom. The authors conducted a four-year *Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers in Technology* (PT) project (made possible by a grant from the Department of Education). Fundamentally, the sociocultural theory states:

Learning is the result of a dynamic interaction between individuals, other people, and cultural artifacts, all of which contribute to the social formation of the individual mind and lead to the realization of socially value goals.” (Whipp, Wexler & Keiboom, 2005, p. 37)

The authors draw from their experience with two K-12 schools – Woodrow Wilson School (about 760 students) and Adlai Stevenson Middle School (about 750 students) – who gladly welcomed the collaborative efforts of the authors to help their respective teaching staffs increase integration of instructional technology into their culture. Each school was well equipped with technology assets that included multiple computer labs, iMacs and PCs, a video conferencing center, TV cameras, and a wide array of sophisticated educational and commercial software packages. Wilson had cultivated a partnership with a local university and Stevenson

Middle with a local hospital to create a conduit of learning and idea exchange for their faculty and students.

Filtering their research through the sociocultural theory framework, the authors used these schools and their partnerships to describe three “activity systems” for professional development in technology: One system for preservice teachers, one for practicing teachers, and a third consisting of a joint experience. The authors contend that important support for use and integration of technology include three major observations:

- (1) Varied activities aimed at beginner and advanced technology users
- (2) Multiple levels of assisted performance
- (3) A collaborative culture for sharing work (pp. 39-40)

The article concludes with various lessons learned and how other teachers involved in similar partnerships with local universities or businesses are working to professionally develop their faculty and administrators with new technologies to positively impact student outcomes.