


Welcome to “WHAT DID I SIGN UP FOR!”

My name is Shawn Wheeler and beyond the fact that I was once where you are... Who cares anything else about me!

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Topics

- Solid Impressions and Introductions
- Planning & Facilitating Professional Development Activities
- Working with the BIG students
- Keeping your sanity (Time Management)
- Communication, Communication, Communication
- Keeping up with all of technology
- If you have specific questions, feel free to ask

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Today I want to talk to and with you about the job you have taken on... and I want to help you get and stay excited about the challenges you will face as a Educational Computing Strategist. Some of the topics we will be touching on today include:

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Introductions

Person to Person or Instructor to Class...

- It is all about them
- Who
- What
- Comfort level
- Anxieties



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In the interest of time, I am going to randomly ask three people to introduce themselves. Tell me (sir or madam) What is your name, what did you teach, where are you located and what is your biggest fear as a Educational Computing Strategist?

Just like the students who joined your classroom in the past, your job is to make them feel welcome and put them at ease. When you introduce yourself to the teachers on your campus or students in your classes, place the focus on them. Find out who they are, what they teach, etc... You can ask them what they like most about technology but often, a more telling question is what they dislike or fear about technology and why!

Next... Ask one of the three who introduced themselves to explain their fear if they have not done so previously. If they have, refer back to that fear.

In some cases, you will be able to address the person's fears in that class or meeting. In other cases, you will need address their fears at another time. Whatever you do, never discount their anxiety. Acknowledge their concerns, empathize with them and make an effort to help them overcome their fear.



At some point, you will need to introduce yourself to the staff and the students in your classroom. Now there are a couple ways to handle this opportunity.

One way is the Jack McFarland self absorbed narcissist... Play the video.

The other way is to keep your introduction as simple and short as possible and shift the conversation back to what is most important to them. Which is... them or what they collectively are doing in their classroom and look for a way to invite yourself into helping them use and integrate technology.

For instance an introduction could go like this. (Approach someone in the audience.)

You – Hello my name is _____ and I am your Educational Computing Strategist. What is your name?

Person – Hello my name is _____.

You – Hello _____ what grade do you teach?

Person – I teach ____ grade.

You – Oh that is wonderful, tell me _____ do you use technology in your classroom?

Person - Yes I use it in this way...

You – That is fantastic. Hey, have you heard about (insert topic here)? You may find your students will respond to it also. (Be certain to smile and nod your head as you say this last statement.) You would be interested in learning more wouldn't you?

Or

Person – No, I am not very confident in my computer skill.

You – Yes, it does seem overwhelming at times, what do you find you have the most difficulty with?

(Make a mental note then write this information down as soon as you can for future reference. In the weeks to come, look for opportunities to work with this person and help alleviate their technology anxieties.)



Professional Development

Development

- School needs vs. Your interests
- Alignment to school technology plan
 - Coordination
 - Grouping and sizing
- Facilitating →



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Developing, coordinating and facilitating professional development activities is the by far the best part of this type of job. However, there are some areas where you need to be very careful. For instance, there will be topics which you will find fascinating and you will think everyone should be equally as interested in. Be careful not to inject your personal interest on a topic without a real need on the campus.

Alignment – Your school should have a site technology plan. If the topics you are planning to teach are not in alignment with the technology plan, you should reconsider teaching that topic. Of course, there will be times in the education technology world where topics crop up faster than plans are adjusted. In these cases, it is usually best to amend the tech plan. That is not say you can't begin the planning process, you just shouldn't implement it without having your tech committee on board!

Some people love to coordinate workshops and a person who is good at it is worth their weight in gold. Whether you are good or bad at coordinating workshops, there are a few things to consider when you plan professional development workshops which focus on or use technology.

1. Consider the skill set of your audience. If you will be working with a group of teachers with limited skills you may want to keep the number of people in your workshop low so you have an opportunity to work more closely with them.

If your group is well versed or “they think” they are well versed, you may choose to keep the numbers lower in this group or have a second person in lab with you. Believe it or not, skilled computer users are more difficult to teach non skilled!

2. Can you group the teachers by grade or subject area? A shotgun approach to training is often used because it is the easiest to schedule. However, it is not uncommon for teachers tell you they are not interested in something because they don't “think” it applies to them. Putting like grade levels or subject area in the same workshop tends to be more effective.



Introduction Video

You will be dealing with the toughest audience you will ever face. They are tough because anything and everything they are or will be doing is more important than the reason you are standing there.

They will:

- Show up late and leave early
- They will check their work and personal email during your class.
- They will text and chat while you are talking
- They will take and make personal calls during your class
- They will tell you what you are teaching them does not apply to them, they are not interested or my favorite... I don't want to learn about that, I need to know about XYZ and it doesn't matter who else is in the room.



Facilitation

- Value time
- Cute is OUT
- Set rules of engagement
- Own your class
- Let them drive
- Smile, Smile, Smile
- Follow-up



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So how do you win these people over?

Value their time. If your workshop starts at 4:00 PM, then you start at 4:00 PM. This shows those who showed up early that you value their time and it show those who show up late that you value YOUR time.

Cute is not chic. Now I realize there are some people who think all those cute little games we have to play in staff development workshops are fun. If you are one of those, people, don't get offended but realize, most participants are there for reasons other than they really really want to be there. So don't waste their time with cute "STUFF"!

Starting on time gives you time to set the rules of engagement. While allowing a couple more minutes for the habitually late to get in the room. During the rules of engagement speech, explain to them that the phone needs to on vibrate or off and put away. Taking and making calls should be taken care of on a break and this holds true for texting. Side conversation are and will continue to be a challenge. You will have to figure out what works best for you with adults talking in your room. Keep in mind, talking louder never works well but talking softer will give you amazing results. Proximity to your naughty ones, it works with kids and adults. Shockingly, telling them to stay on task and not get ahead of you is necessary. Tell them they may know how to do what you are teaching but the person next to them may not. If that poor person looks at your screen, they will be even worse off!

During the first Star Wars movie (the one that came out in 1977) Luke was told to "Stay on Target" even though the two fighters beside him were blown out of the sky. Luke needed to stay focused so he could accomplish his mission and of course blow up the Death Star.

You will have people in your workshops who will play the role of the tie fighter. They will try to hijack your class into something they want it to be. Keep focused, stay on target and OWN YOUR CLASS.

Classroom movement is imperative in technology workshops. Do not get married to the computer in the front of the room. Demo what you want them to do then work the room to see how your students are doing. This is also, where team teaching is invaluable. But, even if there are two of you, be sure each of you work the room.

When you need to provide additional assistance, do not take their mouse. Yeah... there will be an overwhelming urge to do this, MAKE THEM DRIVE THE MOUSE. And in the rare occasion, you have to run the mouse to figure out how to do something, ask them for the mouse. Once you figure out the problem, undo what you did and make your student works through the process. This is also a good time to explain to them that you want them to be successful when you are not next to them.

Smile... Be happy... Smile... Be happy. You need to keep in mind, some people would rather get smacked in the nose then sit in a professional development workshop and they will let you know. Smile at them, welcome them, ask them to sit next to you and smile. Happiness rubs off as well as nastiness.


You will get questions that are not part of your class, it would be better to answer them later and yes, you will get questions you flat do not know the answer to. Make sure you follow up. If you need to put the question off until later in the class, write it down on the board so you don't forget. If you need to find out the answer, make sure you find and send that answer to everyone in the class. There may have been more than one person who wanted to know that answer and it proves their questions are important to you.



Personal Style, it seems so simple and obvious that it isn't worth talking about... But it really is THAT important. Everyone of us knows a fantastic teacher, you know the teacher that you watch with your mouth open. The teacher who has the presence in a room we can only dream about. That teacher... that all the kids love to death and best of all they learn. You know that teacher right?


We also know that teacher who is funny. The kids beg to get in the teachers class, they never want to leave because they are having so much fun with that teacher and again the kids are learning.

Everyone in this room has a personal teaching style. Do you recognize this person? It is Jaime Escalante. Now I don't know how close the movie Stand and Deliver was to his style, but he had a style none the less. Question for you, would his style work with adults? All we can do is guess. Escalante's style is his. Not yours not mine. And what works with kids doesn't always work with adults.



Things to remember

- Talk to
not down to
- Slow down
- Explain complex topics
- Geek speak 😊
- Small stage not big



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Some things to remember when you work with adults. (Funny thing, these apply to kids too.)

Don't talk down to them. Just because you know your topic and they don't, doesn't make them stupid! Think about how many times you have heard a staff developer talk down to the people in the workshop.

SLOW DOWN... You are not there to impress them with how fast you can blow through the information. Yes, get them out on time but do not forsake their learning.

Don't assume they will not understand. Take the time to explain topics to them. It's complicated is not acceptable. Many people will take that as you don't think they are smart enough to understand or... You don't know yourself.

Use real terms. Geek speak is okay IF... You explain the meaning of the word and put it into contexts. Use analogies whenever you can as it helps to connect the dots.

Don't use your classroom to rehearse your comedy bit or your next dramatic part. Yes, I am a firm believe that teaching is part showmanship, part sales, part storytelling, etc.. Find the mix that works best but don't overdo any one area.

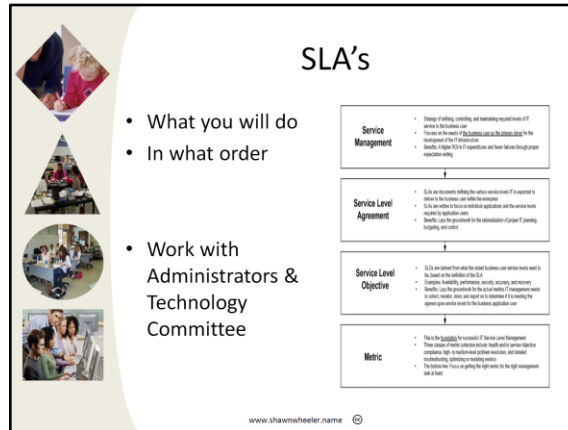
Just like the kids you taught, treat the adults with respect and dignity, they will be happier and so will you!



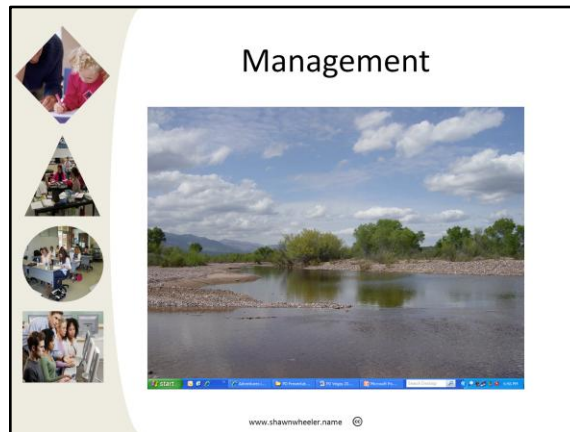
As I understand it, part of your role on a campus is to help manage technology resources, keeping records, level one tech support, etc... And my personal favorite dealing with copyright!

The one thing I can promise is... Something will break at the most importune time and some person on the campus you work at will swear the sky has fallen and it can't get up!

Get a grip on what is on your campus. It can be in a database base, spreadsheet, word document, it doesn't matter. What does matter is you know what is on the campus, were it is and what kind of shape it is in.



If there isn't a set of service level agreements for your site in place, create them and you may want to include your administrator and the site technology committee when creating these. A SLA is a written document stating what level of service your will provide. These SLA's will help you set your priorities for the campus and it will help the teachers you work with understand where their particular issue falls in the grand scheme of things.



The better organized you are... The better that desktop will look!



Can anyone tell me what the connection to this clip is and technical support for your staff?

Teach them to be self sufficient. Teach them to be self sufficient with solving problems and looking for solutions. Teach them to be self sufficient when setting up equipment.

If you think for a minute, this will work you out of a job, don't be concerned with that. The better qualified they are to take care of the little things, the more time you will have to teach them and work with them on the integration.

The bottom line, if a person is not comfortable with the technology, they will not use it and they certainly will not integrate it into their teaching.

Also, the recommendations for working with staff in a classroom setting holds true in a one-to-one or technical support role. You will need to remember, it will take longer to teach them than to do it for them. BUT, doing so will save you time 10 fold in the future.

Finally, you are a teacher NOT a technician. NEVER FORGET THAT AND don't let them either.



Communication

- Email
- Voice
- Person-to-person
- Image & text
- Video & audio
- Audio only
- Journals & Blogs



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Communicate, communicate, and communicate. Everyone in the room has a way they like to communicate. Some like the phone, others email still others like face to face. Communication is important but it can't always be on your terms. Work with your teachers on their terms. If one teacher likes face to face, then do it when possible. If you do have to communicate via email, you need to remember tone of email can be misjudged. Something you may consider to be funny could upset the other person. Sarcasm could be the death of you and your mood will affect the way you read an email and the way you write an email.

If you are in a bad mood and you read an email that increases your anger. Mark it as unread and come back to it another time.

If you use sarcasm, you had better make sure the reader understands your sense of humor!

If the topic is "heavy" or very important, let another person read the email to ensure it says what it needs to say. NOT what you think it says. This is also a good idea if you are mad when you write the email. Again, if the response can wait until you are cooled off... WAIT.

Journaling or Blogging

The idea here is to keep a running log of items you work with people on. Now this doesn't have to be as large as a Harry Potter novel. But it does allow you to look for trends, issues and identify areas where you will need to develop training. It also works as a great reference for you and depending on how you journal and what you write, it can be a great resource for others.

A picture is worth a thousand words and a video is worth even more but sometime just a voice with step by step instructions will work.

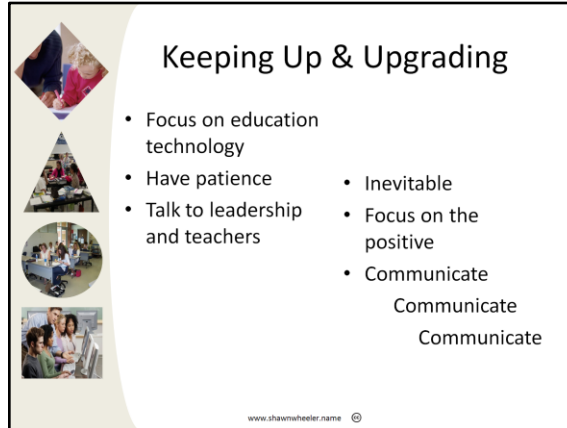
Words on a page with a screen shot is worth its weight in gold. Find a screen capture tool you like and use it!!!! Keep in mind, what you create may be useful for others so you will want to keep these items for future reference. Where is the question?

Some people have a tough time following directions without seeing the complete process. This is where a screen capture program works very well. In some cases it takes less time to create the video than type directions. Of course, audio is a key factor in these videos. Again you will want to keep these items for future reference. Again, where is the question?

Audio is a killer application in this job. It is not sleek and sexy but it is effective. Think about it, you give directions to groups all the time through the spoken word. Do your student really need to see your screen for your directions to be effective? No... Of course they don't. For some students, your screen is even a distracter!

There will be days when you need to get a message or a set of directions, steps etc... to a person. It could take you twenty minutes to type the information and word smith it or you could pick up your microphone, say what you need to say in 5 minutes and send it to them.

Try it sometime, you will be surprised by the responses you get.



Keeping Up & Upgrading

- Focus on education technology
- Have patience
- Talk to leadership and teachers
- Inevitable
- Focus on the positive
- Communicate
- Communicate
- Communicate

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Keeping up with technology, the tools, the changes, the implications and how to integrate them into the classroom will be your biggest joy and frustration.

How do you keep up? I am sorry to say... You can't. All you can do is focus on the things that will work in the schools. This doesn't mean ignore all the other stuff but don't invest a ton of time in it either.

Don't pull away from something just because it will not work in your school today, next week etc... Sometimes in Education Technology, it takes time for the schools, the hardware, networks and instruction to get caught up. Keep your eyes on it, work with it, talk about it with each other, the teachers and the leadership.

Talk to both the leadership and the teachers. Changes in technology will not get in the door without the support of the leadership and it will not get implemented without the support of the teachers. You have to learn to traverse both groups and be able to talk to them in terms that are meaning full to each group.

Upgrades and Updates

Changes in technology and software are a fact of life and the speed of change is far faster than most of our comfort level. This is true of the people you will support and some of them will express to you how much they dislike the changes YOU force on them.

It is funny, educators ask students to change each day they walk into a school yet this same group of people will push back each time you ask them to change the way they do something.

When you have the opportunity to explain a change in technology to the staff, make every effort to focus on the positives of the change. Make an effort to word it as what IT is doing for them versus to them. Again, focus on the positive changes and how it will help them do their job easier or faster.

Try to anticipate the questions they will have and answer them in an email or presentation to the staff. Be certain to explain the plan, process of the change and the timeline. If anything changes, make sure you communicate that information as well. Tell them, Tell them, tell them again and again and again. The more you communicate with your staff, the better your relationship will be with them.

If something goes wrong, be honest, tell them what is broken. Tell them in technical terms and plain English!



You have entered the best job you can have in education. You get to teach, you get to work with technology and what you do will make a difference in the lives of kids!