Teacher Talk in collaboration with OECD "Technology in the Classroom: Today and Tomorrow"

Sunday, October 8ᵗʰ, 2017, 1-1.45pm

- **Jan Peter aus dem Moore,** Associate Partner,McKinsey & Company, UAE

- **Mona Almarzooqe**, teacher, Al Reyada School, UAE

- **Paul Solarz**, Westgate Elementary School, USA

Moderated/Facitlitated by: **Alfonso Echazarra**, Analyst, Policy Advice and Implementation, Directorate for Education and Skills OECD

Proficiency in Information and communication technology (ICT) is progressively becoming essential for success in life and work. Is technology redefining what is important for students to know and be able to do?

The value of technology in the classroom depends on how and when a teacher uses it, said Echazarra. Technology can allow for flexible and deeper learning, it can connect teachers and students with others in their community and experts and experiences they would never be able to have without it.

The challenges, however, are formidable: how can busy teachers keep up with the changes, make sure students are learning and not just consuming, and how do they filter through and choose between hundreds of apps, websites and programs that are available?

After years of trying to avoid technology, Solarz finally embraced it on the job and says he learns just as much from his students as he does through his own research. Students in his classroom participate in Passion Time, a six-week process they learn about something important to them, catalogue the process in a blog online, where people can read and comment, and make a video about their experience and share it on YouTube.

Solarz, who relies on students to help each other when they have grasped a concept, even uses video to gain evidence of how students are processing what they are learning. "They get one take and they can make as many mistakes as they want as they go," he said.

At Al Reyada School Almarzooqe uses What'sApp and Skype to get students solving problems and drawing on their mobiles. "I give them special lessons about how to use technology, like the school pad, the graphic calculator, so that the students will be able to save time," she said. "You all know that we have a huge curricula and we try to pass information to students without wasting time, especially as we know as students waste their time on their mobile."

Technology is also an effective tool to keep students up-to-date on their studies when they have to be absent, she said.

Moore pointed out the goal was to move to action and creative skills. "It's not about adding more skills to the current landscape that is quite crowded," he said. He also encouraged teachers to work with each other on this developing area. "Don't be afraid of it and embrace it and don't go alone," he said. "Share with your colleagues, have a deliberate discussion about your experience."

Teachers who lead the charge to teach using technology need to be fully supported by their administrations, said Solarz. "My principal came to me and said 'I'm looking for risk-takers, I'm looking for people who are going to seek new technology,'" he said. "I think you need a school administrator who is willing to be very supportive when you make mistakes so it doesn't come out in your evaluation."

There is also so much available to them that teachers also need access to filters that help them choose what technology to use, particularly when they have limited classroom budgets. "I love having the autonomy to use whatever I choose in my classroom," said Solarz, who admitted the task gets time-consuming and overwhelming. "It would be great if someone would do that for me. A place to find information catalogued by purpose and teachers thinking outside about the box about how to use it and how much it costs."

Main Takeaway: Teachers who embrace technology can better connect with their students, who are already fluent in everything from YouTube to What'sApp.