

Leading 21st Century Schools: Harnessing Technology and Achievement, by L. Schrum and B. Levin (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2009, 212 pp.)

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One of the greatest challenges for twenty-first educational leaders in the K-12 sector is the expectation by parents, students, and teachers that technology will be integrated into schools in ways that are pedagogically sound as well as bleeding edge. In the United States, this expectation is additionally fuelled by the National Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for Administrators. Revised in early 2009, these standards address five areas: visionary leadership, digital-age learning culture, excellence in professional practice, systemic improvement, and digital citizenship. Each is intelligently and practically explored in Lynne Schrum and Barbara Levin's *Leading 21st century schools: Harnessing technology and achievement*.

Schrum and Levin's book offers a rich and diverse discussion of leadership strategies and technology-focused knowledge that will assist principals, consultants, and technology coordinators in their work as technology stewards for education. As the authors point out, many of today's educational leaders neither grew up in the digital age nor have they necessarily been trained in the use of technology for education. Therefore, a book that meets its promise of simplifying the quagmire of Web 2.0 and other technologies in the pursuit of "tech-savvy school[s] that deliver academic success" is a valuable resource.

As educators with extensive expertise in information and educational technologies in the elementary and secondary sectors, as well as higher education, Schrum and Levin have organized their discussion into four parts. The first section is called 21st Century Schools: A New World for Administrators, Teachers, and Students, and provides the framework for the rest of the book. Ideas about information literacy, today's students and teachers, and an introduction to the aforementioned standards are explored. Then, in Part II, called New Tools and Strategies for Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century, the reader is introduced to a wide cross-section of Web 2.0 tools and strategies for use in learning contexts. Impressively, the authors' discussions are sufficiently detailed to hold the interest of those already acquainted with Web 2.0 and clear and straightforward enough to be useful to the neophyte. In Part III, the

authors tackle the general and specific issues of leadership when appropriate deployment and use of educational technology is the goal.

For this reader, while there are many thoughtful and practical gems throughout this book, two stand out. The first pertains to the authors' presentations of the citizens of contemporary schools. The authors, for example, know well the skills and dispositions of the technically savvy Millennials who presently comprise much of the student population in our schools. The authors are also aware of and sensitive to the life experience and expertise of those in positions of leadership who, for the most part, belong to the Baby Boomer generation. Any examination of educational technology in our schools must start here, knowing the players, their strengths, inclinations, and differences.

Responding to the needs of the teacher who must manage the twenty-first century classroom, the second gem is the commonsensical information offered about specific technologies. Certainly, there is no shortage of tools from which to choose as well as an overwhelming quantity of ideas, applications, and strategies to explore. Recognizing that more is not always better, the authors have done a fine job in distilling what we need to know from what the technically overenthusiastic might wish us to know.

Also noteworthy are a number of features that increase this book's usability. Every chapter sets out its specific direction with a bulleted list of items to be covered; stories by principals and other "ed tech" leaders; suggested activities; and resources are likewise provided. Further resources, a glossary, and a comprehensive references list are found at the end of the book.

In closing, Schrum and Levin have made an important contribution to the literature of educational technology and leadership as well as the real world that educators experience every day as they work to ensure student achievement through, among other things, appropriate use of technology. As Fullan (2001) has stated, leadership in the context of complex change requires strong moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, building relationships, creating and mastering knowledge, and coherence making. Given the complexity of this kind of leadership, resources such as Schrum and Levin's are significant in their value.

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