TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:

Educator Perspectives on Integrating Technology in the Early Grades

With the support of the Grable Foundation, the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College spent two years learning from educators about what technology means to them. We conducted interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, and hosted a convening with educators from across Western PA.

103
EDUCATORS
Teachers, Administrators, Coaches, Directors, Community Partners

43
DISTRICTS & ORGANIZATIONS
Across Resource Levels
Public, Private, Charter

7
COUNTIES
Rural, Urban, Suburban
Allegheny, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland

THE FIVE THINGS EDUCATORS ARE THINKING ABOUT...

1

BALANCING TECHNOLOGY
Educators are continuously exploring what works for children, families, and themselves as they incorporate technology into their daily practice. For example, educators are asking questions such as: What is the ideal blend between using new innovations and traditional teaching methods?

2

EQUITY & ACCESS
Schools, families, and classrooms offer different opportunities for children to engage with technology and educators are considering how to support equal access.

3

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
Technology affords opportunities for educators to connect with families in innovative ways. Educators continue to think about new roles and responsibilities of being media mentors and stewards of technology for families.

4

RESOURCES & SUPPORT
Educators are eager for tangible guidance around intentionally integrating technology into their existing curricula and practice. They are also seeking principles of technology use that will outlast particular apps and devices as well as autonomy to explore innovations.

5

COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES
Educators value learning from and with their peers as they explore new strategies for using technology in their classrooms.

At the Fred Rogers Center, we value Fred Rogers' idea that children learn and grow best through the relationships they have with the adults in their lives. With this in mind, we focused conversations with educators around technology in four areas of a child's life.

THE CHILD

As educators think about what technology means for the children in their classrooms, they reflect on their own emotions towards technology. Many feel both frustration and fear in addition to excitement and hope around the possibilities of new innovations. Educators discuss children's perceptions of technology as a tool *and* as a toy as well as the importance of equity and access for children from all backgrounds.

THE SCHOOL

Educators appreciate autonomy to use technology in ways they know is best for their own students. Time to intentionally explore new innovations is also useful. They talk about the value of building a community of practice with other teachers around the topic of technology and the ability to share resources and supports with one another.

THE FAMILIES

Technology integration in education is new for families as well as educators. By keeping empathy central to the conversation, educators can use technology in service of strengthening relationships between school and home. Educators share successes and challenges when working with families around and with new technologies.

THE CLASSROOM

Educators prioritize using technology for a purpose rather than just for the sake of using technology. They acknowledge there is not one "right" way to integrate innovations. They talk about the benefit of using technology to enhance and transform pedagogy as well as the value of teaching content and building relationships. They also wonder about the impact of technology on child development and social and emotional learning skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.