



One-to-One

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Dear Colleague,

Welcome to the July/August edition of our AALF newsletter. This month AALF

President, Bruce Dixon writes about rethinking the curriculum; **Susan Einhorn**, Executive Director of AALF, shares her summer work with you, and **Karen Ward**, Manager of Communications and Coaching/Consulting, reflects on the importance of using the right tools to help us think about our work as well as the support AALF coaches are ready to provide for schools and districts. **McNairy County School Board** in Tennessee shares their work and lessons they have learned since implementing their 1-to-1 classes. You will want to be sure you read the details about upcoming AALF **Leadership Institutes** and the **Anytime Anywhere Teaching and Learning Academy** for teachers and leaders.

Enjoy!



President's Message

The 'Precious' Curriculum

By **Bruce Dixon**, President

[Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation](#)



Let us reflect for a moment. When we talk about transforming learning, what are we trying to say?

Put simply, technology gives students the power to transform both how they learn and what they learn. And by transform we are not talking just about changing the appearance or form of the how or what of learning, but changing the very nature of what makes up learning.

We've only seen a tiny glimpse of what is possible. We can find a number of stories from exceptional teachers who have taken up the challenge of proving what can be achieved. But what has been the exception must now become the

what can be achieved. But, what has been the exception must now become the norm. Our students, all of them, deserve no less.

So, we've really only just begun. That beginning meant we had to give everyone access to technology - kids and teachers alike. When we do that we find many exceptional, courageous teachers to show us what is now possible with learning in technology-rich classrooms.

And what happens in classrooms around the world is guided by what we describe as curriculum, and it is curriculum that is now the real source of our dilemma.

To illustrate, I'm reminded of a story from Seymour Papert that gives us a context....he calls it the Parable of the Jet-Powered Stage Coach.

".....imagine an early nineteenth century engineer concerned with the improvement of cross-continental transportation. Someone comes to him with a design for a jet engine. 'Great,' the engineer says 'we'll attach this to stagecoaches to assist the horses.' When they try they soon see that there is a danger that the engine would shake the vehicle to pieces. So they make sure that the power of the engine is kept down to a level at which it would not do any harm. (It is not on record whether it did any good.)"

Seymour Papert. *Technology in the Schools: to support the system or render it obsolete*, Milken Exchange on Education, July 1998.

Papert uses this parable in the context of schools. I think it is even more appropriate in the context of curriculum. For too long we have ensured that the power of the engine - technology - was kept down to a level at which it would not do any harm - to curriculum. We can no longer 'bolt on' to our existing notions of curriculum. We have to rethink curriculum, reconstruct it. We need to re-engineer curriculum. Put simply, our 'smokestack' curriculum is no longer appropriate for a knowledge world. When we give students access to laptops as a natural part of their learning, the door is opened for us to do something significant. Let us not allow this opportunity to pass.

Re-engineering does not just mean doing different things, or doing things differently. It means completely rethinking our notion or our understanding of what curriculum is or what it should be. We are way too precious about curriculum as it is provided today; the way we interpret it, the way we defer to it, and the perception we build of the role of curriculum in the broader public eye. If we are to seize the opportunity offered to us at this time, we should start by trying to establish some basic principles that can guide our thinking forward more clearly.

Let us first acknowledge that we are not trying to throw out the concept of a reference or guiding framework. What we have to develop are the basic principles for establishing a curriculum of knowledge. Let us examine these basic principles:

Curriculum must be built around core values: love of learning, lifelong learning, learning how to learn, working collaboratively. They are already out there and being valued in so many classrooms. We just have not taken them seriously in the context of what is now possible.

Curriculum should be simple. Curriculum is supposed to be the guiding light. If we are supposed to be following it, then let us start by making it less complex. We have compartmentalized 'school learning' so much that we have created a repertoire, an industry of assessment grids and rubrics that have become ends in themselves. Let us get back to our founding objectives, our real purpose for it all. We are trying to develop active learners who love learning, who know how to learn and adapt rapidly, and who can build their own knowledge from information they discover. Simple.

Curriculum should be relevant and authentic. As Drucker so succinctly defines it, 'Knowledge is simply information endowed with relevance and purpose.' There's not a lot of relevance in much of our curriculum today, and certainly too little purpose. So let us think of learning just-in-time....not always just-in-case.

Curriculum should be a living framework, built around thinking. If we keep it simple and focused around our core values, we can do what we like in terms of the strategies we use to deliver it, without

around our core values, we can do that the same in terms of the strategies we use to deliver it, without losing sight of those things we stand for, our values.

Curriculum should be leverage-able. Why do we think that so much of what we learn under the guise of curriculum is an end in itself? It is sad indeed to think that we do not seek to use curriculum more often as a springboard to great teachable moments, to create wonderful tensions of thought, rather than stay within the safe confines it can be seen to offer. In some ways we may have developed a curriculum of the scared. Now is the time for the curriculum of the courageous.

Curriculum should be transparent. What is the real objective of curriculum? To provide a purpose, a reason for learning. Too often it does just the opposite. We must engage, excite and enthuse our students about what opportunities learning offers, and we cannot do that if we continue to cloak our curriculum in shrouds of 'you need to know this'. Is there not so much out there that can be learned that our focus should now be on making it accessible, desirable and useful?

Curriculum should be rigorous. The minute we start tinkering with curriculum, we are accused of softening it. Why? Are we scared that if we make the wrong investment in the early years of schooling, it will take many years to become evident, by which time the damage may be done and be irreparable?

Let us never take that responsibility for granted, but let us also not deny the bigger responsibility we have to all young students who enters our classrooms to give them learning that is relevant, useful, and appropriate for the world they will enter when they leave our classrooms....and in the process it will be more rigorous and demanding than the habits we have delivered in the past.

Let us dare to step into the future and stop teaching from our past.

Best!



Edited and reprinted with the author's permission. The full article appears in *Transforming Learning: An anthology of miracles in technology-rich classrooms*. Edited by Jenny Little and Bruce Dixon, Kids Technology Foundation, 2000.

AALF Leadership: Executive Director News and Thoughts

Change

By **Susan Einhorn**, Executive Director
[Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation](#)



I've been very busy this July, attending conferences, planning AALF events, looking for new ways to support educators as they develop their anytime, anywhere learning programs. At ISTE's National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) in San Antonio, TX, I participated in both the 1-to-1 Forum and the 1-to-1 SIG meeting. The 1-1 SIG is only a year old and is already one of the largest ISTE SIG's, demonstrating the growing interest in 1-to-1 laptop learning.

At the annual Laptop Institute, held at Lausanne Collegiate School in Memphis, TN, AALF ran a series of Critical Conversations around leadership and vision in 1-to-1. These conversations generated some illuminating discussions as attendees shared both stories and questions. We hope all our participants benefited from these conversations. If you attended any of these sessions, please share your reflections with the AALF community. You can send them to me at seinhorn@aalf.org.

We've also been busy planning what will be some focused AALF events this fall, including the 21 Steps to 21st Century Learning™ Institutes and the Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy. If

to 21st Century Learning™ institutes and the Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy. If you're starting a 1-to-1 program or already have one and are looking for ways to develop your 1-to-1 pedagogy, these learning events are designed for you. Check the Events column below for more information.

At each of the conferences I've attended, I've been lucky enough to participate in discussions around some very thought-provoking questions, some more hypothetical than others. I thought I'd pass some of these along to you.

The US is electing a new president this year, which triggered some interesting discussions. Whether or not you're about to experience an election, imagine you are and are asked to be the Secretary of Education or Minister of Education or equivalent in your country. What would you do? Would you make big changes or try to tweak the current program? Why?

This leads to a question Bruce often asks and with which we often deal, whether in education, industry, or elsewhere - and on which we often don't take the time to reflect. Where do you stand in terms of change? Do you tend towards incremental change or do you see yourself making big changes? In other words, are you engaged in evolution or revolution? How do you determine where you are on this continuum? Is there a right choice?

Please share your thoughts and experiences with the AALF community. Send your responses to these questions to me at seinhorn@aalf.org.

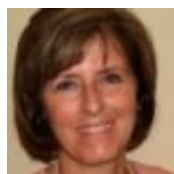
Until next month,

Susan

AALF Coaching and Consulting

Essential Questions-Critical Support

By **Karen Ward**, Manager of Consulting Services and Communications
[Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation](#)



If you want to teach people a new way of thinking...give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking.

[Buckminster Fuller](#)

I believe there are a variety of tools educators can use in building their knowledge about providing highly effective learning opportunities for their students. Common language can become one of the tools illustrated in the quote above. Let me provide several examples to support this statement.

I attended an international laptop institute in July where educators spoke about their experiences in creating and building laptop programs for their schools. It was wonderful to be in the company of dedicated and bright educators and attendees were clearly excited about the learning opportunities provided their students. At the end of one session the man sitting next to me asked if I might be able to clarify the speakers' main points. His reaction to my attempts at honoring his request reminded me of an earlier article written by Bruce Dixon, President of AALF. In his article Mr. Dixon addressed the need 1-to-1 educators have of building a common language about their practices and knowledge so they can effectively communicate with one another and use the information they receive to build their site laptop programs. Common language is one of the tools needed by all educators as we support one another in our important work.



Several days later I had the opportunity of meeting face-to-face with three of our AALF coaches. Both individually and combined, these individuals had accumulated a wealth of experience and knowledge about creating and building effective 1-to-1 learning environments. As we met we had the opportunity of

clarifying our thoughts and building a common understanding and language amongst us. Common language was one of the tools we used to support one another and further build our expertise.

[AALF coaches](#) use a variety of tools developed specifically for supporting 1-to-1 educators and teams of educators. Common language is one of these tools. Armed with their knowledge, experience, and other various tools, coaches act in a variety of roles including:

- Expert and consultant
- Thinking partner and collegial mentor
- Facilitator and useful resource
- Presenter and encouraging sage

We are excited to share the expertise of our AALF coaches. The goal of AALF is to ensure that all children have access to unlimited opportunities for learning anytime and anywhere and that they have the tools that make this possible. AALF coaches provide support for educators at all levels in achieving this goal. Please contact me (kward@aalf.org) if you would like to discuss the role AALF coaches play in supporting 1-to1 educators.

Have a great month!
Karen

Coaches Corner

Rock Solid Reliability

By **Jane Metcalf**, AALF Coach

I was the technology director at [St. Joseph's Academy](#) in Baton Rouge, LA for the last 4 years. Previously, I worked as systems and operations manager with Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation for 12 years and before that as system manager for Computing Services at Louisiana State University. I taught in Los Angeles during my early career and returned to college mid-life to earn a B.S. in Computer Science.

St. Joseph's Academy recruited me to manage a faltering infrastructure and support system which put the effectiveness of their highly respected 9 year laptop program at risk. I was instrumental in creating and building practices that have led to the continued success of St. Joseph's program. Besides the obvious academic and communication gains possible with a laptop program, the students learn to manage their own technology. Every aspect of the technology program incorporates students as partners. They are allowed freedom with their laptops and are responsible for the consequences of their choices. Students are expected to backup their own work and reimage when download activities slow their system. They perform basic housekeeping and troubleshooting before consulting the school helpdesk. Students sit on the school board's technology committee, instruct faculty during technology training days, act as teaching assistants to incoming freshman, participate in the laptop model selection process and staff the onsite warranty repair shop.

I use lessons learned in business along with my teaching experience to design school technology that works. I believe that rock solid reliability is required before teachers will fully embrace the power of technology. If the network or system fails once a teacher may try it again, but if it fails twice they will never use it again. My goal is that teachers and administrators never think, "I hope the network is working." Technology should be so reliable that questions of availability and usability should never even cross their minds.

During my time at St. Joseph's I was fortunate to have won a Cisco *Growing with Technology Award*, CoSN *Team Leadership Award* and special mention honors from *Windows IT Pro* magazine. St. Joseph's was awarded the *Catholic Schools for Tomorrow Innovations in Education Award*. I retired from St Joseph's in June of 2008 and started my own consulting company as well as coaching for AALF. I have had the



started my own consulting company as well as coaching for AALF. I have had the opportunity to be a keynote speaker at a Toshiba event in New Orleans this April. This spring I also taught Integrating Technology in the Classroom at Louisiana State University. I have been an AALF coach since spring 2008.



A note about AALF coaching support:

The goal of AALF is to ensure that all children have access to unlimited opportunities for learning anytime and anywhere and that they have the tools that make this possible. AALF coaches provide support for educators at all levels in achieving this goal.

Working with individual leaders and teams of educators, AALF coaches incorporate:

- Face-to-face and additional communication sessions
- Online learning opportunities
- The use of Web 2.0 online collaborative communication tools such as blogs and wikis
- Professional development support with AALF associates who are currently working in highly effective 1-to-1 schools

Contact Karen Ward at kward@aalf.org for additional information regarding AALF coaching support.

1-to-1 Teaching and Learning

Lessons Learned

Information reported by **Terry Burns**, Technology Director, McNairy County Board of Education

Research and experience have taught 1-to-1 educators that there are important steps involved in implementing a successful laptop learning program. This month's focus school district shares their planning and implementation processes with AALF readers.



The [McNairy County School Board of Education](#) is set in [Selmer, Tennessee](#) in a small rural area east of Memphis, Tennessee. The district has limited resources and the majority of students in their attendance area do not have access to the internet at home. But educators and community members within the district have committed to providing the type of modern learning environment they know will make a difference for their students. Their goal is to make 21st century learning environments the norm for all students in grades 5-12. They believe these learning environments should be

based on relevance, innovation, creativity, project-based learning, and real world simulations that include authentic activities. Their work has taught them some invaluable lessons. Some of these lessons are detailed below.

Lesson One: *Careful planning, research, and preparation are vital first steps.* McNairy started their 1-to-1 work by forming a committee composed of educators, students and community members who collaborated on establishing expectations for their program. The committee helped to identify and establish their current objectives and goals. This phase of their work also included having leaders and educators from their middle and high schools visit other 1-to-1 sites, research reports and other publications about laptop programs, speak with successful 1-to-1 leaders, and attend conferences. Teacher input was also critical in establishing their goals. The county decided to begin their laptop program in the six middle schools, grades 5-8, because research shows that this is the age when students begin to disengage from school. Educators chose to partner with the County Commission, School Board, businesses, and community members to support the program. All of these stakeholders have become relevant to the success of the laptop program. Terry Burns, Technology Coordinator for McNairy County Board of Education believes that involving business partners in the 1-to-1 program has led to other important work between the community and students. For example, community members throughout the county have been asked to speak with classes real work activities, and how important and relevant innovation is in education today.



Lesson Two: *Supportive leadership is crucial.* Burns believes that supportive leadership has enabled the county to accomplish as much as they have in the past several years. Director of Schools, Charlie Miskelly, supports the 1-to-1 initiative throughout the county. From the beginning principals at each school site have understood the opportunities 1-to-1 learning can provide for their students. Consequently they have been supportive in doing everything they can to insure program success at each of their schools.

Lesson Three: *Effective teacher development insures success.* Another important factor in their implementation program has been the provision of teacher professional development specific to teaching and learning in laptop classes. Laptop teachers agreed to participate in professional development during the summer prior to beginning their 1-to-1 work. The county established a partnership with a professional development team at the [University of Memphis](#). This partnership has been invaluable in providing ongoing professional support for teachers and leaders. Teachers also agreed to attend five Saturday sessions throughout the school-year. Teachers were encouraged at all sessions to learn from one another by sharing their experiences, new knowledge, and student work. Other teachers who were anxious to become laptop instructors themselves also participated in these training sessions as did principals from each of the schools.



Lesson Four: *Use a reputable source for evaluation of your 1-to-1 program.* McNairy County School Board wanted an outside source to evaluate their laptop program because they believed this would add credibility and objectivity to their work. They again enlisted the support of staff from the University of Memphis. Evaluators from the university participated with McNairy educators and students in gathering data, observing classrooms and interviewing students and educators at four different intervals throughout the school year. They are currently compiling this data along with results from state and federal mandates tests. University staff will present their completed evaluation report to the County Board, County Commission, educators, community, students, and parents late this summer. This report will be used to review the program before the 2008-2009 school year begins. Burns recommends this type of partnership for other schools involved in 1-to-1 implementations.

Lesson Five: *Communication with all stakeholders helps build the sustainability of 1-to-1 learning.* Another lesson McNairy has learned is the importance of communicating regularly with all stakeholders. They recognize that the success of their program is dependent upon a variety of factors, including engaging the support of their community. For this reason they communicate regularly through sources like the local newspaper, the [Jackson Sun](#), and the local news station in [Jackson, TN](#). Educators, including Terry Burns, speak about their 1-to-1 work whenever they get the opportunity. Recently this has included presentations at the Technology Conference in Nashville, TN and the [Lausanne Laptop Institute](#) in Memphis, TN. Burns says he never forfeits the opportunity to speak about the success of the program.



Outcomes: Although they are waiting for the formal evaluation from Memphis State University, McNairy educators have observed positive outcomes since implementing their 1-to-1 program. These include decreased absences, fewer discipline issues and more students interested in learning. Teachers believe that the creativity instilled in children through the laptop program promises success and innovation for the future. They also believe that having access to 21st century learning environments and tools has empowered students and teachers to develop higher order thinking skills. More than anything else they know that the laptop program promises success and innovation for the future and that it is succeeding in making a difference in the lives of their students.



McNairy educators and community feel they have made very positive first steps toward sustaining a 1-to-1 learning culture that engages students in exploring their creativity as they learn skills and processes needed for the future. As Burns states, "We must stay up-to-date or we will go under." (Quote from the movie, *Thunder Road*.)

Terry Burns is the Technology Coordinator for the McNairy County Board of Education. He can be reached at burnst@k12tn.net.

AALF Worldwide Networking

Our AALF worldwide newsletter readership continues to grow. In the past nine months our foundation enrollment and readers have grown to over 2,500 members. This is exciting news and certainly provides evidence about the relevance of 1-to-1 learning across continents! As our audience and support continues to grow, we are anxious to provide timely and relevant information regarding 1-to-1 learning and schools around the world. With this in mind, I would like to invite foundation members to get involved with the production of this monthly publication. There are several ways you can contribute to this important work:



- Get involved with a RTA group (Research-to-Action); these groups will continue to contribute to the '1-to-1 Leadership and Learning' column which explores 'best pedagogical practices'
- Volunteer your school to be a '1-to-1 Global Storybook Spotlight School'; this column provides an in depth look at 1-to-1 schools from the perspective of leaders, teachers, and students
- Volunteer to help with production of the newsletter; editors are needed as our publication continues to grow in breadth and depth
- Volunteer your unique suggestions; suggest columns or ideas you think would benefit 1-to-1 educators around the world

Please contact Karen Ward (kward@aalf.org or 425-223-3753) if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

Conferences, Institutes, Academies and Events



21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institute

This two-day institute, designed for superintendents, principals, and headmasters, will focus on the 21 steps needed to provide successful 1-to-1 learning cultures on their campuses. Sponsored by AALF and based on the experiences of thousands of laptop schools around the world, the **21 Steps to**

21st Century Learning range from research and resource assessment, through all stages of project and financial planning, communications, professional development, and deployment. Space is very limited for each institute, so register early. The next institutes will be held **August 18-19 in Lambertville, New Jersey**, and **October 27-28 in St. Louis, Missouri**. For more information or to register, click:

[21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institute- NJ](#) - lead by Bruce Dixon and Bette Manchester, Executive Director of the Maine International Center for Digital Learning. Ms. Manchester has extensive experience in 1-to-1 learning having been the Director of Special Projects for the Maine Department of Education at the time it established its statewide 1-to-1 program.

[21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institute - MO](#) - lead by Bruce Dixon and Joe Hofmeister, long time technology director at Cincinnati Country Day School (CCDS) where Joe helped lead the school's pioneering efforts with one of the first student laptop programs in the US.



Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy

This 3-day intensive academy will help you build your in-school digital pedagogical coaching team and provide hands-on experience in developing meaningful and significant learning experiences for your students. The Academy workshops focus on peer coaching skills and project-based and inquiry-based

learning. Academy facilitators include expert lead coaches and mentors, school leaders experienced in project-based learning, 1-to-1 teachers who are transforming the learning environment in innovative ways, as well as educational leaders such as **Will Richardson**, **Bernajean Porter**, **Gary Stager**, and

Chris Lehman.

The Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy is designed for school leaders and lead teachers from schools that already have or are beginning 1-to-1 and recognize the need to rethink their curriculum to develop a truly transformative 1-to-1 pedagogy. It is also valuable for schools that have had 1-to-1 in place for a few years and want to continue to grow their innovative thinking around pedagogy and the curriculum.

The AALTA complements the 21 Steps framework and expands the pedagogical and professional development ideas introduced in the Institute. It is also an excellent first step in an AALF Coaching plan. The AALTA will be held in **New Hope, PA on October 22-24, 2008**. For more information or to register, click:

[Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy - PA](#)

Events

Check [Events](#) on the AALF website regularly to learn of other events at which AALF leaders will be speaking or leading workshops. We look forward to seeing you there.

Do you have an upcoming 1-to-1 event you would like to share with other newsletter readers? Contact Karen Ward (kward@aalf.org) for additional information.

The Foundation thanks its partners for their support:

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