

ED\_630\_Unit\_2\_Personal\_Review\_‘Let’s Be Digital Multipliers’ by Marc Prensky (2009)\_by\_MessmanC

I have appreciation and respect for the ideology presented by Marc Prensky in his: ‘Let’s Be Digital Multipliers’ (2009). I strongly agree that we should teach to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs in which our daily lives are immersed in technology as adults presently and inevitably in all of our futures (including the new generations). Nearly all institutions and industries are so driven by technology which in turns interacts directly with our daily lives.

The technology world creates separation amongst those with access and those without this create a great divide to make that progression explode. While many fantastic opportunities are available with technological components, many inhibiting factors arise. With the discoveries and useful remedies meeting our needs, more challenges and detrimental issues arise.

We are so limited in the ability to be true ‘Digital Multipliers’ by limiting factors: budgets, policies, fear, school administration and district policies, physical limitations of internet access, and parent/guardian support.

Prensky proposes many wonderful ideas and implies we as teachers can be powerful multipliers. I agree when the above mentioned factors allow and work together we can be very key components by designing instruction, facilitating lessons, and supplying new technology.

The hurdles and precautionary plans for keeping our students safe and equal in measure often override the benefits. When we look at ‘real life’ measures and public education, we are often not realistic about providing equal opportunistic futures for our students. Until we have full control in equalizing all variables in our students lives, then and only then, can we draw from the same background and create the same instructional opportunities. The worries are that we be able to create a George Orwell’s, 1984, Big Brother society where there is no value to being ‘different’ but all needing to be alike or else. But if we truly educate our new generations with ethics that coincide with the growth of our digital world, these fears will not transpire.

With that said, can we conquer the divide for some in allowing differentiation in education with acceptable utilization of tools that eliminate disabilities that hinder opportunities to contribute to the success of all and amazing outcomes for the future? Then how shall we make these opportunities come to fruition? Some public school institutions in larger cities reap vast amounts of recycled electronics where small rural usually do not have the same opportunities. In my small rural district one class had the opportunity to close the divide when offered to a

class set of iPads but due to the unfair concerns they were denied. Security issues with limited resources are always a concern too. This does sound horrific as most of us would agree, to better some that might start a trend of financial or material support from local donors that we could build on or add to with fewer encumbrances by the whole and make improvements that are more of a reasonable in cost. If we targeted a certain grade level to ensure all at one grade benefitted wouldn't be reasonable that it would continue to support all in moving through that grade. Is it right to worry within a district and not have our governments worry about discrepancies between districts and states.

There is such a huge divide amongst US school and we are missing the key components of building on the basics. Wouldn't it be better to have a simple rope bridge (basic technology skills built one grade level at a time) that gets us across the divide instead of waiting to build and use a 'Golden Gate' (iPads) or 'London Bridge' (SMART Boards) for each divide. Why should we wait to design instruction and facilitate lessons without technological hardware and software before we teach the use of technology? We can bridge the divide with less than ideal materials or fewer components (just as we can cross any bridge no matter its style). We need to get to the future that technology offers. Therefore, we should use what we are given and cross the divide with appropriate care rather than spend all of our time on worrying what can go wrong or how unfair it is. Life is not fair and all lives will not be the same. When we seek to make sure equal rights are maintained, does it mean we take away all rights to using technology?

I think we do the best we can, by obtaining all we can, to 'raise' our students just as parents aim to raise their children providing all they can for their children. This can be kept in simplicity but realistically is much more complicated when we take in all variables that impact our students. As a teacher my hands are somewhat tied causing my limitations in being a 'digital multiplier' and Prensky makes it sound so easy. Whole-heartedly I would love to bridge the 'technological divide' with my students through the lessons I teach but realistically I know there will always be limits to what I can provide. I can continually seek ways to enrich their lives with technology skills and knowledge.