Technology in a Classical Education Model

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Technology in a Classical Education Model

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Capstone Project: A School Improvement Plan

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Abstract

Classical Education is historically in contrast with technology. Technology is essential to improving testing scores in students. Teachers must implement technology integration into elementary classrooms to prepare students for their further education and careers. Research aims to answer, How can elementary students in a classical charter school be better exposed to technology in order to be able to be a successful citizen in the modern world? Implementation of this plan includes adding professional development opportunities, technology standards into lessons, and adding performance-based assessments.

Keywords

Classical Education, Technology Readiness, Testing Improvement, Teacher Preparedness
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Technology in a Classical Education Model

Classical education is a highly effective form of education. Classical education charter schools focus on the classic roots of education such as rich literature, the foundations of math, learning about the history of the world and memorization of important texts. Charter schools typically see high levels of performance in students. Leman Academy of Excellence is no exception to this. We are a classical education model charter school where students learn to thrive in a rigorous educational environment. The problem is students are not set up for success because they are not exposed to technological tools. Students do not have access to technology to learn basic skills necessary to be successful in higher levels of education or in future careers (Lyapina et. al, 2019).

The purpose of this school improvement plan is to bring an understanding of the importance of technology even in a classical model. The research plan will work to answer the question of: How can elementary students in a classical charter school be better exposed to technology in order to be able to be a successful citizen in the modern world? Scholars need to be exposed to age-appropriate technology skills in order to meet the state standards and be able to use the skills they develop as they continue in their schooling. In the common core standards, there are technology readiness skills that students must have. These skills are embedded in the standards so that students are making sure to not only learn the academic content that they need but also are learning how to use tools that will be with them as they grow. The students will learn tools and methods of communicating information that can be used in projects and activities as they continue.
Research for this study will be included based on specific inclusion criteria. The journal articles must be written within the past ten years. The research used in this action research plan must be from a journal or other peer reviewed sources. Research key words that were used are: charter education, classical education, technology skills, benefits of technology in elementary schooling. The research comes from the DeWitt Library at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa which includes the EBSCO database and other academic databases.

The belief is that when educators at Leman Academy of Excellence understand the benefits of using technology in the classroom students will be exposed to age-appropriate technology skills. These skills will contribute to preparing scholars for the future. The scholars will be able to demonstrate an understanding of technology skills which will also help to improve test scores such as MAPS, CMAS, and COGAT due to the scholars being comfortable with the testing devices. The young scholars in our school currently do not have basic technology skills such as using a computer touchpad, typing, and knowing how to navigate. Scholars will be able to test with less distraction if they are comfortable using the device that the test is on. When the scholars are able to comfortably use the device they will not have to try and understand what the test is asking of them and also understand how to answer it using the technology.

The literature review will be organized by key themes that point to the importance of teaching technology skills. It will begin with the benefits of technology in the elementary classroom environment to develop skills needed. Next the literature review will focus on different charter models and how they can be adjusted for the modern age. This includes the benefits of adding a STEM education model into a preexisting charter school model. Then the literature review will focus on technology skills in regard to higher education. Finally, the
literature review will focus on the importance of educators' perception or comfort teaching with a technology-integrated model (Hong et al., 2023).

Review of the Literature

Classical education and technology are at odds with each other. “Classical education is a conscious return to the ancient goal of education: teaching children to think and learn for themselves by imparting to them the tools of learning (Treasure Valley Classical Academy, n.d.).” Teaching students to learn to think for themselves is essential to the success of students in a classroom and outside of the classroom. In the modern world, the tools of learning need to include technology resources. Technology is a backbone to the modern educational system that we live in now.

The Benefits of Technology in the Elementary Classroom

There is extensive research on the benefits of technology in the elementary school classroom. The research article “Teaching in a Digital Age: How Educators Use Technology to Improve Student Learning” a team of researchers looked at the importance of using technology to enhance student learning (McKnight et al., 2016). The study analyzes a group of seven teachers from around the country and their abilities to integrate technology into the classroom. This study displayed the benefits of technology in the classroom which included improved communication between teachers and parents, a positive restructuring of teacher time in the classroom, and the shifting of traditional teaching roles in the classroom. These benefits point to the importance of adding a substantial amount of technology into the classroom environment. Therefore, I will be working with the administration team at Leman Academy of Excellence to provide them with the benefits of technology. This study will help our students to be more successful as they continue in their academic learning and future careers.
Delgado, Wardlow, O’Malley, and McKnight (2015) show that students have shown high levels of growth through an inverted classroom model. This model supports the student’s participation in lecture type activities as independent work with the use of technology and as whole class activities being focused more on classroom applications. The research clearly demonstrates the investments in technology that are needed for a successful integration of technology. In contrast to the benefits of technology it is also evident there can be significant challenges. “Educational Technology: a review of the integration, resources, and effectiveness of technology in k-12 classrooms (Delgado et. al., 2015)” explains the challenges that students can experience if the teachers do not have the proper training that they need. In order for students to be successful, teachers need to be confident in what they are doing. In my setting we need to provide training or professional development for teachers. Teachers need to understand how the tools can be used and be given the training to support students.

A key piece of research that needs to be completed is the study of whether schools are using the technology that they have. Gibbs, Dosen, and Guerrero (2008) strive to answer this question. They explain that students are not going to benefit from the technology if the school is not using it properly. The study shows that the Catholic schools in the study have advanced technology available to them, but they are not using it because the teachers are not confident in their abilities to teach using it. In my opinion, this is an extreme disservice to our students. Schools need to provide training to staff to help them to feel confident enough to use the technology that is available to them. In contrast, to this research my school has no technology available to students. The research shows that it is important to make sure that we are using technology for students to learn how to live in a modern world.
The perspective of an educator or students’ use of technology in the classroom helps to prove if the use is benefiting the students. While looking at research on teachers’ perspectives of what good teaching is researchers ask these questions. They examine the research questions of: “What are the salient components of good teaching using technology from teachers’ and students’ perspectives? How are teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and educational contexts related to their use of technology (Han et. al., 2019)?” These questions guide the research to show technology should be used to enhance pedagogy. The goal of adding technology is not to take away from the lesson or distract the students but rather to add to the engagement for the students. Teachers can use it as an extension tool to promote further learning. Teachers who have the ability to seamlessly embed technology into lessons are able to create a learning environment that is enhanced by technology. While in contrast to the teachers that are able to seamlessly embed the technology into there are also teachers that struggle to embed technology and it impacts the quality of the learning for the students. Leman Academy does not encourage the teachers to embed technology in their lessons. We are told to not use technology into different lessons. I am going to encourage administrators to see the influence of adding technology into lessons for students. Embedded technology will help our students to not only learn how to use the technology but also to know what tools they can use in the future.

Drijvers (2015) completed a study on why adding technology to make works or doesn’t work. This study clearly displays there are benefits for students to learn math when they are able to see the problems and tasks they are working on. The study also points out for the technology to add to a lesson needs to be specifically chosen. It needs to be intentional and studied to understand how to properly use the tool. He states that in order for technology to be a welcome addition it needs to be perfected by the teacher. Similar, to research that states that the schools
should use the tools that they are given teachers must have a deep understanding of how to use tools properly. In order to communicate this importance to school administrators, we need to make sure that we are showing where student growth is coming from in regard to the integration of technology. The administration needs to be able to demonstrate an understanding of benefits to specific instruction to see the growth that students can have when using technology based tools.

**Technology Skill Readiness**

The education system that we currently have requires that students are able to use technology and understand how to properly use the tools to be able to connect with those around them. Teachers must be intentional in their planning of lessons and learning opportunities to include activities that provide students with the opportunity to use technology. In order for students to be able to connect with digital learning they need to have the readiness skills developed. Maryani, Latifah, Fatmawati, Erviana, and Mahmudah (2023) discovered that students that did not have basic technology readiness skills developed in early elementary were unprepared for digital learning outcomes later in their schooling. Students are unable to meet the academic standards that incorporate technology. This is purely due to the lack of understanding that they have of the skills they need. They need to be explicitly taught how to use the technology tools provided to them. Leman Academy does not prepare our students for digital learning skills that they need. They are unable to complete basic typing or other basic technology skills. We need to prepare our students for life outside of elementary school where technology is an essential tool.
While it is essential to teach our students the technology readiness skills this begins with the education that the teachers have of the technology tools. Teachers need to be prepared to equip students by understanding the tools themselves. In a study conducted by Maryani, Latifah, Fatmawati, Erviana, and Mahmudah (2023) about teaching technology readiness skills in an early childhood classroom, the teachers had a positive attitude about teaching these concepts. The teachers were unable to successfully teach the concepts because they themselves did not have the knowledge that was needed. Teachers made it clear that they needed more training to be successful in creating meaningful technology skills for students (Uerz et. al. 2018). I am going to work to encourage administration to create meaningful training opportunities for teachers, so they are able to test and apply their knowledge of technology before teaching it to students. Teachers cannot be a successful resource to students if they are not first given the opportunity to practice and use the tools they are being presented with.

One way that technology readiness can be tested in students is by applying a flipped classroom model. This allows students to complete lecture content as homework and in class time is spent completing project-based learning. In a higher education setting, this has proven extremely successful (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). This is a model that encourages a higher level of thinking and application to learning. Higher level thinking creates students that are able to apply what the know and use it outside the walls of the classroom. Scholars are able to take the things that they are interested in and apply them. I believe that this flipped classroom model would be something that could be adapted to fit a younger scholar. The scholars at Leman thrive with higher level thinking application. A flipped classroom application at a young age is going to require teacher involvement and training. Our students are able to think deeply and present that learning to peers and other students within the school. We should allow them to use the tools of
their future as we ask them to complete project-based learning. An example of a flipped classroom project could be a PowerPoint where students take the concept that they learned and teach the class an extension lesson. This allows the students to practice using a technology tool they will need going forward while also forcing them to think deeply and critically. Students will learn that it is important to limit the amount of information on a slide but also to make the presentation engaging to their students. Leman Academy asks our scholars to participate in a rigorous educational program so we should provide them the challenging opportunities to teach their peers.

Scholars need to have a level of understanding of how a computer or other technological tool is used. The readiness skills that they need include understanding how to use a mouse or touchpad to navigate the computer, knowing how to type, knowing how to scroll to change the window. Leman Academy in contrast to other schools does not provide our students with these learning opportunities. I believe that we need to implement classes into our elective programs that present these lifelong skills to students. I am going to present the importance of the research on using a flipped classroom model, making sure teachers have the training that they need to communicate the skills to students.

Adjusting Charter School Models for the Modern Age

Charter schools typically have a specific focus of model that they use in their mission statement and operation. In order for our students to be successful there needs to be adjustments to the model of the charter school so that students are prepared for what they will encounter in the modern work field and in their future academic learning. The STEM learning model focuses on integrating technology into the elementary classroom. This model of learning encourages
students to create project representations of their own learning (Hong et. al., 2023) Project based learning encourages students to apply their knowledge at a deep level and requires higher level thinking. In contrast, to a classical charter model the STEM learning model enables students to use technology as a way to represent their learning. I believe that my students would be able to show incredible understanding of important topics if we gave them the opportunity to demonstrate this using a typical STEM model that Hong, Nguyen, and Tien (2023) investigated.

While charter school education practices are typically extremely successful there are certain models that prepare students to be successful in a way that outshines the others. The “No Excuses” charter model has been proven to provide students with opportunities to be extremely successful. A “No Excuses” charter school, which focuses on high academic expectations, rigid and consistent discipline, extended instructional time, intensive teacher training, and increased parental involvement, have seen larger levels of academic achievement than a typical public school (Krowka et. al., 2017). This model is similar to the classical model and expectations that Leman Academy has for their students. Cohodes (2018) saw a trend that the charter schools were producing better test scores and students were able to perform at a higher level than the public schools. While looking at these trends they began to ask, “What are highly effective charter schools doing that could be adopted by traditional public schools in order to close the achievement gap? (p.13)” The No Excuse model could be adapted by most schools and this model was incredibly effective in creating an environment where students were out performing other students. The main difference being that the “No Excuses” model uses any tool that is available to them to promote growth in students while the classical model that we follow discourages the use of technology to foster student learning.
The model that a charter school adopts does not have to be a rigid format, it is something that can and should be adapted to reach the needs of the students. In a study conducted to determine the most effective charter school model, Huang and White (2023) discovered that the classical model was the most influential model to promote student growth. This discovery came from intensive study of charter schools from around the country. This ranking was based on the standardized test scores that were produced by the schools in that charter model. In comparison to the classical model the STEM model of learning for students also outperformed most public schools (Huang & White, 2023). I believe if a classical charter school can be flexible in their learning style and model and adopt principles from a STEM school that students will greatly outperform similar students. The administration at Leman Academy needs to be made aware of the benefits of adding a STEM element to our current model in order to create scholars that are prepared for the modern world.

While it is a large undertaking to adjust the model that a charter school has it can have extreme benefits for students and teachers. In order to change the model that a charter school has there needs to be clear guidelines and expectations presented to teachers and staff (Dallavis, 2023). Teachers are generally more cautious to change the way that they are teaching if they do not have clear support and guidelines from administration. For Leman Academy to be able to adapt their classical model to include more technology-based activities the administration needs to provide clear guidelines and extensive training. These guidelines and training can lead to a smooth transition if given the time and support needed (Dallavis, 2023)

**Educators Perceptions on Technology in the Classroom**

Each teacher has a different perspective on the use of technology in the classroom. They believe in varied amount of technology integration. Teachers perceived that there was an
increase in engagement and excitement in lessons where smart technology was used (Lyapina et. al., 2019). The students were able to participate in a more flexible learning environment. It is important to create an environment where our students are excited to learn. Teachers that are willing to adjust their teaching model to allow students to use a form of technology to engage with the material have students that are more willing to participate. Teachers that were surveyed by O’Neal, Gibson, and Cotton (2017) conveyed that they believe that technology helps them to communicate better with students and families. They are able to quickly and, in the moment, share what students are working on. Leman Academy uses technology primary for communicating with our families. We have seen an increase in family involvement when we started to implement new technology tools. I believe that there are student engagement opportunities we are missing by not using technology in our classrooms. One of these opportunities which should be provided to students is an ability to take a virtual field trip to a new location or time. My scholars become fascinated in the historical time period when I can show them an artifact from the time that we are discussing. Teachers should be able to create engaging opportunities by using internet resources to take our students to new lands.

In contrast to the benefits of adding technology to the classroom environment, there are also barriers to students learning with technology. Teachers need to stop using technology as a way to occupy the students but rather use it to enhance a lesson which was previously taught (O’Neal et. al., 2017). Students should not spend the entirety of the lesson listening to a video teach them. They should have meaningful learning opportunities presented by the teacher which can be enhanced with a technology resource. Students are able to learn the lesson in a meaningful way when the technology is not used as the teacher but rather used as an enrichment tool within the lesson. Other barriers identified to integrating technology included amount of
technology, location of technology, amount of instructional time available, availability of support with technology (Carver, 2016). Leman Academy does not have the ability for all students to be using a Chromebook at the same time. We do not have the internet bandwidth to accommodate all the students. This can cause extreme frustration and distraction for not only the students but also for the staff. The students at Leman Academy often waste much of the limited time that they have for technology trying to access the tool. This is not beneficial to the students. Administration needs to understand these barriers and work to find practical and appropriate solutions to support students and teachers.

Reis-Andersson (2023) looked at the response of school organizers in response to technology integration in schools. He pointed out that for schools to be able to have a high level of digitization and technology, the teachers and students must first have a level of digital competence. Digital competence is the first level of increasing the smart tools that can be used in a school. Teachers need to be proficient in using a technology tool before introducing it to their students. Leman Academy needs to support teachers to increase their digital skills if they want to be able to prepare students for the modern world around them.

Many of the teachers and staff at our school are not using technology tools because they are not aware of the tools that are available. The training that we have received on technology is very limited. Teachers that are unfamiliar with new technologies are doing a disservice to their students because they are not introducing them to tools that will be used in their future. Students need to practice how to type. Students should also be given opportunities to complete research using online databases. I believe that Leman Academy scholars should be given the opportunity to connect what they are learning in a rich text to what they can learn by discovering for themselves using technology.
School Profile

Community Characteristics:

Leman Academy of Excellence is a classical charter school located in Parker, Colorado. We are a kindergarten through eighth grade school. Leman Academy has been operating in Parker for five years. Parker, Colorado has a population of approximately 61,000 according to a U.S. Census Bureau estimation (2020). The population is 81.4% white, 12.4% Hispanic, and 7% other races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). In Parker 95.9% of adults over the age of 25 have a high school degree or higher. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

District Characteristics:

Leman Academy of Excellence is located in the Douglas County School District in Colorado. The Douglas County School District has 63,000 students enrolled which makes it the third largest district in the state. There are currently 90 schools in the district. There are 48 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 9 high schools, 6 alternative schools, 18 charter schools. Douglas County School District has an 90.8% graduation rate with a 0.9% dropout rate. Leman Academy is a high performing charter school in the Douglas County District.

School Characteristics:

Leman Academy has 1,114 students enrolled in the school. The school serves students that are 78% white, 21% minority students. 48% of the students are females and 52% of the students are males. 12% of scholars are provided with free and reduced lunch options (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.). Scholars at Leman Academy are presented with a classical curriculum that focuses on rich literature, interrelated disciplines, studying specific time periods in history, an emphasis on classical art and music, and embedded values and virtue education.
Leman Academy creates a relational environment within the classroom where each student is known and encouraged to show excellence. Leman Academy is focused on creating scholars that are prepared academically and are students of virtue. The vision of Leman Academy is to create scholars that are prepared for life outside of the classroom. They want to shape scholars that are leaders in their field. Scholars that can be leaders not only academically but also in virtue.

**School Mission & Vision**

Leman Academy holds strong to our mission and vision for the scholars and families that are served. Our school mission statement is “Leman Academy of Excellence offers a rigorous, Classical education based on the traditions of Western culture where all disciplines are interrelated allowing scholars the ability to think independently and critically. We purpose to partner with supportive parents, pursue excellence, provide a safe and challenging environment, and instill morals and values in order to produce tomorrow's leaders today.” The goal of Leman Academy is to create an environment where scholars can love to learn and discover for themselves the world around them. We work to challenge them to become independent thinkers. The scholars are asked to think rigorously and to reach high standards. We are a school that focuses on the traditions of how education was done and works to return to the traditional model.

Leman Academy creates a relational environment within the classroom where each student is known and encouraged to show excellence. Leman Academy is focused on creating scholars that are prepared academically and are students of virtue. The vision of Leman Academy to create scholars that are prepared for life outside of the classroom. They want to shape scholars that are leaders in their field. Scholars that can be leaders not only academically but also in virtue.
Current Student Learning Goals

Our current student learning goals are focused on two main areas. These areas of learning are math and differentiated instruction. These two areas have been the focus of many professional development sessions this year. The professional development learning opportunities have been spiraled throughout the year to increase the understanding and growth of staff. These weekly professional development sessions help the teachers to be able to improve their classroom instruction.

The goal for math is to implement fidelity using the math curriculum. Math has been a focus due to the most recent standardized testing scores. Our scholars did better on a reading or ELA assessment than they did on the math assessments. Leman Academy has begun to implement the use of technology tools to try and close the gaps for students in math. This program provides students with individualized lessons based on a benchmark assessment. The use of the new technology is not available to the younger students, and I believe that is a disservice to the younger students as they also need to fill the gaps of the math curriculum while also teaching them basic technology skills.

The other learning goal for students this year is differentiation. This includes scholars that are above the typical grade level expectation and students that are below grade level norms. Our school has a high population of advanced learners due to the rigorous environment that we provide. This can create challenges in reaching all scholars and encouraging growth within them. The goal is for all students to be above the 50th percentile and to see growth in our students that are above the 90th percentile. This requires differentiation in the classroom. The goal is to help each scholar to be challenged in their learning while also making sure that it is appropriate for them. One way this is being implemented at Leman Academy is through the focus on depth of
thought teaching and questioning. In each lesson that is taught we are working to have our students discover for themselves new learning and creating opportunities for them to analyze their own learning.

**School Performance**

Leman Academy of Excellence is a high performing school. According to the Colorado Department of Education School view they are listed as a performance school (n.d). This means that there are no improvement plans currently in place. Scholars in third through eighth grade at Leman Academy take the Colorado Measures of Academic Success assessment each year. This is a standardized assessment that demonstrates student achievement. In the 2022-2023 school year, only 86.2% of students took the ELA assessment (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.). In this assessment, 54.6% of students met or exceeded the expectations. In the state of Colorado, 43.7% of students met or exceeded the expectations (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.). Leman Academy regularly surpasses the expectations in ELA. In contrast to ELA, only 37.2% of scholars met or exceeded expectations in math. This demonstrates a need for stronger math curriculum and interventions. The academic goal for students and teachers is to improve math scores for the next testing year.

**Parent Involvement**

At Leman Academy, it is an expectation that parents are involved in their students’ learning. Our mission statement states that we purpose to partner with supportive parents. This is an expectation that is communicated to parents as they tour our school. Parents are asked to volunteer in a variety of areas within the schools. We have a WATCHDOGS program. This program encourages dads or other males to be involved in the safety of the school. These male
figures will volunteer for a day and will be seen around campus helping with a variety of tasks and making sure that students are able to learn in a safe environment. The parents of Leman Academy are very involved in the academics that their child is learning.

**Curriculum and Instructional Design**

The curriculum that we use is purposefully chosen to support and encourage student learning. Each piece of curriculum taught is intended to point scholars to the traditions of learning. We want our students to take the living ideas that are presented to them and to use critical thinking to expand their understanding. The curriculum is used as a tool to interconnect ideas and disciplines. The expectation is that in each lesson the students are being exposed to more than just that subject area but rather are seeing a complete picture of learning and how it connects. The students are challenged to read classic literature, to learn the foundations of language, to be exposed to a historical time period in art and music, and to learn key concepts of math.

Curriculum is used as a guide in the classroom rather than the master. Teachers are encouraged to have students do more of the talking and the learning. Rather than giving our students all the information we work to set up opportunities where they are making the discovery for themselves. We want to give our students big questions to wrestle with and to think through and not always provide them with the answers right away. This instructional strategy challenges students to take ownership in their education. It requires them to be actively engaged and involved in the learning process. My second-grade scholars can have a complete discussion and debate complex ideas from a novel with the need for teacher supports.

**Assessment Practices**
Scholars are graded on a scale of reality and success grades. Reality grades clearly demonstrate the reality of what the students know. These grades are a clear assessment of if a student understands the standards and material that is being taught to them. Success grades demonstrate if a student is participating in the learning process. These grades show that a student was engaged and working to learn the material. In assessing student learning, it is essential that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding but also see the effort they are putting in.

Leman Academy also has students complete a series of standardized assessments throughout the school year. They are given the DIBELS reading assessment. This shows how accurately and fluently a student can read. This is an important assessment to determine the level of literacy assistance a student needs. Students also take a MAPS assessment. This assessment is given in three sections. There is a language section, a reading assessment, and a math assessment. All of these assessments help to drive the instruction that is provided by the teacher in the classroom. This assessment is given to students in 2nd through 8th grades. This is a computer-based assessment. I am looking to study the trends of how the computer-based assessment model impacts our students scores. They are expected to know how to use the computer to take this assessment. For the younger scholars it is challenging to prepare them for this unfamiliar model. The final standardized assessment given at Leman is the CMAS assessment. This has been given in both a digital and a paper format. Students at Leman seem to score higher when it is given in a paper format.

**Professional Development:**
Leman Academy has weekly professional development sessions. Each Wednesday the scholars come an hour later to school and the staff use that time for professional development. These weekly sessions are based on the goals for the academic school year. This school year the 3rd-8th grade teachers have been focused on implementing and improving the math curriculum that is taught in their classrooms. The k-2nd grade teachers have been focused on improving literacy teaching and increasing the depth of thought within the classroom. The professional development sessions are led by the administration. This time is very beneficial for newer teachers or staff members but could be better used for veteran teachers. The topics that are covered are typically repeated each year and do not allow much space for suggestion or adding new ideas. I believe that we could use this time to train teachers on new tools and technologies they could use in their classrooms to help encourage student growth.

**Needs Assessment**

Leman Academy of Excellence needs to implement and improve their technology-based teaching methods. Technology is essential to scholars to be successful as they move forward into a future educational and career field. Administrators need to understand the importance of adding technology into the classroom. Technology creates an environment where students are able to be in control of their own learning and can express that in a way that works for them. “Allowing students choice and control in their learning process, taking responsibility in the learning process, and utilizing multiple pathways to individualize learning are key principles of this learner-centered approach to instruction. This approach is correlated with higher student participation and motivation to learn, which in turn correlates with improved learning” (McKnight et al., 2016, p.2). Leman focuses on having students become independent thinkers and this learner centered approach fits nicely with that model.
Adding technology into the classroom is essential because it forces students to learn how to use the tools that will be used in formal assessments. The standardized formal assessments that students are given use a technology-based model and expect that students are able to appropriately use the computers. There is not a system in place for helping students learn how to use the technology that they will be using to take the test. Students need to be able to understand the basics of technology. This includes how to scroll, read in a digital way, type, and even complete basic research. The technology-based testing requires that students scroll using a touchpad to read the passage. Students need to be able to conduct research searches and be able to write an analysis of the information that they have. These skills are essential to students in order to make sure that students are prepared for higher levels of education and a future career.

Leman Academy of Excellence students do not have the basic understanding of technology that they need. They are not provided with exposure to technology. This is due to the belief that students need to be taught in a classical model. This means that students are taught in a way that follows how students have been taught since the foundations of the educational system. We do not believe in putting students on a technological device as a way to keep the students occupied without the teachers being actively involved. However, there is a realistic view of technology that is needed. We should not be scared of using technology as a tool for our scholars. We need to make sure that we are teaching our students how to be wise on the technology that they are using (Society For Classical Learning, 2021). Leman Academy focuses on creating students of virtue and this exposure to digital learning tools requires teachers and students to be critical thinkers when looking at research.

The students need to be given the opportunity to use technology in the classroom on a regular basis. “Parents, as well as other constituents of the school, oftentimes evaluate a
particular school’s quality by the quantity and quality of the technology that can be observed in the building” (Gibbs et al., 2008, p.177). This means that teachers need to implement a technology curriculum plan. This plan would clearly describe how the teachers were going to add technology learning opportunities into the classroom. Gibbs (2008) completed a study demonstrating that there is a need to make sure that schools are not only having the technology but rather that they are seamlessly integrating it into the lessons that are being taught. There are basic technological advancements that could be easily made. Students could complete math enrichment activities on a computer. Teachers should also allow students to conduct research and share results with others using a technology model. This addition to the classroom curriculum could be easily implemented into the elementary classroom.

The addition of technology into the Leman Academy curriculum would benefit students in many ways. These simple adjustments would allow students to be better prepared and equipped to complete testing. The students would also be better equipped to move onto higher education opportunities and in their future careers. Technology is an essential skill that students need to be taught. The Common Core State Standards have created a set of standards that are used to help prepare students for their future education and their career. These include technological skills and critical thinking skills. It is essential that teachers use technology to integrate these standards into the classroom (Delgado et al., 2015). While Leman Academy focuses on having students reach the standards, they neglect to ensure that scholars are meeting the standards that are integrating the technology skills.

Data Analysis
When we look at the state CMAS (Colorado Measures of Academic Success) scores of the Leman Academy scholars we see the need for improved teaching of technology skills based on the lower test scores. Students are given a rich education and learning environment, yet the state testing scores do not show that learning. The scholars are not prepared to take a computer-based assessment and struggle to score in the same way other students within the district scored because of their lack of understanding of how to use the testing tool. Leman Academy of Excellence students are not given the opportunity to use technology daily. When they are asked to use the technology for testing, they do not have the skills and confidence to be able to clearly show their learning. I believe that if we can bring awareness to the difference between what students know and what is being shown through the test, we will see a clear need for technology based instruction.

In 2022-2023, 61.6% of students in the Douglas County school district met or exceeded the testing expectations on the ELA state assessment (CDE, n.d.). While only 54.6% of Leman Academy scholars met or exceeded expectations on the same assessment (CDE, n.d.). This points to a lack of understanding how to take the assessment or a lack of confidence reading and using the tools to take the assessment. On the math assessment, the difference between district assessment scores and Leman Academy assessment scores is even more obvious the need for improvement in curriculum based on technology in the schools. The district had 50.7% of their students meet or exceed testing expectations while Leman Academy only had 37.2% of students (CDE, n.d.). Figure 1 below clearly demonstrates that Leman Academy students are not scoring as highly as Douglas County School District students on both the math and ELA assessments. This figure demonstrates the need for evaluation of test scores to help Leman Students to be successful.
This data shows there are major gaps in the learning programs that are offered to students. The scores show there are areas in both ELA and math where students are not getting the support and instruction that they need. Leman Academy teaches a rigorous curriculum and focuses on teaching students in a way that inspires critical thinking and discovery. These are great ways to teach students it does not prepare them well for a standardized assessment. The students do not understand what the best ways to use computers and other technology tools to share their answers to these assessments.

Math is a weakness for the Leman program in regard to the state testing. Scholars in the fourth and fifth grades practically are not prepared for the assessment. According to the Colorado Department of Education school view program only 42.5% of fourth grade students approached
expectations. In Figure 2 below we can see that many of the students that took this assessment were not meeting the expectations given to them. This is because the math curriculum needs to be implemented with more fidelity and needs to provide students with the opportunity to think for themselves and to practice using digital formats for solving math equations.

**Figure 2**

*A Visual Representation of 4th grade CMAS Data for Leman Academy*

An area of strength that can be seen in the state testing assessment is that there is a high level of participation from Leman Scholars. The high level of participation shows that we have accurate data as to how the students are doing as a school. Participation in this assessment is important to show that we need improvement in our school based on scores. We are a smaller school and if students do not take the assessment there is not sufficient data to show areas of improvement.
One way that we could show a need for improvement of the technology within our curriculum would be to offer assessments to scholars in both a digital and paper format and compare the scores that they receive. This assessment format would show the difference between students that have gaps in knowledge and students that have gaps in knowledge of how use the tools. In order to clearly demonstrate the need for students to learn technology skills we need to see the gaps of technology-based assessments and paper-based assessments. This will help administrators and teachers to know the specific areas to focus on in regard to technology instruction.

Leman Academy has a strong academic program where students are held to high standards and are expected to do their best. As a school we need to do our best for the students by providing them with the tools and training they need to be successful on state assessments. While looking at the data in figures 1 and 2 we can see that Leman Academy is not reaching the same academic levels that the surrounding district is. We need to make sure that when we look at the state testing scores that we are looking at all the areas where improvements need to be made. One way that Leman Academy can help to prepare their students for jobs and higher levels of education is by making sure that they have the training in technology that they need.

**Action Plan**

The data presents a clear need for action to be taken to help scholars in a classical education setting to be prepared for higher levels of education and also for the work force they will be entering. It is essential to provide the scholars with a complete education and this includes the ability to use and understand modern technology in the classroom. Scholars and staff need to be comfortable using technology so that it does not become a hindrance to testing abilities. “The effectiveness of online education depends not only on students’ technology
readiness, but also on their human capital (Maryani et.al., 2023, p.46).” Staff must also be prepared to use and model technology usage in order to prepare students to use the tools presented to them. There are many strategies that can be tested and put into the classroom setting to help equip our students for a digital learning environment.

I believe that the first priority for Leman Academy in regard to technology teaching would be to implement a professional development series on using technology tools that we have in our classrooms. Delgado, Wardlow, O’Malley, and McKnight (2015) explain that teachers cannot successfully teach and help students if they first do not understand what they are teaching. Leman Academy has many teachers that are intimidated by using new tools and strategies in the classroom. They do not want to learn how to operate a new piece of technology, but this is a significant disadvantage to our students because we are not providing them with a complete education that will prepare them for the future. Figure 3 below shows the professional development needs of Leman Academy staff and the purpose of the training.

**Figure 3**

_Professional Development Needs_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Tools Needed</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-Ready Training</td>
<td>1-1 Chromebooks for students</td>
<td>The students can use the enrichment program to help reinforce skills that they have been taught in the classroom. They complete a diagnostic exam and then complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNOLOGY AND CLASSICAL EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>learning activities based on</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>their personal goals and needs.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Common Core Standards</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards access for teachers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The teachers will look at</strong></td>
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<td><strong>where they could purposefully</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>embed technology standards</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>into their lessons to help the</strong></td>
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<td><strong>students get the exposure that</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>they need.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Google Suite Training</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1-1 Chromebooks for students</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Teachers can look at the</strong></td>
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<td><strong>different learning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>opportunities available by</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>using the google suite. They</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>can learn how to help students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>make presentations, videos,</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>learn to type, research in a</strong></td>
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<td><strong>safe way, and learn how to</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>present data.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Digital Citizenship Training</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Digital Citizenship training</strong></td>
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<td><strong>materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers and staff need to</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>under what digital citizenship</strong></td>
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<td><strong>looks like in an elementary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>classroom and how to</strong></td>
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<td><strong>explicitly teach those</strong></td>
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<td><strong>expectations to students. They</strong></td>
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</table>
need to know how to teach safe technology usage and what it means to be a good digital citizen.

While it is essential to teach our students how to use technology tools it is also a requirement by the Common Core Standards. Leman Academy needs to look at the technology-based standards and see where they can be implemented into the preexisting curriculum that we have. Maryani, Latifah, Fatmawati, Erviana, and Mahmudah (2023) discovered that students that did not have basic technology readiness skills developed in early elementary were unprepared for digital learning outcomes later in their schooling. We need to make sure that we are preparing our students by using an explicit teaching model for the technology-based standards. Students need to be immersed in the learning opportunity to help see the most growth potential in our school.

Students need to learn that there are expectations on the technology tools. We need to use the technology that is available to learn basic technology readiness skills. These technology readiness skills include typing, researching, creating presentations, and sharing information. These skills have shown a significant increase in a student’s confidence and ability to use the technology they need daily. Students that are able to type are able to communicate clearly a thought or idea. Technology readiness helps to take a lesson from only the teacher presenting to a group of students that are listening but rather transforms a learning opportunity into something more engaging when the students are able to participate fully (O’Neal et. al., 2017).
McKnight and team (2016) present a study that shows that there are many benefits to adding technology into the elementary classroom. I believe it is essential that Leman Academy is open to incorporating more technology into their classroom. One way they could do this is by offering flipped classroom assignments. This would mean that the students would be watching or completing a lecture at home and then spending their time in the classroom completing a project-based learning assignment. This allows the students to be focused on the high-level thinking skills in an environment where the teacher is there to actively support the students and allow them to think and create for themselves instead of just passively sitting and listening to a lecture.

Figure 4 below shows a clear action plan for how to incorporate technology into the Leman Academy model so that we are able to better prepare our students for the world ahead of them. First, we need to teach our teachers how to use the technology through professional development opportunities. Then, we need to make sure that we are incorporating the standards into our lessons and learning for students. Then, we need to begin to teach basic technology readiness skills to our students to prepare them for more challenging tools. Once students have basic technology skills, we can incorporate a flipped classroom model to help to fully engage and challenge students to use tools.

**Figure 4**

*Technology Integration Plan Steps*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Provide professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Incorporate common core standards into classroom lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teach basic technology readiness skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Create a flipped classroom environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching students to use technology in the classroom is essential to helping them be successful in their future schooling and in their future careers. In order to be able to support students in their learning using technology we need to start first with staff professional development. This professional development then leads to implementation of new tools and techniques into the classroom. Leman Academy needs to focus on helping students to learn the proper tools and technologies for use in the classroom. I believe that if we can help our students to feel comfortable with the technology around them this success will feed into all areas of their academic life.

**Implementation of School Improvement Plan**

Implementation of a school improvement plan takes time and requires the partnership of many different groups of stakeholders. I love how O’Neal, Gibson, and Cotton (2017) point out that there are 21st century skills that our students are missing out on when we are not teaching them digital skills. “Therefore, while many teachers seem to benefit from using technology for administrative tasks and some see the benefit of using technology to enhance students’ skills, there remain many barriers to creating a technology-rich learning environments, thus limiting their ability to promote the development of 21st-century skills (O’Neal et.al., 2017, p.194).” We need to make sure that we are involving school staff, parents, students, and administrators in the planning and implementation of this plan. There does need to be a thorough timeline to guarantee a successful implementation of the plan for the Leman Academy community. The best time to start a new training plan for staff would be in the fall professional development at the beginning
of the year. In order for this to be successful for students we need to make sure that the staff is prepared at the start of the new school year.

Administration needs time to start preparing and getting the training materials needed. It is important that they see the need for training of the staff in the necessary technology skills. I plan to present the need for this improvement plan to the administration team at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. This will allow the team to be able to understand the implementation timeline over the summer. They will be able to dig into the standards and tools that are currently being taught. “Although most educators would agree that technology is important for teaching and learning, many teachers fail to integrate computing across their curriculum (O’Neal et.al., p.193)”. It is extremely important to embed technology usage into our everyday curriculum. Administration needs to allow professional development training to be created in order to share with new staff at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. Figure 5 below shows a monthly timeline for implementation. This allows all stakeholders to be aware of the process that will be in place for successful implementation.

**Figure 5:**

*Monthly Timeline of Implementation Plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2024</td>
<td>Present to admin the need for increased technology teaching and awareness within the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2024</td>
<td>Look at state testing scores to analyze area of need for improved teaching of technology tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2024</td>
<td>Begin development of professional development materials looking at the standards and areas of need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| August 2024| Present to the school staff at fall trainings  
             Begin implementation of new technology tools into the classroom |
| September 2024| Teachers begin to implement new technology that relates to current  
                   standards being taught                                      |
| October 2024| Teachers begin to implement new technology that relates to current  
               standards being taught                                      |
| November 2024| Teachers create a system of teaching technology readiness skills to  
               students to prepare them for a project-based learning environment |
| December 2024| Teachers create a system of teaching technology readiness skills to  
               students to prepare them for a project-based learning environment |
| January 2025| Students complete a flipped classroom assignment requiring them to use  
              technology tools and demonstrate learning                     |
| February 2025| Students present the flipped classroom learning assignment               |
| March 2025 | Students complete the computer-based state assessment demonstrating the  
             new technology skills they have acquired                       |
| April 2025 | Results of assessment are analyzed and determine if the increased focus  
             on teaching technology skills shows the improvements that are needed |
| May 2025  | Administration begins to prepare for further professional development  
            opportunities in the upcoming school year                      |

It is essential that the training and development of a technology learning program is given time. The staff and administration need to be able to try systems of instruction and adjust them throughout the year. This will help the students to be able to gain a complete understanding and
learning of the new tools that are being introduced to them. We need to give students and staff the time to experiment and explore the tools they need to.

Resources

There are many resources that will be needed to make this a successful growth opportunity for Leman Academy. We need to make sure there is a clear identification of technology-based tools that staff need to teach the students. This includes the google suite, online reading resources, research software for students and practice test assessments. A clear guideline for staff of the tools that need to be taught will help them to be able to communicate the information clearly and effectively to students. Leman Academy will also need to improve their wireless server to be able to accommodate an increase of traffic on the internet in the building. This will help to make sure there are not unexpected technological challenges for students. We also need to increase the number of devices that are available. The students will need to be able to have one-to-one access to a computer in order to complete the flipped classroom assignment.

Responsibilities for Implementation

Administration

There are many people that would need to be involved in the implementation of this plan for it to be successful. The administration team is responsible for planning and creating professional development programs for staff. They will need to know the areas that are creating the gaps seen in the testing scores of students. Administration will find and collect resources that can be shared with teachers in order to help them teach the students the basic technology readiness skills that they need.
Teachers will also need to be actively involved in the implementation process for it to be successful. The teachers will be responsible for looking at the common core standards and finding the areas where technology needs to be integrated so that students are reaching the standards. This will be the teacher’s responsibility because they are the ones who are expected to teach and meet the standards. Teachers need to be able to find ways to integrate technology into the current curriculum that is being taught. It will be the most beneficial to students if it is integrated seamlessly into the systems they are used to.

Students

Students will also need to be responsible for part of the implementation. It is essential to see the benefits to students. The students will be completing the learning and the testing on the computers. The focus of having students use technology will help them to be more prepared for testing and other activities that require them to use technology. It will be beneficial if they are growing more comfortable using the tools daily.

Plan for Monitoring Success

We will know if the school improvement plan is successful by looking at the computer-based assessments given to students throughout the school year. The I-Ready exam is given to students three times a year to students. The frequency of this exam helps the staff and administration to know if the students are becoming more comfortable with the assessment by seeing the trends of the scores. The objective of the implementation of the improvement plan is to create a culture of students that are comfortable using the technology presented to them for testing and learning in order to improve student achievement data. We will be able to see if the
objective is being met by looking at the data that is being collected from the assessments given to students.

**Barriers and Challenges**

While there are many benefits to adding additional technology to Leman Academy there are also challenges that will arise. One of the main challenges that needs to be addressed is the need for a stronger internet connection. The students cannot be successful using the technology tools provided to them if the internet connection cannot handle the larger amount of traffic. This is a challenge also in the assessment data. The internet connection needs to be strong enough to allow students to test without interruption.

Another challenge that could arise is the need for staff involvement. There are many staff at Leman Academy that are reluctant to change and do not want to implement new ideas. It can be challenging to encourage the staff to have a positive attitude and outlook on new programs. It is essential that the staff is invested in the improvement. If the staff does not have a positive attitude about implementing more technology into the classroom, then the students will also not have a positive attitude. This positive attitude helps the students and staff to be more receptive to learning with technology.

Furthermore, the school community members could pose additional barriers to this improvement plan. Leman Academy promises community members that their scholars will not be spending time during the day using technology but rather will be spending time in rich literature and discussion-based learning. This stems from the classical model of learning. The students are asked to think for themselves and not let others do the thinking for them. The parents and community members could provide resistance to adding additional technology into
the classroom. It will be essential to communicate to the community the importance and benefits of their student being more comfortable using a technology-based device.

Implementation of this action plan is going to be challenging but it is essential that students learn the technology skills they will be taught. It will help them to close the gaps in the education they are currently receiving at Leman Academy. It will also help to prepare them for further education and career opportunities. The plan will take involvement from all the school staff, students, and community members. We will need to implement small amounts of technology building up to a release of students to complete a project-based learning assignment. The development of a technology assisted curriculum will help students to meet the expected standards while also preparing them better for assessments.

Conclusion

Technology instruction is essential to students being successful in their further education and also in their future careers. Schools must be willing to dedicate significant teaching time to the instruction of technology tools. “Students who possess a high level of technology readiness will undoubtedly achieve better learning outcomes than those who do not” (Maryani et.al., 2023, p.46). The instruction helps students and staff to be more comfortable and confident using the tools. This instructional shift at Leman Academy of Excellence is going to require dedicated staff and administrators.

The research focused on answering one research question. How can elementary students in a classical charter school be better exposed to technology in order to be able to be a successful citizen in the modern world? We discover that there are essential steps to make sure that students are being exposed to the technology they need. First, we need to make sure that the staff is looking at the standards and finding ways to purposefully integrate these standards into our
lessons. Then, there is a need for training for staff. They need to be able to confidently teach the students about the tools they are being asked to use. This comes from a dedicated and focused professional development plan. Finally, we need to allow students to practice these skills in a safe and teachable environment. Reis-Andersson (2022) points out that for students and staff to become fully digitally competent they need to become producers of digital technology and not just consumers. By incorporating a flipped classroom model the Leman Academy scholars will become the producers of the content and that will show they have the necessary digital skills to be successful in the future.

Leman Academy needs to focus on supporting their students through the use of more technology. “To ensure young adults are prepared for current and future work environments, developing these skills must begin as early as elementary school (O’Neal et. al., 2017, p.192).” There are many stakeholders who may not understand this shift from a classical model that focuses on rich literature to a model that also integrates technology into a strong curriculum. There needs to be an awareness of the contrast of assessment scores from students that are exposed and comfortable with technology tools. I believe that when stakeholders are presented with the data they will clearly see that it is essential to teach our students to use the tools of the modern world. Stakeholders must then be willing to implement changes to the curriculum to incorporate technology into the lessons being taught.

While Leman Academy has a strong culture and commitment to the development of future leaders, they need to be able to adjust to the needs of the modern world for our scholars. It is essential that they begin to incorporate technology learning opportunities into the daily structure and routine of the students. It begins with preparing the staff and then the staff can work to support the learning in students. Classical education does not need to be separate from
learning that prepares our students for the modern world. O’Neal, Gibson, and Cotton (2017) point out there is an unnecessary separation between the education provided to our students and the technology they will need to be apart of outside of the classroom. Leman Academy should be a place that works to bridge the gaps created by the education system and the technological world. We should strive to work in tandem to give our students a complete education that prepares them for the world they will be entering.
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