

Force Field Diagram

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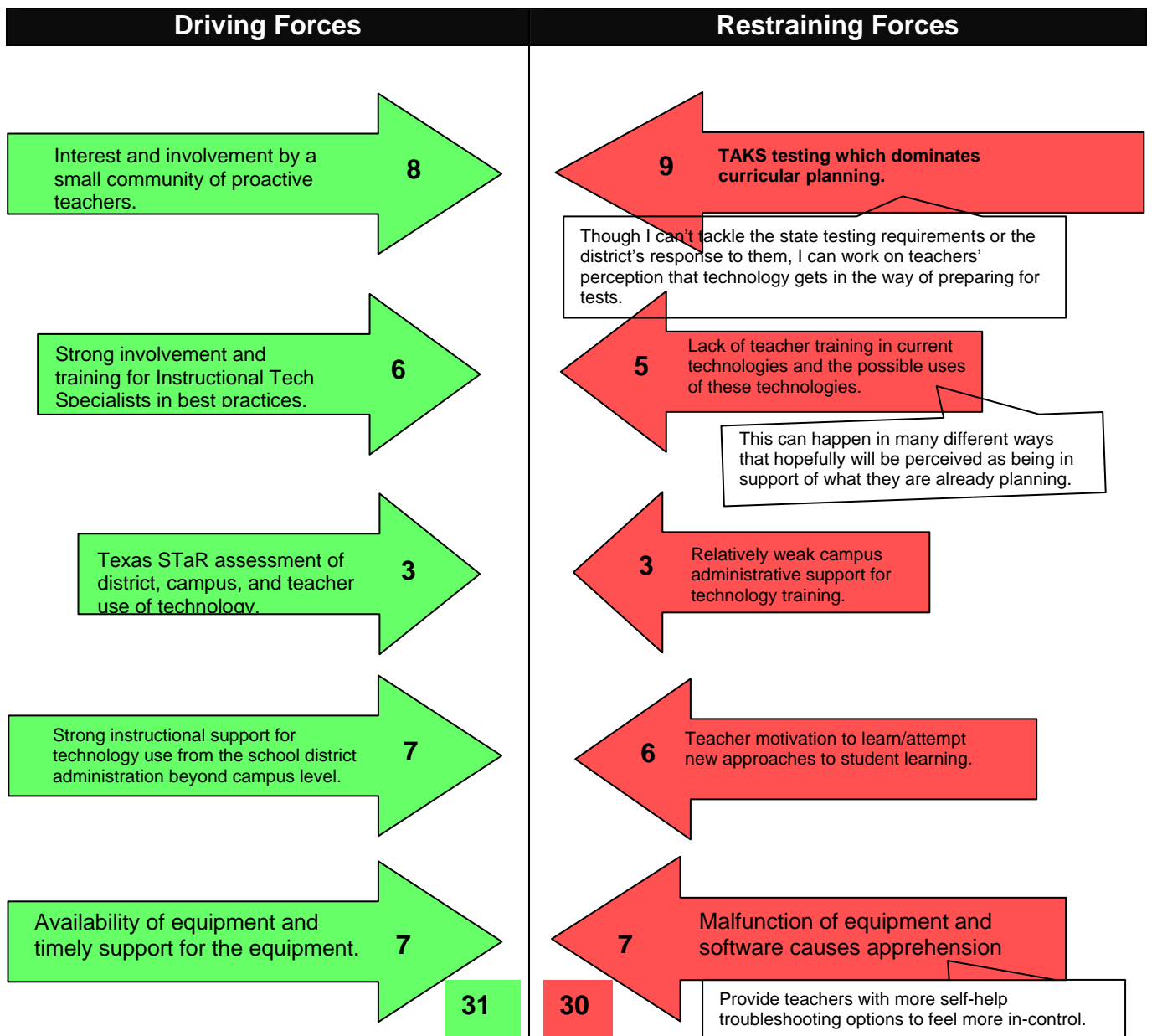
How can I improve the academic use of technologies already present in the schools which I serve?

"No technology is important—it's the use of it that's important." Pesce, Mark. The Playful World

Both of the elementary schools which I serve have technologies available which are utilized regularly in the classroom by only pockets of active users.

If I can improve the situation, the technologies which these schools have available for academic use will be used regularly by the majority of faculty members as active users so that student engagement in their learning process may increase.

If no action is taken, students will not benefit academically from the use of available technologies, and the community may not vote to pass bond issues which fund technology purchases, resulting in out-of-date accessible technologies which no one will want to use.



I took these ideas for a validity test-drive with teachers on the Bluebonnet Elementary campus.

Environment:

At this time, I work in two elementary schools in what is considered by the state of Texas to be a property wealthy school district. The district has around 37,000 students, 28 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 5 high schools. The school population demographics vary according to the area of the city. One of my schools is in a newer building in a middle-income community and has a 97% passing rate on the state test. The other elementary school is a bilingual school which has 74.2% economically disadvantaged students and ranks at the bottom of the school district in state scores. The administration of both schools has changed this year with the principal from the higher performing school moving to the low performing school with her chosen asst. principal, and a new principal and assistant at the other. The entire district has undergone reorganization this summer as well probably as the result of a new superintendent's entrance.

The school district is located in a suburban community just outside of Austin, Texas. It is known in the state for excellent schools and for a technology-rich environment as compared to most public schools across the state. Both schools in which I work have good available technologies. There is an up-to-date teacher PC in each room, and older PCs are available for student use. The schools have together 9 carts of new wireless laptops available to teachers on a checkout basis as well as computer labs. Other available technologies include a SMARTboard, Promethean boards, MIMIO presentation devices, Turning Points and CPS interactive devices, VCRs, DVD players, multimedia projectors, digital still and video cameras, and a variety of educational software. The district operates on its own fiber optic super ring to support Internet services. A five-year refresh program for all district technologies (depending on the passing of bond packages) keeps us up to date.

My job encompasses the following duties:

- Collaboratively analyze campus data to guide teachers in planning and intervention strategies.
- Provide technology services including but not limited to troubleshooting, software installation, web mastering, E-News communications, daily server administration, training for technology integration, training for implementation of district technology initiatives, eCampus entries, Gradespeed and Curriculum Management Tools support, Lotus Notes installations and support, tech assistance for unsupported (old) campus hardware, and coordination of other campus technology needs.
- Assist teachers in the classroom providing resources, planning, and co-teaching as appropriate.
- Collaborate with the district CIS/TIS/Teacher Leader team.
- Continue to provide communication with administrators of campus needs and delivery of curriculum and technology services.
- Deliver and share initiatives, communicating and working collaboratively with all staff through teacher and team meetings, informal training sessions, newsletters, and email.
- Provide assistance to district Lead CIS group, non-campus based CIS group, behavior specialists, and autism specialists located at [one school].
- Attend weekly Building Leadership Team meetings, verbalizing areas of concern.
- Plan for and provide interventions to student groups including the Voyager reading groups (4th grade) and morning math tutorials (5th grade).
- Give support during TAKS testing by doing small group testing, and other duties as assigned.
- Purchasing, learning, and preparing new technologies for optimal campus use.

The technology services department performs all of its own warranty work for the Dell technologies available in the district. We normally have a 24-hour or less turn around on repairs and troubleshooting required beyond the campus Instructional Technology Specialists such as I.

Problem:

With the above technologies and services available within the district, I do not see an optimal use of available technologies on my campuses. According to the [Grappling's Technology and Learning Spectrum](#), most of the uses I see are still at the literacy level, with a pocket of teachers working within the adapting uses category and perhaps one or two teachers only at the transforming level.

Looking for a Solution:

I believe that with the abundance of technologies available, teachers at my schools can become more personally and professionally adapted to technology use. Within these elementary schools, technology is used with fairly good efficiency for the business of running the school, but it is in integration into the classroom that we need to become more proficient. Studies of positive uses of technology as evidenced in our own Cadre 9 research show that gains can be made by incorporating technology use into the classroom. My own personal research indicates that technology also has a great factor in student engagement in classroom activities. I want to know how I can improve my practices in my job to promote positive use of technology in the classroom, perhaps working further toward the transforming level of technology use where appropriate. At this time, I need to decide whether I will incorporate both schools in my research or whether I will focus my efforts on one school with the other school hopefully benefiting from the research result.