



IT Fads and Fashions

IT fashions are perceived as anything new, innovative and at the forefront of practice.

Typically, individuals and schools will converge on new technologies on the basis of a limited set of information or from a narrow vantage view. Their colleagues will follow their lead and also converge on that same technology.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the fashion phenomenon in IT matters to a school's outcomes. So what happens to schools that pursue the latest IT fashions?

Educational establishments are likely to fall into two camps. Firstly, they may see no educational or financial justification to try and adopt IT fashions which are not well established across many other schools. Secondly, they will support an early adopter approach to innovations in educational technology.

If schools take the early adopter route they need to take into account the disruptive nature of introducing a new technology into their schools as investment in new IT fashions regularly leads to lower performance in the short term and then better performance in the long run.

Occasionally, the investment in new and emerging technologies does not guarantee successful educational outcomes for a school. There could be any number of reasons for this; including, the lack of sponsorship from the school's senior leadership team, inadequate resources, a lack of training and poor technical support to support the roll out of the new technology.

Nevertheless, with careful management, the benefits far outweigh the costs when new technologies are adopted, embedded and mature within a school setting. That is not to say that all new and emerging technologies will always succeed.

Successful adoption of new technologies should encourage and promote critical thinking, autonomy and interdependence. The creative introduction of new technologies should contribute to a more active pedagogy, increase motivation, promote self-discovery and enable students and teachers to become co-creators.

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