

LEADERSHIP IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Charles Sosnik | January 30, 2018 | 4 minutes read | [Bookmark](#) | [A+A-](#)

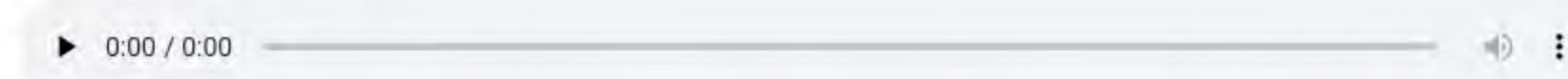
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More thoughts from the Future of Education Technology Conference By Charles Sosnik

The [Future of Education Technology Conference](#) is such a treat. It is an opportunity to hear the greatest minds in education and EdTech add context to technology in a way that helps us understand technology's place in our children's education. One important session I attended was on Leadership Competencies to Create a Lasting Tech Legacy.

It was moderated by Dr. Matt Harris, the Deputy Head of School for Learning Technology at the British School Jakarta. Matt's panelists included Michael Toth, founder, CEO, and Chief Learning Officer of [Learning Sciences International](#), [iObservation](#), and Learning Sciences Marzano Center for Teacher and Leader Evaluation. Toth is actively involved in research and development, gives public presentations, and advises education leaders on issues of leadership and teacher effectiveness, school improvement, and professional development systems. He is the author of *Who Moved My Standards? Joyful Teaching in an Age of Change: A SOAR-ing Tale*, creator of the SOAR School-Year Theme Kit, and co-author, with Robert Marzano, of *Teacher Evaluation That Makes a Difference: A New Model for Teacher Growth and Student Achievement*.



Toth was quick to point out that the technology in our schools is not always used for positive change, and that it is the responsibility of leadership to direct the necessary changes. "Schools will not change unless the leader changes," he said. Leaders need to share a vision for technology and its proper usage. Technology shouldn't be used for low-level learning or teacher replacement. It should help us realize instructional rigor and higher taxonomy learning. "We should be creating a system of 'new economy skills,'" said Toth.

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Christina Devitt, Head of Technology for [Jakarta Intercultural School](#), served on the panel and gave great practical advice for leaders. Devitt stressed the importance of the technology team and the relationship between school and district leaders and their technology specialists. According to Christina, the trust among everyone involved is very important. Once the reason for technology is agreed upon, it needs to be implemented properly. Communication is vital to create a functional, sustainable system.

The 3rd panelist was Peter Kraft, the CEO and co-founder of [Evolution Labs](#), which helps higher ed and K-12 engage students and parents, driving enrollment, retention, and positive social-emotional learning outcomes. Kraft sees technology as a conduit to have a dialogue. He cautions that for students, it's not about the technology itself. It's about how to integrate technology into their culture. Peter explained that we should look beyond the obvious uses of technology. As a tool, technology can allow us to connect with our students, and to connect our students with the world. Perhaps more importantly, it can provide a means of communication and feedback into the environment in which our students actually live. Working within the culture of our students allows us to understand them as learners and provides a valuable means for them to communicate their ideas and feelings in a way that is comfortable for them.

These are extremely valuable viewpoints for leaders trying to understand how to lead in this digital age – demanding that technology meets our higher standard for learning, creating proper implementation and utilizing technology's ability to meet our learners where they live. I have always thought that in one sense, the technology didn't matter. Technology will always change. But the possibilities of technology are infinite. Increasing higher order learning and significantly improving our communication with our learners – that's exciting for our educational leaders everywhere.



Further Reading

1. [EdSurge – LEAP Innovations' Way to Build Better Schools](#)
2. [New York Times – Education Innovation: A Special Section](#)
3. [edCircuit – A Framework for Innovation in Learning](#)

Author



Charles Sosnik

Charles is an education journalist and editor. He uses his deep roots in the education community to add context to the education narrative. He is a frequent writer and columnist for the NSBA Journal, eSchool News and EdCircuit. Charles is unabashedly Southern, and likes to say he is an editor by trade and Southern by the Grace of God.

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