Low-Hype High-Tech Learning Environments -- Abstract

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Technology is seen as being special, and many of our attitudes are influenced by the hype that spirals around the information about technology. The hyperbole used to describe expectations of technology slant our views and attitudes of its use. Special classroom technology used to be a movie projector, while consumers became familiar with television at home. Now a computer and video projector are special items in the classroom, while consumers are familiar with high-def video, wireless LANs, and mobile telecommunication technology. This gap is an implicit goal by academicians to see technology as something special and thus apart from the primary focus of teaching and the resulting student learning. An example of an after school technology literacy program is presented that illustrates a "Low-Hype" strategy of technology integration focusing on student achievement. The coupling of detailed lesson plans, teacher preparedness, and technology readiness makes the learning challenging, fun, and engaging for the students. This puts forward the premise that if we acknowledge that technology is not something special, but just using different tools to accomplish the same goals we have always strived for, then our students can help us close this technology literacy gap.