Laptop School Progress Self-assessment

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When I began working with laptops schools in 1990, I fully expected schools to evolve in the following way within a decade. How did we do? How did your school do?

Read the following checklist and determine if your reality has exceeded my dream. Schools without laptops can use this document to help plan your future.

The easy stuff

- Basic productivity tool fluency would be assumed
- Electronic publishing of student work would be commonplace
- Electronically-mediated parent/teacher communication
- Teachers using the computer for personal productivity/school paperwork
- Every child and teacher would have a personal computer
- We would stop referring to computers as technology
- I.T. would cease to exist as a school subject

The hard stuff

Kids would be:

- *All laptop owners*
- Composing music
- Writing powerful computer programs
- Freely communicating online
- Building robots
- Conducting scientific investigations with probeware
- Publishing in a variety of convergent media

School leaders would be:

- Using computers in personally powerful ways
- Supporting the imaginative use of emerging technology
- Participating in the professional development they impose on teachers
- No longer using computers to quiz or test students

The really hard stuff

- Principals would no longer be able to get their photo in the newspaper just for standing next to a kid and a computer
- School would be learner-centered and educators would be able to articulate what that means
- School leaders would spend less time making computer deals and more time collaborating with other learners
- Students would be able to program and construct their own software tools
- The supremacy of curriculum would be abandoned & no one would speak of delivery
- School leaders would join the community of practice
- Kids would collaborate with other kids and experts around the world
- Computer science would be offered in most secondary schools

The really really hard stuff

- Multi-age interdisciplinary 'classrooms' would be widespread
- External forms of assessment would be replaced by more effective humane forms of authentic assessment
- Kids would spend less time in school
- Schools would stop viewing the needs of children as an impediment to the enterprise
- There are far fewer technology coordinators employed by schools

For 23 years, Gary Stager has helped learners of all ages across the globe embrace the power of computers as intellectual laboratories and vehicles for self-expression. He led professional development in the world's first laptop schools (1990), designed online graduate school programs since the mid-90s and is a collaborator in the MIT Media Lab's Future of Learning Group. He is Editor-At-Large of District Administration Magazine, Adjunct Professor at Pepperdine University, author of the feature, *Exceeding Expectations,* for Apple Computer and an Associate of the Thornburg Center for Professional Development. In 1999, Converge Magazine named Gary a "shaper of our future and inventor of our destiny." He may be reached at gary@stager.org for consulting, presentations, keynotes or other services.