



Peace, Love, and Technology

I never lived in the 1960's. I hear it was quite a time. There was great social change occurring in America with the Vietnam War and of course the Hippie era. I was watching a documentary not too long ago that spoke about the Hippie movement. The show chronicled the movements purpose and explained that as the movement gained popularity it quickly lost its meaning. As more and more people joined the Hippie movement they began to add their own meaning to peace and love. Some of their additions were helpful others were not. The Hippie movement was a peaceful movement, but as more people joined, violence began to break out. One only has to think about Charles Manson to see how far the Hippie movement got off course from its original intent.

This made me reflect on an article I read several weeks ago. The article was about the SAMR Model. The SAMR Model is a popular model designed to be a tool to help educators describe and categorize technologies use in a classroom. The model has four stages that encourages teachers to identify currently where they are in their use of technology. The model also encourages teachers to move through the stages of the model until they reach the "Redefinition" stage, which uses technology as a tool to create new tasks previously seen as unimaginable. First introduced in 2006, the SAMR Module has become very popular in K-12 education and this is one of the key issues with the model.

Hamilton, Roseberg, & Akcaoglu (2016) note that due to SAMR's popularity many have created their own meaning to the SAMR's four stages. Similar to the Hippie movement, the meaning of SAMR may be losing its meaning. What may be "Augmentation" to you may be something completely different to me. The authors note, "Vastly different representations can lead to misunderstanding and confusion..." (p. 435). Furthermore, the authors note the lack of evidence behind the model "complicates how to accurately interpret and apply the SAMR model" (p. 436).

Other criticisms of the model center around its absence of context. Successful technology requires a complex arrangement of technology resources, professional development, principal vision, teacher buy-in, and infrastructure support. None of these in isolation works without the others. The same is true for the SAMR Model, without the support of these entities implanting innovation and technology is nearly impossible. The SAMR Model alone will not lead to success without the support of these other entities.

Finally, the authors note that linear models don't necessarily reflect how students learn. This is simply because learning is not a linear process. Learning often has many twists and setbacks. It requires many exposures, variety in stimuli, and a solid background on which to base the new knowledge. It's complex and hard to define in a simple linear model.

The ultimate point is this. If the SAMR Model helps educators be successful with technology that is great. However, I think it's important to realize there is no perfect road map. Technology without sound pedagogy, leadership, professional development and technology support is likely to leave much to be desired.

Hamilton, E. R., Rosenberg, J. M., & Akcaoglu, M. (2016). The Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition (SAMR) Model: a Critical Review and Suggestions for its Use. *TechTrends*, 60(5), 433-441. doi:10.1007/s11528-016-0091-y

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