Section 6

IT IN SCHOOLS
Around the world, considerable money has been invested in IT for primary and secondary schools and as a result policymakers expect improvements in teaching and learning. An increasing school accountability trend has underscored these expectations and added to them that gains be measured through scientifically rigorous research and keyed to national interests, particularly global competitiveness. Teachers working alone in their classrooms cannot produce the sort of large-scale results and significant outcomes that are expected, and so it raises the question of how IT might be harnessed at a school-wide level in order to bring about the desired ends.

Key questions that are raised are how can leaders best coordinate teachers’ efforts across a school?; how can leaders best position school organization resources to support teachers’ efforts?; how can focusing on the perspective of the school organization to study the barriers to and opportunities for IT effectiveness provide insights into aligning it with efforts at the teacher, curriculum, and policy levels of the system?; and how can outcomes from IT be best defined and measured? The chapters of the *IT in Schools* section of the book teases apart the salient issues behind these questions and presents the key research that addresses them.

The premise of this section is that maximizing the effectiveness of IT use at the school-wide level requires leadership and decision making about IT integration goals for classrooms and the IT implementation environment across a school. This includes how IT leaders can use the nature and scope of a school’s IT vision to unify and guide teachers’ uses of technology in support of teaching and learning. A related issue is creating an effective learning and support environment (i.e., technical, instructional, and social support) for the teachers to achieve the IT vision at the school. Since it is likely that a group of people will distribute the leadership responsibilities for the successful integration and implementation of IT throughout a school, the processes these team members use to guide and coordinate their decisions and work is also an issue of interest when considering IT at the school-wide level.
The first chapter of Section 6 will provide an overview of these leadership issues for IT in schools and discuss the conceptual framework of this section. Each of the following chapters in this section then elaborates upon the key ideas from the framework.

– Chapter 6.1, *Leadership for IT in Schools*, lays out an overview of issues for IT leaders. By elaborating upon the key functions of leadership, desired outcomes for leading school-wide IT use, the team-based nature of IT leadership, and key decision processes, it serves as an overview to the section and an introduction to topics discussed in subsequent chapters.

– Chapter 6.2, *Framing IT use to Enhance Educational Impact on a School-Wide Basis*, presents several frameworks that could be used to develop a school’s IT vision, with advantages and limitations of each noted.

– Chapter 6.3, *Quality Support for ICT in Schools*, examines the high-quality support programs that are needed at a school in order to foster teachers’ learning about IT integration and ease its implementation in classrooms.

– Chapter 6.4, *Distributed Leadership and IT*, selects from the research on leadership, particularly distributed leadership, and its key elements in order to illustrate how expert knowledge can serve as a key source of power for IT specialists who may not hold formal leadership positions.

– Chapter 6.5, *Total Cost of Ownership and Total Value of Ownership*, describes the process of data-driven decision-making as well as the considerations for implementing it, with particular attention to two possible models of data-driven decision making about IT in schools: total cost of ownership and total value of ownership.

– Chapter 6.6, *The Logic and Logic Model of Technology Evaluation*, first raises the question of what outcomes of technology integration are reasonable to expect and then discusses how to approach evaluating whether or not those outcomes have been reached.