Third Reading: Barbara Means

1. According to Means, why is technology important in Education?
2. What are some of the reform efforts in education that technology might support?
3. Give some examples of authentic or contextual lessons?
4. What are some examples of top down reform?

1. According to Means technology is important in education because it, “is more available and affordable than ever before.” The communication with technology has become virtually instantaneous. Students could interact around the world. An example of this is America students doing a cultural report of students living in Japan. They could literally talk to each other via web cam, or through a less visual tool the email. A virtual software developed gives students the visual depiction of the place, object, or resource teachers trying to teach. Technology could help all kinds of students modalities, visual, kinesthetic, auditory, and more.

2. Some of the reform efforts in education with technology are the way it is being delivered or taught. In some aspects technology is used as the status quo or as Means state, “in the margins.” I find that this is because most teacher don’t know how to implement it or afraid to try to implement it. Means state that, “The key to the partnership lies in educators developing reformed sets of curricular and instructional goals and then using technology as a tool to support these goals.” It is important to know that using technology does not automatically promote superior style of learning. The use of technology is a tool and students understand that tool can boost their imagination.

3. Authentic lesson stated by Means, are a challenging tasks and invites new kinds of assessments of student’s learning. This is due to the style in which students are learning the curriculum; it is more through collaborative style of work. Students first need to interact with technology as a tutor, explorer, use of a tool, and last communications. Using technology as a tutor is where students interact with a given program a get instant result on the outcome. This can be done through problem solving or answering questions. Students as an explorer is students researching the internet to find a giving answer. Using it as a tool is done through word processor, spreadsheet, video cameras, or video editing equipment. Lastly is communication, this can be done between students or the teacher. This could be done via email, message board, or website. This is why assessing students through authentic lessons is difficult because there is such a big curve with how the ability of students grasping the technology. Some students have been exposed to this technology and some never used it. Once overcoming this obstacle students could be assessed on the project they create using their imagination and technology. The teacher then becomes an advisor then a person of direct instruction. Students would be assessed by their peers and overall product.

4. The top down reform is when technology is implemented through the administration onto the teachers. This will fail because if there is no teacher buy in, or if the teacher can’t see how the use of technology will help them, why change. Means states that, teachers can’t use technology effectively until they have thoroughly assimilated it into a
larger instructional plan.” Teachers need to become a dominate player upon their own not forced into it. As time roles on you will find more teacher willing to experiment with technology by their own, and the next generation of teacher will be more open to it because they will be the ones who grew up using it at home through the use of games and other multimedia.