Episode 11 Transcript

00:00:17,000 --> 00:00:54,779 [Speaker 0]

As a reminder, any time another work is referenced, you will hear a ding. A timestamp document with references will be available in the show notes. In addition, any time there's a direct quote, you will soft music playing underneath it. This will help you, as listeners, determine the difference between paraphrased information and quotes directly from other sources. This podcast is a unique opportunity to listen to the voices of educators. In doing so, they allowed their voices and opinions to be exposed while also allowing me to critically analyze their responses so that they relate to each episode's themes. This was all member checked or checked for validity by the participants before publication.

00:00:54,779 --> 00:01:56,339 [Speaker 0]

Welcome back to Education Isn't a To-Do List. I'm your host, Hannah Jimenez. In this episode, we are going to conclude our analysis of the responses to my recent interviews. The last themes I want to explore are how educational technology supports culturally sustaining practices and pedagogy. As a reminder, the following are our interview participants. Ms. Kimberly Jones has been an educator for 19 years, and she was named North Carolina Teacher of the Year in 2023. She predominantly teaches high school English in Central North Carolina. Dr. Aaron Gabriel has been in education for 29 years and is currently serving as a superintendent in Central North Carolina. Ms. Jill Irwin-Hardell has been an educator for 28 years and is currently serving as an IB coordinator in Central North Carolina. Mr. Silas Burk has been an educator for 13 years and currently teaches middle school English in Central North Carolina. Lastly is Ms. Paula Januzzi-Godfrey, who has been in education for 41 years and currently serves as an elementary school librarian in Central North Carolina. Let's start by hearing from Silas Burk.

00:01:56,339 --> 00:02:35,519 [Speaker 1]

You know, just one of the things that really jumps to my mind if you talk about cultural lo- uh, sustaining, that concept of sustaining, I'm especially worried about cultures that maybe are disappearing. Um, and so I'm thinking about, like, um, indigenous American cultures and that kind of thing. And there's, I think, great, great, great movement in the AR, VR, XR space, um, with museums. Those are, a- as far as I can tell, some of the organizations that are really at the forefront of using that technology for, you know, virtual tours and stuff. Like, I can't go to the Louvre, but I can go on a tour of the Louvre, and I think that's really cool.

00:02:35,519 --> 00:02:37,319 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:02:37,319 --> 00:03:09,559 [Speaker 1]

Um, and so when I think about museums, I'm thinking about cultural preservation. I'm thinking about, um, I'm thinking about multimedia, multi-sensory things, right? You can sort of be in the space with an object, with an artifact. You can hear something. You can hear maybe a language that is disappearing, or you can hear music from a culture or what their instruments may have sounded like or that kind of thing. Um, and so I do think there's absolutely r- room for those two things to coincide, especially if you can find a way to empower,

00:03:09,559 --> 00:03:14,059 [Speaker 1]

um, students who are members of that,

00:03:14,059 --> 00:04:23,559 [Speaker 1]

that culture, um, that you're trying to, you know, hold onto and support and lift up. If you can encourage them to use that technology to, um, either further their own understanding 'cause I think one thing that happens when some of, some of those cultural start to kind of get, get washed out or get lost is that, y- you know, the younger generations maybe don't know the things that the older generations knew. And so they can learn things that they didn't know or hold onto things that they do know or share things that they do know with everybody else who's not a part of that culture and doesn't know anything about it. And again, I think technology, um, especially in that kind of, that AR space, um, e- can be such a powerful tool for that because you're talking about... When you talk about culture, the things that first come to my mind are arts, um, and, and history. And that's stuff that I think can be shared really effectively through that medium. And then, you know, just the whole concept of, like, a digital repository, um, to, to hold onto artifacts. So maybe it's, um...

00:04:23,559 --> 00:05:38,739 [Speaker 1]

I mean, we've talked about this a lot, even in, in English class. That's what we do, where in a way, we're, you know, sustaining cultures from thousands of years ago if we read something that originated with the Anglo-Saxons. My seniors right now are reading Beowulf, which is a story that's 1,200 years old. We don't know anything about, um... There are no Anglo-Saxons alive who can tell us about what their lives are like. There's not a lot of history 'cause they weren't a group of people that wrote a lot of stuff down, but we have some stories that are

leftover. We have some poems that are leftover. We have some archeological excavations that have been done, and we can kind of use those to draw conclusions about them. And I think you can do the same thing with cultures in a, in a modern context that... Not necessarily ones that have disappeared, um, just ones of somebody that's maybe different from you. You use those. You use the stories, the poems, the music, the artifacts as a, kind of a gateway to start, start an exploration. And, and something that's cool about that is I think you'll find that there are a lot of students that, even if it's a, [sighs] a culture that would seem very, um, other to them, might, might engage with it because of, you know, finding the music interesting or finding the, the artifacts interesting or, or whatever. So yeah. I definitely think those are things that can go together.

00:05:38,739 --> 00:06:00,879 [Speaker 0]

One thing to pull out from what Mr. Burk said is that technology allows us as a culture to sustain each other. A question we might consider is, whose responsibility is it to sustain the communities that are being erased? Should it not fall on the majority to protect the minority cultures that have been negatively impacted by this erasure?

00:06:00,879 --> 00:06:12,051 [Speaker 0]

These are thoughts to consider.Next, Ms. Jill Irwin-Hardell will discuss her thoughts on how educational technology can support culturally sustaining pedagogy beginning with teacher training.

00:06:12,051 --> 00:07:02,111 [Speaker 2]

If, you know, once upon a time we used textbooks. We've realized that textbooks grow old within, you know, three years, the f- the rate at which society has grown and changed, they're obsolete. But the internet, the technology is- is constantly evolving, every day, every second. So this becomes the- the tool where we have access to the world. So even in the way we train teachers, getting them to use culturally responsive or culturally sustaining pedagogy in the training of teachers. So w- when you ask a teacher to create a lesson plan, giving them the opportunity to go on the internet, pull the resources that they would be able to embed and use in the classroom,

00:07:02,111 --> 00:07:18,671 [Speaker 2]

get them to explain how, what, why, when they would do with these, where does it connect to the standard, how would students evolve and develop these further, we tend to, um, have a disconnect in the way we train teachers.

00:07:18,671 --> 00:07:33,051 [Speaker 2]

We want them to differentiate in the classroom, we want them to have all of these station rotations and activities, but when we train teachers, we're still using that linear, archaic, old-time, um,

00:07:33,051 --> 00:08:43,331 [Speaker 2]

way of, uh, of teaching. You know, stage on the st- Or sage on the stage in the front of the lecture hall telling the kids what to think and what to do as opposed to doing station rotation, differentiation, dialogue, collaboration, discussion, and then a- a bubbling test at the end. Why not make it performance-based where they turn in what they would teach? Um, and I think you're seeing that with the edTPA and why so many teachers are struggling to be successful on that edTPA, is that it is you- you plan something, what you're gonna do, then you act upon it, then you look at it, you reflect it and you talk about what went well and what didn't go well. Well, teachers aren't used to that because they're never asked to look and watch themselves teach, they're only look to look at the data of what the kids did, not how they performed with the kids. And so I think that you have this big disconnect because we're trying to compartmentalize where if we would integrate them all the time, then they wouldn't be fighting one another.

00:08:43,331 --> 00:09:03,771 [Speaker 0]

When you hear Ms. Irwin-Hardell's comment, you can also hear the tenets of Frede. Education should be collaborative, student focused, and freeing. Instead of a place of teacher lectures, memorization, there should be an encouragement of dialogue together for knowledge creation.

00:09:03,771 --> 00:09:16,471 [Speaker 0]

Next, you will hear Dr. Gabriel share some audio you might have heard before, but I think it's important to hear it again in the context of this specific theme, where technology supports culturally sustaining pedagogy and practice.

00:09:16,471 --> 00:10:03,831 [Speaker 3]

We wanna know where they're coming from, um, because the beauty of technology is it's much easier to create lessons or modify things, uh, to- to, uh, reflect a culture a little bit different than our own, than it was when I was in the classroom. Yeah, 'cause I can tell you when I was in the classroom, it was very much from a White Anglo-Saxon protestant, uh, standpoint. So much, much easier to do that now, and I think the intersection wil- with this initiative and with technology is the way that technology can become the vehicle to help a teacher truly diversify what they're teaching, uh, and to who they're teaching it to, because in any given class, especially at one of our elementaries, uh, and our middle and high school, you may have five different nationalities in the same class of 25 or less.

00:10:03,831 --> 00:10:14,751 [Speaker 0]

Dr. Gabriel shows us that technology is a tool for increased educational equity in classrooms. Giroux would consider this crucial in his critical pedagogy of resistance.

00:10:14,751 --> 00:10:25,591 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Kimberly Jones will describe multiple different ways that technology can support culturally sustaining pedagogy while also issuing a warning that the two are fundamentally not the same.

00:10:25,591 --> 00:11:03,191 [Speaker 4]

I still think that is your number one priority, to- to meet the academic needs and the- the social emotional and the character vision that your community has for schools, um, and to not allow, you know, the- the court- the- the cart to- to pull the horse. To continue to keep kids and their- their academic, their social emotional, and their character development at the forefront, and allow these tools to be aids to that. Um, I think a lot of teachers feel intimidated because when you go... when you do a Google search [laughs]-

00:11:03,191 --> 00:11:03,471 [Speaker 0]

[laughs]

00:11:03,471 --> 00:11:09,151 [Speaker 4]

... of what are the best ed tech tools, you're gonna get, you know-

00:11:09,151 --> 00:11:09,551 [Speaker 0]

Hundreds

00:11:09,551 --> 00:11:32,651 [Speaker 4]

... 1500, 1,000 pages of, "Oh, you could do this, and here's another way you could teach spelling, and here's another way you could teach, you know, the- this graphing formula. Here's another way you could teach this scientific principle." There's always gonna be more options, I think, than we have capacity to fully understand. I think it's really critical that we make sure

00:11:32,651 --> 00:11:40,831 [Speaker 4]

that whatever tools we choose, that they are grounded in ways that have longevity.

00:11:40,831 --> 00:11:41,251 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:11:41,251 --> 00:11:49,211 [Speaker 4]

That their purpose is not just, "Oh, here's another way to slice a piece of bread." It's, "Here's a way to make bread." [laughs]

00:11:49,211 --> 00:11:49,331 [Speaker 0]

[laughs]

00:11:49,331 --> 00:12:28,143 [Speaker 4]

There are- there are different classes of tools, and I think that's where your, um, instructional technology officers and your chief academic officers have to be in conversation, in close conversation, with what do we want to give our teachers, what is the outcome of giving them this tool, and is there gonna be longevity in the..... applicability of this specific tool, because that's how you're going to get teacher buy-in. I think another one of the big

hurdles to both, both of these practices, both culturally sustaining practices, which I think has an eternal longevity and always has. I think it's a new conversation, but I think it's been a need that's been there-

00:12:28,143 --> 00:12:28,163 [Speaker 0]

Hmm

00:12:28,163 --> 00:12:39,623 [Speaker 4]

... since the advent of education. I just think it's a reality that maybe people haven't talked about as much, so I, I put it in a slightly different camp than I do ed tech. But with either,

00:12:39,623 --> 00:12:58,403 [Speaker 4]

I think establishing, um, tools and protocols and, you know, pedagogical practices that we know from the art of teaching and the science of teaching are gonna be sound tools. You know, a hammer is a hammer, is a hammer, is a hammer.

00:12:58,403 --> 00:12:58,464 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:12:58,464 --> 00:13:08,923 [Speaker 4]

Uh, it's a, it's a tool that from [laughs] its advent to today, serves the same purpose. We can improve the hammer, but we still need a hammer.

00:13:08,923 --> 00:13:08,943 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:08,943 --> 00:13:23,223 [Speaker 4]

There are certain things, you know... A butter churn was technology at one point, and there are still people who use a butter churn, but it is not a necessity that is applicable in the same way as the universal applicability of a, of a hammer.

00:13:23,223 --> 00:13:23,243 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:23,243 --> 00:13:31,743 [Speaker 4]

When we're looking at technology, we need to find hammers, not, you know, uh, you know, ornamental grilled cheese makers.

00:13:31,743 --> 00:13:31,803 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:31,803 --> 00:13:40,243 [Speaker 4]

It's nice to have [laughs], but, you know, I don't need every grilled cheese to, to come out looking like a star, but I do need to be able to make bread.

00:13:40,243 --> 00:13:40,263 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:13:40,263 --> 00:13:57,183 [Speaker 4]

So I think when we're evaluating what those tools are, that's an important thing that I think will also allow for not only greater teacher buy-in, but greater parent buy-in, because they're gonna see the fruitfulness of, of their student learning or working with that specific tool.

00:13:57,183 --> 00:14:02,123 [Speaker 4]

I don't know if they can be one thing. I think they are...

00:14:02,123 --> 00:14:06,523 [Speaker 4]

I think they are individual tires on the same car.

00:14:06,523 --> 00:14:06,723 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:14:06,723 --> 00:14:31,343 [Speaker 4]

I don't think it's the same tire. I think there's four tires on the same car. And, you know, student wellbeing is one of... Mental health and access is one of those tires. And, um, culturally sustaining pedagogy is one of those tires. And ed tech is one of those tires. And things, something like nutrition or extracurriculars is one of those tires. So I think they're, they're moving on the same axles, but I don't necessarily think they're the same thing, if that makes sense.

00:14:31,343 --> 00:14:31,363 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:14:31,363 --> 00:14:45,543 [Speaker 4]

So it's hard of me... It's hard for me to think that the only way to do... Because that would imply... I guess it's my, my pause, is that when I... If I think of them as one thing, it becomes the way to carry out culturally sustaining practices-

00:14:45,543 --> 00:14:45,663 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm

00:14:45,663 --> 00:14:48,423 [Speaker 4]

... is through ed tech. And I don't think that's necessary.

00:14:48,423 --> 00:14:48,843 [Speaker 0]

Mm-mm.

00:14:48,843 --> 00:15:11,903 [Speaker 4]

Or that all ed tech use is grounded in culturally sustaining practice. Now, here's what I will say. There is a very large place in that Venn diagram where they blend together, because in order for something to be culturally relevant, it's important that we understand that's not always gonna look like an identity-based relevancy.

00:15:11,903 --> 00:15:15,463 [Speaker 4]

I'm looking at the culture of Gen Alpha-

00:15:15,463 --> 00:15:15,563 [Speaker 0]

Hmm

00:15:15,563 --> 00:15:31,863 [Speaker 4]

... or Gen Z, which is inherently tech focused. So the incorporation of, of ed tech tools is being culturally relevant to these kids, because that's how they engage with the world, and that's what the future is gonna look like to them.

00:15:31,863 --> 00:15:31,883 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:15:31,883 --> 00:15:45,143 [Speaker 4]

And so I think in some ways, the use of technology alone can be a- an aspect and a use of a culturally sustaining, um,

00:15:45,143 --> 00:15:53,423 [Speaker 4]

pedagogy, because it is culturally relevant. It's how you get that buy-in from students. It's m- it's meeting them in that virtual space where they-

00:15:53,423 --> 00:15:53,483 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm

00:15:53,483 --> 00:16:05,283 [Speaker 4]

... live all the time. If that's turning your notes into a series of TikToks, if that's turning your primary sources into a series of Snapchats, if that's- [laughs]

00:16:05,283 --> 00:16:05,483 [Speaker 0]

[laughs]

00:16:05,483 --> 00:16:30,423 [Speaker 4]

... turning, you know... Having your kids create Instagram, uh, posts for characters in a text, or that they're able to create virtual study groups, I, I think that is a way that we make and we honor the reality of the lives of our students, that they live very often in these virtual places. There's a beautiful example of that in the game Fortnite.

00:16:30,423 --> 00:16:30,443 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:16:30,443 --> 00:16:49,523 [Speaker 4]

Uh, the, the Fortnite, uh, designers within the last couple of years created a virtual Holocaust museum within Fortnite. And it's not a game level, but it literally is a space within Fortnite where players can visit and learn information about the Holocaust-

00:16:49,523 --> 00:16:49,663 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm

00:16:49,663 --> 00:17:32,923 [Speaker 4]

... in ways that, of course, that are, are protected to ensure that there's not harassment or anything like that. But it is a, a learning space placed into this virtual landscape where we know students are, that have culturally relevant and culturally sustaining, um, information there for people to engage with. And so I think, you know, that's a, that's a sort of corporate version of what that looks like, but that's, that's one... That's that sort of space in the middle of the, that, that Venn diagram where I think the technology alone can be an aspect of culturally sustaining pedagogy. But I'm a little reluctant, again, just to call them-

00:17:32,923 --> 00:17:32,943 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm

00:17:32,943 --> 00:17:36,763 [Speaker 4]

... the same things, because I think

00:17:36,763 --> 00:17:40,903 [Speaker 4]

the culturally sustaining practices can happen without technology.

00:17:40,903 --> 00:17:40,923 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:17:40,923 --> 00:17:49,123 [Speaker 4]

And I know that technology can happen without, you know, culturally sustaining, uh, pedagogy being the focus.

00:17:49,123 --> 00:17:49,783 [Speaker 0]

Mm-hmm.

00:17:49,783 --> 00:17:59,023 [Speaker 4]

But both are critical, and it's, it's awesome when you can be intentional about allowing, you know, these two wheels to turn on the same axis.

00:17:59,023 --> 00:18:27,059 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Kimberly Jones makes a very important point in her discussion. Educational technology and culturally sustaining practices and pedagogy can support each other, but they are not the same thing and should never be considered interchangeable.We know from Benjamin [bell rings] [20:19] that technology is inherently biased, and so should be handled carefully and used wisely. This also applies to its use in schools for both teachers and students. It's a support, not a solution.

00:18:27,059 --> 00:18:35,240 [Speaker 0]

Lastly, we will hear from Ms. Paula Januzzi Godfrey [piano music plays] and how her perception of educational technology changed due to the pandemic.

00:18:35,240 --> 00:18:41,779 [Speaker 5]

Mm, that's an interesting question. I'm going to say that's an interesting question for someone

00:18:41,779 --> 00:18:48,000 [Speaker 5]

with my years of experience, because I have watched technology

00:18:48,000 --> 00:19:06,299 [Speaker 5]

come from nothing to where it is now. And have certainly had moments on and off throughout my career where I was not a fan of technology. Um, I've come to a different, uh, place with that. I,

00:19:06,299 --> 00:19:17,439 [Speaker 5]

I can honestly say I think I've come to a different place on that because of the pandemic, where we were forced to use technology in order to

00:19:17,439 --> 00:19:35,019 [Speaker 5]

maintain relationships and, and survive in education, in everything really. But in education, if we didn't use technology, we, we didn't have... [laughs] We didn't have community. We didn't have a chance to do any of that. So I feel like, um,

00:19:35,019 --> 00:19:39,979 [Speaker 5]

that really was a game-changer for me, as much as, um,

00:19:39,979 --> 00:20:14,039 [Speaker 5]

I... It felt very stressful at the time, but that was because of all the other things happening. Um, but after the pandemic, I personally use technology in a whole different way and in a much better way than I did before. So before that, I would've not put that much effort into it, because I did feel that it was less, um, personal, that it was taking away human interaction. Um, I won't say that I don't still feel that way. I do, I do watch

00:20:14,039 --> 00:20:25,539 [Speaker 5]

teachers and, um, colleagues, and, who I think and feel [laughs] overuse technology, uh, in ways that

00:20:25,539 --> 00:20:33,499 [Speaker 5]

do put up barriers, that make it less human interaction. I think there's a balance. But, um,

00:20:33,499 --> 00:20:36,019 [Speaker 5]

but I do...

00:20:36,019 --> 00:20:47,719 [Speaker 5]

Yeah. So I think, I think as with everything, there's pros and cons, and it depends on how you use it. [piano music plays]

00:20:47,719 --> 00:24:40,280 [Speaker 0]

These interviews reflect diverse opinions about how, why, and when technology should be integrated into schools. As an audience, I hope we heard that each educator has their own way of making sure that what they use and when they use it is most beneficial for students. As always, it's important to connect these ideas to those of our critical theorists. Freire's critical pedagogy stresses that students should not be passive recipients of knowledge, but active participants in their own learning. [bell chimes] Several educators in the interviews emphasize this idea. Miss Jill Erwin Hartle critiques outdated teacher training models, which focuses on "sage on the stage" instruction rather than interactive, student-centered approaches. She argues for performance-based assessment and reflection rather than rote memorization, echoing Freire's belief that education should be a process of critical reflection and dialogue. [bell chimes] Miss Jones highlights how teachers must embrace discomfort and change, acknowledging that students are often more digitally literate than educators. She notes that teachers must be vulnerable learners themselves, rather than maintaining rigid authority over knowledge, aligning with Freire's belief that teachers and students should co-construct knowledge through dialogue. [bell chimes] Henry Giroux argues that education should be a site of resistance against dominant power structures, where students become critical citizens who challenge inequities. [bell chimes] The interviews reflect this in multiple ways. Dr. Gabriel discusses how technology can be a tool for educational equity, enabling teachers to diversify their curriculum in ways that were historically impossible. He notes that in the past, education was largely Eurocentric, reflecting a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant perspective. With modern tools, however, teachers can incorporate multiple perspectives and center marginalized voices, a key principle of Giroux's critical pedagogy of resistance. [bell chimes] Miss Jones warns against the uncritical adoption of ed tech, emphasizing that not all technological tools align with culturally sustaining goals. She stresses that schools must critically evaluate which tools have long-term educational value, rather than simply chasing trends. This aligns with Giroux's argument that education should resist neoliberal forces that push corporate-driven solutions without questioning their impact. [bell chimes] Gloria Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy emphasizes that effective teaching must support academic success, affirm students' cultural identities, and foster critical consciousness about societal inequities. [bell chimes] This framework appears frequently in the interviews. Mr. Burke discusses how AR and VR can preserve indigenous cultures, allowing students to experiences languages, artifacts, and histories in immersive ways. This exemplifies Ladson-Billings' call for teachers to affirm diverse cultural identities in the classroom. [bell chimes] Miss Jones highlights how integrating ed tech into the curriculum is itself a culturally relevant practice, since Gen Z and Gen Alpha students live in digital spaces. She argues that teachers who resist technology may inadvertently alienate students from their own cultural realities, rather than embracing their ways of engaging with the world. Django Paris extends Ladson-Billings' work by arguing that education must actively sustain cultural practices, rather than just making learning relevant. [bell chimes] This means valuing and

maintaining the linguistic and cultural practices of marginalized communities, rather than just acknowledging them. [bell chimes][laughs] Mr. Burk's discussion on digital repositories for endangered languages aligns with Paris' argument that education must do more than acknowledge diversity; it must actively sustain it [chimes]. By using AR and VR to preserve languages and traditions that might otherwise disappear, technology becomes a tool for cultural survival, not just education.

00:24:40,280 --> 00:26:01,640 [Speaker 0]

Ms. Jones' example of Fortnite's virtual Holocaust museum is also a compelling application of culturally sustaining pedagogy. By emba- by embedding historical education into a digital space where students already engage, educators meet students where they are while reinforcing cultural m-memory and historical consciousness [chimes]. The interviews reveal a complex relationship between technology, cultural identity, and pedagogy. While some educators fear that ed tech tools could erode critical thinking and personal engagement, others see them as opportunities to enhance culturally sustaining teaching practices. In line with Freidet, Giroux, Ladson-Billings, and Paris, the educators express both resistance and cautious optimism, recognizing that technology is not inherently good or bad; its impact depends on how it's used and who controls it. And culturally sustaining pedgogy, pedagogy requires intentionality. Tools must be selected and adapted to affirm student identities rather than just standardizing knowledge. Ultimately, the discussions align with critical theory's demand for education that is transformative, empowering, and actively engaged in cultural resistance. Teachers must not only adopt new technologies, but also critically interrogate their implications and ensuring that they serve equitable student-centered and culturally sustaining purposes.

00:26:01,640 --> 00:26:11,639 [Speaker 0]

That's all for this episode of Education Isn't a To-Do List. Join me next time as we look into AI. [upbeat music]