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Philosophy of EdTech

Technology is a constant tool in our lives, and it is here to stay. While we were already heading in the direction of a more plugged-in society, the COVID pandemic hurled us face-first into a more digital world. Teachers had to switch their entire classroom to be accessible online with BitMoji's and memes. They showed us what can be done with technology while starting conversations about what we need to change and how we can move forward. When I think about my Philosophy of EdTech, I want to utilize tech as much as possible, but with purpose. I want to provide students with agency over their learning and create an equitable educational environment. However, I understand technology is not a cure-all, and inequities exist. Most importantly, we need to protect our students' data when using different digital tools and understand the effects of social media and online bullying. These are just some of the ideas I want to keep in mind as I develop my Philosophy of EdTech.

Technology in schools has opened doors that we did not know existed. It has allowed us to access content, communication, research materials, and gave students agency over their learning. Students can log in from anywhere to work on assignments, and teachers can provide students with immediate feedback on their work. We can use technology for formative assessments to "provide real-time feedback to both students and teachers, and ...provide aggregate qualitative and quantitative assessment data"(Knowles, 2020). This data can help us help our students better understand where they might need additional support and allow them to take control of their learning. Technology like

this also provides teachers with important information and is less time-consuming. This time we would spend on grading can now be used to adjust our lesson plans based on the formative data we receive from the digital tool.

Unfortunately, technology does have its drawbacks. The pandemic showed us that many households in the U.S. do not have reliable broadband access. Nicol Turner-Lee points out that students who do not have access to the internet are being held back in an increasingly digital economy (Burroughs, 2020). Not only do we need to provide urban and rural communities with broadband, but we need to be aware of how these fun new tech tools access and use our students' data. These issues of student online privacy have emerged in conversations with colleagues including how, "some online educational services may not implicate FERPA -protected information" (Protecting Student Privacy, 2014, p. 2). The cost of these new tools does not outweigh the benefits. We must protect our students' data and teach them about the monetization of their data and what they can do to protect themselves. These are just some examples of drawbacks with technology and ideas to keep in mind as we teach our students.

I am a fan of technology in the classroom. I believe technology connects teachers to our students better and allows us to provide efficient and effective feedback. I think digital tools are engaging and interactive tools that provide students with different ways to participate in the learning process. Technology is also a prevalent factor in society, and if we do not teach our students how to use it, we will be doing them a disservice. With all that said, it is important to remember Bryan Phillips' saying, "teachers have to understand not to make an assignment that uses a Chromebook just to use a Chromebook"(Burroughs, 2020). There needs to be a purpose behind the technology we use. I have

also realized that teachers need to teach students how to use technology. Whether you are using tech in math class or English Language Arts, students are not always aware of the different ways to use these tools. I have modeled the same strategies for both my eighth and eleventh grades. We cannot assume they know what they are doing because these new generations pick up technology quickly.

When I think about my Philosophy of EdTech, I think of it as constantly developing. New technology and digital tools are developed every year, and teachers must adapt to the changing landscape if we are to prepare our students for life after secondary school. I will use technology to engage and educate my students. I will use technology to provide my students with options and agency over their education. There are always two sides to every coin, and technology is not different. Teaching students about the positives and negatives of technology is often not included in the curriculum but must be a part of our pedagogy.

References

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