

Running Head: Philosophy of Instructional Technology

Short Paper of Philosophy of Instructional Technology

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Introduction of Instructional Technology

5150:610

The University of Akron

Spring 2011

Submitted to:

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Philosophy of Instructional Technology

In order to be a highly qualified and effective educator, there are certain attributes that should be utilized in the classroom. The teacher must be the expert and have knowledge of all key content areas, as well as the ability to instruct and deliver this content through multiple strategies and tools. The educator must always assess one self, be willing and flexible to try new things, and continue to develop.

One of the main responsibilities and goals of the instructor is to teach the material to all students, whether struggling or succeeding, by using multiple approaches and strategies, including the growing technology and media of the twenty-first century. Learning will be a focus through individual efforts, as well as cooperative learning within the classroom and daily lives. Knowing that diversity is not only skin deep, it is imperative that the concept of individuality is taught throughout the classroom. Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses will allow the instructor to advocate social equity and impact learning for each unique student and their multiple intelligences. Using technology can be an effective way to reach this goal set by the instructor. The standard of "customize and personalize learning activities to address students' diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources (Koehler & Mishra, 2008, p. 18) is one way to meet the needs of a 21st century learner. The instructor can create effective learning tools, for instance a jeopardy game or a hands-on SmartBoard lesson.

Along with content material, the instructor should be willing to integrate appropriate technology to enhance the learning process. Moats (1999) states that “One of the most fundamental responsibilities of schools is to teach students to read” (p. 61). Many teachers only believe in certain strategies in teaching students the fundamentals, such as choral reading and sight word memorization, however literacy skills and processes can be taught to the 21st century learner by teachers who have the relevant knowledge of how, when, and why to use technology effectively in the K-6 classrooms (Anderson & Speck, 2001). Swenson, Rozema, Young, McGrail and Whitin state “technology has actually changed the way we read, create, and interpret texts (2005, p. 67). This means that the instructor must not only understand how to use technology, but also how technology is impacted students’ learning of literacy (Schmidt & Gurbo p. 67). This can be done by following the NETS-T standard of Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments. One of the most important standards is for the teacher to be able to “design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity (Koehler & Mishra, 2008, p. 15). By creating these activities, students have the opportunity to work on the literacy skills in many different ways, which is a great focus while instructing efficiently.

Students should be taught how to be critical users of the ever-changing internet and technological advancements. The instructor must give students the opportunities to explore and utilize technology. However, before students are given the chance to do this, it is imperative that the teacher models, advocates,

and teaches safe, legal, and ethical use of digital tools (Koehler & Mishra, 2008, p. 18). Students need to be taught how to work safely online, especially on social networking sites, which could be a difficult task for facilitators and leaders (Williamson & Redish, 2009, p. 129). A teacher should model safe internet use, and encourage the parents to get involved at home as well, especially when students become interested in those social networks.

An instructor must also model and teach students how to be ethical when studying a topic and receiving information from a website. One must be familiar with the Copyright Act of 1976, which can be found online at <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>. The law explains all violations of property and it is encouraged that educators thoroughly understand these principles when integrating technology in any activity, especially in the older grades (Williamson & Redish, 2009, p. 131). If teachers utilize technology for resources and information, they must be familiar with these principles.

Giving the students a chance to display their work on the web, like the example of Willowdale Elementary, allows students to share their work with a larger audience, even relatives far away. Yes, students were excited to upload their work, but not really realizing the risks of doing so. However, it was the teacher's responsibility to be aware of and caution students about online safety (Williamson & Redish, 2009, p. 140).

To be able to reach all students' abilities, one must continue learning themselves and stay current on all the changing and new strategies, resources, tools and media. As an educator, it is a duty to be a lifelong learner to improve

skills and contributions to this profession. Many teachers are required to attend in-service workshops, professional development classes offered by the district, and obtain their masters degree plus some hours. Throughout one's continuing education, one will be able to reflect and implement new plans and learning theories, such as how to implement technology into the classroom. To honestly assess one self in these areas will help guide student progression throughout the year.

Still most importantly, these qualities cannot be mastered or carried out without professionalism. Because elementary students are so easily impacted, the instructor needs to demonstrate ethical attitudes and values and serve as a role model at all times. It is important for any and all types of educators to remember these words that Sara Wilford states in the abstract of her article *Modeling Appropriate Behaviors: Helping Teachers Recognize Their Position as Role Models for Children*:

A role model is someone an individual looks up to and wants to be like-- but also someone an individual connects with as a person. There is a special relationship between a child and a teacher, particularly in the early childhood years. Teachers must think carefully about how their manner affects the children in their classrooms (Wilford, 2007, abstract).

Wilford goes on to say "that teachers have to consider the image of themselves as role models for the children with whom they work. They must consider modeling social/emotional skills, modeling intellectual growth, and modeling physical development. As role models for children, teachers need to be aware of

their impact on them socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically (Wilford, 2007, abstract).

As an educator of the twenty-first century, I realize that ways of learning and instructing are always changing and that I must adapt and be willing to utilize the most effective strategies and media. Still, the most significant thing to remember as an educator is that children need to be instructed on their levels and be treated as individuals.

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