

## Joseph Boateng: Introduction to Technology

### Reflection Paper

**Prompt:** *Reflect on what you plan to do to address the equity and ethics issues when applying technologies. You may share with us about what you have been doing by addressing these aspects and what you will change after learning in this module*

It has become complex to address the issues of equity and ethics in the new technological environment. This stems from the fact that the existing guidelines, norms, and rules have not been able to catch up with the speed at which the new technologies are being applied, particularly in the educational system. Therefore, it is important that our moral principles fill the vacuum between the application of the new technology and the existing policy framework within which our professional responsibilities have originally been exercised. According to Baase (1997), ethics is imperative when the laws lack clarity in dealing with the new challenges of technological application. However, how to exercise ethical responsibilities, including ensuring equity, are in themselves, not a mere task. It may require enriching our personal principles of doing what is good by availing ourselves to the best practices, including case study scenarios and properly detailed guidelines.

### Description

Under this module, the tasks have included active interactions with our colleagues in the class on legal and ethics, health and safety, and security and privacy issues. A reference point has been a case study scenario in which readers could catch in their minds' eyes, intriguing conduct and classroom management skills of a teacher. In addition, articles and book chapters dealing with the subjects such as ethical consideration in technology in dealing with people with disabilities; ethical approach to technology in adult distance learning; and human issues pertaining to social, ethics, and legal. These assignments are climaxed with a report based on the earlier case study.

### Impact

The exercises have proven to be benchmarks or yardsticks for me to assess my efforts as a professional in a classroom. Under certain circumstances, I empathize with the teacher in the case study on the issue of duplicating software, contrary to the specifications of the license. In most cases, given how useful and effective a technology has become in the teaching and the learning processes, we tend to base our moral or ethical responsibilities on its application rather the conditions attached to such application. In most cases, we tend to over exploit the fair use assumption. I appreciate the fact that ethics in that regard would require proper procedure to acquire the right to use.

The exercises accentuate the linkages between technological application and issues of planning and classroom management. The conduct of the teacher in the case study exposes us to the fact that our negligence as teachers can pose health and safety hazards to our students. The instances of glaring computer screens, a near bag back accident, etc. are a reminder to the effect that as teachers, managing class room entails health considerations. Logging on and out of computer is a known required practice. We may take it ordinarily, but the consequences could be far reaching

on ourselves as well as our students. Consider a scenario where a teacher fails to log out or close a program after entering students' grades, and as a result, some of the students becoming privy to the grades of their peers. In the current environment where bullying and student stress are of critical consideration, it is important that such negligence are not countenanced.

Our responsibilities as teachers translate into parental duties as well. Access to the internet and all the good and bad materials on the internet make it important to constantly monitor and restrict students on some of the uses. Students with uncontrolled access to the computer and the internet, adventurous as they are, may explore other links or materials that may be detrimental to their wellbeing. A typical example is when the students rather chose to watch a commercial link instead of their assign work in the case study.

How do we manage the issue of equity in the midst of technology application? By 2005, almost all schools have been fitted with internet access and computers, according to US Department of Education. However, that does not address the issue of equity relative to students' access and the use of technology. Giving students a technologically based assignment as homework raises the question about equity. That is, how many students have access to the requisite technological tools or gargets at home? In the case study, this question did not factor into the teacher's decision to task students to complete their assignments at home. Moreover, how to deal with people with special conditions underscores our equity responsibilities. Technology is good because it can enhance the wellbeing of people with disabilities, yet in our quest to prioritize it, we can ignore the concerns of those with disabilities (Bedini, 1993). This played out in the case study where a workstation for a physically challenged person was not readily available.

## **Intent**

Haven read and addressed myself to the issues in the assigned readings, I intend prioritizing the issues of ethics and equity when applying technology in my teaching profession. The starting point is to avoid all the identified shortfalls in the conduct of the teacher in the case study. Second is to reconsider the measures that are in place in my current job to determine whether such measures conform to expectation, and also the extent to which I align my job tasks to those expectations. Here at the University of Akron, the issue of equity is keenly considered. There is a common digital or internet platform for all students. In much the same way, students can log on to computers on campus, in most cases, irrespective of the department in which those computers are located. Each student has digital or internet accounts to access the internet with recourse to greater privacy. The library service offers advice to students and teachers on the issue of copyrights. In the Geoscience department for instance, students offering GIS are often giving original copies of the ESRI software rather than the duplicate copies.

It must be emphasized that the efforts of my current employment setting is sacrosanct regarding the issues of ethics and equity. On the micro level, as teachers, we have to play our part. In this respect, I will avail myself to the series of orientation and workshops for application of new technologies to boost my professional skills. In practice also, I will consider students have equal access to the required technologies to complete assignments.