28 Aug

Shanille

I agree completely that the emergence and proliferation of technology is generally seen as a negative influence on adolescents and their development (Rowan, 2010). Whilst it is without much doubt that the overuse of technology has critically affected the adolescent learner (Villegas, 2013), the techniques acquired by them are still of significance. Generally, the negative behaviours around technology overuse, revolve around addiction, poor interpersonal relationships and communication and, in some cases, aggressive dissociative behaviour. Whilst some of these instances are manifest in extreme forms, typically, a student is able to participate in the classroom environment, to a limited degree.

To counter the perceived epidemic of technology invading the home and classroom, teachers must capitalise on the abilities and skills that students bring with them, as you have discussed. The teachers that invest more time to understand and implement technology as an asset within the classroom are more successful at engaging students and imparting skills and knowledge to them (Casey & Rakes, 2002). Although, this is not the first step to ensuring that students are participating in the curriculum and ingesting the content.

To better enable the students’ learning, whether in a classroom or online, the teacher must build a meaningful relationship. The diversity of techniques to apply this principle is vast, however must be catered to the individual student or cohort, as applicable. The fostering of connectedness between student and teach has been shown to improve motivation, retention of information and a sense of belonging (Brown & Starrett 2017. McCabe, et al., 2017).

I particularly like the inference you have mentioned regarding the more efficient use of time when conducting research and learning in the two settings. Previously, when conducting research, a student would typically be expected to peruse the library in search of suitable books, journals, et cetera. This use of time could also be increased through the locations or if the student was required to search in multiple locations. Due to the convenience of technology, this can all now be conducted from the classroom or one’s own home.

I enjoyed reading your Blog, Shanille. It allowed me to review several aspects of the environment I intend to work in that I had not previously thought deeply about. Thank you.

References

Brown, M., & Starrett, T. (2017). Fostering student connectedness: Building relationships in the classroom. *Faculty Focus| Higher Ed Teaching & Learning*, *29*.

Casey, H. B., & Rakes, G. C. (2002). An analysis of the influence of technology training on teacher stages of concern regarding the use of instructional technology in schools. *Journal of Computing in Teacher Education*, *18*(4), 124-132.

McCabe, C., Sprute, K., & Underdown, K. (2017). Laughter to Learning: How Humor Can Build Relationships and Increase Learning in the Online Classroom. *Journal of Instructional Research*, *6*, 4-7.

Rowan, C. (2010). Unplug—Don’t drug: A critical look at the influence of technology on child behavior with an alternative way of responding other than evaluation and drugging. *Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry*, *12*(1), 60-68.

Villegas, A. (2013). The influence of technology on family dynamics. *Proceedings of the New York State Communication Association*, *2012*(1), 10.

Shanil,

Your discussion on the creativity of 21st Century Learners has particularly intrigued me, mostly due to my own lack or perceived creativity and the statements that “kids will take a chance” “they’re not frightened of being wrong” when adults often are.

The creativity of children is described by Sir Ken Robinson, that they are born creative and the current education systems are educating students out of creativity. This is to say that people are born with the level of creativity for any of the Arts, their ability or the support to maintain and foster that creativity is becoming increasingly difficult. Sir Ken Robinson also goes on to discuss how the education system’s hierarchy of subjects leaves the Arts at the bottom, due to historical need. As this need was developed for the Industrial Revolution, the existence of this hierarchy or the ordering of the subjects seems less and less relevant. (TED, 2007)

The ability of the students of the 21st Century requires courage when it should not. The lack of allowance for students fail has stifled their willingness to test new ideas. Without the safety in knowledge that making mistakes will cause a student to be ostracised, they will be crippled in their creativity. “If you’re not prepared to be wrong, you’ll never come up with anything original.” (TED, 2007)

The characteristics of the teacher are critical to foster, and not stifle, creativity in the classroom. Traits of empathy, openness and acceptance are critical for the teacher to have and display within the classroom to encourage students’ creativity. They also benefit from their dedication to the students, with an emphasis on interpersonal relationships. These characteristics, when displayed to the students, encourages a sense of safety within the classroom and allows them to make mistakes in the pursuit of new ideas. (Hong, 2009, Cropley, 1997).

Whilst I know I have focused on a small section of your Blog, Shanil, this was an area that captured my interest. A small number of times, the creativity of students has been mentioned in the content of our course and I hope to explore it further in our studies.

Thank you

Alan

Cropley, A. J. (1997). Fostering creativity in the classroom: General principles. *The creativity research handbook*, *1*(84.114).

Hong, E., Hartzell, S. A., & Greene, M. T. (2009). Fostering creativity in the classroom: Effects of teachers' epistemological beliefs, motivation, and goal orientation. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, *43*(3), 192-208.

TED. (07 January 2007). Do schools kill creativity? | Sir Ken Robinson. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY>

Tianyi,

I specifically like the reference you make to the comparison between teachers being left behind by their students when learning new skills within the digital domain. Simply by their volume of exposure, students are more likely to learn more skills than their teachers. It cannot just be Digital Technologies teachers that conduct professional development to maintain relevance in a constantly evolving field, as it is all students that are experiencing their learning journey through a digital age. (Honan, 2012)

At the more technical end of the spectrum, digital domain is a complete language that its practitioners must become fluent in to operate; this includes students and teachers. At Darwin High School, students can work toward a Certificate II within the digital technology field. To achieve this the teachers proliferating this must also be suitably qualified.

Whilst I agree that students will be exposed to and use a greater variety of digital media, their application of it may not be as refined as teaching professionals that are devoted to their craft and development of it. It is common knowledge that a child’s mind is like a sponge, however the comprehension of that information is significantly more lacking than an adults’. Teachers that may not be as determined to learn a new language, at the more technical end, or new techniques and methods for existing programs and platforms, are likely to be less engaging to students that will begin to expect the technical innovation they are exposed to in their day-to-day life. (Lafon, 2004. Prensky, 2007. Skinner, et al., 2008)

An interesting method I was privileged to observe whilst on a recent placement, was where students were enrolled in an online course that taught python scripting. As the stage of the unit, where I joined the class, all students were working individually, or with some assistance from the teacher and peers. As I personally do not benefit from this type of study, I was surprised to see the online course being used in a secondary school class. However, whilst interacting with the students, they all reported that they particularly liked this style of learning for this subject and were aware enough to understand this would not be appropriate for all subjects or content. This was an interesting and surprising revelation, due to my own preconceptions and preferences, but also interesting to see a completely different teaching method to my own experience.

Grok Learning, (n.d.), *Grok Learning | Learn to code from your browser*. <https://groklearning.com/>

Honan, E. (2012). A whole new literacy': Teachers' understanding of students' digital learning at home. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, The*, *35*(1), 82.

Lafon, P., Chasseigne, G., & Mullet, E. (2004). Functional learning among children, adolescents, and young adults. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *88*(4), 334-347.

Prensky, M. (2007). How to teach with technology: Keeping both teachers and students comfortable in an era of exponential change. *Emerging technologies for learning*, *2*(4), 40-46.

Skinner, Ellen, Furrer, Carrie, Marchand, Gwen, & Kindermann, Thomas. (2008). Engagement and Disaffection in the Classroom. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *100*(4), 765–781. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012840>