Teaching Philosophy

Introduction to Instructional Technology

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To be an effective educator, one should know their teaching philosophy and how technology fits into their philosophy. There are many different teaching philosophies an educator can identify with. Educators need to understand and apply teaching philosophies, instructional strategies, and technology to be an effective educator. Educators also need to know how to teach ethically using TPACK and 21st century framework.

Teachers need to utilize and acknowledge different teaching philosophies. There are five different teaching philosophies. Each one is either student-centered or teacher-centered. First of all, essentialism is mostly teacher-centered. The teachers change the way they teach to accommodate their students while still be extremely traditional. Secondly, perennialism is also teacher-centered and very similar to essentialism. The main difference is that it is unchanging teaching methods and material. The next teaching philosophy is progressivism. Progressivism is student-centered. The teacher is seen more as a coach and the students have a say about what is going on in the classroom. The fourth philosophy is existentialism. Existentialism is also student-centered. A teacher using this philosophy would promote individualism. Lastly, social reconstructionism is extremely student-centered. The teacher wants to promote social change when using this philosophy (Page 209-213).

My teaching philosophy involves both essentialism and progressivism. I like to incorporate traditional teaching strategies on days with direct instruction. The days after teaching the concept, I have stations or small group teaching to differentiate learning. I strive to act like a coach or facilitator on small group days. I feel like most teachers would not fall into one philosophy category. There are times would a teacher can be described as all five philosophies.

My instructional technology philosophy is both constructivist and connectivist. Constructivist is defined as “integration is used by students to create products, artifacts, or authentic work, which allows students to construct their own meaning.” ("The Digital"). Connectivist is define as “technology is used to connect students to a variety of resources and people, building their knowledge net and their exposure to the infinite number of the learning items in the world” ("The Digital"). Sometimes I use technology to allow students to relate content to real-life and create authentic learning experiences to build conceptual knowledge. Most of the time I use technology as a resource or tool to build my students knowledge and appeal to their learning style. For example, I use Khan Academy almost daily in my classroom. It is great for visual and auditory learners. It also appeals to kinetic learners because of the virtual manipulatives. This tool allows students to learn the skill and they are given the math skill in many different types of problems.

When considering how technology fits into one’s teaching philosophy, TPACK needs to be used and referred to. TPACK is “technological pedagogical content knowledge.” TPACK has three main components. The first component is content knowledge. Content knowledge is knowing all of the content for the subject the teacher is teaching and the standards that go with the content. The second component is pedagogical knowledge. This is knowledge of teaching and assessment strategies. The final area is technological knowledge. Technological knowledge is knowing how to use different types of technology. These three components overlap to form pedagogical content knowledge, technological content knowledge, and technological pedagogical knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge is “how to teach particular content-based material” (Harris and Hofer 2). Technological content knowledge is “how to select and use technologies to communicate particular content knowledge” (Harris and Hofer 2). Technological

pedagogical knowledge is “how to use particular technologies when teaching” (Harris and Hofer 2).

According to Harris and Hofer, “when integrating educational technologies into instruction, teachers’ planning must occur at the nexus of standards-based curriculum requirements, effective pedagogical practices, and available technologies’ affordances and constraints” (1). Teachers need to first choose learning goals, pedagogical decisions, activity types, and assessment strategies before picking the technology that is going to be used to help facilitate learning (Harris and Hofer 2). Harris and Hofer state “choosing learning goals, making practical pedagogical decisions about the nature of the learning experience, selecting and sequencing appropriate activity types to combine to form the learning experience, selecting formative and summative assessment strategies that will reveal what and how well students are learning, selecting tools and resources that will best help students to benefit from the learning experiences being planned” (2). This helps the teacher create a lesson that is not technocentric and allows technology to be a tool to assist with learning (Harris and Hofer 7). Technocentric practices is when teachers pick the technology first not the strategies, targets, or assessments (Harris and Hofer 7). Technocentric practices do not help students meet the standards but only teach students how to use a particular technology (Harris and Hofer 7). Harris and Hofer point out that their “approach to helping teachers develop TPACK is to suggest that they use curriculum-specific, technology-enhanced learning activity types as the building blocks for instructional planning” (2).

Every teacher should know how to ethically integrate technology into their curriculum. Teachers need to teach students how to be safe using technology in the 21st century. Digital citizenship should be taught teach students what websites are accurate and reliable. Digital

citizenship is put into place to “promote, model, and establish policies for safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology” and to “model responsible social interactions related to the use of technology” ("The Digital"). Students need to know how to cite their resources so that they are not violating any copyright laws. Also, technology needs to be taken care of and students need to make sure they are being safe while using it. Cables in the classroom need to be properly placed so they are not hazards to student safety. Student’s information and passwords need to be secure and private to follow privacy laws.

21st century skills need to be taught and implemented into the curriculum. The student outcomes for the 21st century framework is life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, key subjects and 21st century themes, and information, media, and technology skills. The support systems to reach these outcomes are standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments. The 21st century themes are global awareness, financial, economic, business, entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, and environmental literacy. The learning and innovation skills focus on creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. Students need to know how “to be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to create, evaluate, and effectively utilize information, media, and technology” ("Framework for 21st"). The life and career skills that teachers should focus on are flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity, adaptability, leadership, and responsibility ("Framework for 21st").

There are technology standards for students, teachers, coaches, and administrators to follow daily. “The student standards describe the skills and knowledge they need to thrive, grow, and contribute in a global, interconnected and constantly changing society” ("ISTE Standards").

The NETS-S standards focus on developing a student that is empowered learner, digital citizen, knowledge constructor, innovative designer, computational thinker, creative communicator, and global collaborator. In order to help students master these standards, educators have standards that they need to follow as well. The NETS-T standards focus on teachers being leaders, learners, citizens, collaborators, designers, facilitators, and analysts. The technology administrator standards are abbreviated with NETS-A. Administrators need to focus on being equitable, citizenship advocates, visionary planners, empowering leaders, systems designers, and connected learners according to the NETS-A. Lastly, coaches have standards labelled as NETS-C. Coaches need to focus on visionary leadership, teaching, learning, assessments, professional development, program evaluation, content knowledge, professional growth. Clearly, the ISTE standards hold students, educators, coaches, and administrators accountable in developing students who are 21st century learners ("ISTE Standards").

In conclusion, technology should be a tool to effectively help students learn the content. It should help students learn 21st century skills. Teachers should only select the technology tool for their lesson after they have selected learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessments to avoid being technocentric (Harris and Hofer). Teachers should strive to know and learn the ISTE standards so that they are being facilitators, leaders, and learners. Students should know what ISTE standards they need to learn and strive for such as being a learner, digital citizen, computational thinker, and global collaborator ("ISTE Standards"). Technology is such an important part of education and every teacher should strive to use technology to engage students in creative, innovative learning.

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