Chapter 3
Technology in Education: Integrating Contemporary Technology into Classroom Pedagogy as Foundation to a Practical Distance Learning

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ABSTRACT
As the global economy moves into a complete dependence on information and technology, the United States has to revisit how information technology is used in schools. Schools no longer imply the actual building with administrative halls and student centers, but also distance learning possibilities. Distance learning is still encountering skepticism from some educators, both in the secondary and post secondary stages of learning. This untamed skepticism is the product of the remains from traditional educators who are yet to answer the what, where, when, who, why and how of modern technology in the classroom. Traditional education wants to teach technology as a core curriculum, to be assessed as such. The universal reality, on the other hand, is that technology is a global culture and language. American students, to some extent, determine how this culture and language is used and spoken, but the fear is that they are doing this outside of the classroom. The goal of technology education must be to make technology so comfortable that its transition to distance learning will be smooth. This is done by recognizing and using technology to motivate learners to want to learn and succeed.

INTRODUCTION
Socrates, the Greek philosopher, told his disciples, “By all means marry. If you get a good wife, you’ll be happy. If you get a bad one, you’ll become a philosopher and that is a good thing for any man.” Things have changed since time of this Greek thinker, but the Socratic idea of marriage is metaphorically similar to the use of technology in education: it is a win-win situation. By all means use technology in education. If you are successful, you will be happy (and students will be happier). If you are not successful, you will become a smart thinker and that is a good thing for any teacher and student. Whitney (2007) reflects that while many people use technology from dust till dawn to make
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decision, communicate, evaluate and distribute information, the same level of technology use cannot be found in schools; “schools which are meant to prepare students for their future careers in the ‘real’ world.”

BACKGROUND: THE WHY OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Technology in educational is no longer an option; the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 makes technology in education an objective. The law (NCLB Act) states that, “every student should be technologically literate by the eighth grade, regardless of student background or family socioeconomic status.” McAnear (2006) describes technology in education as “magic.” She concludes that it is magic because it makes complex things simple or makes the impossible possible. A sound technology in pedagogy should motivate students, close their learning gap, and help them master complex concepts.

As education moves away from the melting pot theory, that is characterized by one approach to teaching should fit all learners, to a better appreciation of every learner as unique in both learning style and socio-cultural identity, education becomes a highly engaging environment. Considering more diverse approaches to teaching, Law (2006) suggests that educational research into teaching methods should, “target those students who learn through other modalities than the customary linear-sequential approaches of schools.” Law also observes that more research in technology in education will find that learning with technology will “benefit” all students, and will lead to a “significant improvement and engagement in learning from students classified as ‘at risk.’”

Put simply educational technology must be a tool that increases every student’s learning opportunities (Dreier, 2006). A United States Department of Education report agrees that, “students using technology have a distinct advantage over similar students who are not using technology” (Murray, 2001). Technology in education is not an optional tool in learning, but a fundamental necessity that every student must have and use in order to be more competitive.

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Not all technology use within an educational system qualifies as technology in education. The use of $180,000 for Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in Spring, Texas (Jones, 2006) on school busses to fight kidnapping in a town that has “never” had a kidnapping is a good preemptive undertaking, but does not classify as technology in education. Encouraging students, Wilder (2001) notes, to play games on computer during free time, withholding computer use from some students as a punishment, and giving access to others as a reward are not technology use for education. For technology in education to be adequate it should pass the social test. If the human is a social being and learning is a social activity, it is only logical to expect technology in education to make the social growth of students easier. One way to accomplish this is to motivate the student in such a way that they would want to study the content. In order to meet the mandate of the NCLB Act (provide a reasonable opportunity for every student to learn with technology) it is imperative that technology be truly “easy and transparent” “cheap or free” (McAnear, 2006).

An important component of technology in education is availability and access (Gahala, 2006). A National Center for Educational Statistics (cited by Valdez, 2007) reports that there are virtually “no differences in Internet access between poor schools and wealthier schools any more.” While this does not suggest that there is equity in technology availability between the rich and poor, it give the impression that when it comes to the most important technology tool, there is a level playing field. Student today are more likely to write a paper and make a presentation that draw
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