Millennium Teachers in a Global Context

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When preparing for a race, the coach will advise, "Do not look back at your competition; look forward to your goal." Educators integrating technology into instruction often take this same view; they look ahead to win the race in preparing students to be effective in the use of technology in learning and in life.

Our educators need to be conscious of their role in a world of people who have access to technology as an educational and life resource and those who do not. And, they need to take action to assure that children and citizens in all of the world's societies can make effective use of appropriate technology to enhance learning and living.

While the world does not have a history of assuring equal educational opportunity for all, the disparity is, and will become all the greater, as technological literacy becomes a requirement for success in educational and life achievement.

The reality of our world is that "roughly 130 million boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 are not enrolled in school. Another 150 million drop out with less than four years of education…" (*Herald Tribune* editorial, July 2, 2002). As a result, we and they are denied their having the benefit of at least a basic education. And though the percentage of adult illiteracy has dropped from 22.4 to 20.3% since 1995, there remain 862 million adults unable to read in our global community (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, July 2002).

As members of the global professions of teaching and teacher education, we must not only look forward to our institutional goals, but must also include in our vision the responsibility for assuring that all of the world's children have access to educational opportunity as well as the chance to participate effectively in our global community.

With this context in mind, the millennium teacher must:

1. Act on the realization that how we prepare future generations to understand and use the technology of tomorrow will significantly impact their lives and the nature of our world.
2. Assure that policy and practice associated with the integration of technology in instruction reflect the needs of all students and teachers in our global community.
3. Utilize technological and personal resources to link themselves and their students to teachers and students in other parts of the world to foster understanding and opportunities to learn from each other.

These are not simple tasks, but ones that can be accomplished. A starting point: we educators need to stop acting as if we work in isolation and within only a local area. Instead, we need to be aware of and appreciate a global context within which our actions are based and their impact upon the global community.

With such an awareness and appreciation, new ways to influence policy and action, and to foster interaction and mutual learning across any boundaries, become apparent. As we accept these opportunities, we see yet more ways to influence the future and assure that all human beings have the opportunity to participate fully and effectively in the global community.

REFERENCES

Herald Tribune. (2002, July 2). Editorial.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2002, July). Retrieved from *www.stats.uis.unesco.org*