

Chapter 9

Can Technology and Affinity Be Bridges for Well-Being in Educators?


The Crossroads of Intersectionality

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ABSTRACT

The NorCal GREAT teachers pipeline is a grant-funded program designed to build and sustain a diverse teacher workforce in far northern California. In order to do so, the program aims to support future, in-training, and current teachers who reflect the students they teach in a wide variety of ways and identities. The program supports these participants through professional development events and affinity groups to build social-emotional awareness, healing centered engagement, and culturally sustaining pedagogy while simultaneously addressing academic advising

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and technology needs. Specific to those needs, the program provided both in-person and online (i.e., Zoom) options to access these identity-rich experiences. The study includes multiple surveys on identity, experiences, and perception to determine whether the involvement of the “Roomers” differs from that of “Zoomers.”

CAN TECHNOLOGY AND AFFINITY BE BRIDGES FOR EDUCATOR WELL-BEING?

Well-being is a complex concept with various views, approaches, theories, and components that encompasses the physical, mental, emotional, social, and even philosophical aspects of human life (Campbell, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Tov, 2018). Diener (1984, and later with colleagues, 2009) explained the concept of *subjective* well-being, which focuses on how individuals experience the quality of their lives, including both emotional reactions and cognitive judgments. This subjective perspective emphasizes the importance of personal perception and evaluation of one's life, contributing to the understanding that well-being is a subjective and individual experience. Alternatively, according to Ryff (1989), well-being includes aspects of self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others. This approach to well-being is also called *psychological* well-being. These dimensions highlight the complexity of well-being and suggest that it involves both feeling good and functioning effectively. Hence, enhancing well-being requires a holistic approach that addresses the diverse components that contribute to an individual's sense of fulfillment and happiness.

The impact of technology on well-being is a topic of considerable and contemporary debate, reflecting both the benefits, detriments, and mixed effects (e.g., Burr et al., 2020; Rafnsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2004). Of benefit, technology facilitates access to information, education, and communication, thus enhancing aspects of social well-being, happiness, and connectivity (e.g., Graham & Nikolova, 2013). For example, digital platforms can foster social interactions and support networks that are crucial for well-being (Hampton et al., 2009). Simultaneously, and conversely, the excessive use of technology, particularly via increased screen time and social media use, has been linked to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, suggesting a negative impact on mental well-being (Twenge & Campbell, 2018).

Teachers must be knowledgeable and efficacious about all these issues of well-being and use of technology. Teachers must understand social emotional development of their own students (Buchanan et al., 2009; Zolkoski et al., 2021). They need to understand how to effectively and appropriately use technology to promote learning and facilitate communication (e.g., McKnight et al., 2016; Wang & Reeves, 2003)—including “digital well-being” (Burr et al., 2020). Furthermore, they must

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