**Technology through a Pedagogical Lens**

Recent teaching experiences has made it obvious to me that there is a growing disconnect between the learning that is expected to exist and the technology that is being introduced and used. Successful learning and teaching is mistakenly being measured by the use of the most recent technology in a belief that this will directly result in more successful learning. At the same time, there is a growing comfort level among students to incorporate technology and social media tools into their daily lives. Unfortunately, this is paralleled with many teachers feeling unsettled and inadequate as they grapple with trying to learn the newest technological tool and attach it to some sort of learning that they are trying to address. Interestingly, having discussed the challenges in implementing the use of social media with other classmates, there is a belief that teachers need to change or go. There is a belief that life and education are changing, and as in any businesses you change to service your market or lose it ([Wood, 2011, May 31](#_ENREF_9)). It has become apparent that teachers have tended to maintain rather than alter existing classroom practices ([Kirkwood, 2000](#_ENREF_4)) with the introduction of new technology. However, it is essential that we consider the use of technology through a pedagogical lens that is flexible and appropriate to 21st century learning.

**Participatory Pedagogy**

Prensky ([2001, as cited in Anderson, Brown, & Murray, 2008](#_ENREF_1)) claims that today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors. For me, the most significant benefit of incorporating technology into the learning environment is that it paves the way for participation, community connections, social interaction, and global networking ([McLoughlin & Lee, 2010](#_ENREF_6)). Nigel ([2011, April 15](#_ENREF_7)) describes this educational change as a “context for ICT to re-position technology as a tool for change ([Watson, 2001](#_ENREF_8)) and for technology to not just be a catalyst of change”.

Having read McLoughlin and Lee ([2008](#_ENREF_5)), I understand Pedagogy 2.0 as one that incorporates personalization, productivity and participation. This pedagogical framework incorporates a shift to learner-centered instruction. This requires that students need to develop skills in being productive participators. Cowan ([2006](#_ENREF_3)) highlights that we need to train students in the skills of becoming effective listeners, negotiators, collaborators and investigators so that they can effectively and productively participate in 21st century learning.

I agree with Ardis ([Cochrane, 2011, May 25](#_ENREF_2)) that “Pedagogy 2.0 has applicability outside Web 2.0 as it can be done in a classroom with pencil and paper”. As a teacher, wanting to become more of a facilitator, it is essential that I ensure that the pedagogy I adopt will develop student’s skills to collaborate and contribute in a participatory environment. This environment may be face-to-face, online or a combination of the two. This environment will be enhanced but not dependent upon any one type of technology.

**Learning through Participation**

How do I know that a participatory pedagogy is effective? I have experienced this type of learning within the online classes that I am participating at present. At first, I questioned whether participation in online forums and discussion groups would be a vibrant learning experience. Particularly in the case where the instructor took a back seat to the topic exchanges, students led the weekly forums, and no grade was given for actually participating. I found this asynchronous learning to be motivating and interesting as it offered time for reflection, as well as, time to formulate my ideas to share with the group. Within a pedagogical framework that the course was constructed on, I utilized available technology to construct knowledge in a participatory environment.

Education is now far more than the acquisition of information and the ability to follow procedures. It includes the development of capacities of judgment, to not merely respond passively to events but to make decisions actively in different contexts. ([Cowan, 2006](#_ENREF_3)) As I have experienced in my online courses, learning now requires more active participation. It is no longer a spectator sport.

**Technology Enhances Learning**

Young people today have grown up in a world where technology weaves itself into all aspects of their life. As educators we must also ensure that technology weaves itself into learning and teaching in a way that enhances and enriches the experience. Most importantly, we need to ensure that we keep our pedagogical lenses on as we integrate all the new technology that will continue to become increasingly available.

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