15 ICT Technology and 21st Century Learning

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15.1 Abstract

Technology has become part of life and schools have little choice but to embrace modern technology but essentially it must be ensured that technology serves needs of students and is utilized as a tool that enhances learning. Used appropriately technology can be integrated into a curriculum in ways that serve the needs of students but the tools of technology should never be seen as a means to an end in themselves. Used appropriately educational technology can enhance learning but on the other hand the recent OECD report "Making the Connection" has concluded that "on average, in the past 10 years there has been no appreciable improvement in student achievement in reading, mathematics or science in the countries that have invested heavily in information and communication technologies for education." This is the case in many well-funded international schools and highlights the urgent need for schools in the sector to review their utilization of educational technology.

The tools of technology can be used in our classrooms to complement the overall learning experience of our children. The danger arises when the tools are technology are seen as ends in themselves which unfortunately is too often the case. Thus our schools need to ensure that students have limited screen-time, that technology is only integrated into the learning process when there is evidence that it enhances learning and that it is used in conjunction with a myriad of other appropriate pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, the technological revolution is not just affecting the economically developed world but is also transforming communications globally. It is now possible for American children to interact with children in Peru and French children with their counterparts in Cote

d'Ivoire. This enables International Schools to communicate and interact with one another frequently, often in real time, and can make the world a much smaller place.

The problem with universal access to technology is the fact that it provides almost unrestricted access to information. Much of this information is fantastic and can give a real boast to the learning experience. The danger exists where there is mis-information, inaccuracies and worst of all information that might promote prejudice, discrimination, hatred and violence. To an extent one might extend the same argument to the any medium of the written word but the key difference is the open access that the internet potentially provides. Once more the argument boils down to the appropriate use of technology and information.

Interacting with others is at the heart of our human experience and this must be something that international schools must be conscious of and promote continuously. Technology has the potential to enhance aspects of our human experience but must be used with the upmost care and with great responsibility in schools so that it enhances learning without ever undermining our humanity. And if the tool doesn't enhance learning then it has no place in a classroom regardless of which century we are living in!

15.2 <u>Keywords:</u>
enhanced education, blended learning, information amount, learning experience.