30 What Can Technology do for Tomorrow's Children?

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30.1 Abstract

School looks different today than it did even a handful of years ago. Teaching and learning is changing—in exciting ways—because the world is changing. We now live in a global economy with a knowledge-based marketplace, where the ultimate measure of our success is becoming less about what we know, but more about what we do with what we know, and learning new skills to fit a rapidly changing world. Technology has helped to accelerate this pace of change, retooling nearly every aspect of our daily life, from how we communicate, to how we shop, to how we receive medical care. Schools—many of which have been slow to embrace innovation—are beginning to engage in this digital revolution.

However, technology can just as easily widen the lead for those who already have every advantage. If the technology revolution only happens for families that already have money and education, then it's not really a revolution. Classrooms across the country are marrying hands-on, inquiry-driven learning with digital technologies. They are blending traditional instruction with computer-based activities.

Innovation in education isn't about the latest gadget or app, or about how adept a student is at using a smartphone to consume the latest Internet meme.

Efforts to further educational innovation must not only help students to develop skills for modern lives and careers. They also must help prepare students to be captains of their future and creators of a better world in ways in which my generation, likely yours, and others before us never dreamed possible. One danger of educational technology is that digital-

learning tools and innovation could miss their potential to close persistent opportunity gaps and instead disproportionately benefit students who already have the most advantages.

Technology is enhancing the crucial relationship between educators and learners, helping teachers to use their time and talents more effectively to personalize learning for students—tailoring the pace, approach, and context of the learning experience to students' individual needs and interests.

Educators frequently share that teaching is the most difficult job anyone can have—and also the most rewarding. Teachers can literally shape the way young people see themselves and the world. Unfortunately, their efforts are too often not fully appreciated, supported, or immediately rewarded.

Technology can help by ensuring that professional development for teachers is just as personalized and meaningful as the education we expect them to provide to their students. We also need tools and platforms that provide customized feedback to teachers so they can deepen the quality of their practice precisely in the ways—and at precisely the times—they need. We need tools that ease the administrative burdens of the job to free teachers to spend more time engaging with their students.

Everyone has an essential role to play in elevating and supporting the teaching profession. Teachers must be willing to explore new ways of supporting and challenging themselves and their students. Students must assume more responsibility for their own learning. Principals must create school climates that honor innovation and experimentation. Elected officials and policymakers must be willing to incentivize policies and programs that lift up the profession—through more resources, support, and funding.

30.2 <u>Keywords:</u>

innovation, professional development, equity in education, digital revolution.