Technology In Education Essay, Research Paper

Technology in Education: Who s Really Learning?

Nearly a decade ago, educational leaders and politicians believed that it was necessary to improve the use of technology in the classroom by implementation of more resources. Based on the growing use of such technology, as well as the need for individuals capable of servicing and working with this technology, a plan was created. This plan sought to better integrate the use of computers and technology in the basic lesson plans of schools. Now years later, improvements have been marginal and the lack of overwhelming success has been attributed to the misuse of those technology resources.

Misuse does not necessarily translate into wrongdoing. In this case, there are certain variable that must be involved with this plan for technology to be effectively put to use. The basic foundation to any effective use of technology is and must be the training of staff and teachers on how to use the resources. However, all too common school systems ignore the importance of this particular variable.

It should be common knowledge that without appropriate understanding and/or training, it would be nearly impossible for effective teaching to take place. Too often teachers are charged with instructing students on the use of technology that they themselves are still learning how to use. In a study done by the Wall Street Journal in 1997, William Bulkeley commented that of the top 10 lessons learned in over a decade of having computers in the classroom, lesson number three (in impact and importance) was that most teachers are woefully unprepared as far as technology knowledge and usage.

The lack of preparation has translated into marginal student improvements, wasted funding and even more wasted time. By overlooking possibly the most important aspect of education, students are being placed at a severe disadvantage in comparison of what they know, what they should know and what they need to know.

Despite the opportunity to blame the teachers, this is not necessarily all their fault. According to the Education Department, only 13% of school systems nationwide require computer training for their instructors. Less than half of that 13% provide monetary incentives or stipends to entice the teachers into gaining this knowledge. Unfortunately, the students are suffering as a result.

With over six billion dollars has been allocated over the last decade to integrating technology within education, it is imperative to right the ship. Yet with current doctrines, its no wonder that although technology resources have rapidly increased, test scores, achievement, graduation rates and dropout figures have remained relatively stagnant. It is not enough to simply have the materials. It is equally, if not more important to have individuals available who can effectively train and teach the students on the use of those resources. Without that, we are merely throwing money away and watching our potential success, sink to the bottom of the ocean.