Technology And Education Essay, Research Paper

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Technology: A Tool For Education

More and more each day technology infiltrates deeper into our daily lives and routines. In

fact, it has become such an integral part of society, that mass hysteria and panic would undoubtedly

ensue should it suddenly be taken away. To allow technology to take control would surely lead to

a disintegration of society. Today, most classrooms are connected to the Internet or at the very

least contain computers to help educate the nation?s children. Technology, although useful, is only

a tool and must be used wisely in regards to the education of today?s youths.

Technology holds the promise of delivering vast amounts of information in a very short

time. The Internet alone contains a plethora of information for anyone who has the desire and

ability to use it. With just a click of a button a person can ?surf? the web finding information

ranging from aardvark to zygote. The speed in which information flashes across the screen can be

dizzying. Although general information is readily accessible, obtaining specific data can be

frustratingly difficult.

Just the other day, I was on-line searching for information regarding to peritonitis. As is

typical, I logged onto a search site and typed in the subject I wanted. The search found and

displayed about a dozen sites related to peritonitis. However, it also displayed more than three or

four dozen sites on topics ranging from colon cancer to feline leukemia. I can?t figure out just what

relation feline leukemia has with peritonitis. As far as I can tell, they?re like apples to oranges.

Too often these searches seem to take the user to sites that only contain links to other sites, with

links to yet other sites, and so on. It took me nearly an hour to find specific information providing

detailed signs and symptoms of peritonitis. I never could find anything regarding actual treatment

procedures for the disease. Maybe I should have taken a five minute drive to the library and

looked in an antiquated encyclopedia – it would have been faster and easier.

Don?t get me wrong, I?m not saying that technology is a bad thing, but there are negatives to

every positive. Technology does offer an array of options, including those for educational

purposes. Many college students are now able to take courses via television, cable, and the

Internet – only attending classes on campus for taking exams. Although this form of education

provides more scheduling flexibility, it deprives the student of being able to contact their professor

readily. While in an on-campus class, if a student has a question on the material being studied,

they can simply ask their instructor for clarification and receive an immediate response.

Contrarily, by taking a television or Internet course, the student would have to e-mail the professor

and wait up to several days to receive a reply.

School is not just a forum to learn facts and theories. ?One of the principal functions of

school is to teach children how to behave in groups? (Postman). In other words, by attending

school children learn how to interact with others in a positive and constructive way. By allowing

technology to take over the education of our children we deny them the feeling of being included as

a member of society. For without social interaction, society itself no longer exists. At one time,

many years ago, dialing ?0″ on the telephone connected them to a living, breathing person on the

other end. Several years later technology took over and one had to navigate through a myriad of

computerized menus for information, bringing forth complaint after complaint from customers.

Currently, various phone companies advertise how one can now dial ?0″ and get a living,

breathing person on the other end.

Although technology can provide a nearly endless supply of information, it cannot provide

the tools necessary for understanding. A computer can simply display facts, insight can only be

learned through interaction with others. If a child cannot comprehend a concept, a computer will

not be able to re-explain things in a fashion the child understands; it can only repeat the data. Only

through personal interaction with another person can information be modified into a context the

child can understand and appreciate. ?Knowledge, certainly in the humanities, is not a

straightforward matter of access, of conquest via the ingestion of data? (Birkerts).

Children today often know how to operate a computer better than their parents.

Educational software, designed to captivate the short attention spans of children, do a good job of

teaching children in information, but fall short of teaching any social values needed to co-exist

peaceably with others. For a child to be able to function as a member of today?s society, both

technological and social teaching need to be balanced. We must always keep in mind that although

technology is capable of many things, it is only a device that helps deliver information, it cannot

teach understanding needed to obtain true knowledge and social conscience.

Bibliography

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