Technology Teaching Philosophy

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Abstract

This paper will explore my technology teaching philosophy. Specifically I will discuss the following three considerations regarding my philosophy: my personal viewpoint on the use of technology in the classrooms; how I currently use technology in my classrooms and how I use technology to address the diverse needs of my student learners from different backgrounds.

Today's teachers in every discipline and at every level are faced with a wide variety of challenges in their classrooms. From administrative pressures on faculty to help students meet standard achievement goals to a wide range of social issues that many students face just to name a few. As a result, many educators have the misconception that technology integration is just one more of burdensome task to manage rather than a classroom enhancer. Despite all of these factors, the overarching primary goal of all teachers should simply be to assist students in mastering content from their assigned subject area using whatever resources are readily available.

Consequently, I work hard to keep this objective in the forefront of my mind when teaching my various information technology courses. I personally feel that technology can and should have a significant presence in the classroom at all levels and in all disciplines. Being an Information Technology instructor at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska, I am naturally intrigued by the wide variety technology tools that are available for educators today. I pride myself on becoming an early technology adaptor at my institution. I am constantly exploring new and creative ways in which technology can successfully be integrated into my various courses. To specifically categorize myself using the SAMR model developed by Dr. Ruben Puentedura, I would fall between the Modification and Redefinition levels. (Puentedura 2014)

One simple example of how I use technology to modify common classroom tasks such as taking attendance, I incorporate a variety of native or mobile web applications. Specifically, the one application I really like and attempt to use in all of my on-campus courses is Socrative (www.socrative.com). This website provides teachers with web tools to create online interactive assessments / quizzes. Additionally, Socrative has complimentary native mobile applications and an interactive student web site where students can complete these assessments. I have stretched the intended purpose of this tool to use it as a student attendance tracker as well as a quiz tool for

weekly classroom lectures. Because of the great reporting feature this software offers, I'm able to easily keep track of attendance as well as assess a student's mastery of current topics presented in class. In a college environment, we are equally challenged with students being distracted by their mobile devices. My rationale and philosophy for implementing this tool was to engage students with their technology tools rather than having strict classroom policies that penalize students for their use.

A second example of how I use technology in my mobile web application development classes in a redefining way is to have my students engage each other in a collaborative manner using school issued iPads on group assigned projects. Students are allowed to check out iPads for this course because it requires students to deliver a project-based final group project. To aid in the collaboration outside of classroom, students coordinate FaceTime or Group Skype meetings with their assigned team members. To truly transform these types of classes, I mandate that all students complete their application design and prototyping work using iPad applications such as iMockApp instead of using paper sketches. Additionally, students must share all collaborative coding exercises using Dropbox.

Finally, the one area that I personally plan to improve upon in the future is how I use technology in my classrooms to address the needs of diverse learners. According to an article written by educator Brennan Blackstone, video captioning is another innovative method to provide lecture material for students with diverse reading comprehension levels. (Blackstone 2007) The rationale is that students would have the ability to process course material at their own speed and rewind and take notes as needed. Because of the diverse level of learners I encounter in my classes at my community college, I feel this technology inclusion approach actually holds the greatest potential for me to truly redefine and elevate the quality of technology enhanced learning

experiences for my students. This concept was ultimately derived from The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) developed a concept called Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which focuses on the need for a change in curriculum to meet individual student needs. (CAST 2014)

In conclusion, technology when truly embraced by educators and their organizations it can change the landscape of education to better accommodate the varied needs of learners at all levels.

References

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