WHY TEACHERS STILL MATTER MOST IN THE DIGITAL AGE?

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I would like to start this article with a food for thought from Bill Gates… “Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important.” Yes, technology is used as a tool to appeal to all learning styles and levels, but can never be a substitute for well-trained teachers. No matter the improvement in technology, we still need teachers to come and explain.

Who is a Teacher?

A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competences or values. He/she is an expert who is capable of imparting knowledge that will help learners to build, identify and to acquire skills that will be used to face the challenges in life. He/she also provides to the learners knowledge skills and values that enhance the development. (Senge, 2000).

The Roles of a Teacher

A teacher wears a variety of hats because there’s a lot more to teaching than just showing up and giving the day’s lesson. As a provider of information, a teacher gives lectures to the students on a particular subject, through lessons that build on students’ prior knowledge and moves them toward a deeper understanding of the subject at hand. Through his actions and words, a teacher can be a role model. It is important for a teacher to always reflect a positive image and teach children things like respect, trust, and responsibility. Students sometimes lean on for support and advice of their teachers. Teachers are often given the charge of being surrogate parents for their students, especially when students are lack of parental contact at home. Most of the time, teachers are planner, assessor, and developer. They have backup plans available to pull at a moment's notice. Their planning also involves taking the assessment data from his/her previous lessons and using it to develop plans for the next unit.

Being a teacher is so much more than standing in front of a class lecturing. The best teachers are happy to extend their role beyond lecturing because they know it makes the students’ educational experience so much more beneficial.

Technology in the Classroom

Technology has become integrated in the classroom in so many ways. The impact that technology has had on today’s schools has been quite significant. The widespread adoption of technology has completely changed how teachers teach and students learn.
Teachers are learning how to teach with emerging technologies (tablets, iPads, Smart Boards, digital cameras, computers), while students are using advanced technology to shape how they learn. By embracing and integrating technology in the classroom, we are setting our students up for a successful life outside of school.

The following are the few benefits of using technology in the classroom:

- **Technology makes learning fun.** There are various technology tools that are used to make a boring chapter more colorful and interesting.
- **Technology prepares students for the future.** Education is not just memorizing facts and vocabulary words, it is about solving hard complex problems that prepares them for the future, and sets them up in the increasing digital economy.
- **Technology improves retention.** Technology indeed helps students remember what they learn because of its rich learning environment.
- **Technology helps students learn at their own pace.** With individual work assigned to the students, they can be able to develop skills and explore knowledge whenever and wherever is best for them.
- **Technology connects with students.** The students of this generation are considered technological learners. They learn best being more interactive, and technology is what helps them do that. They can better stay focused and learn faster.

**Some Ways to Use Technology in the Classroom to Enrich Learning**

There are countless reasons why technology is a key aspect of learning in the schools. Whether we like it or not, technology is everywhere. It is widely catching up in teaching methodologies across the education space, and teachers are bringing the vital elements of experience, discovery, excitement, engagement, fun, and interaction to the classroom by using various technological tools.

But while technology is ever-evolving, one thing remains the same: the importance of the teacher in motivating students, customizing instruction for each of his or her needs, and managing classrooms that blend digital with live instruction (S. Patrick, 2018).

In more schools today, technology is recognized as an instructional tool, not as a subject of instruction.

Here are some ways technology can be used:

1. **Collaborative Exercises**
   A great way to optimize collaboration is to use mobile devices in the classroom by letting students use them in group work. Students can get together in groups with their tablet, and present their works in front of class.

2. **Video Streaming**
   It says that a picture worth a thousand words, and that images on screen using video can really help create a clearer and more complete picture for students.

3. **Video Conferencing**
   Using video conferencing technology can allow students to travel the world from their classroom, speak with virtual guest lecturers, and make friends and interact with others in different countries.

4. **Social Media**
You can use Facebook or twitter to post a topic for discussion and get all students involved and interact with one another. It is an easy way for them to share resources and help each other out.

5. Podcast
You record about topics and issues and then put them on the internet so that students can download them on their computer or mp3 player.

**Teachers Can Do What Computers Cannot**

With so much information available online, students can gather huge amounts of information at their fingertips. This changes how knowledge is consumed and transmitted. But teachers are concerned with more than just the knowledge their students acquire. They help students understand, interpret and apply the knowledge available to them. As Plutarch who is a Greek historian once said “the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled”. With so much information, we focus far too much on filling people's heads with content, but the thing is we need to inspire people to learn for themselves… and to inspire people, we need teachers, not computers.

Teachers were trained in helping children build self-confidence. They often manage classes of mixed ages and abilities. They also play a role in preventing exclusion or bullying that might result from the depression of children. They provide a stable environment for learning, and make children feel safe and appreciated. These are the things that teachers can provide the computer technology cannot.

There is no single recipe for success when combining traditional and digital methods, but it is clear that human presence – even remotely – still plays an important role in student motivation and progress.

We must remember that this world is both high tech and high touch. Students want both high tech for individualization and flexibility and high touch from great teachers. Computers will never replace people in any setting, especially in the education of our youth. The promise of technology to help our teachers catalyze learning is a promise worth investing in, so that our teachers can motivate and guide students with the best tools and have even more impact for student success. (S. Patrick, 2018).

*Why teachers still matter most in the digital age* … it is because computer lives by human instructions, while teacher gives instructions with the heart.
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