

Knowledge is power. As cliché as this has become, it is a truth which continues to drive modern society. When I was young, I first heard this on a television show that was made specifically for educational purposes. The phrase “knowledge is power” has stayed with me for decades and in many ways inspired me to become an educator, however I have only recently realized the importance of the use of technology to bring me that phrase in the first place. The television is not often thought of as an educational technology, but when used to bring people knowledge and understanding it is one of many devices around us that can be a powerful tool to empower people through education. It is with this early exposure to the powerful world of educational technology that my own philosophy has been shaped.

As an educator, I strive to utilize educational technology that will afford learners the access to knowledge, tools, and training necessary to develop and improve themselves and enhance the experience of learners, while being familiar enough so as not to alienate any potential learners. Whenever possible, my students will create artifacts (both physical and digital) that can be used to assess their learning and provide evidence of mastery. Above all, I will use educational technologies which are accessible to my students and work to make more learning tools accessible to more learners.

As a teacher, my responsibility is to provide students with the tools and resources for them to learn. Almost all of these tools and resources incorporate or are themselves a form of technology and are all, therefore, within the umbrella of educational technology. As such, educators must be aware of the role of technology in the educational setting and prepare lessons and activities with these technologies in mind. To be truly meaningful to the educational experience of learners, an educational technology should provide learners with access to knowledge, tools, and/or training. A technology providing students access to knowledge allows students to guide themselves through their education. These technologies offer students the ability to explore subjects that interest them at their own pace and depth. Technologies that provide tools to learners afford the learner the ability to do something with their knowledge, and similarly, training provides students with the skills needed to perform tasks that may be required of them. Educational technologies with these provisions allow learners to use the technology to strengthen their ownership of the knowledge, especially when the technologies can be accessed anywhere via the internet. In the classroom, I will strive to utilize educational technologies with these qualities so that my students can take their own learning outside of the classroom.

I also believe that the educational technology we use should enhance the experience of the learner. In theory, a student with a textbook could ‘learn’ all of the information required without any technology younger than the 580+ year old printing

press. This is likely not a desirable experience by the learner however, and even if the information is retained, it would likely be a shallow understanding of the material. Newer technologies have the capability of enhancing student engagement and comprehension by involving multisensory input (often through multimedia capabilities). Much like I was enamored with the educational television program that introduced me to the power of education, many learners are drawn to these multisensory experiences and may often be learning as if by accident while their focus was on the experience of the technology itself. These technologies should be unique and interesting enough to captivate learners, while also being familiar enough to be understood through trial and error, allowing students to use the technology as if playing. When using technology to enhance the learner's experience with a technology that is so foreign to a student that they must be trained before using it will often deter and potentially alienate otherwise motivated learners, therefore we must strive to utilize technologies which enhance while remaining approachable to the students with whom we are working.

While not necessary, there are many technologies that also afford the ability to assess and evaluate students. These technologies can be helpful in the classroom for me, the educator, as they often reduce the amount of time needed to grade assessments, but they are also invaluable to students as they often offer the ability to create a product or digital media that can be collected as evidence of learning. Learners can use these technologies inside the classroom but also in other areas of life and professionally, enabling students to produce measurable milestones of their achievements. These technologies should be sought whenever possible as they empower students by allowing them to learn while also giving them the tools to create products that can be meaningful to students in uncountable ways, professionally, academically, socially, and personally.

Lastly, I believe education should be free and accessible to all people. As such, I also believe that we must strive to use technologies which are universally accessible (or as close as possible). These technologies empower students and can be used to allow learners of all kinds to flourish beyond what would otherwise be possible without such access. As educators, we must connect students to the tools and resources which they can access while advocating for all of our students to have access to technologies as equitably as possible. These technologies, by virtue of being widely accessible, are also the technologies most likely to resemble those technologies that they may need the skills to use throughout their lives. Technology is now being incorporated into many aspects of life that are expected of typical citizens, such as filing documents or applying for financial assistance, and by using widespread technology, they are maximizing the likelihood of teaching skills and procedures for using other technologies relevant to their lives.