Digital technology is already commonplace in schools at all levels. There is also widespread agreement that access to the wealth of online information can be beneficial to both educators as curators of information and to students in their learning quest. While quality, legitimacy and pedagogical value of immense online information is of prime concern, there is little research on the efficacy of online learning and the level of student engagement and motivation for deep learning.
New technologies are relative to times, they serve as tools to simplify tasks as were once the typewriter, the overhead projector, the word processor or Apple II a few decades ago[1)]And as it has happened before, but now at an exceedingly higher rate, all we deem now as new and exciting will be the laughing stock of our young before they reach adulthood – *"huh, can you believe my parents had that thing they used to call iPhone!"*. With the advent of the internet, technology has redefined itself as a means of facilitating access to information, where information in itself is cheap.

> Technology has no inherent educational value.
>
> We all know an effective teacher can engage students and achieve extraordinary results with only a piece of chalk and a blackboard – but there is no need to do that of course in this day and age.

If we choose the path to technology we must do so with great diligence, sensibility and purpose. And always observe the golden rule: moderation.

Push for more technology use in schools and targeting younger age groups

What is worrying is the incessant, hyperbolic calls for new innovative learning spaces and new technologies, increased technology use in classrooms and the alleged benefits of instructional technologies and access to digital media across all levels starting in preschools and kindergartens. Enforcing technology use of various sorts, encouraging private sector partnerships, linking schools and online content

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providers, the establishment of Communities of Online Learning (COOLs), and another variation of the same, the development of Online Learning Communities (OLCs) in facilitating teaching–learning in online learning environments are all new trends that are centrally driven. The push for more technology curiously has recently spilled over to an audacious push for online schools[2)]Establishing a regulatory framework for online learning , https://web.archive.org/web/20160828095714/http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/legislation/the-education-update-amendment-bill/establishing-a-regulatory-framework-for-online-learning/ as a new category of schools alongside public, private and charter schools. This is yet another concern that needs to be addressed by the education practitioners, parents, students and the wider community.

What we need instead is a shift from unbridled push for technology to quality assessment of available digital materials, and for students, new skills in digital citizenship, critical media analysis and scholarship where methodical quest for information (intellectual winnowing and sifting) is accompanied by finding context and meaning.

Another issue, to be discussed separately, is that the excessive push for online learning unwittingly opens floodgates to all kinds of obscure, unregulated and often commercially motivated online providers as evidenced in most schools today.

References & Footnotes [+]

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