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Module 1
EDTECH 551

The paper I have chose was from EDTECH 501 and was titled: “Technology and the 21st Century Educator.” I chose this paper because it was the first paper I had to write after starting my Edtech career. To me, it is always interesting to look back at the beginning. The audience intended for this paper were my fellow students and educators. The content dealt with how technology can create a more authentic learning experience through aiding the educator in instruction and assessment. It discusses how Institutions are realizing the importance of producing technologically savvy educators. The purpose was to illustrate the importance of bringing technology into the classroom to create a relatable learning environment for this tech savvy generation of students. This paper is written consistently from a third person point of view.

My writing process begins with doing research on my topic. I do the research and write down items that back up my thesis and illustrate points made in the paper. Then I start to write from the beginning. I am not a visual person, so graphic organizers, brainstorm sheets and index cards are not helpful. I do better by writing the paper first and then breaking it down and tearing it apart. I do have an idea about the organization, and there are times when I will outline it all the information, examples, quotes, etc.. I especially do this if it is a new topic that I am not familiar with.

Abstract and Concrete Word Usage

This is one that I have to be careful of since I tend to talk and write in generalizations. In this paper there are a few examples of Abstract terms such as “Teachers realize that assessment is not only for the students, but for themselves, as well.” Another example is, “When educators discuss the benefits of technology they use word such as “authentic” and “personal”. The abstract here being the word teacher, students, and technology. What kind of students, teachers and technology is unclear though understood by the intended audience.

There are also examples of more concrete word usage. As with all writings, I try to give concrete examples to back up any generalizations that I bring up. “With technology, using online tools such as tutorials and games help those students who need extra time and more review that a teacher may not have the time for.” This example shows how an educator might use technology with examples of specific tools. Students are also placed in more concrete category by answering the question, who would benefit from these certain tools? Students who need more time.

Subjectivity/Objectivity

Although this paper is written from a certain point of view, for the most part I believe it is written objectively. I say for the most part because there are a few lines that I have found while reading back over it that could be considered subjective. “Not only is creating activities involving technology important, but technology use in assessment is as equally crucial.” An example of an objective passage is, “If a lesson works and the desired effect is achieved without technology, it may be best to leave the technology out of it.”

Transitions

I try to make sure to use transitions in my writing, or else it would read in a choppy manner. This is a trap I fall into if I am not careful. Some examples are:

“The research showed that in classrooms, which use technology effectively, the students collaborated and searched on their own how to solve problems.”

“Peer teaching is more prevalent in classrooms with technology, which in turn creates a more authentic learning experience.”

Jargon

Since this paper is geared towards a particular audience, namely educators, there are some terms that could be considered *jargon*. Examples of jargon could be: Summative, formative, assessment, and benchmarks. While these may not be acronyms that could require deciphering, the non-educator may not understand the exact meanings or depth of their meaning.

Vague Terms/Inclusion of Details

In writing I try to include as many details as needed to back up any assertions that I make. This comes from being a History major where details are a major part of any paper. One example of including details is a line following the idea that Education students should be required to take technology courses and learn how to utilize it in a classroom setting.

“The argument is that technology should become a requirement for all education majors and not just an elective. This way, if the Teachers are prepared, they can then prepare their students for life in the technological era. The authors believe that Teachers should go into the classroom for hands on training with technology.”

“The research states that 58% of teachers still do not use technology in the classroom and that after “training” the number does not improve by much.”

Passive/Active Voice

I have learned that I have to be careful about avoiding writing in a passive manner, it is easy to slip into.

Examples of passive voice:

“Online activities can help gifted students to extend on a concept and help them take it further.”

Examples of active voice:

“Technology has allowed differentiation to go even further through a still new concept of online schools.”

Structure

Words per paragraph: 5.8

Words per sentence: 18.0

Passive sentence: 14%

Reading level: 11.2

Wordiness

I have a tendency to be “wordy” in real life. I have always been a talker and that can sometimes translate over into my writing. Luckily, I majored in a discipline that focuses so much on writing that I have learned to tone down my wordiness. Still it creeps in.

“Not only is creating activities involving technology important, but technology use in assessment is as equally crucial. Immediate feedback is important to the development and understanding of students.”

This example, to me, sounds a little wordy because you could cut out the first sentence and keep the meaning.

Fillers

Regarding the topic of fillers, I believe it goes hand in hand with wordiness. One example is the same sentence from above. The phrase, “Not only is” could be considered a filler. I have realized that “not only” is a filler I use very often. The two examples below can be found in the same paragraph.

“Not only is creating activities involving technology important, but technology use in assessment is as equally crucial.”

“Not only summative and formative, but across standards and benchmarks, which will create a more conducive learning environment.”

Passive Verbs

Same as passive voice, and I have to be careful. One example I found was in the second sentence of my paper:

“For the 21st century, education has been ushered into a age of technology.”

Combining Sentences

Combining sentences is another way to cut down on wordiness. Here is an example of where I might have been able to combine sentences creating a more readable statement.

“Immediate feedback is important to the development and understanding of students. The faster a student can receive feedback, the quicker corrections to learning can be made.”

Summary

After evaluating my paper, I can see obvious strengths and weaknesses that I had not noticed before. The paper is written with a clear point of view and retains its objectivity. The transitions are smooth helping the readability and I offer examples to back up many assertions, although implementing more examples would be helpful. The jargon contained in the paper is easy for my audience to understand and does not disrupt the information. Combining sentences is done with relative success unless I am overlooking mistakes I am not familiar enough with to point out.

Some weaknesses are the same weaknesses I have with all my writings, although I have improved over the years. Wordiness is my worst enemy and not because I am trying to fill holes, I just like to hear myself talk. Detrimental, I know. I would also like to

eliminate any passive voice. This paper contains 14%, but I would like to see that number dwindle. Fillers are the one thing that really stood out for me. I used the same filler twice in one paragraph. I don't know if it is from laziness, or it sounds good at the time, but it is one thing I definitely have to work on. I chose this paper because I made an A and thought it would be an easy one to critique. I pride myself on my ability to write. I am now humbled.

Technology and the 21st Century Educator

Education evolves with time. It is vital that educational practices be reviewed and revamped when the need arises. For the 21st century, education has been ushered into an age of technology. Students in today's classroom have been brought up with technology all around them, and in order to engage the technologically saturated generation, educators must use what is relatable to their students. They must become 21st century educators in order to effectively instruct 21st century learners. If educators are trained to create an authentic learning experience for their students, students will in turn take ownership and create a deeper meaning in their learning. Technology can improve classroom activities, assessment and differentiation when used in conjunction with effective Teacher training.

Technology gives teachers a way to engage students like never before, and holding a student's attention and makes class more interesting, but the most important advantage of using technology in the classroom is how technology can help relate a topic to the "real world". Technology is everywhere everyday, especially for the youthful demographic. Students in today's classroom are being raised in a technological era. Technology is their reality, and by bringing it into the classroom, we are bringing in the world around them.

In the journal article entitled "Technology and Classroom Practices", it discusses the findings of research done on the effects of technology in the classroom. The research showed that in classrooms, which use technology effectively, the students collaborated and searched on their own how to solve problems. This higher order thinking skill is the "holy grail" of education. It is a crucial skill to help students with their future success in their educational careers, by allowing the student to pick their own tasks, which show they are taking control of their own learning. Creativity and communication as well not only improves among students, but teachers as well.

The Internet is everywhere, and there is more opportunity than ever to make the most of planning lessons. That is not to say that technology should be integrated in every single lesson. If a lesson works and the desired effect is achieved without technology, it may be best to leave the technology out of it. If there is a lesson that does not have the desired effect or the students are not engaged and get nothing out of it, then technology could be the answer to make it more effective. In the article, "Integrating Technology in Teaching and Teacher Education: Implications for Policy and Curriculum Reform" it touches on how important implementing technology into the classroom is crucial since it is everywhere outside of the classroom. The article is discussing how important it is in schools all over the world to incorporate technology. Technology allows for more effective peer teaching opportunities among students. Peer teaching is more prevalent in classrooms with technology, which in turn creates a more authentic learning experience.

Not only is creating activities involving technology important, but technology use in assessment is as equally crucial. Immediate feedback is important to the development and understanding of students. The faster a student can receive feedback, the quicker corrections to learning can be made. Not only summative and formative, but across

standards and benchmarks, which will create a more conducive learning environment. It helps the teacher as well see where adjustments need to be made for students, and to realize what needs to be retaught before too much time has passed to make the assessment irrelevant.

Teachers realize that assessment is not only for the students, but for themselves, as well. If there is an assignment that a single student or a group of students have problems with, then the Teacher can step back a figure out if it is the student who needs reinforcement, if the lesson needs to be retaught as a group, or if the lesson needs to be scrapped altogether and the concept in question should be taught in a different manner. All of this can happen in a short span of time instead of days. Being able to reteach or correct a student while the concept is fresh in their mind is reason enough to integrate technology into the classroom. The article, "Perspectives on Integration of Technology and Assessment" asserts that the new era of assessment is learning-centered. Technology improves on the quality of tasks presented to students. It will only get better in the future.

Another important benefit to using technology in the classroom is individual instruction. When educators discuss the benefits of technology they use word such as "authentic" and "personal". One of the hardest things to accomplish as a Teacher, especially if there is a large class size, is differentiation. It is hard to focus on one or two students needs when there could be 30 plus students to teach. With technology, using online tools such as tutorials and games help those students who need extra time and more review that a teacher may not have the time for. At least not without taking away from the other students. It works the other way as well. Gifted students sometimes get overlooked and not challenged enough so they are never able to meet their full potential. Technology by being a creative outlet for gifted students. Online activities can help gifted students to extend on a concept and help them take it further.

Technology has allowed differentiation to go even further, through a still new concept of online schools. Now a 21st century educator has the choice of where to work, a choice that Teachers have never had before. Use to, Teachers worked in a classroom, and that was the only option. Now Teachers can work from anywhere and there is a flexibility that has never been there before. In the article, "Schools That Technology Built: Evaluation of a Program to Train Teachers for Virtual Schooling" online education and teacher preparation are the topic. The article comments that the upside is that online schools can be the answer to students who struggle in a more traditional class setting. It also has a flexibility that some families may require or want. It is also a great tool for parents who home school. Their children work with certified teachers and parents feel more confident knowing that standards are getting met. For this reason demand for these types of educational institutions are on the rise. With this new avenue of schools, the realization is dawning that Universities have to take another look at how they are currently training soon to be teachers. Teacher education must evolve as well to keep up with the growing integration of education and technology.

As stated in the article by Roblyer and Davis discusses the importance of re approaching how Universities education up and coming Teachers. The argument is that technology should become a requirement for all education majors and not just an elective. This way, if the Teachers are prepared, they can then prepare their students for life in the technological era. The authors believe that Teachers should go into the classroom for hands on training with technology. According to the article, there are many Universities

that have already started implementing technology into their education curriculum as a requirement. They assert that in order for teachers to understand how to use technology properly in their own classroom when they get one, they need to see how it is done out in the field. Doing this, according to the authors, will ensure that graduates know how to implement technology in the classroom in the most effective way possible and to prepare them for the future role of technology in education.

Success using technology in the classroom must start with Teacher training meaning both up and coming Teachers, and those who have been in the classroom for any length of time. In an article entitled, “Can Teacher Technology Integration Training Alone Lead to High Levels of Technology Integration?” it states that most of the time training deals more with administration and less about how to use it as part of the curriculum. The paper states that 58% of teachers still do not use technology in the classroom and that after “training” the number does not improve by much. This asserts that it is not the *lack* of training, but the *type* of training. Teachers need the type of training that makes technology use both relevant and authentic to them, terms that are used when describing using technology for student learning. If the type of training used can’t convince teachers who teach core subjects, how can it be used to any success in the classroom? It makes sense, that like classroom assignments, technology training for teachers need to be geared to be more individualized. One solution could be for more schools should have a full-time technology coordinator who is able to show teachers how to use technology in the classroom. If more technology is to be used by teachers in all subject areas, there must be better training geared toward making it more relevant and personalized so that teachers can see the benefits and how it can apply to their classroom. Otherwise, it will be viewed as another thing they have to do and another standard that needs covering.

In order to create 21st century students, we must have 21st century teachers. Technology helps students and teachers create an individualized and authentic learning environment. Through immediate feedback, students can correct learning sooner and more effectively. Technology also can help in differentiation in the classroom as well as through online schools. With proper and relevant training, teachers will be able to use technology effectively and appropriately in their classrooms. They will have the understanding that only when used in conjunction with standards, can it reach its full potential to create a technological savvy student. Teachers must remember that the goal for technology use is to enhance what is already there, not to replace it.

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Link:

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