

A Revolutionary Idea for the Classroom: The Lecture

Stewart Barr, Phil. D.

Anthony Pitucco, Ph.D.

Pima Community College, West Campus

Tucson, Arizona

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Today's educational focus is centered upon the advent of the most sophisticated classroom technology. As such, the current learning environment has experienced a decreased dependence on the traditional lecture which has significantly altered the classroom environment. There are two issues rarely addressed in the current educational mind set, firstly the effect of technology on the success of the student, and secondly, whether the overall cost and time expenditure of such technology has been a "boon or a bust" in view of the steady decline of the basic academic skills at all levels.

Recognizing that there is little to no "serious" debate on these issues, it is essential that faculty and administrators understand more globally how classroom technology may be a double-edged sword, with pros and cons, that must be addressed. The current emphasis on the creation of the "high-tec" classroom has, in many respects, made the distinction between the science of teaching and art of teaching quite diffuse, with some even equating the two. Of the many definitions held of the "art of teaching" there is a common thread that most would not deny, namely, the unfolding of creative ideas and inspiring insights as instrumental during classroom lectures, wherein the teacher often becomes the student learning new ways to incorporate old and current ideas making the classroom a living entity. The memorable teachers are those at both extremes, those who perfected this biology and those who "killed" it. It is within this spectral extreme where the art of teaching lies.

The delivery, or the science of teaching, where the essential educational tools lie, is as significant and as important. The current trend to place an amorphous "information technology" as a universal educational tool of choice has become the panacea for curing all educational ills. No doubt, the benefits

and conveniences of such an invaluable and limitless resource is important for teaching and learning. It is both a necessity and a responsibility for any educational system to place an emphasis on developing the essential critical thinking skills to accurately and effectively use the existing and ever changing technology and it is just essential that educational technology must be driven by the curriculum and not the reverse. The danger with the converse is that the development of building complex reasoning skills is often by-passed due to the apparent simplicity with which a computer or simulator may accomplish the task. The problem, of course, is that the complexity of the problem has not diminished but has rather been replaced with a perception of simplicity, or worse, in that there is no problem at all . One need only consider the concept of "number" being substituted for a picture on cash-register, wherein lies the usual jokes about one's inability to make simple change because of a failed cash-register.

Over the past twenty years we have seen very sophisticated and expensive technology to into greater use. The measure of how well this is working is not just the passing of standardized test but rather are they prepared for the next academic level. With most colleges having 70 "

At the expense of being misunderstood as "luddites" it is critical that educators look seriously as to how the current trends in technology are being used. Certainly, the process of developing sophisticated reasoning is a long one and done with much work and labor. Educational technology is a great classroom tool that must be employed and evaluated, but it is not a substitute for the traditional lecture. Do we really believe that a person who went through a traditional Ph.D program and one who obtained the same degree from a regionally accredited distance learning institution had the same level of educational experience. All we ask is "where's the beef"?

Today, however, it is an anathema, for educators who hold to this opinion to speak out questioning the overall benefits of the technology.