

Introduction: Technology, Education and Change

Chapter Outline

Introduction

Towards a definition of technology

Aspects of technology

Technological determinism

Technology, education and change

Conclusions

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Activity

The list of issues generated as a result of the growing link between education and technology is by no means definitive. What others would you add?

Activity

What do you think is the difference between science and technology?

Activity

Identify two things, one complex and expensive and one simple and cheap, that you think has had a significant impact on your education.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using complex or high technology in education?

Do you think your viewpoint would be the same if you lived in a country that was significantly different from your own?

New Technology and Education

Activity

The shovel and the earthmover, although they do the same job, are at different ends of the technological spectrum. Try to identify devices that you may have seen used in teaching and learning that represent similar extremes.

Provide an example of technology as a system or a series of interconnected activities from an educational context.

Activity

1. Did suburbia create the car or did the car create suburbia?
2. Is there a link between the development of the Spinning Jenny (see URL link at the end of this chapter) and the necessity for a literate working class?
3. The technological determinists would argue what will be will be. Does this mean that if the development of weapons of mass destruction is preordained any form of moral education to halt their advance is pointless?

Activity

1. Can you think of a device(s) used in schools or universities where many variants existed and now only one is available?
2. Can you suggest whom the actors and relevant social groups in the evolution of the device(s) identified above may be?
3. Using a recently developed technological device that you are very familiar with (it could be an iPod), identify which different social groups (old, young, etc.) could be ascribed to which adopter profiles.
4. From your own experience, identify a device that has been available but not widely adopted in school or university that would be useful in promoting teaching and learning. Suggest a reason why it has not been adopted.

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Big question

Neil Postman in Olson et al. (2001: 9) muses that all technological change 'is a Faustian bargain – that every advantage is tied to a corresponding disadvantage'. We are fast approaching a point where the disadvantages of using technology in learning and teaching are outweighed by the advantages. Does it matter that we have reached this state?