

The Computer and Education

Chapter Outline

Introduction

Programmed learning

Computers

Perceived benefits of computers

Early issues with computers

Uptake of computers

Conclusions

The Computer and Education

Activity

Early adherents claimed that programmed learning was as old as education itself and followed in the tradition of great thinkers such as Socrates, whom they thought of as the first programmer (Fonseca, 1965). Why do you think they made this assertion?

Activity

Computers were either regarded as a universal panacea for all educational ills or as a force that would compromise the relationships between people, particularly in education (Coulson, 1966). Do you think any element of this statement holds true today? Justify your conclusion.

Activity

The IEA study appears to indicate that the rate at which computers were being adopted for educational use in the early days varied considerably between countries. Can you suggest what factors affected uptake? What principles can you derive from your reflection that can be applied to the introduction of any new technology into the classroom?

Activity

Morton (1996), when referring to the introduction of computers, suggests that educators were far too eager to look 'studiously backward' and that, as a result, their thinking was destined to be flawed, rather like the Laputans in *Gulliver's Travels* who always rejected new ways of doing things, regardless of the consequences. Do you think teachers today still have this Laputian mindset? What do you base your conclusions on?

New Technology and Education

Activity

It is clear from examining this period that even until quite recently, and despite great potential for change, the computer has been used falteringly. However, while it has been possible to choose the extent to which the technology is involved in the process of learning and teaching, that option is no longer available. What has altered between then and now?

The Computer and Education

Big Question

Are there any current technologies that appear to have as little potential to be used in education as the computer did in the early days that should be employed in learning and teaching?