

Impacts of Technology on Learning

Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference, October 4-6, 2006
<http://www.umsl.edu/teachers/mwr2p06>

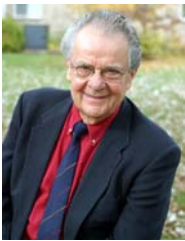
Roxanne Miller

Hi! I'm Roxanne Miller, Civic Communications Specialist with University of Missouri Extension and Co-Chair of the 2006 Midwest Research-to-Practice conference. You will be listening to Tom Titus of the Boeing Company, Dr. John Henschke, Extension Continuing Education Specialist and Associate Professor, University of Missouri-St. Louis and Dr. Joe Levine, Professor Emeritus of Michigan State University.

Tom Titus

What have the impacts been of the technology?

John Henschke



As I reflect on technology over a period of years, I observed it and watched it take place. I remember the old telewriter that people would write in one place and it would come on a board. That kind of thing. That was one of the early ones. Another one was where we had a bunch of professionals (and I won't name the profession). They were professionals where somebody would get on and send lecture notes, or the lecturer to a group of people would go on and talk for an hour and half without stopping. The people in the local audience would fall asleep. Another time, we used to do the uplinks and we would have conferences. And, of course, in the middle of it the wind would blow hard and the signal would get knocked out. Everyone looked as if to say, *is this what we paid our money for?* I went on farther than that and did some uplinks of videos and downlinks of some conversations in discussing the comments or the things that were on uplinks. And that kind of thing. I can remember a bridge at the university that was very antiquated, and we spent twenty-four percent of the time just making the technology work.



Joe Levine



<laughter> You were lucky to get away with twenty-four percent!

John Henschke

Yeah. OK. There was another one in which I had 65 people in 22 locations purely on the telephone. And, I insisted that he do it interactively. They facilitate the learning, not just be a talking head over an audio thing. And, we were able to accomplish that despite the fact that the technology people thought we were wasting money when we weren't jabbering on the telephone.

Joe Levine

<laughter> John, I remember so well many years ago a colleague of mine at the university was working with a local school district – a teacher in-service thing – a period of a number of weeks. And, one of the things that he promised them was that at one of their meetings, he would bring in a telephone system. They would have the opportunity to address their questions to a national authority in the field. They were excited and they worked for a series of sessions developing the questions they would ask, etc, etc. The day came and they set up this technology and sure enough the national expert came on. They spent an hour on this phone talking to this expert, and at the end this group of teachers felt tremendous. The technology finally got them the answers they needed to hear.

John Henschke

Now for me also right now I always, when I am working with technology, I am always very cognizant of the fact that I am in the business of **facilitating learning**. And that is what that is about. If I ever forget that, then it seems like things break down. But as long as I can keep that in mind, we can keep the learning process interact and beneficial to those who are participating.

Joe Levine

Absolutely. And John I think there's got to be some way to remind our colleagues of this fact on an on going way.

John Henschke

Yes. And I think that if your keynote takes on the character of some of the things you applied today, I think it will help to do that and you might want to open it up along the way and ask if there are any comments. That could be dangerous. I mean you could control it.

Tom Titus

I guess what you're saying is that you have to **focus on the learning** and **focus on the learner**. Unfortunately, too often I think some people that are very techno-savvy have a tendency to get too wrapped up in the technology. The flip side of the coin is probably true - I guess the other end of the continuum would say it better - is probably true in the fact that people that are really anti-technology probably inhibit some learning by really shying away from it.



John Henschke

Yes, I think you are right, Tom.

Joe Levine

But, you know, if we as educators and we as learners have a reason to use the technology, a good viable reason, I think it works.

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