TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING IN ALBANIA

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Abstract: Technology is undoubtedly having a major impact on every aspect of our lives and that includes today's learning environments. It is shaping the way in which students learn, teachers deliver material and the way in which we design spaces for future learning opportunities.

It is said that schools aren't just investing in computer stations and keyboards and we are witness to the fact, based on our planning and design work, and that they are quickly embracing the "constant contact" trends that have changed our global culture. As technology continues to evolve, it brings with it new opportunities and challenges for educators and students. Social networking is a great example of technology that can help — or hinder — education, depending on how it is used and integrated into teaching plans. Privacy and security are two concerns that can come with using social networking in the classroom. It can also become a distraction to students, or even a tool used for bullying.

Learning spaces now, more than ever, are being designed to help with communication and information sharing. From tablets used to asking kids to "raise their hands" virtually, to viewing a lecture via Skype or FaceTime, the traditional four walls and a chalkboard are transforming rapidly. According to a recent USA Today article, a New York-based educational technology startup released the first device, an Android-powered touchscreen tablet, "designed for kids both to take to school and bring home. For sale only to schools for now, the Amplify tablet comes pre-loaded with virtually everything a student will encounter during the school day, including all the textbooks, lessons, tests and e-books she might be assigned."

Keywords: *Learning spaces,Technology,books, teaching plans, distraction*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research literature throughout the past decade has shown that technology can enhance literacy development, impact language acquisition, provide greater access to information, support learning, motivate students, and enhance their self-esteem (ACT, 2004; CEO Forum, 2001; Boster et al., 2004; Mann et al., 1999; Tracey & Young, 2006; WestEd, 2002). Indeed, researchers have affirmed that computer technology provides abundant opportunities for students to build or modify their personal knowledge through the rich experiences that technology affords.

As technology continues to evolve, it brings with it new opportunities and challenges for educators and students. Social networking is a great example of technology that can help — or hinder — education, depending on how it is used and integrated into teaching plans. Privacy and security are two concerns that can come with using social networking in the classroom. It can also become a distraction to students, or even a tool used for bullying. According to a 2011 Pew report, 15% of children surveyed said they had been the victim of mean behavior on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

However, using social networking as part of the learning process can also have benefits. Students who are more introverted may open up and connect more with faculty and other students when they are communicating through social networking. It also affords students the opportunity to collaborate and work together in a whole new way.

There are also social networking sites designed specifically for education. An article on technology in education by Education Week mentions ePals and eChalk as two sites "designed specifically for learning."

College students can be notoriously connected to technology, including social networking, through their smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Social media in education presents college students with different benefits and detriments compared to their younger counterparts. According to Mashable, "Facebook is the most used social media tool in higher education." Additionally, Mashable says that colleges can use social media to encourage school spirit, foster the growth of alumni groups, and offer virtual tours to potential students.

So whether it is a college student studying classic literature or a grade school student first learning to read, technology is now an integral part of the education process.

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Kristen Purcell of the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project recently co-authored a new study on technology and education. She says schools aren't just investing in computer stations and keyboards and we are witness to the fact, based on our planning and design work, and that they are quickly embracing the "constant contact" trends that have changed our global culture. Purcell says, "What did surprise us though was the extent to which mobile tools have become part of the learning process. [We found that] 73 percent of teachers that we surveyed told us that cell phones are now either part of their teaching experience, or their students' learning experience. Tablets and e-readers are being used by more than four in 10 of these teachers."Technology has changed the way we as humans live; it changes our understanding of the way things work and changes the way we interact with one another. Technology was once opposed but is now somewhat welcomed into our homes. During the renaissance period, technology was opposed, as the church believed that technology would oppose the beliefs of god. Well they were right. Technology isn't just computers or TV's, its engineering science. And in Science, our goal is to progress and understand everything there is to understand about us, our planet and beyond. However, the way we understand and experience this concept the most is that its just to make our lives much more efficient. When you look around, what do you see? Just at an intersection in downtown New York or Los Angeles, you see people walking around with cell phones and carrying around laptop cases, other's just listening to music. But then the companies that build these types of technology want to make them better and more efficient. So they keep releasing new devices that are smaller and faster and mostly more costly.

METHODOLOGY

For this paper to be successful, there are used the qualitative and quantitative methods such as the tests and the interviews in 100 schools in Tirana. The questionnaires were made to 50 teachers and 50 students. Then through the SPSS technique there were analyzed the values and results of this paper.
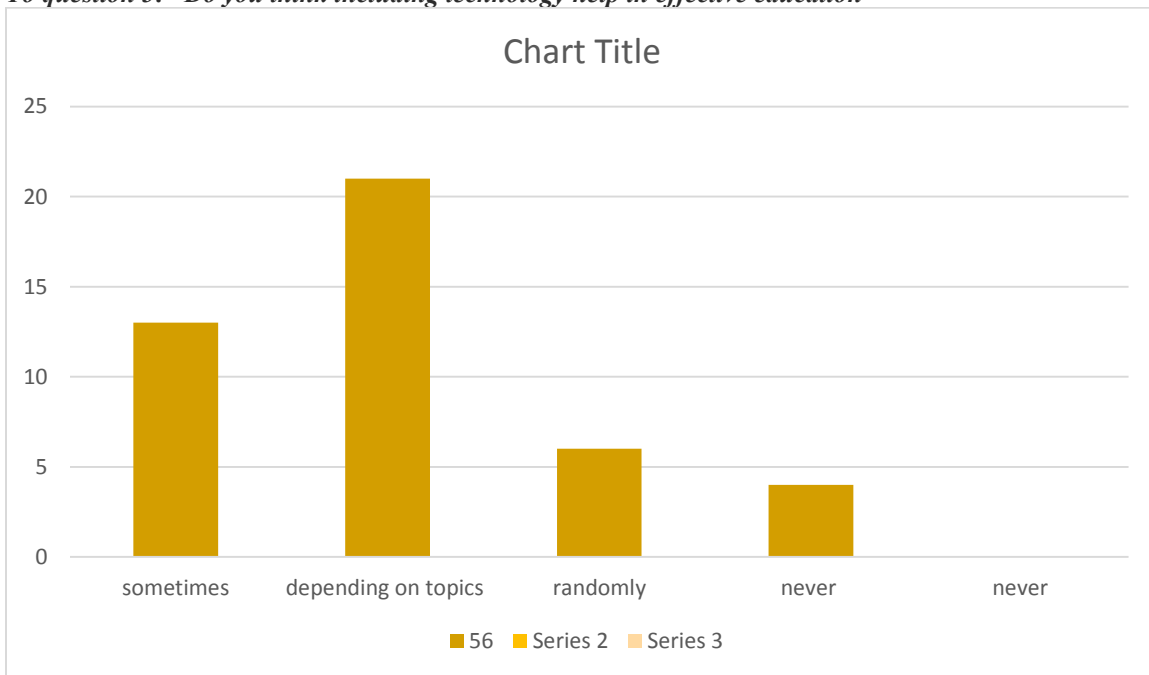
To question 1: Do you know the mean of education technology?
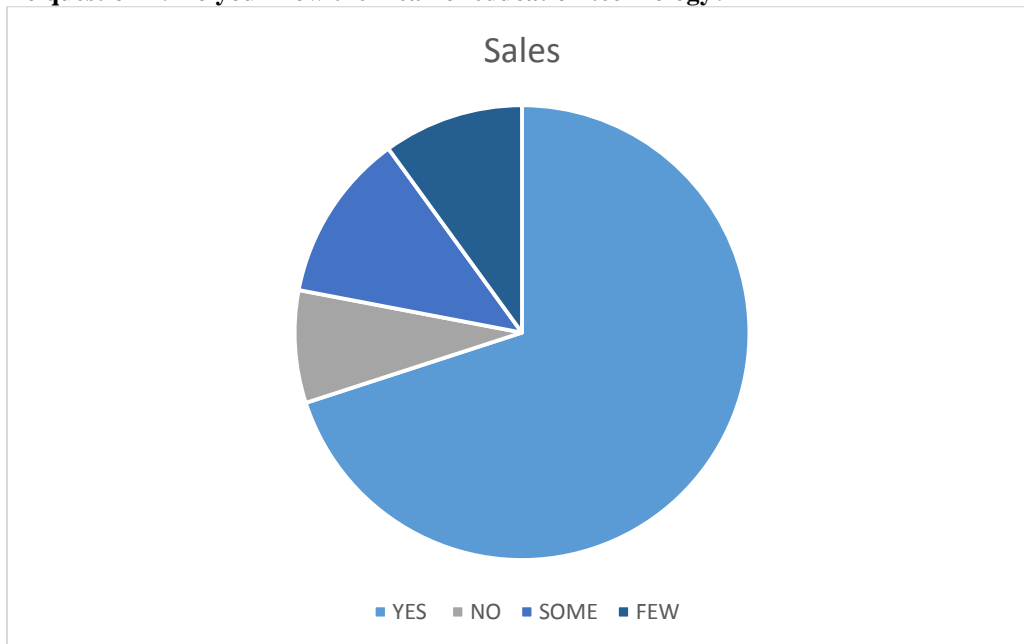
To the question 2 "What is the frequency of using technology in the class ", the teachers answered as it follows:
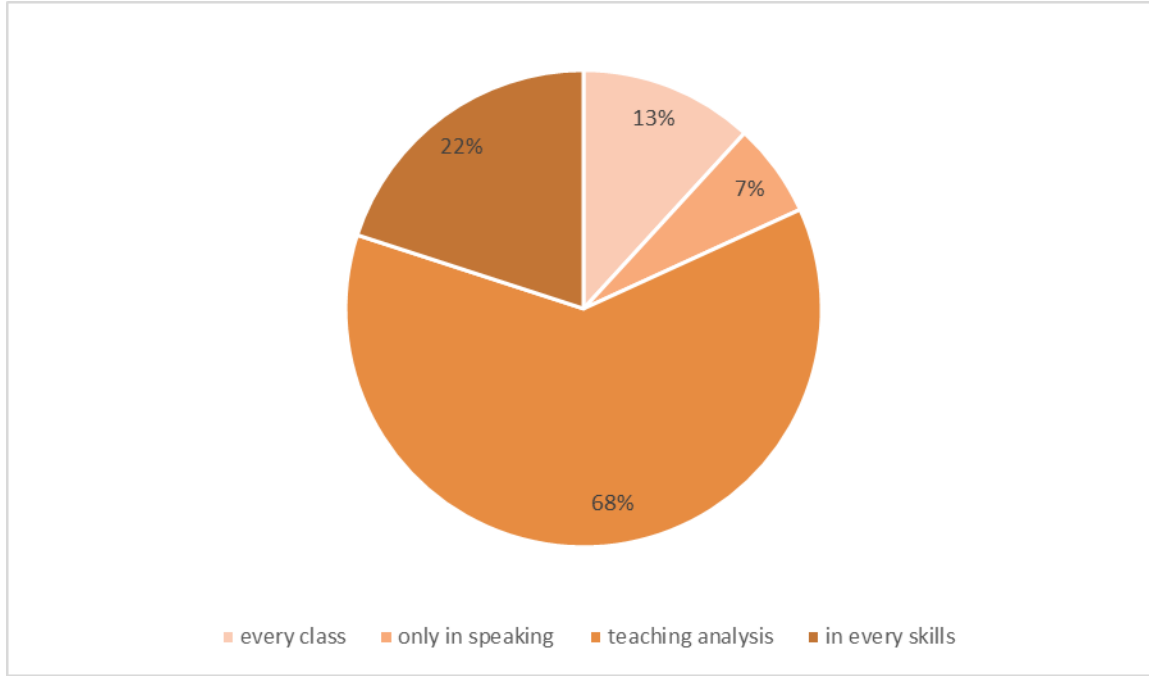
To question 3:" Do you think including technology help in effective education"

Technology is a concept that will never end. new devices will be released and then refined just about endlessly. Not even if or when we start running out of resources, because we would have recycled parts to build new technology and we will build new technology to possibly refine available resources or even find another planet that has the same resources. Technology now is a concept that we cannot survive without; an average North American person needs technology to eat, to entertain, to cook, and to do many other daily functions. Lets face it we need technology to survive. But this is to an extent, for example a computer can be one of mans best friends, it helps us write documents such as the one you are currently reading, it helps us obtain knowledge through the internet, and it helps us entertain ourselves with games, movies, and music. But the computer can also have side effects, to our behavior, and even to our appearance. Some children get so entangled in this technology that their eating and sleeping habits change and along with their behaviors. Not just on the computer, even just playing on gaming platforms such as the Xbox or the PS3 or even iPods, they can all change the way we eat, sleep, and behave. While children play on computers or gaming platforms, they get so involved that they begin to avoid eating and sleep later to play longer, but the games they play really can change their usual behavior, shooting games or fighting games can make them more violent, strategy games can make them more strategic (slightly), and racing games can make them aggressive drivers, it all depends on how much you play and how addicted you become. But gaming can also lead to a loss of physical activity, when someone is addicted to a game, they refrain from leaving the house until they reach a certain 'achievement', until they win a race or even until they 'die' in the game, this behavior can cause us to gain weight and/or become obese because we also begin snacking more instead of eating proper meals and we stop exercising often.

I'm not saying technology is bad, Technology is changing the way we live, changing the way we interact, it lets us understand the world better, and it helps us write documents, do our homework, make money, present neat computerized presentations, and even edit documents with others in real-time. But what I am saying is that technology is evolving, to engulf us into different activities. There was a presentation at DICE (a creative design convention) where a design professor had very interesting arguments. He called his presentation, "design outside the box" he said, "Technology changes the way we do things, it's literally turning our lives into games, who knew that Ford built a car so intelligent that it knew if you were driving efficiently, and would grow a computerized plant around your speedometer" but then he introduced an idea that made the audience think if this was to really happen? He said, " In the future, we are going to be engulfed in points, in a point system where you get points for eating a healthy cereal, for taking the bus instead of a car, for showing a tattoo which shows 'ads' with 'E-ink', where you would get points for watching a certain advertisement on TV or walking or biking to work." He made me think, is this really going to happen? Well if it does, it's going to completely change the way we live, we will be engulfed in a game, and a computerized game not just the 'problem solving' game that we call life but a game for points, full of achievements to win. We will stop eating our favorite food because we wouldn't be getting points for them and not buying certain things because we won't get points for them.

To conclude, I believe in technology, I completely support it, but only to an extent. I say go ahead and enjoy what technology has to offer, learn about the world we live in, entertain yourself and engulf in it. Just until it doesn't affect your appearance or the people around you and especially the person in you. Think about it like this, we as humans made machines we can't let machines make us who we are.

LITERATURE
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