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Technology and Teaching Physical Education

Considering I am very new to the field of teaching, only being in my second year as an educator, I have a limited base of information I can recall from when considering how technological advances have changed my way of teaching. However, with the ability of taking online classes and a growing emphasis on incorporating technology into education, I feel very encouraged about the future of technology in education and my ability to use technology as an additional option to teach. I grew up as technological advances were becoming more and more common. My knowledge stems from experimenting with computers and the internet on my own as a youngster and further advancing my ability as I encountered classwork associated with a number of different technologies. I did not really start to understand the benefits and advantages that the internet enabled until I took a few college classes online. Through those classes I was able to understand how to connect aspects of the internet into what I was to learn. ED 800 especially introduced me to a world of hyperlinks where a tremendous amount of information could be found. As this course is coming to a close, I have found in myself a motivation to incorporate technology into my own curriculum.

Although I have only taken three online courses over the last few years, I have seen a transformation in how these courses can be taught given the advancement of technology. The first online class that I took was simply about reading the information through what amounted to a typed lecture. There were no links to external sites or examples, which in hindsight, could have really helped enhance my understanding of the subject matter. The second online class that I took incorporated recorded lectures synced with powerpoint slides. It was nice to hear a voice explaining the idea behind the slides, but it was hard to focus on a voice while looking at a still object on the screen. The subject matter was relayed well, but again, I feel links or even a video lecture would have been more beneficial. Finally, my third and most recent online class, ED800, combined a number of different aspects that technology and the internet can provide. This class was similar to a "choose your own adventure" book where I could choose the amount of depth I would like to learn about any given topic. Not only were there written lectures, but also video evidence, external websites, audio clips, and in my case, films that were able to be streamed online. Out of all three of these classes, ED800 was by far the most in-depth course and allowed the most complete learning. Now, I'm not trying to brown nose by saying this about the class, but it truly has been a great experience.

After completing such an exhilarating course with so many options to learn the material, I have found a renewed motivation to incorporate more technology into my own curriculum. I do have some obstacles to overcome as far as technology goes as it is very difficult to use certain technology in a physical education setting. With the amount of movement and athletic equipment involved, sometimes it simply is not safe to have expensive technological equipment set up around the activity area. However, that is probably the least of my worries. Currently, I teach in an area with a low socioeconomic status where many families cannot afford new technology. There are very few areas in town where the community can use various technologies and also our school library is no longer staffed to help students understand how to use the available technology properly. The hardest part of using online resources with students will be accessibility and the students' own knowledge. It seems as if the community is "behind the times" when it comes to what the internet has to offer such as navigation, social networks, and many other aspects. However, on a brighter note, our school is beginning to transform into a technological

friendly zone with the addition of Smart Boards in certain classes and wireless internet throughout the school.

Knowing the challenges I may face, I still believe that students will benefit from the use of technology in physical education. On a basic level, it could be a welcomed change in how physical education is taught compared to traditional practices. After watching the chapter about teaching with technology from the *Digital Nation* video, it seems as if students need to be taught subject matter using technology that the students will use for a good portion of their lives – until something better is invented anyway. My vision consists of offering supplemental material online that can help enhance what the students are learning in class. This probably seems contradictory to the physical activity goal that physical education curriculums should have, but I feel it is more about informing the students and offering them a different form of motivation to learn the proper ways to be physically active. The students are going to use various forms of technology anyway, so instead of fighting it, I want to give them an opportunity to use it in a positive manner. Currently, I have a website that I post all assignments and announcements for the students to see. In the future, I have a vision to add sport specific skill videos or maybe even links to these skills for students to basically study or "teach themselves" outside of class time. I would love for the students to develop the videos themselves as if they are teaching the specific skill to their classmates, which would also involve using video editing technology. The whole goal of this idea would be to allow students an opportunity to learn how to use various forms of technology while still learning the important aspects of physical education. They would be able to connect an emerging interest in technology with many healthy lifestyle components, hoping to further their knowledge about physical activity. To revisit the challenges I may encounter, this idea would also help the students become more familiar with advancements in technology and how to use them properly. I would love to help the students advance their lives using technology because it is and will be an even more important part of their lives as they move on with their careers.

Throughout ED800 the positives and negatives of technology have been discussed. In the last unit a notable resource described how the availability of information using Google has created a smaller attention span. Nicholas Carr, the author of the article "Is Google Making us Stupid?" explains how he cannot focus on reading a book because of the instant availability of information on the internet and how often he takes advantage of the resource. I believe he makes a great point, but if students are taught how to use online resources properly, they can be very useful. I am willing to argue that many teachers, including myself, use Google to look up a number of different things. I even use Google to search for ideas I can incorporate into my classes and lessons. With physical education revolving around movement and not so much reading, I feel that helping students understand how to properly search for information on the internet could be very beneficial to living a healthy lifestyle – as long as they are searching for that type of information. Students' attention spans are considerably shorter now than even a few short years ago when I was in their place, so it may be more beneficial to help them learn to use resources that would allow them to be more effective given what is available to them today.

In conclusion, I feel technology is a great addition to any type of classroom – even physical education. Having grown up in somewhat an early part of technological advances, I have seen how much more emphasis is now placed on learning in multiple ways and how much technology is now used everywhere. I still struggle a bit to understand every type of technology available and wish I could use every type to its fullest extent, but I am not afraid to learn about new ideas. Considering my history of technology, and looking ahead to how technology will be used, I think it is time that school curriculums start incorporating more technology. As I become more comfortable as a teacher, I do plan to incorporate as

much technology as possible in as many forms as possible. The goal of education is to prepare students for their careers, so now is the time to prepare them to use technology as well.