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TECHNOLOGY DURING THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA: ADAPTATION OR LIMITATION?

Daniela DURALIA

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania
duralia.daniela@armyacademy.ro

Abstract: *According to The Guardian, "Professors, programmers and journalists could all be out of a job in just a few years" [1]. In North America, long before the pandemic, some high schools (both public and private) replaced books and notebooks with laptops. In universities, the students preferred listening to the recordings of the lectures taken on their computers or phones instead of actively taking notes during the classes. Technology has been the topic of many debates among teachers, parents, and students. Seen both advantageous and disadvantageous, technology in the classroom has become indispensable to teaching. Technology has proven to have been the only way out of the pandemic crisis regarding business and education. The trend in the education field in a post-pandemic context resulted from a blend between teaching approaches and technology use. However, in a post-pandemic context, this trend has been seen as one of the central factors leading to an increase in the lack of in-person socialization for youths and a principal distraction from their studies. Moreover, the development of more advanced software (A.I. Bot ChatGPT) has started to influence the teaching process regarding assignments. However, the real question is how and to what extent the use of technology can be advantageous for students today.*

Keywords: technology, advantages, disadvantages, ChatGPT

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, changes in technology have become a central concern for most teachers as students become more dependent on it for their studies. Long before the pandemic, a few North American public and private high schools replaced books and notebooks with laptops. In universities, students preferred listening to the recordings of the lectures taken on their computers or phones instead of actively taking notes during the classes. Technology has been the topic of many debates among teachers, parents, and students. Seen both advantageous and disadvantageous, technology in the education sector has become indispensable to teaching, proving to have been the only way out of the pandemic crisis in business and education.

The invention of ChatGPT has lately marked its stubborn and strong prevalence in education. It has revolted most of the teachers all over the world. According to The Guardian, "Professors, programmers, and journalists could all be out of a job in just a few years" [2]. In a post-pandemic context, consequences in the education field result from a blend of teaching approaches and technology use. However, in a post-pandemic context, it has been seen as one of the central factors leading to an increase in the lack of in-person socialization for youths and a main distraction from their studies.

Moreover, more advanced software (A.I. Bot ChatGPT) has started to influence the teaching process regarding assignments. However, the real question is how and to

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what extent students can use such technology today. Bain notes O'Neil's statement that "technology enables cheating in new and creative ways", and at the same time, he thinks the use of technology could be eliminated, "fortunately, there are actions faculty can take to mitigate and, in some cases, eliminate the use of technology for academic dishonesty" [3]. Instead of blaming technology for offering a more accessible means for cheating on exams, or a general lack of socialization, one should reflect on its advantages and the right way to integrate it into the curriculum.

2. The Advantages of Using Technology

Technology has made resources more available for students in many respects, making significant changes in academia. In the 1990s, students seldom used computers in schools, nor did they have access to one during class. Currently, most high schools provide computer access and expect students to be computer savvy by the end of their program. In Romania, students studying science in high school are required to have obtained The European Computer Driving License (ECDL), which "is an internationally recognized qualification" [4].

In 2023, communication between teachers and students occurs on digital online media platforms like Moodle and Google Classroom, helping teachers follow their students' assignments more conveniently and offer feedback. The use of various devices also allows students to research a plethora of topics.

3. The Disadvantages of Using Technology

Technology has increased cheating, making it easier for students to do so during examinations. Researchers such as Will Douglas Heaven or Erguvan analyze cheating activity as a serious problem emerging after the Covid-19 pandemic. Bri Stauffer talks about 11 ways of preventing such academic dishonest acts:

1. Talk about honesty and integrity; 2. Teach Digital responsibility; 3. Create an Anti-Cheating Pledge; 4. Make Different Versions of Your Assessments; 5. Switch Up Seating on Test Day; 6. Use Multiple Assessment Styles. 7. Manage Access to Personal Devices; 8. Check the Settings on Digital Study Tools; 9. Change the Structure of Your Tests; 10. Create an Atmosphere of Asking Questions; 11. Change How You Define Success in Your Classroom [5].

Cheating is a choice. Cheating did not start with technology; according to Bri Stauffer, "academic dishonesty has been around since before anyone can remember", which is "a problem with seemingly no solution in sight" [6]. Many electronic devices, such as cell phones, can either be used to defraud a test or improve one's overall knowledge. Bain notes that "students cheat less when they are better educated and consistently reminded about the nuances of academic integrity" [7]. Furthermore, teachers must adopt new teaching approaches and new ways to deter cheating.

4. Technology- integrated into the LES

Technology is out of the LES. It is not always integrated purposefully as a means of communication in classrooms. Some students do not understand the necessity of using a PowerPoint presentation. PowerPoint documents should be perceived as tools to convey the explanation to an audience better. Unfortunately, during some scientific activities, students' attention and efforts were primarily focused on the design of it and not on how they could naturally convey information according to their perspective. Technology could help a group animate and keep the members in interactive collaboration.

The attitude described when presenting PowerPoint presentations harkens back to an older, less modern way of teaching. While some of those more traditional teaching approaches are not without merit, most students' performances during the oral

examinations reveal that it is not as conducive to their learning and success. For instance, students may have difficulty analyzing information, finding it difficult to form opinions. Students may also lack motivation, creativity, or even autonomy. Instructors expect students to research copious amounts of information quickly and efficiently without the necessary means by which to do so. Professors also provide vague responses to students' questions in class to clarify specific topics or concepts.

Like any parent inspiring his children with moral values, all teachers in an institution should aim to instruct their students in the proper use of technology in their studies. Furthermore, in the classroom, teachers must decide the type of technology to benefit the needs of their students. The teaching of ESL (English as a second language), EFL (English as a foreign language) and, FSL (French as a second language), FFL (French as a foreign language) can effectively be improved within interactive environments.

Peter Lindsay believes teachers should "decide on the experience and then find a technology that might help us create this experience" [8]. This perspective is the most suitable for using technology in education today.

With a broad perspective on their students, their educational background, and the lesson's initial plan, teachers could effectively decide how to use technology in their syllabus. Previous training and an ideal learning environment are essential before implementing recently discovered teaching approaches and methods, as well as using new technology. Despite much progress regarding pedagogy and technology, their application proves possible and practical only in suitable environments.

The effectiveness of using the most current teaching methods depends on students' educational backgrounds. Some approaches should not be applied in classes where students have never studied in interactive environments. They would like the teaching of ESL, EFL, FSL and FFL to feel comfortable in the classroom. However, students would be reluctant to reply publicly to a teacher's question for fear of being ridiculed by their peers. These are characteristics of traditional learning environments where teachers and students are mutually exclusive. In such situations, teachers cannot apply new approaches to improve their lessons and highlight their subject matter. The student's educational background is not favourable or a fit for a collaborative and interactive approach to teaching. Such a precarious educational background deprives students of self-confidence, creativity, and autonomy.

Students must also be prepared to live as responsible members of society. As students, school represents the society in which they live. They are free and responsible for their choice of actions: to be honest or cheat. In his study, Erguvan reflects on the opinions of other researchers, such as Eshet, Jone and McGee, who write, "students engage in academic dishonesty for a variety of reasons […]: desire for high grades, procrastination, time pressure to complete assignments or study for tests, lack of organizational skills, fear of failing a course (loss of time and money), lack of understanding of academic dishonesty, and plagiarism not being considered a serious offence" [9]. Wade and Stinson complete the description of cheaters "dishonest students characteristically lack maturity and commitment and tend to rationalize their cheating behaviour. They have unclear or misplaced values and low self-image, and may regard coursework as irrelevant" [10]. Such attitudes are generated by a lack of creativity and lack of self-confidence. On the other hand, Erguvan explains that "those who did not cheat had some shared traits, such as a competitive spirit, confidence in their talents, and a strong desire to learn" [11].

Teachers should keep up with current technological uses as they become more relevant and valuable to teaching, research, and coursework. Even if some teachers cling to the older means of teaching, preferring to explain the lessons to students better, they must also adapt to new technology. Heaven remembers one instructor being asked, "What were they planning to do differently after learning about ChatGPT. One faculty member responded: 'I think I'll retire'" [12].

In addition to his encouragement that education needs changes and instructors need to adapt to technology, Heaven thinks that "teachers have been thrown into a radical new experiment. With or without technology, cheaters do not change their drives. They need support to figure it out—perhaps even government support in the form of money, training, and regulation. But this is not the end of education. It's a new beginning" [13]. The teachers' role will always be to look for better ways of planning their lessons and answering students' needs.

5. Conclusions

Technology needs to be used purposefully. Heaven's statement that "ChatGPT Is Going to Change Education, Not Destroy It" invites teachers to embark on the research journey of finding new teaching methods without being afraid of technology as a means for cheating. Instead, students need to be taught more about the importance of academic integrity. Erguvan concludes, "We need to take a comprehensive approach that includes a focus on assessment design, a strengthened culture of integrity, and robust technical tools" [14]. The rules against academic dishonesty must be reviewed and enforced regularly with severe consequences.

Technology has been an essential means of teaching and evaluating students outside the classroom during the pandemic. Many researchers analyzed students' behaviour during the assessments, and students' self-confidence increased, making way for greater moral integrity.

Concurrently, phones were also much used as a means of communication.

Moreover, after the pandemic, technology has proven its usefulness once again. In their study, Yulita et al. had as their primary objective "the creation of an Indonesian-language web-based application" that teachers can use to determine "if students are cheating on online tests". They have created it for use as a supportive tool "to advance educational technology in Indonesia" [15].

The use of technology must be taught correctly according to the norms and regulations of the institution where it is used. Teachers must integrate the use of technology into their planning. The choice of the type of technology has to be made following the lesson objectives that have to be clearly explained at the beginning of the course. Students are well-aware that technology has to be limited only to educational ends and adapted to students' needs.

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