

Information and Communication Technologies at School :

The Efficiency Issue

A Critical and Communicational Analysis of American and French Models

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Summary

Until recently, educational technology's history has experienced a succession of technological cycles leading only to limited use. The efficiency issue was not properly stated. First, it had roots in a totally out of date industrial model. Secondly, it identified itself with desperate efforts to find quantitative evidences of a comparative advantage, when the complexity and the number of intricate factors made outcomes far from certain.

Unlike previous cycles, the stake seems higher now, since pedagogical tools are also those with which is predominantly built the richness of our society. This is being reinforced by another radically new aspect. Due to the digital unification, educational technologies are now technologies of personal control of information. They can accommodate any pedagogical style and give to each teacher the ability to adapt resources to his or her specific needs. Therefore, conditions for a qualitative step in practices have been created.

A critical mass of equipment enabling pervasive use seems about to be reached but the situation remains fragile and full of uncertainty. Significant risks do exist if the use of technology doesn't develop quickly, accompanied by a resulting backlash in both perception and purposes. Teachers are gatekeepers. They have to be convinced first, but one should not forget that they already are under pressure in accomplishing their everyday activity.

Change would only be a progressive one. It doesn't not seem realistic to ask teachers to shoulder twice the workload concerning both methods and tools. They desperately need support services targeted to save time and effort and to make easier the use of educational technologies, according to a holistic approach called 'ingenierie educative'. Under such conditions, the time for educational technology may have come.

Key Words

Educational Technology ; Information and Communication Technology ; School ; Efficiency ; Use ; Audiovisual ; Multimedia ; Computer ; Internet ;