Education computing as a social practice report examples

Profession, Student

Even though the copyright date of this edition of the book is 1998, much of the information presented is still relevant 15 years later. Districts and their budgets continue to struggle under financial constraints and having to determine where their limited dollars must go. Salaries, pensions, and building maintenance expenses must be met. Often these necessary expenses are covered through layoffs, increased class sizes, and the elimination of programs. Artistic programs have been particularly hard hit in many districts throughout the country. Many schools, particularly on the elementary level, have eliminated art and music courses. Some of the ones deemed fortunate have parents come in and volunteer their time to enable the students to still engage in these activities, but it is a far cry from having experienced and trained teachers share expert knowledge with students. Since there is a lack of exposure at the elementary level, the secondary level suffers as well. Without the exposure in the younger grades, there is a lack of interest in knowledge as students enter the upper grades.

One difference over the past 15 years is the increased knowledge that students have about technology. It is rare that students are not exposed to computers and cell phones before entering schools. In this way the paper has lost some of its relevance. Pre-schools and head start programs now have technology incorporated into their programs. Libraries are equipped with technology. An increased number of households have computers as the prices have plummeted. Most people, regardless of income, have cell phones, even the students themselves. The devices are also easier to use. One is hard-pressed to find a child or teen that is not technologically savvy. The paper does add the knowledge that having computers in the classroom

actually further limits the teachers' time because of things that are removed from the budgets. Paraprofessionals being reduced or eliminated and class sizes being increased make a teacher's job more difficult, even though the teacher may use the technology available to them in the classroom. The costs of maintaining the technology throughout the district, including the constant training of new staff and all staff of new software and programs, necessary licensing, software upgrades, equipment upgrades and replacement is a constant burden on the budget. All of the time spent by the teachers on this technological training also is time taken away from other areas that they teachers could have devoted to other aspects of their students' academic performance. Very often, these are areas that are not reflected on by the general public.

Another area that is not reflected on in the paper is a current trend by many districts to use tablets instead of textbooks. Textbooks, which average $70-$100 each, are expensive. A student averages six textbooks each a year. With tablet prices now below $600, it is a financially wise choice, in the eyes of many, to use tablets. This way, students can always have the latest edition of the book available along with the online resources provided by most publishers. The downfall is the liability of lost or stolen tablets and how to recoup the expense. This is one area where districts are still trying to determine the effectiveness of this method.

Most of the information is presented in the article in an organized and logical manner. All of the information related to the subject of technology in the classroom is done in an excellent way. The author provides a clear and concise introduction. Next, he explains why computers in the classroom

make sense at some level. Then, he provides an argument about why they might be overused and may not always be the best choice. An explanation as to how the overuse of computers in the classroom follows, with the introduction of the business aspect outlined. Following is a summary of why school districts are struggling to support the expenses associated with the technology and why these expenses are not necessarily justified in education. The author does sway from the point of the article for too long when explaining a survey and they choices about the head of household. But he does get back on topic and wrap up the article nicely explaining how the rest of the book will be laid out for the reader (Bromley, 1998).

Reference

Bromley, H. (1998). Introduction: Data-driven democracy? Social assessment of educational

computing. In P. G. Altbach (Ed.), Frontiers in Education (pp. 1-45). State University of

New York Press.