The role of technology in transforming higher education

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More than 100 years ago, John Dewey, a major influence in American education, argued for the need to "stimulate the spirit of inquiry into actual fact" (Dewey, 2002, p. 118). The debate among politicians and educators about the structure, purpose, and goals of education and inquiry continues. Yet the world has changed, largely because of widely accessible and versatile technologies. We are unclear how Dewey’s spirit of inquiry will grow, die, or reinvent itself through boundaryless tools of inquiry such as the Internet, but the technology is here and will not disappear while educators debate best methods.

Twenty-first-century society demands new ways to learn and understand, and these new ways of learning require new ways of teaching (McPheeers, 2009/2010). For many students, especially the younger generations, technology intertwines with almost all daily activities, including social contact. Many educators lag behind the technological curve and express frustration at the challenge to shift their educational paradigms toward increasingly technological means of communication and interaction, or entertain "virtual realities" as legitimate educational forums.

The purpose of this symposium is to examine the role of technology in transforming higher education. The goal is to seek best methods of using technology more effectively to educate learners for the 21st century. The shifts in society’s focus and the characteristics of learners going into the future are also critical, and part of this discussion.

References

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