Group Position Paper 2

Condition of the World

Drucker in his article on Age of Social Transformation states that the rise of the class succeeding industrial workers is the newly emerging dominant group he calls "knowledge workers." He contends that by the end of this century knowledge workers will make up a third or more of the work force in the United States. These new jobs offer much greater opportunities but the great majority of the new jobs require qualifications the industrial worker does not possess and is poorly equipped to acquire. They require a good deal of formal education and the ability to acquire and to apply theoretical and analytical knowledge. They require a different approach to work and a different mindset. Above all, they require a habit of continuous learning. When we combine this with the our understanding of learning styles, multiple intelligences and the types of memory, then the way that K-12 schools are structured comes to mind. Sandholtz, Ringstaff and Dwyer in their book on Teaching with Technology make the statement that teachers are frequently targeted for criticism when there are problems in schools, but rarely are asked for solutions. Yet their views, beliefs and actions are of paramount significance. For when the questions are classroom based and teacher driven, the solutions are classroom based and teacher driven.

Discussion Question

Based upon the need for creating a habit of continuous learning in learners combined with the concepts of learning styles, multiple intelligences and types of memory, how do we change our learning environments so that they are environments that create graduates that are prepared to be successful in no matter what direction they take as adults?

Working Process

Expectations

Members of your Discussion Group will work through asynchronous and synchronous communications to produce the group position paper. The Group Position Paper needs to be at least two pages and it will be evaluated by this rubric.

The Discussion Group has specific design with each member having a specific role. The roles will rotate each assignment so that each person complete each role by the end of the semester. Your group is allowed to post messages only in your group discussion BB. Each member of groups must log on a minimum of two to three times per week and are expected to post substantive contributions to the group discussion. Simply saying "hello" or "I agree" is not considered as a substantive contribution.

Group Roles

For the Group Position Paper 2, the group leader of Group Position Paper 1 is to assign group roles for this group activity. Please click here to review Roles of Treatise Group . The Presenter is to read the reading thoroughly and post discussion topics.

Note: The Presenter needs to create a Threaded Discussion and all other members need to response to each topic with the thread.

Paper #2

Running head: CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Changing Learning Environments to Foster Lifelong Learning

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Dan - Leader
Kari - Presenter
Melody - Commentator
Melinda - Observer.

Abstract

This paper will discuss the need to create a tendency toward continuous learning in students. The fact that different learners possess diverse learning styles, multiple intelligences and types of memory necessitates strategies to transform and adjust learning environments to accommodate those differences. We will also discuss methods from our personal experiences used to promote lifelong learning and prepare learners for success in life.

The Knowledge Worker

As technology and information processing continue to expand in scope and importance to the world economy, the age of the industrial worker continues to decline and a new type of worker -- the "knowledge worker" -- is becoming the dominant class (Drucker, 1994). According to Drucker (1994, p. 56), "... the traditional industrial worker (will) become an auxiliary employee. His place is already being taken by the 'technologist' -- someone who works both with hands and with theoretical knowledge."

Student-Centered Learning

This new form of worker requires that schools shift focus from the traditional school to the progressive. Schools will need to deemphasize rote memorization and lean towards creating thinking students. To do this, learning environments will need to redesigned towards a more student-centered environment. Students should learn through inquiry and not by being spoon-fed solutions. As students enter the job market they will need these thinking skills in order to accomplish tasks and find answers in their profession. They cannot expect to be told the answer; instead they will need to figure out answers on their own.

Instead of merely lecturing students -- drilling information into them so that they may regurgitate it later -- educators must help students become lifelong learners. "Increasingly, an educated person will be somebody who has learned how to learn, and who continues to learn especially by formal education, throughout his or her lifetime" (Drucker, 1994, p.p. 66-67).

Constructivist classrooms, in which students create meaning based on past experiences, can help learners prepare for this knowledge society. "Learning environments feel more like real workplaces where problems are solved through conversation, inquiry, trial and error, and constant comparison of one approximate solution against another" (Sandholtz et al, 1997, p. 13).

Educational theories and practices continue to evolve as more and more learning environments embrace tenets of constructivism and constructionism and technology becomes more ubiquitous. These changes create opportunities for students to work in group settings, often across multiple disciplines. At the same time, they are creating their own meaningful knowledge with the teacher acting as guide, mentor and colleague rather than the one-to-many imparter of facts. Students of different backgrounds with different learning styles are able to work together, sharing knowledge and helping each other to create meaning. Each is able to offer his or her own perspectives and to contribute based on not only common knowledge, but on personal interest and experience. Such a learning atmosphere allows learners of different learning styles to collaborate and share their experiences with one another, giving rise to an environment in which there is no single learning style which allows for success (Sandholtz et al, 1997).

Technology as a Tool for Promoting Lifelong Learning

We as teachers must also account for individual learning styles, multiple intelligences and types of memory that each student has. This requires that different programs be set up that will address these needs, allowing each student to work in the realm that he is comfortable with or in which he will best learn. Where once we had one teacher trying to do all of this for his class, we now have the ability to use a technology that will make that instruction easier and more individual in its approach. "In today's school there is little chance for the individual teacher to actually change the curriculum, but we can make the way we deliver the curriculum very different. And that is where the technology comes into play: to make it more interactive, to encourage collaborative learning, to encourage exploration" (Sandholtz et al, 1997, p. 184).

It is the teacher's job to guide a student towards self-discovery and individual mastery of subjects. Teachers can provide the tools and guidance necessary, but a student will need to choose which tool will best help him or her, and then use the tools to find answers to questions. Since computers have transformed our world, it is of utmost importance that schools provide these tools for students to learn. Students will be expected to perform at a mastery level with the use of technology in the future. No company wants to teach an applicant to turn on a computer, use a mouse and to type using a word processor. The workforce expects this out of its employees from their schooling. "The education that is required for... knowledge work can be acquired only through formal schooling" (Drucker, 1994, p.p. 64-66).

Conclusion

In order to change our learning environments so that they are create graduates who are prepared to be successful in the direction they choose to go in as adults, we must first look at the different learning styles that each student uniquely possesses. Teachers are being asked to address these issues in their teaching techniques, and with the introduction of technology into the classroom there are new challenges being presented with outcomes that can greatly help to advance student learning. The knowledge worker of the future must be prepared to acquire knowledge throughout his lifetime, and student-centered learning environments are the ideal atmosphere in which to foster this love of learning.

References

Drucker, P. F. (1994). The age of social transformation. *The Atlantic Monthly, 274,* 53-80.

Sandholtz, J. H., Ringstaff, C. & Dwyer, D. C. (1997). *Teaching with technology: Creating student-centered classrooms.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.