Technology is Transferring Human Education to Computers

Student Name
Columbia Southern University
Abstract

Online primary educational learning was researched, in conjunction with psychology and sociology, in order to study the theoretical implications of childhood academic success in sole online pedagogy. The goal was to determine their success while examining their social, mental, and physical capacity, with information obtained from published books in the fields of psychology and sociology, in addition to articles relating to electronic learning. The sources confirmed the dangers that will accompany this type of learning if it is to be the sole source for childhood primary education, with the implication that it will lend to unsuccessful educational completion, while noting the deterioration of children’s long-term mental stability and physical handicap as a result of the isolation necessitated by online learning.
Technology is Transferring Human Education to Computers

Technology is an amazing thing. It can be incredibly important in everyday life, even to the point that it can extend the human life. In life, technology can keep a human heart beating, keep human lungs filling with air, can replace limbs, and increase human intelligence in the form of distance education. The major benefit of the latter is that as the course of life evolves, so does the need for flexibility in education. Namely, online education is rapidly increasing in popularity and acceptability in both the academic and professional worlds, despite the stigma of the result being an internet degree.

With all of the benefits mentioned previously, it is difficult to think that this same technology could also prove detrimental to human development. One major area that can prove devastating in the full implementation of technology is education in primary schooling. By nature, humans are creatures that desire, even require human contact. This contact is essential to basic development in terms of sociability, psychological health, and even in being able to physically express oneself. Online learning is primarily based on the concept of self-teaching. Adults gain this capacity over a lifetime of teaching themselves and learning by their own examples. Children are incapable of accomplishing these dynamics on their own because they lack the experience that forces them to do so. These dynamics are vital in successful online learning. In addition to an unsuccessful educational experience, children practicing online pedagogy find themselves lacking in rudimentary social interaction skills. Although the world’s growing reliance on technology is transitioning education to becoming fully online for all ages and education levels, there are many possibilities that exist as to the physical and psychological dangers that this transition poses to children attempting to attain their early education online.
Review of Literature

Matthew Etherington, the author of the article “E-Learning Pedagogy in the Primary School Classroom: The McDonaldization of Education,” (2008) writes about the dehumanization of primary students as a direct result of online pedagogy. Human evolution has led to the creation of better technology. That technology has led humans to become reliant on machines, which do not require or necessitate any social interaction to be effective. This is confirmed by Etherington (2008) when he stated “when a child gets on their computer….there is no sense of a physical connection – there is only a mask” (p. 34).

To delve further, socialization is defined from an industry perspective by John Macionis in his book Society the Basics (2009) in this statement: “sociologists use the term socialization to refer to the lifelong social experience by which people develop their human potential and learn culture” (p. 72). Macionis also stresses that socialization is also significantly enhanced by children attending a physical school. It is in school that they begin to recognize cultural, racial, social, and gender differences between themselves and others and what makes them different, in addition to being able to decipher which characteristics allow them to connect with others. Additionally, while in school, children also begin to form their own peer groups, which permit “escape [from] direct supervision of adults” (Macionis, 2009, p. 81). This freedom is how they first begin to establish personal relationships outside the family.

In demonstration, W. E. Ross, who wrote the article “The Promise and Perils of E-learning: A Critical Look at the New Technology” in 2009, attended the Wired Culture Forum that was hosted in the city of Toronto. At this forum, he found that more than 400 high school students expressed remarkable concern that technology is beginning to take over their lives. Those students noted a continually increasing reliance on their own personal devices, that the
internet isolates them from interacting with others, and that “technology threatens their… ability to relate to others” (Ross, 2009, p. 483). While some high schools in many states and countries have already converted to the online format, in Pennsylvania, there is “currently a proposal for a cyber-school that would enroll children as young as 5 years old” (Ross, 2009, p. 482).

In order to understand some of the reasons for the issues that children face in pedagogical technology, it is imperative to understand some of the definitions of behavior. In *Psychology: An Introduction*, Benjamin Lahey (2007) defines psychology as “the science of behavior and mental processes” (p. 5). To further understand this, here are some of the common terms that define psychology and help to accomplish the goals of psychology: Lahey (2007) defines science as “psychologists attempt[ing] to understand people through careful, controlled observation” (p. 5); next, behavior is considered any direct, physical action that can be observed; finally, mental processes are any “private thoughts, emotions, feelings, and motives that others cannot directly observe” (p. 5).

Additionally, Lahey (2007) also compares our closest evolutionary ladder match in which he illuminates the “nature versus nurture” debate as inapplicable to childhood socialization, by illustrating how two researchers (the Harlows) studied the effects of early social deprivation on monkeys by taking a small group of infant monkeys and raising them in isolation for the first few months of their lives. These monkeys seemed to be completely normal at the conclusion of this stage. At adulthood, the monkeys were then released into population with normal monkeys, and later (at 3 years of age) they were placed in specific breeding cages; “it was then that the Harlows first noticed that the social, sexual, and emotional behavior of these monkeys was distinctly abnormal” (Lahey, 2007, p. 319) in both the male and the female of the species, characteristically. The females were afraid and withdrew from their normal male counterparts,
while the males that were paired up with normal females were clumsy, awkward, and overly anxious. The research was further proven by the reactions of these same monkeys upon the birthing of their own baby monkeys and their extreme behavior to their own offspring, which often included murder.

To add to these findings, John Macionis (2009) quantified that “humans need social experience… to survive” (p. 72). Mead (as cited in Macionis, 2009), who developed social behaviorism and the central concept of “self,” stated that, “the self develops only with social experience” (p. 77). This indicates that without the social experience, the self does not develop. According to Etherington’s (2008) postulation of “dehumanization,” some of the potential problems that will stem from a child’s sole online pedagogy are “isolation, lack of community, and decreased socialization of its learners” (p. 34), and also more physical problems as “repetitive stress injuries, eyestrain, [and] obesity” (p. 43).

In addition to these physical dangers, there are also abnormal personality disorders that can occur as a result of de-socialization. Some of those disorders are explained in detail by Nevid, Rathus, and Greene in their book Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World (2009): avoidant personality disorder (similarly, social phobias), increased proneness to different types of phobias, and a terror of rejection and criticism that renders that person generally unwilling to enter relationships. As a result, they do not often have close relationships outside their family.

Another possible disorder is separation-individuation: a process by which children learn to “differentiate their own identities from their mothers” (Nevid, Rathus, & Greene, 2009, p. 456). Failure for a child to complete this process can create a personality disorder in an adult, and lead to separation anxiety. To expound on this issue, the type of anxiety disorder that could easily result from this could lead to a borderline personality disorder in which people lack
TECHNOLOGY IN HUMAN EDUCATION

confidence about their individual characteristics (which can include both personality and sexuality), leading to constant feelings of emptiness and boredom.

Furthermore, physical communication disorders can quickly breed in children who are unsocial because they do not experience proper enunciation and articulation of different letters and sounds. These disorders range from an expressive language disorder, a mixed receptive/expressive language disorder, a phonological disorder, to stuttering (Nevid et al., 2009). Indeed, other physical and personality manifestations can result from a lack of socialization: children become “more passive … [and] less likely to use [their] imagination” (Macionis, 2009, p. 82).

Ross (2009) establishes that technology can certainly benefit a professional environment by his statement that, “over 85% of Fortune 500 companies use remote training” (p. 482). In fact, most companies today actually utilize remote computer training for new hires as a part of their orientation to a new job. Some places even offer distance education as incentive to further one’s career, not only by offering a raise, but also offering monetary gifts as well. Again, the correlation between adult pedagogy in technology and child pedagogy in technology is demonstrated by Etherington’s (2008) further study of a child being in a physical school, and a teacher being absent from the classroom, but elsewhere conducting an interactive activity. His study noted that the child would not only leave the computer, but would have no interest in or recollection of the computer during this physical activity. To recap, John Macionis (2009) stresses that necessary socialization is significantly enhanced by children attending a physical school and interacting with other children on a constant, daily basis.

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With the advancement of human civilization, comes the advancement of technology. In efforts to embrace this evolution, humans are beginning to depend on their own creations of technology. This has even become so critical that the youth of the world have already begun to recognize this dependence in their personal lives. In 2009, W. E. Ross was in Toronto attending the Wired Culture Forum. He wrote the article “The Promise and Perils of E-learning: A Critical Look at the New Technology” as a result of his findings at this forum. Among 400 high school aged students, those attending the forum expressed remarkable concern regarding technology taking over their lives and an ever-increasing reliance on their personal devices, noting that the internet isolates them from interacting with others, and that “technology threatens their…ability to relate to others” (Ross, 2009, p. 483). The simple fact that not only is human reliance on technology increasing, but insomuch as our youth are even noticing this trend and are beginning to voice public concern. They are indirectly illuminating the first problem with childhood online pedagogy: a lack of socialization. Matthew Etherington, the author of the article “E-Learning pedagogy in the Primary School Classroom: the McDonaldization of Education,” (2008) writes about the dehumanization of primary students as a direct result of online pedagogy. While postulating that machines do not require or necessitate any social interaction to be effective, he also confirms by stating “when a child gets on their computer….there is no sense of a physical connection” (Etherington, 2008, p. 34). Continuing, there are further and much deeper problems that also stem from this lack of interaction.

Humans are naturally social beings. They prefer human contact and interaction, and fundamentally require it for survival. When this basic need is unfulfilled, the results are an incomplete and deficient human being. This is demonstrated by John Macionis in his 2009 book Society the Basics in his statement “sociologists use the term socialization to refer to the lifelong
social experience by which people develop their human potential and learn culture” (p. 72). He not only defines socialization from an industry perspective, but also notes when socialization skills truly begin for humans, which is in elementary school. It is actually in school that children first begin to recognize cultural, racial, social, and gender differences between themselves and others, in addition to subconsciously being able to decipher which characteristics allow them to connect with others. Additionally, while in school, children also begin to form their first peer groups. This is the first act of establishing personal relationships outside the family. When this vital step is missing, there are incredible deficiencies that can arise in one’s persona, in the form of psychological disorders.

In order to elaborate on psychological disorders, one must first understand psychology. In his book, *Psychology: An Introduction*, Benjamin Lahey (2007) defines psychology and some of the basic terms associated with the understanding of psychology. In order to best apply these definitions to childhood socialization, Lahey (2007) compares human children to the closest match on the evolutionary ladder, monkeys, by his illumination of two researchers’ study (the Harlows) of the effects of early social deprivation on newborn monkeys, by keeping them, for the first few months of life, in total isolation. After this time, while their first introduction into monkey society showed few behavioral differences, as they were placed into specific mating situations, “it was then that the Harlows first noticed that the social, sexual, and emotional behavior of these monkeys was distinctly abnormal” (Lahey, 2007, p. 319). The females were afraid and withdrew from their normal male counterparts, while the males that were paired up with normal females were clumsy, awkward, and overly anxious. The research was further proven by the reactions of the isolated monkeys upon the birthing of their own baby monkeys and their extreme behavior to their offspring, which often included murder. While this is a
comparison of humans versus monkeys, the basic socialization pattern is essentially the same, as is the necessity for interaction with one’s own species.

Further, to expand upon the emotional behaviors exhibited by the monkeys in the mating situations, there are several abnormal psychological and personality disorders that can stem from isolation and lack of socialization. Previously was discussed the socialization act of establishing personal relationships outside the family, by way of peer group establishment in school. Nevid, Rathus, and Greene discuss some of the reasons that one would not establish these relationships, from a lack of socialization in their book *Abnormal Psychology in a Changing World* (2009), to include social phobias (namely, avoidant personality disorder), increased proneness to any number of phobias, and a fundamental terror of rejection and criticism that often renders a person totally unwilling to enter relationships. Another disorder is an identity deficiency in which a child does not separate from his mother in identity, in accomplishing separation-individuation, leading to separation anxieties. A result of this anxiety could easily cause a borderline personality disorder, in which one would be confused about their personality and/or sexuality. This is especially relatable to a child’s need for human interaction and socialization because it is an expression of problems that can continue to manifest throughout and shape one’s entire life negatively. However, these types of issues can be avoided simply by interjecting children into society normally, starting with their attendance in school.

Finally, in addition to abnormal psychological disorders, there are also physical and communication disorders that can develop as a result of childhood online pedagogy. Aside from the more obvious physical problems that can occur from sole online learning, which Etherington (2008) lists as “repetitive stress injuries, eyestrain, [and] obesity” (p. 43), there are also communication disorders that can cultivate in children over time, which can often be far more
socially embarrassing. With the lack of social interaction, children can miss the experience of hearing proper enunciation and articulation of everyday pedagogic letters and words. Nevid et al. (2009), discuss some of the disorders which range from an expressive language disorder, a mixed receptive/expressive language disorder, and a phonological disorder, to stuttering and improper articulation of one’s words. The cruelty of life can make a child (or any person) with any of these types of disorders not only humiliated to be in public, but can inhibit the proper understanding of their expressions by others, due to improper articulation. In short, the implementation of sole online pedagogy in primary education will be a critical mistake in the continued evolution of the human race.

Conclusion

The world’s growing reliance on technology is transitioning education to becoming fully online for all ages and education levels. While high schools in many states and countries have already converted to the online format, in Pennsylvania, there is “currently a proposal for a cyber-school that would enroll children as young as 5 years old” (Ross, 2009, p. 482). Unfortunately, this is already in the process of being implemented at the primary school level. This will prove to be disastrous. Children cannot be expected or allowed to teach themselves the basic learning styles needed to rise through the educational ranks to high school or even college graduation. Enrolling children in traditional schools can minimize and even eliminate many of the dangers associated with sole online learning and isolation at such a young age. In short, the implementation of sole online pedagogy in primary education will be a critical mistake in the continued evolution of the human race.


The references are also listed in alphabetical order. Pay close attention to the small details of formatting different types of sources. Look closely at things such as punctuation, font formatting, and capitalization, as these do change depending on the type of source you are using.