

## **Activity 1: Discussion - Impact of Computers**

Richard Clark's now-famous comment about the impact of computers on learning was that the best current evidence is that media are merely vehicles that deliver instruction but do not influence student achievement any more than the truck that delivers our groceries causes changes in our nutrition. Why do you think that this statement has had such a dramatic impact on the field of educational technology?

As many educators probably did at one point in their careers, I also had the belief that computers were the answer to all the instructional problems that I have experienced in my classroom. I expected an immediate impact on my students' performance by just including computers in my teaching or instructional methods. I firmly believed the use of computers was sufficient to change my students' attitudes and disposition to learn math well.

Initially, the computer accomplished what I thought it would: students started being more interested and focused in learning math, a dull subject for many of them. However, once the novelty of using computers to learn math faded away, the same instructional issues (and even new ones!) that I had before using computers arise again. From my experiences, this is why I validate Clark's comment about the impact of computers on learning.

Protheroe (2005) stated teachers are responsible for unlocking students' potential, not computers. Wahlstrom (n.d.) once emphasized that computers itself cannot generate student's excitement for learning, instead, only by teachers. Cordes (1998) once cited Hubert Dreyfus, a professor of philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, who contended that education is all about teacher-student relationships, and computers are just peripherals of such relationships. Sambar (1998) emphatically stated that students do not need faster computers, instead, good teachers. Roblyer (2006) pointed out "No technology is a panacea for education" (p.12), and it is the teacher who needs to plan carefully and effectively how to enhance the learning experiences of their students with the use of technology.

Teaching and learning is a human endeavor, which no computer will ever emulate or duplicate. Computers are just teaching-learning tools which can be seen as extensions of the teacher (as cited in Burnley, 2003). It is how teachers use technology what makes a difference in the learning experiences of their students. Computers will never replace a teacher, but it is encouraging teachers to reflect and change their traditional instructional methods (Protheroe, 2005).

### **References:**

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