**[ ITEC 7430 ] Equitable Access**

It was not a child’s decision to be born where they were born. It was not a child’s decision to be born to the family that they have. It was not a child’s decision to live the particular lifestyle that they currently have and it was most definitely not a child’s decision to be born into this world.

My mother once told me that life is not fair, and if anyone told me it would be, well… they lied to me. While this may be true in most aspects of life, a child’s education is where this life truth can be halted from time to time. Every child deserves a quality education with equitable access to knowledge, materials and supplies, and technology. Even with this truth, the flip side to this truth is that not every school district, family, and/or the community itself, can afford the rising costs. So what can be done about it, and how do teachers, school administrators and families get around this technological divide?

Schools need to understand that not all students have internet or the tools necessary to even “dial up” the internet itself. For the most part, I believe that this is an understood reality, even in the money districts. The problem, primarily, is in the Title 1 schools/districts and rural areas of the states. All teachers should differentiate their lesson plans to ensure that each student can complete their homework, projects and/or papers in an equitable manner for those who do not have the technology available to them at home. According to the article, [Zero to Eight – Children’s Media Use in America](https://kennesaw.view.usg.edu/content/enforced1/699840-CO.430.ITEC7430.12287.20154/zerotoeightfinal2011.pdf?d2lSessionVal=Hq9LieKwHeJ9lfbmQt98771pL&ou=699840), one in ten lower-income children has a video mobile device in the home as compared to one in three upper-income children. My students are predominately in the lower-income category and as you can see, just from being where they were born, they are already a few clicks and swipes behind.

I currently have students who do not have a mobile device and internet service at their home. I need to be mindful of that as this could be an embarrassing thing to admit to. I still assign the lessons and projects as I normally would, however, I do offer, for every assignment, a technology free alternative if the assignment is required at home. Some students choose to use some extra time in school to convert their written paper into their Google Drive during school hours, and others simply just turn in the paper hand written. We have a few old computers in the classroom and nice computer labs that all students have access to throughout the day.

As teachers, we have been taught to teach the students in differentiated styles to allow for the best chance for their learning and success. Students have different needs not just in learning, but to the digital tools and resources to educational and instructional technology as well. Whether it is a ESOL, ELL, SPED, BYOT, BYOD, 504, IEP, EIP, GIFTED & ADVANCED, or even a general education student, each student deserves equitable access to technology and everything else that comes with it. Without equitable access, by definition, the playing field is already stacked to reward the children that were born into the life that already has an app for that.

PEER REVIEW | Rebecca Cooper
<http://racooper2015.weebly.com/blog/location-location-location>

Looking at this as educators from a K-EDU perspective, our vision on equitable access to technology will obviously be geared to whom we work with and the age of the students. I teach middle school English and Georgia Studies in rural Georgia and see students who have cell phones and iPads in their backpacks and I see students who don’t even have a backpack. Not their choices, but their realities. Once the students make it to your level, it is on them, but until then, in my perspective, it’s all about the family, not location, that the student was born into.

As a University level educator, do you feel that once the student’s get there, they are on their own finding their own technology resources, or are there assistance programs setup to assist those in need? I understand there are computer labs open all the time, some even 24 hours from way back to the days I attended my underrate studies, but is owning a computer now a requirement for one to be successful in the University setting?

Wonderful post and thanks for sharing!

Chad DeWolf