E-CLASSROOM: TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION AND GLOBAL CHANGE

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“The two great equalizers in life are the Internet and education” John T. Chambers, CEO, Cisco System.

Stone Age tools such as the blackboard using one stone, chalk, to write upon another stone, slate, will be replaced with high resolution video projectors. Notebooks will be replaced with laptops. Exams and grades will be on-line. Even the walls of the classrooms may vanish as video conferencing and distance education break down the time and distance barriers. As educators, we cherish the face-to-face interaction, the sense of group collaboration, and the presence of a caring teacher as role model, subject matter authority, and group facilitator. Instead educational technology will be used in the classroom to enhance and facilitate the same age old process of learning. Even the educational materials may be very similar in the electronic classroom. The content will be the same but form will be electronic. The electronic classroom will not change the content of education but it will change the medium and in doing so it will enhance and enrich the learning and communication process.

The electronic classroom is "same time, same place" in the same way that the traditional classroom is. We schedule a room and a time, and we all meet for class will incorporate both conventional educational processes and innovative new facilities only possible in an electronic environment. The fully integrated electronic classroom will have all of these elements and perhaps more. For example, there will be (a) classrooms that allow the instructor to project multimedia displays and simulations during lectures but not allow the students to have hands on experience with the materials; (b)
classrooms that provide workstations for all of the students but do not provide an ability to share results and display them to the class as a whole; and (c) classrooms that are integrated within themselves but are not networked to the outside world.

Beyond the glitz of technology, it is the hope of educators that what will be truly different in the electronic classroom will be the solution to a number of age old problems in education: lack of motivation on the part of the students, lack of resources and materials on the part of the schools, lack of specialized abilities and expertise on the part of the teachers, lack of individualized instruction, and over worked teachers burdened by record keeping. The human limitations of teachers and constraints on their time may be alleviated through the extensive use of individualized instruction using computer-assisted instruction and classroom management software. The classroom of the near future will be very different from the classroom today.

Reference:

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