Fuyin Xu, James A. Pershing

A Move towards the Integration between Education and Technology

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We are already well into the Information Age. The development of ICT has progressed rapidly causing a huge transformation away from traditional ways of teaching and towards creating a new ICT-based teaching environment. China is in the early stages of establishing such a foundation: we have seen significant progress in amassing a library of teaching materials for both vocational and higher education, the numbers of libraries and museums in universities, networks for China's education and scientific research and ICT facilities for all kinds and levels of schools. We have seen satisfactory development in long-distance university-level learning, rural primary and middle school distance learning and effective integration of ICT into the classroom environment. By entering the Information Age, schools in China today are able to share invaluable resources via multimedia and the internet, they are empowered to act more independently and to co-operate more effectively, they are empowered to launch investigative studies. It also fosters a more equitable development platform in education and in the profession of teaching. The use of virtual of reality can facilitate all kinds of theoretical experiments and create inventive ways to prove and disprove theories, to test scientific hypotheses, to foster students' creative abilities and practical strengths, and it can provide a platform for students to build on a vast bank of knowledge. The Information Age has created the limitless classroom: a study environment can literally be created anywhere. ICT has become the integral part of education. This discussion has arisen from the perspective of educational planning and how ICT supports the educational environment.

Our focus of this issue is on the study of the new theoretical approach integrated education and technology. It examines the relationship between virtual online study communities on the Internet and the building of knowledge. It also reports on the new orientation of teaching that comes with the integration of education with ICT and the application of modern distance learning resources for rural elementary and middle schools in Western China.

Fuyin Xu (✉)

School of Information Technology in Education, South China Normal University, Guangzhou 510631, China

E-mail: xufy@scnu.edu.cn

James A. Pershing

School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA