

My Philosophy of Education

The only constant in our world is change and we need to best prepare our future leaders for it. Students need to be able to quickly assess their environment and create “out of the box” solutions to address the many problems that they might face. The correct solution is not multiple choice but rather an organic process utilizing knowledge from a variety of sources and perspectives.

Finland, one the world’s leaders in education has implemented a method called “phenomenon learning” which currently seems most fit in preparing students for change. It is a style of learning that is more holistic in nature, taking multiple perspectives and subjects into play in order to understand real world events. While we wait to see the results of the national experiment, there are always limitations that will affect the execution of any teaching method. We can’t surpass all, but many of these limitations can be eased by our friend: Technology.

Note that we cannot and should not replace a teacher with technology, however both play a crucial role in an optimized learning environment. Technology helps with administrative and resource needs such as attendance, grading, and content, saving precious time for teachers to do what they do best:

“The ability to connect with students and understand their needs, teaching the intangible skills and mindsets that are needed to succeed.”

I’d like to best compare the role of a teacher to a project manager in an agile product development team. The project manager acts as a facilitator to team members, guiding them with different perspectives and provides any resource or advice they need to be effective. A project manager also needs to encourage all members to actively participate in the development of the product, determining the direction as a whole. In a similar fashion, teachers should not hold all the access to information, but rather act as a facilitator, guiding students through their own personalized journey.

On the technology side, the future of personalized education will rely on our development of artificial intelligence to capture student inputs. The ideal AI system will understand exactly what content is needed at the level it is needed for the student. While technologies do exist through online programs, we know that most of the learning and teaching does not happen on the computer; Students don’t just learn from reading from a screen, but through real contextual interactions between person to person.

While these technologies are not yet available, we are not so far away from providing truly enriching and efficient learning. If you Google search the word Education, it is defined as “an enlightened experience”. Undeniably, we will need both teachers(facilitators), and effective technology(tools) in order to create a truly “enlightened experience” for our students, who are the customers, consumers, and the product.