Moving from a “Flood Our School” to an “Islands of Success” Conception in the Process of Advancing Underprivileged Children

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ABSTRACT

Policy makers in education do not perceive the education system as a unique discipline, but rather judge it using terms appropriate for the world of economics. Methods of analysis and decision-making that exist in the world of economics are implemented in the field of education. This reality was the basis for the authors’ research on the integration of technological systems for the advancement of students which was conducted as part of their desire to understand processes of change in learning systems. It became clear that in order to succeed in the process of integrating innovative technological systems in the schools, society should not “flood the schools” with technology, but should rather use the “islands of success method.”

Keywords: Implementation of Technologies in Education, Integration of Technologies in Education, Pedagogical Decision-Making, Process of Change in Education, Teacher’s Role, Teaching Style

INTRODUCTION

In this article we will present a model for the effective integration of technologies in education. The model was developed by our research team and is based on knowledge which we accumulated within the framework of studies performed over the past decades with the aim of successfully implementing technological systems among children from underprivileged populations.

Over the course of time we saw that the viewpoint that claims that schools should be flooded with innovative technologies in order to enable successful integration of technologies in education causes more harm than good, and in practice delays the implementation of technologies in schools. Processes of change in education must begin with an understanding
of the needs and a clear definition of concrete educational goals. A teaching method should then be designed according to the constraints, such that it combines technological abilities and enables successful achievement of these goals. We should not flood the school with technology, but rather afford an appropriate solution for each goal via technology and examine how the change affects the field. Implementation of technology is not the educational goal. Technology is a tool for the achievement of educational goals, a tool with which we can help teachers succeed in achieving the pedagogic goals they face.

Research has demonstrated a relation between the level of learning in schools and universities and a country’s strength (Giddens, 1998). A relation also exists between education and the level and quality of life. Education today is a significant factor for ensuring society’s existence, development and prosperity. However, major cities can afford students an opportunity to acquire knowledge more than cities found in the periphery. A gap therefore exists between the level of learning in major cities and the level of learning in peripheral settlements. Students with high learning abilities who live in the cities can participate in university courses and other learning centres, whereas students with high learning abilities who live in the periphery do not have a framework that can afford them knowledge in accordance with their talents and abilities.

This reality was the basis for our research on the integration of technological systems for the advancement of students towards academic studies. Our research aims to investigate how technological systems can be used to advance populations of students who live in distant areas, to afford them the opportunity to learn academic courses and to be university students while attending high school (Katz & Offir, 1991; Offir & Katz, 1990; Offir, Golub, & Cohen-Fridel, 1993).

Proper integration of technological systems in order to reduce gaps between populations is very complex. Its successful implementation depends on the understanding and control of numerous diverse and complex parameters. We should not flood the schools with technology. Rather the “islands of success” conception should be used and technologies should be implemented in defined places, within limited frameworks, such that the factors that influence success can be examined, evaluated and quantified (Offir, 1987, 1988, 2000; Offir & Cohen-Fridel, 1998). A proper combination of these means during the learning process requires a change in the teaching method. It must take numerous educational and pedagogical factors involved in the process into account. It must recognize the teachers’ and students’ personal attitudes, must evaluate the student’s level, analyse the sociological processes taking place in the classroom, formulate an appropriate teaching method, and recognize the teacher’s position and status in the classroom, etc. (Offir, 2000; Offir & Lev, 1999, 2000; Offir, Lev, & Lev, 2000; Offir, Lev, Harpaz, & Barth, 2002; Offir, Lev, Lev, Barth, & Shteinbok, 2003, 2004).

In our research we tried to identify and define variables which may help describe the process of integrating technology in learning and have implemented the conclusions reached from the research data. We examined the interrelations between these variables which comprised the basis for a model which enables more effective assimilation of technological systems in education. Research that examines the integration of technological systems in teaching begins with descriptive research whose aim is to evaluate, measure, and identify the existing components and variables. The next stage, of carrying out prescriptive research, is then carried out based on data obtained from the descriptive research. Within the framework of this stage of the research, we examine the effect of changes that can be generated in the variables in a controlled manner.

**HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS**

The symbiotic relationship that exists between economics and education is as old as human history. The relationship between the two fields is as old as human society itself, with education serving as a tool for economic development and economic growth providing the means to support educational institutions. Throughout history, education has played a crucial role in shaping the economy, fostering innovation, and driving social progress. Conversely, economic development has been a driving force behind educational expansion, particularly in the fields of science, technology, and business. In recent years, the relationship between education and economics has become even more pronounced, with the rise of educational technology and the importance of human capital in the modern economy. This interdependence continues to evolve, with ongoing discussions about the role of education in driving economic growth and the need for continued investment in educational systems to support a knowledge-based economy.
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