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# **Critical Issues Identified by New Members of the Educational Technology Community of Practice**

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## **Session Abstract**

New members of a community of practice bring fresh eyes to critical issues facing our discipline. This session offers five investigations of important questions in educational communication and technology. The papers include professional issues such as professional development for teachers, health care providers and youth volunteers, and media literacy.

## **Media Messages to Adolescent Females**

Research demonstrates that media play a dominant role in influencing females' perceptions of the world around them, as well as helping them to define their sense of self. This paper examines the influence that media has on adolescent females' feelings towards their place in society, sexuality, self-esteem and body image. Possible solutions to some of the problems mentioned are also addressed.

## **Teaching Technology Skills in a Resource-Based Constructivist Learning Environment**

Resource-based learning is a constructivist-learning environment where students become active participants in their own learning; collaborate with others to meet their learning needs, and through the use of a wide variety of resources piece together information to construct their own meaningful understanding about a subject. This paper illustrates how the use of one of the three current manifestations of resource-based learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning and project-based learning facilitates the effective integration of technology skills. These resource-based learning environments place the student at the

center of the learning process where through collaboration and using technology to solve real-world problems they become information literate citizens.

## **Challenges and Benefits of ICT for Youth Participation in the Non-Profit Sector**

This paper considers the challenges and potential benefits that advances in information and communications technology (ICT) and increased youth participation bring to the non-profit sector. Considering the educational nature of youth participation, strategic integration of ICT is considered to be a question relevant to instructional design and technology (IDT). Activity theory and social constructivism are used to provide theoretical foundations for activity-centered and youth-centered IDT approaches. Areas for future research are also considered.

## **Professional Development for Late Career Teachers: The Promise of Virtual Learning Communities**

Michael Huberman's (1989) cycles of conflict/resolution in a teacher's career that contribute to growth and development and how virtual learning communities can enhance that process within the theoretical framework of situated cognition will provide the foundation for this study. Recognizing that teachers participate in a variety of communities of practice and that group dynamics and individual intrinsic motivation are contributing factors, this paper will address late career teachers specifically. Huberman illustrates that teachers have different needs as they progress through five career cycles and advocates targeted professional development needs at each stage. The premise is that virtual learning communities can provide "just-in-time" professional input especially for teachers in the final three cycles labelled as serenity and distancing, conservatism and regret and disengagement. The hypothesis is that virtual learning communities may enable teachers to develop or maintain multiple active trajectories within an outbound trajectory.

## **The Use of Technology in Education and Professional Development for Health Care Providers**

Continuing professional development (CPD) has become increasingly important as more businesses and organizations recognize the importance of life-long learning and its role in decreasing mishaps and increasing productivity. One field that has long required its members to take part in CPD is health care. Both physicians and nurses must engage in CPD on a regular basis to maintain their skills and increase their knowledge of new research. Technology plays a growing role in both pre-clinical education and post-clinical CPD. This paper gives an overview of how technology is being used for education and professional development among health care providers with the purpose of determining what is currently being done and what areas can be improved upon and expanded.