

I'll Dare to Wander

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control...I've been wondering lately where all these fit into the world of academia. Certainly self-control would apply. Perhaps patience is applicable, for, it certainly takes patience to get through a Ph.D. program. Hmm...faithfulness is a necessary ingredient, but to who...or what is the academic faithful to? Alas, where do love, joy, peace, kindness and goodness fit into the world of academia where many tell you just play the game? And if many are just playing the game, how authentic is academia?

I've wondered what will become of us, so called, leaders (i.e. 5, 10, to 15 years from now). Most of us will become professors. But will we be leading researchers who just write for each other or will be agents of change that benefit humanity?

Yes, I believe that Ed Tech can benefit humanity...as strange as that may sound. I've seen the benefits of learning through Ed Tech firsthand on my students' faces. Though reading disabled, kids are learning to read. Perhaps, it's because computers are a bit more patient than many teachers. Kids with special needs are taking chances in the classroom that they ordinarily wouldn't take, kids are creating, exploring, and even blogging. How exciting it is to see them publishing their thoughts proudly on a digital platform.

Additionally, when kids connect via the Internet they glean perspectives from remote locations at an instant. With one click the dotted lines of borders erase and children begin to understand each other and the world we all share. They begin to understand cultures and perspectives they potentially would have never known had it not been for Ed Tech.

But I ask you...what do most academics think of when asked about Ed Tech? Do we think of the ordinary schoolhouse or the overworked and under-appreciated teacher? Do we think of the poor? The oppressed? Do we think of those in remote locations? Do we think of the illiterate beggar squatting on La Rambla...as asked by one of the audience members in Barcelona? Do we think of humanity? Or do we think of our next potential book...or perhaps our claim to fame neotheoretical article that will someday, no doubt, collect some sort of digitized dust?

But I digress, the audience in Barcelona still echoes in my mind, for, they had the gumption to basically say, "What are you leaders in Ed Tech gonna do for humanity?" And so, I too reflect on 'what role I will play?' My calling, or so it now seems, is to help kids with special needs learn and communicate through Ed Tech. Additionally, to strive along with others to make technology globally accessible so that kids with special needs will have a voice and so that we may understand their cognitive world a bit better. Such global accessibility to educational technology would also allow for the quality of education to be raised internationally for kids with special needs. Alas, at present condition many kids with special needs are still being institutionalized in many parts of the world. Thus, technology is key for improving the quality of special education globally.

And so where does love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control all fit into the world of academia? The truth...anywhere we choose. Dr. Niki Davis gave us ILETers insight as to our goals when she posted the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for 2015, which include the goals, "to halve extreme poverty, combat serious diseases, achieve universal primary education, and to promote gender equality". Thus, what legacies will those of us grateful to be chosen as ILET scholars give to the world? I wonder...as I dare to wander...will we be fruitful?