

Digital Ethics Audit

Description

7a: Inspire and encourage educators and students to use technology for civic engagement and to address challenges to improve their communities. (ISTE Standards for Coaches 7: Digital Citizen Advocate)

I interviewed C. Wardlaw, a director of NQA Childcare Center and an Early Childhood Education professor. I approached this interview with the goal of understanding the perspective of an early childhood educator on using and implementing digital tools and going through the thinking process together. I experienced the role of a Digital Citizen Advocate, explaining digital citizenship and things to consider when using technology. I provided Ribble's nine components of digital citizenship for better understanding (Ribble & Miller, 2013). We both agreed that educators play a significant role in a child's life and can make an enormous impact. Therefore, we need early intervention to educate students about technology use. This project served the purpose of inspiring and encouraging the use of technology.

Tips:

- Start a conversation with colleagues about digital citizenship, identify the barriers, and discuss ideas and how to implement them.

7b: Partner with educators, leaders, students and families to foster a culture of respectful online interactions and a healthy balance in their use of technology.

The interviewee brought up two vital points during the interview; the importance of teaching social skills through personal interactions and parents' involvement in educating technology use. She addressed the concern of how the use of technology can negatively affect social interactions and "too much" exposure to technology could harm the children, especially when parents and teachers use them to just "quiet" the children. She would consider using technology in the classroom if it is developmentally appropriate, using no more than an attention span of 10-15 minutes for younger children, and under the supervision and monitoring of teachers. The importance of the teacher being in control of the learning experience was emphasized. As digital citizens, our aim is to partner and find a healthy balance in their use of technology. Therefore, moderation and appropriately limiting screen time are essential topics. According to recent research by Radesky, a child development specialist at Boston Medical Center, toddlers as young as 18 months can begin learning fundamental concepts from media if they use it with an adult. However, the guideline recommends that children under five should only spend an hour a day using technology (Edwards & Fox, 2016). Removing uncertainty and fear through education and involving parents in taking action is a critical part of digital citizenship. The interviewee devised practical ideas to educate students, parents, and educators. I especially liked the idea of an educational event, inviting parents and kids to learn through hands-on experiments. Educators are trusted sources for parents, and we must build a solid network to work together for the sake of students.

Tips:

- Provide resources to parents through emails, blogs, and monthly newsletters. Keep the communication going.
- Holding an event with a specialist to educate teachers, students and parents. Encourage parents to become models in using technology at home for their children.

7c: Support educators and students to critically examine the sources of online media and identify underlying assumptions.

As the interview continued, the interviewee emphasized the need for educators to “research and do the hard work” to validate digital tools. This goes well with our efforts to support educators and students to critically examine the sources. Educators must devise a plan and specific purpose for using technology instead of jumping into it with the underlying assumption that if many people use it, it must be safe. To teach students to use technology properly, teachers must have “digital literacy” as well as “digital wisdom” (Prensky, 2013).

Tips:

- Educate the teachers, and set a day to examine the sources of media and digital tools used in the classroom.

7d: Empower educators, leaders and students to make informed decisions to protect their personal data and curate the digital profile they intend to reflect.

The interviewee mentioned the need to expose students to technology to make them learn but must teach them how to “navigate” first. She compared the students’ experience with technology as going into an unknown place. There is a need to do research, know if there is any danger, and have a map to navigate safely. The role of educators is to know the risk and guide students to understand the responsibility and consequences so that they can make informed decisions.

Tips:

- Install a monitoring program for children to safeguard them from potential online harm and educate parents and students about possible risks.

I organized the interview with Mrs. Wardlaw according to ISTE standards for Coaches 7: Digital Citizen Advocate to demonstrate that the goal of the interview was to promote digital citizenship. During the interview, the interviewee recognized some issues and came up with possible ideas to implement, which I listed under “Tips.” As the interviewee emphasized, using technology is inevitable; however, we must have a purpose and clear plan to bring a positive outcome. There is a trade-off for connection, knowledge, and convenience we get from technology. Yes, we must handle it with caution. However, because there is a risk, just avoiding it is not a solution. We must be more proactive in preparing ourselves and students, and parents must be part of the digital educational plan. At the end of the interview, it was encouraging to see that the interviewee realized the need to teach students about digital citizenship at an early age.

References

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