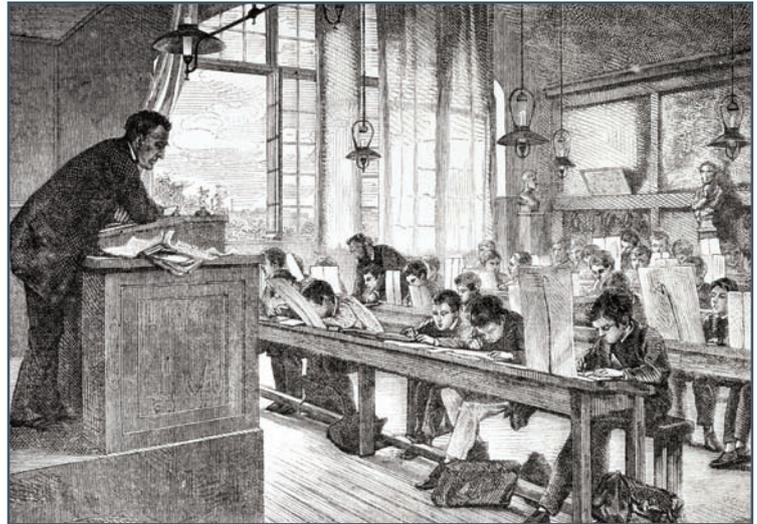




Changing the Pedagogy Paradigm

Written by: Suzanne Guzman

Teaching methods have barely changed since the ancient times, with the advent of writing followed by the introduction of Greek Philosophy which led to students beginning to ask questions. In the medieval times society decided that it was okay for both boys and girls to become educated and they started to learn from the first textbooks. From the inceptive page-turn of *The World In Pictures*, the first vivid and illustrated textbook, to the all-level classrooms of our grandparents, the actual art of teaching – the pedagogy- had remained, effectively, unchanged.

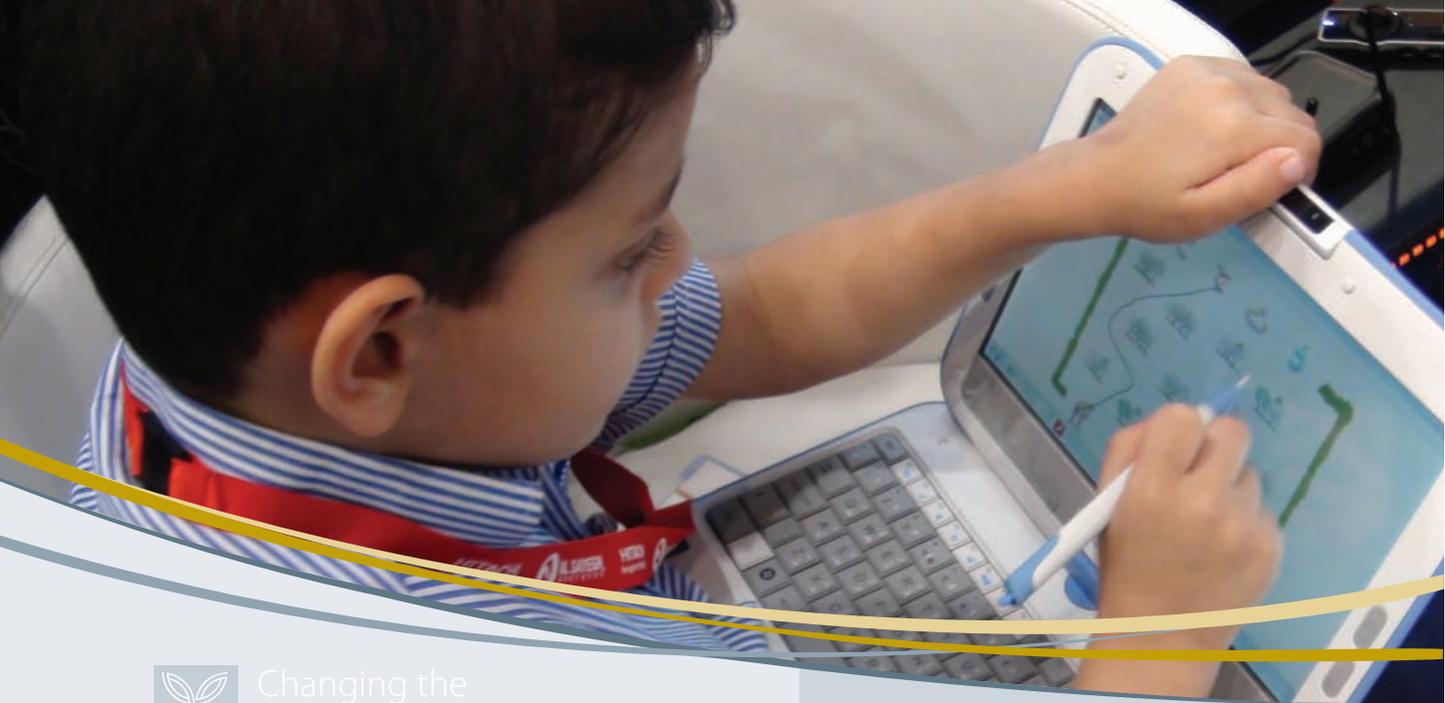


The teacher would prepare the lesson, stand in front of the students and deliver the information needed. The pedagogy of standing in front of the classroom and talking at the students or the “chalk and talk” style of teaching is considered the old- style and is disappearing quickly around the world. No longer do the same teaching methods which were “tried and true” 3,000 or even 30 years ago, measure up the potential learning capabilities of the modern-day student.

In its heyday, the chalkboard, and even more recently the whiteboard, and a heavy standardized textbook were the indomitable resources of the teacher. The old-style teacher and the old-style students shared a defined relationship. The teacher would come into the class, give his or her lecture (from the assigned text) with the aid of the chalk or marker, deliver the necessary information and the students would take notes, maybe ask a question or two, and go home, where they would study their notes and textbook. This was a style in which the teacher played the role of the authoritarian, commander, or director of the classroom. With the teacher playing that role the students were forced to play the roles of the subordinates or underlings. Very rarely would a student dare to challenge or question his or her teacher.

In the new era of learning, however, students have changed thus making a demand for the teaching methods to change as well. No longer do students wish to take the submissive role in the classroom, not with the latest technologies at their fingertips. It's quite difficult, as an educator, to compete with the ever-changing devices of our modern age of technology. How can we compete with the iPhones, Androids, Blackberrys, tablets and access to Bluetooth, WiFi, WiMax, 3G, and other communication devices and mediums? How does a heavy textbook, with its glossary and index (which the usage of both are methods of time consumption and utter boredom) compete with the instant access of websites like Google and Wikipedia, or the online encyclopedias, dictionaries, and thesauruses available with just a tap of a touch-screen? Not to mention, that the modern day electronic device is smaller, and definitely weighs much less than any textbook. Without a doubt, integration of new types of media into the classroom setting is in high demand.

Some of our more experienced and well-seasoned educators believe that there is no place for technology inside the classroom. This can be



Changing the Pedagogy Paradigm

because they truly believe that the old-style is the most effective way to teach or simply that they themselves cannot understand technology and may even have a fear that technology can replace teachers, if given the chance. Either way, this mentality is archaic and needs to be phased out of the modern classroom. It is said that “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” but for the sake of our posterity we, as effective educators, have to try, and the time is now. We have to shift our paradigms from the old delivery style of teaching and find a new and better way to share our knowledge. We need to change our roles from authoritarians of the classroom to facilitators of the education system. We should move from dictating information to guiding learner-based activities. There is a definite need, not just for integration and understanding of technology, but also to focus on different learning styles and to ensure that we tap into each and every one of them.

Research has been done in many countries around the world in the past few decades regarding how students learn, and their different learning styles. One of the most common and widely used categorizations of the various types of learning styles is **Fleming’s VARK model**. There are also differences in learning approaches for the four VARK Learning Styles. As reported by **Decision Science Journal of Innovative Education** “Visual learners prefer maps, charts, graphs,

diagrams, brochures, flow, highlighters, different colors, pictures, word pictures, and different spatial arrangements. Aural learners like to explain new ideas to others, discuss topics with other students and their teachers, use a tape recorder, attend lectures and discussion groups, and use stories and jokes. Read/Write learners prefer lists, essays, reports, textbooks, definitions, printed handouts, readings, manuals, web pages, and taking notes. Kinesthetic learners like field trips, trial and error, doing things to understand them, laboratories, recipes and solutions to problems, hands-on approaches, using their senses, and collections of samples.”

The old-style of teaching had never been fair to the kinesthetic learners, they were mostly thought of as ignorant, lazy, or even stupid. Research shows these learners are in fact, the very opposite of stupid. According to **Hasan Saleem, author of Directory Journal Online**, “Albert Einstein once stated that he felt it in his muscles, when he was thinking about something that later proved to be very significant. This heightened kinesthetic sense tells us that helping develop this kinesthetic sensitivity from an early age, instead of suppressing it, will help people turn out to be more creative individuals.”

The modern day student is anxious to play a more active role in the learning process. The idea of the teacher standing in front of the room and telling the students what they should know is a style of teaching that should be laid to rest with our grandparents. Furthermore, the integration of technology and technological devices is a demand we can no longer ignore. Finally, expanding diversity in our teaching methods to fit the needs of each student’s individual learning style is essential to their proper growth and development as learners.

In conclusion, we must embrace the words of John Dewey, Child Psychologist and Education Reformer, “If we teach today, as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow.”