Podcast Group project

Inquiry Question: What does accessible technology for students in an elementary classroom setting look like and what is the importance?

Podcast audio: 5-8 minutes audio podcast

Presentation to class - 5 minute overview, findings and reflections
(show only a little bit)

Topics we need to cover in podcast:

- What is your technology inquiry question and why did we choose it - group question
- What is the relationship to your topic to teaching and learning
- What pros and cons and risks
- What are some of the strategies, best practices, and tips regarding your inquiry findings
- Where does technology accessibility look like today in classrooms and where would we like to see it go? - SARAH

Research:

Strategies:

- Text to speech, audiobooks, adjustable font size to help guide those who struggle with dyslexia
- Word predictions, graphic organizers, and speech to text for those who struggle with putting thoughts down on paper and penmanship
- Screen readers, transcriptions/captions, and visuals for those hard of hearing
- Alternative communication systems (app showing different symbols and gestures) for those who need communication support
- Visual timers, picture schedules, and step by step checklists for those who struggle to stay on task (adhd)

Best Practices:

- Have multiple ways to respond right off the bat (UDL guidelines)
- Use built in accessibility features (chromebooks, laptops, and ipads) all have features of screen readers and speech to text

Tips:

- Offer multiple ways for students to respond (writing, or recording)
- When teaching a student a new accommodation feature include the rest of the class so no one feels singled out
- Check in with students to see what is working and what isn't and what other strategies may be better for them
- Teach students how to properly use technology in a way that is safe but beneficial and informative

Relationship - teaching and learning

- Allows teachers to meet every students needs, different learning syles, reading, watching, listening etc
- Allows students to have multiple means of engagement in a lesson
- Connection to UDL, engagement, representation and expression
- It gives different ways for students to show their knowledge
- Teachers are responsible for giving students opportunities to learn and this allows them to
- Gives teachers additional support for certain students
- Removes obstacles that prevent some students from being able to participate
- Gives the chance for students to be more independent
- Can help classroom management

Pros:

- Promotes inclusion for all children and learners
- Allow students to work at their own pace as lessons can be modified to meet a learner where they are at
- Provides students with an opportunity to express themselves for children who struggle with verbal communication
- Offers alternative ways for class discussion and sharing for students with anxiety
- Encourages time management and independence
- Hard topics can become hands on experiences

Cons:

- High cost
- Training for teachers and EA's and puts more pressure on an educators workload
- Tech failures can lead to losing instructional time
- Overreliance on technology from students
- Negative stigmas around accessibility tools can cause students to feel insecure
- Reduced social interactions and face to face connection
- Tech can be misused as a distraction
- Development concerns for younger children because of too much screen time

Risks:

- Lowers children's attention span
- Weaker foundational skills
- Over reliance on tech
- Decreased problem solving skills
- Less in person interactions may cause lower emotional intelligence
- Students may get off task because of games, shopping, etc
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Students privacy could be at risk
- Unequal home support (some students may not have access to a device or wifi at home and if assignments and projects are only accessible online they won't be able to)

Script:

Intro: *classroom chatter, then shush them

Sar: What's up everyone, welcome back to the pod five podcast

Sar: We’re your hosts

Rylee Rylee

Kaityln: Kaitlyn

Abby: Abby

Sarah: Sarah

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Abby: We're gonna take a trip to the classroom today and see what accessible technology looks like in an elementary class setting.

Rylee Name: Were gonna discuss everything there is to know about this topic

Kaitlyn Name: Wait really everything

Rylee: YES EVERYTHING

Abby: Even the relationship to teaching and learning?

Rylee: YUP

Kaitlyn: What about the strategies, benefits and tips

Abby: YOU BET

Rylee: The pros and cons to?

Kaitlyn: That to

Sar: Isn't there already accessible technology in classrooms though

Abby: You'll find out soon, You can expect it all

Kaitlyn: Wait why does this even matter

Rylee: Well were all planing to be teachers and its important as future educators that we learn and expand our knowledge so that we can best support our future students and adapt to their needs

Sar: Okay, let’s get started

Abby part script 1min 30s -

Abby: Technology is becoming a big part of our everyday lives including it showing up in education

Kaityln: It's changing how students are learning and how teachers are able to teach

Rylee: So How does technology actually connect to teaching and learning in an elementary school classroom?

Sar: Well I would argue the biggest benefit is that it allows teachers to better meet the needs of all their students. Not every student learns the same way. Some students thrive in learning through reading, others by watching videos, listening to instructions or even using interactive activities.

Rylee: Wait, this connects to the universal design for learning known as UDL?

Abby: Yup, UDL focuses on giving students multiple ways to engage with learning, access to information and demonstrate what they know. For example instead of only asking students to write their answer, teachers could allow them to record an audio response through text to speech or do something through a visual presentation

Kaitlyn: Accessible technology is able to help remove barriers that might prevent students from fully participating in a classroom activity. There able to give students more opportunities and build confidence in their learning.

Sar: It also supports teachers by making lessons more flexible and can help with classroom management. Teachers have a responsibility to create opportunities for every student to learn, so accessible technology gives more ways to do that. At the end of the day it's all about making learning possible and more accessible for everyone.

Kaitlyn's Part Script - 1 min 30s

Abby : So, what can teachers actually do when it comes to accessible technology in the elementary classroom? What are some strategies, best practices, and tips teachers can actually use?

Rylee: I'm actually really glad you asked that. Honestly, the easiest place to start is with what is already there.

Kaityln : Wait what do you mean?

Sar: Well for example, most chromebooks and tablets students are working with come with text to speech or speech to text, caption features, and magnification tools, so no one has to spend a dime!

Abby: Once you have the basics down, it then helps you focus on the individual child. Many students have Individual Education Plans and teachers should use those documents as a guiding map to follow, as they tell you which tools to try, so you aren't guessing. Having a quick conversation with students about their needs, which of those are being met, which aren't, and what other strategies for them is extremely beneficial as well. At the same time, plan lessons that give the students choice, like drawing, typing, or recording answers, so that no one feels left out.

Rylee: Of course, young learners aren't going to pick up these tools on their own, so showing them directly is way more informative. For instance, maybe one day if you're feeling spontaneous, I encourage you to channel that into a quick demo on how to use different strategies such as speech to text, and get them all to try it. This also applies for things like screen readers, audiobooks, and much more.

Sar: My last tip would be to build in that idea of structure. As teachers, you can set up tools like visual timers, picture schedules, and step by step checklists to help guide students along so they

can stay focused while feeling less overwhelmed. By implementing structure here and there it starts to feel normal and part of the daily routine.

Kaitlyn: This is just the surface of the best practices to start implementing into the classroom.

Sarah's Part Script -

Abby; So, where does technology accessibility actually stand in elementary classrooms today, and where do we want to see it go?

Sarah: I think that a number of classrooms are already incorporating technology in different ways to support student learning. For example, I have witnessed this in my Link 2 Practice classroom where the teacher will use a variety of different resources such as websites, videos, and audio recordings to introduce topics and reinforce learning. Sometimes they even play music in the background during independent work.

Kaitlyn: Some may argue that these simple additions wouldn't make a difference. However; I believe that this provides students different ways to engage with information. Because some students may benefit more from seeing a video with images, symbols, and explanation, while others find a written or audio example more helpful.

Rylee;That being said, I think we want to see technology accessibility go beyond the incorporation into a lesson. We want teachers to be more intentional about choosing technology that supports different learning needs.

Sarah: I think that it is important to recognize that not every school has the funding to provide the technology or devices that the students need. Another barrier to consider is the lack of teacher training when it comes to technology. Because teachers might not know the accessibility features available or how to incorporate them into their everyday lessons.

Abby:Moving forward, I think accessibility should be considered from the beginning of lesson planning rather than something teachers think about only when a student is struggling.

Kaitlyn: Ultimately, we want classrooms where technology creates more opportunities for every student to participate, learn, and feel included, rather than creating additional barriers.

Rylee's Part of the Script:

RYlee: So now that we have established what accessible technology looks like in an elementary classroom, we should probably talk about how it impacts everyone

Kaityln: Doesn't it just make students' lives easier?

Abby: Ideally by incorporating accessible technology into learning students feel only supported but unfortunately that is not everyone's experience
Sarah : Oh wow, I didn't know that. How can technology have a negative impact?
rylee: I'm glad you asked! Bringing accessible technology into schools can cost a lot of money that the school budgets simply do not have. In a perfect world schools could have access to lots of very helpful devices that could make a significant difference for students' learning but unfortunately they are also very expensive.
Kaityln : I didn't even think about that. Is that like the only con?
Abby : Unfortunately not, when schools do receive new technology that also means there is training required for teachers and EA's. Training takes time out of teachers and EA's busy schedules but they need to be able to help guide students with the new equipment.
Sarah : I didn't realize so many people could be impacted outside of students!
Rylee : Yes, it's so important to consider all individuals who are present in such a collaborative space like a school.
Kaityln : That's so true but wait, how are students impacted?
Abby : Technology can promote inclusion for all learners and allow students to work at their own pace. For example, if a student struggles with verbal communication there are devices that can support other forms of expression. It's important to also be mindful of students potentially becoming over-reliant on technology or not receivin/g enough social interactions. Children need face-to-face connection to develop their social skills and too much screen time can have detrimental effects.
Sarah : Managing the amount of exposure students have with technology sounds difficult
Rylee : It definitely can be, that's why it's so important teachers feel supported when navigating through these challenges. Ultimately, accessible technology can open doors for students and provide amazing opportunities but it can also have harmful impacts if we are not intentional and mindful of the risks.

Outro/Conclusion:

QUE MUSIC fades in

rylee: Okay, so I think we have covered quite a bit today!

Sarah: From different types of accessible technology, the pros and cons, and even the possible risks.

Kaitlyn : But let's bring it back to our driving question: What does accessible technology for students in an elementary classroom setting look like, and why is it important?

Abby: Well, we've certainly learned that accessibility is not about having the newest, coolest apps or devices in the classroom.

Rylee: It's about making sure that each student has the opportunities and tools that they need to participate, learn, and show their understanding in ways that work for them.

Sarah: And as future teacher candidates, it's important for us to recognize that each child will have different strengths, needs, and learning styles.

Kaitlyn: So, accessible technology can be something used to support learning, encourage inclusion, and help remove barriers rather than creating new ones.

Abby: I think it's safe to say that technology can be quite a useful tool in classrooms when it is used intentionally!

Sarah: Well, that's all the time that we have for today.

ALL: Thanks for listening to today's episode of Pod Five!

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