We Need Technology So as Teachers

The article and the Ted Talk are new and fresh to me. At the beginning of the reading, I felt a little depressed and worry that in the future the role of teachers will be questioned and eliminated by people all over the world. For me as a future Mathematics teacher, I could not stop thinking if this became real, how I am going to face it and make a decision. However, if I were ten years old right now, I may change my dream to be another profession instead of teaching. Too late I am not a teenager anymore, and I could see myself changed through schooling. People are humans with brains to think and reasoning, with nose to smell, with eyes to see, with ears to hear, with mouth to talk, and with our hands to work. If students learn things at home alone or as a group in a room in front of the big screen, how long are these students’ interest of learning going to last? In the video, we can see that students feel excited and read after the “teacher” in the screen asked them to do so. I believe this is going to be a good success for very poor countryside that people cannot afford technology like smart phones or TVs. When a thing that can talk and even responds their questions, students will feel excited and wish that they could see the “robot” every day.

I still remembered the first time I saw and touched computers in my elementary school in China. We had to share computers with each other. I was scared to touch it because I was afraid that I would break it if I did not use it properly. I just sat there and watched my peers surfing. Even though I learned how to use computer in my junior and high school life, I did not learn actual computer skills until I came to college. I bought my first laptop when I was enrolled in BMCC because my friends all have one. I used it to translate, to search articles, and to watch some YouTube videos for learning purposes or entertainment. Technology helps us many things, but it cannot be a substitute of education. Instead, we should use it as a tool to checking our learning.

I met a girl from Hunter who never got her K-12 education in school. She had home schooling and passed the GED test. After that, she finished her Bachelor degree and also her Master in Hunter. I intended to ask her some questions and her opinions when I got this reading assignment. Even though she was a home schooling with no teachers in her teenage life, she also disagrees with the idea that technology can take the place of teachers. She told me that she was not able to do some chemistry experiments in her kitchen although she got the materials and watched videos. Also, she told me that she felt a little afraid when she entered college because she never learned how to get along and socialize with other people. She loved reading and writing, but she hates Mathematics and gives up easily when she could not solve the problem and returned to reading. From her experience, I learned that even though children can learn by self-organization, but there are some limitations that can be solved in school. For example, when a student is doing an experiment at home with instructions from the video, it is hard to prevent dangerous incidents happening if there is no instructor around.

I agree with the idea that teachers are sometimes act as a facilitator, but it is not always the case. There are so many roles that a teacher has and so many duties they need to handle. In a class, we are not just learning content knowledge but also learn how to get along well with others. We also have some activities that are not curriculum relevant. The host takes the fact that Mathematics is universal around the world, but he ignores the important part of reasoning. Even though some students know how to do the operations of Mathematics, many of them do not know how to express their opinions. They need the communications and practices with people not just staying for hours in front of a big screen. Every piece of learning needs connections. If a subject is unrelated to students’ life, students will get bored easily. Also, we learn and understand things differently. We also learn from our mistakes and the people around us. Assuming that everybody studies at home, how they are going to communicate with others and express with thoughts. Teachers not only taught us knowledge but also taught us living skills. I learned how to control myself when I was depressed, I learned how to manage my time, and I learned how to be a responsible person. There are so many things that we learned from teachers, our peers, and ourselves. Without formal education, we may not be able to define these behind every school day.

Also, in real life, it is kind of impossible to have children like in the video that they enjoyed reading with a teacher in the screen unless they feel it interesting and important. For example, I will follow after the instructor read like the one in the video because I know I need to improve my English speaking skills. Look around us, how many children know how to play Ipads and some parents feel very proud of them. They think their kids are smarter than them because in such an early age, they already commanded the skills of technology. They never think about the negative impact, even they realize it they will have nothing to do with it because it is too late. I saw my 3-year-old nephew playing his Ipad on the floor. He talked to himself and followed the behaviors inside the video with no concern that I am around. He will get mad when I chose a channel for him. We can predict that, if students self-learning at home, who is going to be the one to assist if their parents both work.

In conclusion, we need teachers and we also need technology. As teachers, we should learn corresponding technology skills to better equip ourselves. For instance, as a Mathematics teacher, he or she should be able to teach students how to use some math software to learn something outside of school. Teachers should be able to make students believe that computers are not only for entertainment but also a good place to learn and explore more things.