Exploring the "Why?" of Educational Technology

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Abstract: The I.T. skills needed by the students we teach demand experiences which are outside the educational mainstream.... (We need) an education commensurate with each student’s ability to learn. (Sandra Kaplan)

My session seeks to focus on the individual relationship between the teacher and each student, with special reference to Martin Buber’s “I-Thou” relationship and to move away from the I-it/I-them” way of education. This is the means to fulfill any student’s greatest need - to be loved and respected for who they are - an individual person who is different. It is my convinced belief that this is the starting point in serving students effectively to enable both the teacher and the individual student to make meaningful contributions for the future. It is in fact to fulfill the conference’s goal as expressed in its title. In the interactive session, I will begin by inviting the teachers to examine the assumptions that underpin their philosophy – with special reference to their understanding of reality, truth and values in their own lives and then in the lives of their students. In this connection, educators will be challenged to be aware of the importance of relevance for the future and also discuss ways to determine each student’s needs for the future.

When these have been explored, then, their relationship to education, with particular reference to the conference’s educational goals, content, method and values, will be dealt with in detail. In view of the wide range of geographic, social and economic backgrounds of teachers attending the conference, (and the students they serve) each teacher will be assisted to create a one page summary that can serve as the basis of their educational technology philosophical framework to ignite their students’ potential at their schools. The session will encourage each teacher to harness personal qualities, interests, experiences and expertise to create this clearly defined framework and, at the same time, be flexible to meet the needs of a diverse population. Accordingly, the essence of the session is to place excellent and relevant tools in teachers’ hands -- tools that can equip them with the knowledge of what clear plans to utilize in serving each individual student.

I am convinced that the “why” of education greatly facilitates and enriches the “what” of education and technology.