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McLuhan Paper

The impact of computing technology in general has been wonderfully powerful and has had life changing impacts. The changes have caused society as a whole to evolve. McLuhan says that man has changed in the way he communicates. Once, man used all senses in an equal balance. Now man uses primarily the eye. The education of people has been forced to change because of the advances made in technology. No longer are the traditional ways of learning in the classroom acceptable. Teachers are being forced to change because their students are changing. However, the change in technology is taking place more rapidly than teachers are able or are willing to make change. Society is changing as McLuhan predicated that it would.

Technology has been a very powerful advancement for society. These advancements have done great good and yet we have had to pay a price for them. McLuhan was so prophetic in his thoughts about what could happen to a society given so much technological change. In the world of education technology has impacted almost every aspect. The students today have grown up with every form of technology at their fingertips. Students have computers, telephones, televisions, microwave ovens, cell phones and the list could go on. Students are not as likely to be interested in reading books as they are in finding information via the internet. This causes a huge break down in learning for the student when the teacher tries to teach by traditional methods such as a textbook. Students are ready to learn via the web, video, interactive power point presentations and so much more. The students need to be stimulated in dozens of ways. They don't know a world without that much stimulation. What a challenge for educators!!

The notion of all senses being heightened and used brings me to a conclusion that I have drawn from personal experiences in the classroom. I believe that children of today's society are more anxious, more hyperactive and more physically unfit than students of past generations. Students are allowed so much time in front of the television, video games, computers and time on phones that they spend little to no time exercising, reading or simply relaxing. Children should be encouraged to play both in and outdoors. They should be encouraged to discover new things through play and by reading books. So many children are being "babysat" by technology. It is part of the society that we are in. Parents are extremely busy so they purchase a "babysitter" for their children. The problem with this babysitter is that it seems to work yet offers very little thought provoking stimulation. However, some of these same parents become frustrated with their children when they reach school age because the children do not behave traditionally in a traditional school setting. This causes behavior problems at school. I believe that a great deal of misdiagnoses is occurring because teachers are expecting a technologically advanced child to behave as a traditional child did in the 1950's.

The hurricanes of the past year, Katrina and Rita, have proven to me that I myself have been affected by the overload of technology. I am not an avid reader of books or the newspaper. I do not listen to the radio for any purpose other than to listen to music and I adore the internet. I also feel "naked" without my cell phone. The days and weeks after the hurricanes taught me to appreciate the simple technologies in life. One such technology that I came to appreciate greatly was the radio. It was the only source of information for many days. It was very empowering to receive information about the after affects of the hurricanes. It was challenging for me to have this as the only form of communication. How real the reality of

technology became. We were without television, computers, cell phones, telephones, newspapers and at times radio. I think McLuhan would have appreciated the fact that a whole group of people were forced to reflect on their daily use of technology.

In summary, I believe that technology has brought about changes both good and bad. The changes affect all people and encourage gaps in society. The gaps are being formed between generations as well as socio-economic groups. As with all advancements in life we must learn to be grateful for the positive effects and we must learn to deal with the negative.