

## Asg-02: 1<sup>st</sup> Paper—Computers and Education

Date assigned: Mon, 2 July 2001

Date due: Tuesday, 10 July 2001

### Required before you begin this assignment:

READ CAREFULLY these sections of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*

(a related document is available online: there is a link on our course home page)

- ✓ Taking Notes
- ✓ Plagiarism
- ✓ Outlining (pay *particular* attention to the sub-section on *Thesis Statement*)
- ✓ Use of Quotations

PERUSE *at least* these sections:

- ✓ Quotations
- ✓ Preparing the List of Works Cited
- ✓ Documenting Sources

We will assume that you are very familiar with these important concepts when we grade your paper assignments.

### Length for this paper:

About 3–5 pages of text, double spaced. The suggested length is a guideline—you may go a little above it if necessary. Refer to *Misc-03* for additional details.

### Select only one Topic:

#### Topic 1: Computers in Elementary Education (K-6)

(Some excerpts from *Edupage*; original source: *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9 Oct 1998).

Some communities are spending a large share of their elementary school budgets on computers and Internet access. Is the cost too high? What are the opportunity costs? Are the tradeoffs worth it? Do computers, and access to the Internet, benefit learning enough to justify a large investment, assuming a zero-sum game? (*What kinds of things are costly?* Think long term.)

Are there any cheaper, more direct, and more *effective* ways to accomplish the same end for K–6 students? One opponent suggests that a great teacher, equipped with enough cheap copies of *Huckleberry Finn* to go around, can teach more that kids need to know than the same teacher forced to revamp all she knows to use a roomful of expensive computers and software. Clifford Stoll (of *Silicon Snake Oil* fame) believes that he'd rather see a child push a pencil (or a high-schooler do a chemistry lab) than tackle a similar task the virtual way.

Many believe that information technology in the elementary classroom is important enough to warrant the costs. Will students who aren't computer savvy, and/or who aren't connected to the Internet during the early years, be at a disadvantage when they reach junior high or high school? Are there experiences that computers and communications can bring to children that simply aren't as good (or impossible to achieve) without them?

What role do *you* think computers, information technology, and the Internet should play in *elementary* public education, if any? *Why?*

## Topic 2: Learning on line

(Excerpts from *Government Technology*, Aug 2000)

### Florida's Leaps and Bounds Into Online Education

Parents, teachers, and school administrators across the United States are watching Polk County, Florida's Daniel Jenkins Academy, the nation's first school to offer a *completely online curriculum in a classroom*. There will be no classroom teachers at Daniel Jenkins Academy, although there will be counselors, school facilitators, and resource teachers on hand to guide students, and the online teachers will visit students periodically. "The whole idea is customizing education and services for students," says Carolyn Baldwin, area superintendent. "...We need to be examining what a child's needs are and designing education to meet those needs," which can be accomplished much more easily with an online school.

Daniel Jenkins Academy will admit 250 students in middle and high school levels. The learning environment will be paced flexibly, with students having a larger input into when and what they learn.

Do you believe that this is a good idea? Why or why not? If not, what problems do you foresee? What would it take to make it work? Are the risks worth it?

### Important notes:

Do your research to find enough articles that can help you to understand more about the topic, what the issues are, and the controversies herein. After you've done some research and reading, **choose a position** (your stance). **Re-read** the handout *Misc-03–Written Assignments: Guidelines* before you start. Read it again after you've written a solid draft of your paper. A successful paper will include a clear position-type thesis statement, will have strong, clear organization, and will include logic and evidence in support of your position.

*You don't have to address every single question asked;* the questions are included to help you to understand that a controversy exists, and what some of the related issues are. Of course, within your paper, you will address those issues and/or questions that make the most sense to what *you* plan to discuss once you've determined *your* thesis statement. And of course, there may be other questions that I did not ask that will relate to your thesis and which you should address. This also does not mean simply re-stating each question and answering each of them, as though you're taking a test—rather, integrate the *essence* of what's being asked in those questions or statements (those that are relevant to your thesis) into the body of your paper as you argue for your position.

28 June 2001