

A Note from the *JADE* Editorial Board Chair



By
Silvia E. Spivakovsky, DDS
Clinical Associate Professor
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology,
Radiology and Medicine
NYU College of Dentistry

This issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Distinguished Educators (JADE)* asks the question: Can educational technology transform learning outcomes? There’s no doubt that access to technology has changed the way students — who came of age in the internet era — navigate their academic experience. Today’s students can choose to attend college online, on campus (or a combination of the two); they can complete their assignments on any number of devices, and many courses include digital publications of textbooks. Of course, the impact of technology in higher education is not limited to the student experience; technology has also changed the way faculty understand and embrace their roles as educators. But while many in higher education have been eager to adopt new learning technologies as teaching tools, the value of educational technology in improving learning outcomes remains a matter of debate. For educators, the question arises, *Do we adopt educational technologies because everyone else is doing it, or because we are convinced that the use of technology in teaching is really more effective than more traditional methods?* In the following pages, you will hear from three individuals with expertise and experience in this area who make the case that the answer is more nuanced than it may at first appear.

Clay Shirky is vice provost for educational technologies at NYU. In this role, he designs, develops, and enhances all academic aspects of technology-based teaching and learning, University-wide. In his article,

“Principles of Humility in Educational Technology,” he offers a thoughtful analysis of the uses of educational technology in the higher education environment, basing his argument for “humility” on the premise that “Learning results from what the student does and thinks and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn.”

Anthony Palatta, chief learning officer for the American Dental Education Association, leads and implements strategic initiatives designed to improve teaching and learning, including through the use of technology in teaching. In his article, “In the Way of Learning,” he emphasizes the importance of educators’ ability to adapt their mindsets to facilitate a form of active learning in which students discover knowledge through a process of engagement and reflection rather than by having it transmitted to their brains by a faculty member.

The final article, “How Educational Technology Can Help Support Sound Pedagogical Approaches and Practices,” by Lillian Moran, senior educational technologist at NYU Dentistry, suggests a path forward based on an analysis of who, what, how we teach, whether it is all aligned, and how academic institutions can cultivate a “growth mindset culture.”

I want to thank all the authors for sharing their views and expertise in such a thought-provoking manner, and I thank the members of the *JADE* editorial board for their input and suggestions. We hope that you enjoy this issue of *JADE*. ■