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Assignment 1: Policy Brief

Part I:

In John Hattie's book Visible Teaching, he explores six categories of factors that influence student learning. These factors include the child, the home, the school, the curricula, the teacher, and the approach to teaching. As educators, it is important to be aware of and understand these factors and the impact that technology can have on each of them.

There are two of Hattie's factors that are the most influenced by technology: the child and the teacher. One might argue that in today's world, the child is the most influenced by technology. Cell phones and laptops, once reserved for the few, are widely available and permeate every grade level today. While the possibilities for the use of technology by students are endless, many still fear that technology will distract students from instruction and learning. While cell phones and laptops might be a distraction, they can also be used as a valuable tool in the classroom. Cell phones can now be used as a way for students to respond in class, allowing teachers to compile real time data to assess students' understanding. And there is where the teacher comes in. With the increasing amounts of technology out there, teachers must stay connected to what technology is out there, not only to know what might be distracting their students, but also what might be used to help keep their students' attention on the lesson at hand. It is vastly important that teachers keep up with the technology to know how to reach their students and as Hattie describes, "provide students with multiple opportunities and alternatives for developing learning strategies based on the surface and deep levels of learning". (Hattie 36)

While the students are naturally drawn to new technology and teachers are forced to stay on top of new technology, there is one factor that seems to be the least affected by technology. That factor is the home. While students who grow up in homes with technology, whose parents already speak the "language of schooling" will obviously have an advantage over students who do not, school districts and teachers do their best to level the playing field. Students are not required to have certain types of technology at home in order to succeed in the classroom. Teachers must consider what resources are available at home and make sure they are available for use through the school or a local library should the technology be part of an assignment. Thus, since there is no requirement for technology to be made available at home it tends to be the factor for student learning that is the least affected by technology.

The factor that offers the most promise from technology is the teaching approach. The very purpose of technology is to apply scientific advances to practical problems and tasks. Thus, the task at the root of all of these factor groups is the instruction, the driving force behind student learning. If used properly, technology can help teachers accomplish many goals described by Hattie. Technology can help teachers provide multiple opportunities for practices, provide differentiated strategies, express the intentions of the lesson as well as help monitor the outcomes. Technology can help teachers accumulate classroom-based evidence and help analyze such evidence. Finally, technology can also provide multiple venues for teachers to talk about their teaching.

On the flipside, technology can also create problems. The factor that has the most problematic relationship with technology is the school. The heavy task of purchasing, installing, and training staff to use technology can be a daunting task. Teachers also need training and direction on how to effectively use the technology. Without proper training teachers will struggle in front of their students using the technology. This in turn negatively affects Purkey's idea of feeling of "Invitational Learning".   Teachers must not only know how to use the technology effectively, they must feel comfortable using it to make students feel the trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality described in Purkey's model.(Hattie 34)

Part II:

Factor influencing student achievement	Common Technologies	Opportunities	Challenges
Child	IPods/mp3 players Cell phones Laptops/personal computers	Ability to listen to podcasts. Ability to give feedback through texting and surveys.	May be used to distract students from instruction.
Home	Personal computers Video games	Can be used to for research and preparation for school.	May be used to replace parenting by allowing children free and unlimited access to video games and unmonitored internet use. Some parents may not have the computer skills to access/learn the "language of schooling".
School	SmartBoards Computer labs Digital projectors	If used properly, can be used to engage students. Indicates a classroom climate that learning is expected to take place.	Purchasing and installing new technology is costly. Use of these technologies does not guarantee engagement of students. Teachers must be given professional development to use these effectively.
Curricula	Online resources State Dept. of Ed	Curriculum is available online to all	Teachers and parents may not be able to

	website Online programs to deliver curricula	stakeholders including teachers and parents. Resources can also be found more easily through the internet. Strategies for deep understanding in each subject area can be accessed in one place online.	discern poor resources from quality ones. There is no regulation of resources that are made available. Poor quality resources are readily available though they may not help teach deeper understanding.
Teacher	TeacherTube, Delicious Web 2.0 Blogs Education websites	Teachers can use technology to engage students and differentiate instruction and assignments. Teachers can also use technology to connect to and learn from other colleagues in their field and become experts in their domain.	Teachers might have the technology but not know how to effectively use it in the classroom. Others might not have access to the technology.
Approaches to teaching	Presentation software (PowerPoint) TeacherTube Personal computer Digital projector Resource websites Teacher blogs	Can be used to help differentiate learning. Multiple modes for delivery are available. Resource websites online allow for teachers to connect with one another and give each other feedback.	Teachers might be using the technology, but not using it affectively. Online blogs and resource websites may not give quality feedback and might also cause teachers to interact less with teachers in their own building.