

Teaching Design, Media & Technology

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As teacher and scholar, I am interested in helping teachers teach and students learn *about, through, for, from, and with/against* design, media and technology. To simplify this intention, when we teach or learn *about* design, media and technology, we are dealing with content and dispositions; when we teach or learn *through* design, media and technology we are dealing with processes and skills. Teaching or learning *for* design, media and technology refers to occupations and roles. Teaching or learning *from* and *with/against* design, media and technology means that we address profound aspects of being a part of technology that characterize our places in a more-than-human world. By themselves, none of these orientations provides an adequate education. Conscious assembling is what differentiates my approach from more narrow studies *about* or *through* or training *for* design, media and technology. Effective design, media and technology teaching or learning requires that we balance these orientations.

The mere word "technology" provokes strong opinions and responses from the head, heart, hand and feet. For some, the notion of technology produces fear and feelings of insecurity. Others feel power and security. Some feel excitement and others feel dread. Many stress out over the technologies they use. Similar emotions are provoked when most of us are forced to design something. Yet, this is what teaching technology is all about: excitement, dread, fears, hopes, insecurities, power and intimidations. Teaching or learning design, media and technology is about dealing with contradictions within design, media and technology. This is not an easy task.

We learn best and become professionals through reflective practice. Reflective practice requires a process of introspection into our identities, clarification of our values and discourses, candid analyses of the state of education and the world, and an externalization and internalization of what we have learned. Reflective practice involves cycles of socialization, externalization, internalization and identification. In the process of becoming a teacher we initially connect and

empathize with certain practices; ultimately we articulate and embody the practices we identify with. Reflective practice simply means that we fluctuate between immersion and reflection. Teaching is a cycle of reflective practice.

Reflective practice also means that we recognize that design, media and technology have ecological-natural, ethical-personal, existential-spiritual, socio-political and technical-empirical dimensions. This includes a concern for deliberately balancing the technical-empirical dimensions of technology, or technique, with its ecological-natural, ethical-personal, existential-spiritual, and socio-political dimensions (Fig. 1).

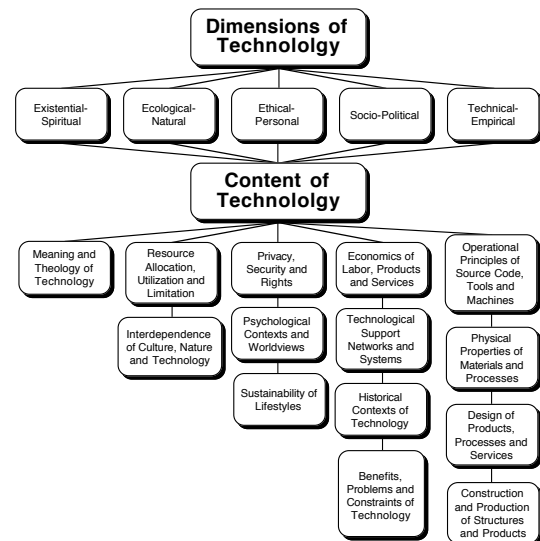


Figure 1. Dimensions of technology.

Another way of stating this is that we value and balance knowing, caring, feeling and doing, or the head, heart, hand and feet. We value learning *about, through, for, from, and with/against* technology. My approach to media and technology, from this perspective, is to provide experiences for people to develop and question feelings, knowledge and skills that empower them to participate in all facets of technological endeavor— from the practical to the political. This means that we *demystify design, media and technology and their applications as well as resensitize people to the implications of their designed, mediated, technological decisions and surroundings.*

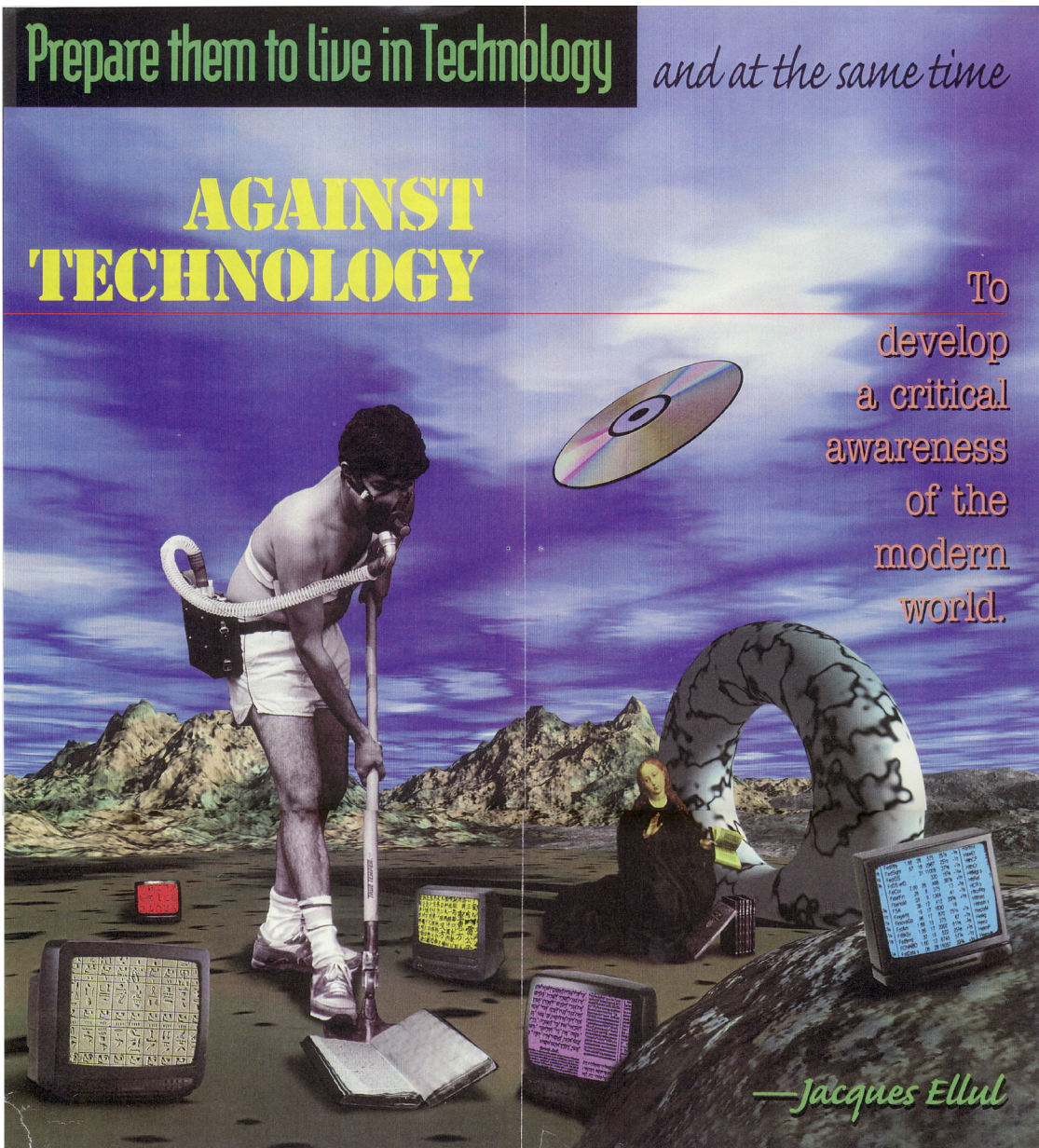


Figure 2. Image by James Collins, 1997 for the “Education Technology: Asking the Right Questions” conference.