# Ethical Framework

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| Principle | Duties and Responsibilities | Outcomes | Personal Development |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Iterative consent and Transparency** | Instructors must provide detailed information on use of technology and role in assessing student performance Students must have informed consent and repeat consent as technologies or their use changes in different contexts or assignments | Possible delays in progress to account for consent and use information | Instructor articulates precise role of technology in learning<br><br>Students have vested interest in technology through repeated consent and knowledge of use |
| **Equal Access to Technology** | All students are provided with the means of accessing technological hardware, software, and connectivity needs. Handled at administrative level | Levels socio-economic playing field in terms of access to educational materials. Possibly lessens stigma/online bullying directed to students of lower means. Higher initial costs | Students from lower income levels have access to the same technology and education as higher-incomed peers |
| **Open but monitored communication** | Students should feel free (and encouraged) to engage in discussions with other students about the course in online platforms; however, these communication should not be offensive or engage in bullying. Therefore, conversations will be unmonitored but still recorded, so that if a complaint is registered by a student, it can be verified | Levels of privacy and recording will have to be put in place. Some students might not feel as free to have open discussions, although others might be more encouraged to do so | Students are encouraged to develop skills as good digital citizens without the direct oversight or lecture of an instructor/authority figure |
| **Privacy** | Data gathered about specific students must be limited in scope and in storage, disconnected from vital statistics in some instance and personal information in most | Careful data collection algorithms must be in place to protect student privacy and possible separate cloud storage employed to manage data for separate usages. | Students may begin to share information more openly (Farrow, 2016). Information and data needs of instructors might become refined and redirected |
| **Responsibility and validity** | Individuals must be in place to determine that technologies are used in a legal way that also achieves goals of improving student achievement. Such individuals will need proper professional development and training | Professional development classes will have to be created and offered for instructors/monitors of technology use | Instructors become better informed of the benefits and effective use of educational technologies |

Justification:

Overall, this framework is designed to ensure that technology is integrated into the classroom in such a way that protects the privacy of the student, empowers the student through informed knowledge of use of technology and ties to his or her grade, and ensures that the instructor is capable and responsible for collecting, managing, and interpreting the use of technology and the data collected. This framework was designed with no specific technology in consideration, but drawing from possible conflicts or issues that might arise in multiple technology types, including learning analytics, virtual reality, mobile learning, and more. The first two principles—consent and access—are focused on empowering the students and ensuring that they are capable of succeeding through the use of technology. The next two principles—Communication and Privacy—are designed to achieve a balance in participation and monitoring so as to ensure that students are actively engaging with the technologies, but both their privacy and sense of self are protected. Finally, the fifth principle concerns the instructor as the agent of proper use and guidance.

Principle 1:

Iterative consent and transparency is focused on the students' best interest in successful completion of the course. The student needs to be informed of the use and scope of the technologies in a way that assures his or her understanding explicitly (Lally, Sharples, Tracy, Bertram, & Masters, 2012). Additionally, as circumstances change—context, assignments, and so forth—consent should be reiterated and reoffered to assure student knowledge of practices. Finally, instructors must be upfront with students on how the technology relates to their overall performance and assessment (Rodríguez-Triana, Martínez-Mons, & Villagrá-Sobrino, 2016).

The outcomes of such a principle include the development of informative and effective consent forms, not simply checking a box or signing a document (Lally, et al., 2012). Additionally, students will become increasingly aware not just of the information taught in the course, but of the role of technology in the learning and evaluation process. There might be delays in the execution of some assignments due to the need to receive informed consent.

In terms of personal development, as mentioned above, students will have a better understanding of use of technology and its role in education. Moreover, the instructor will be able to articulate precisely how technology and evaluation of student performance are related. This articulation should result in strengthened course design and more targeted applications of technology.

Principle 2:

For successful and ethical integration of technology into the learning environment equal access to technology must be assured. This means, not only equal access to the same hardware and software, but also connectivity questions, such as data speeds and storage amounts on smart phones. By assuring that students have the same technology at the start, we level the playing field between lower income and higher income students Lally, et al., 2012, Moore & Ellsworth, 2014). It would be the responsibility of the administration/school to assure equal access for the students.

One outcome of this principle would be increased cost to the school in order to provide necessary access. But an additional outcome would be the potential lessening of the achievement gap between higher and lower income students.

In terms of personal development, students from lower income households could gain a sense of empowerment through the acquisition and exposure to such technology. Additionally, at lower levels of education (honestly, all levels), there is the potential for cyber bullying (Lally, et al. 2012); eliminating any obstacle which serves as a stigma to a user, such as lack of technology or lesser technology, would ultimately remove that stigma for bullying (although not remove bully altogether, see principle 3).

Principle 3:

The principle of open, but monitored communication is an attempt at a balanced approach to communication between student and instructor, as well as between students in the class. Online discussion rooms and other avenues of communication through technology are meant to encourage a free exchange of ideas. And the students should feel free to ask questions, express concerns, and even voice criticism. However, no student should face abuse or bullying or feel threatened in these online spaces. Thus, all chats are recorded but are only observed by the instructor or a third party if a complaint is raised.

This might result in more complicated structures for storing data and more elaborate consent forms from the students. The overall outcome, however, would be the creation a safe online space where students can engage in the free exchange of ideas without resorting to threats or verbal abuse.

A major part of this principle is the attempt at cultivating good digital citizenship on the part of the students. Through the guidance of the instructor on proper online etiquette, students will not avoid offensive language, but will ideally improve their ability to express their opinion (without name calling) and better listen to counter arguments and opposing viewpoints politely (a novel thought!).

Principle 4:

The need for a principle of privacy is an ethical concern that came up in almost all of the readings and applies broadly to every form of educational technologies. Privacy seems to be a concern at multiple levels. There is access to personal information from outside parties that needs to be negated through student protection, but there is also FERPA in place that protects students from instructors having access to too much personal or other information (Rodríguez-Triana, et al., 2016, Moore & Ellsworth, 2014).

The overall outcome would result in administrations drafting and maintaining privacy policies that were circulated to students, instructors, and stakeholders. It would also require the development of data collection algorithm that segregated performance statistics from personal information.

Ultimately, the process could encourage students to become more cognizant of how data and personal information is shared, stored, and circulated online and for what purposes. This knowledge could help add to the development of students into good digital citizens (Farrow, 2016).

Principle 5:

Technology should not be used for technology's sake. Parameters need to be put into place to assure that instructors and administrators are using technology for their stated goals, ultimately the improvement of student achievement. And assessments need to be conducted to make sure that the results from technology are valid (Rodríguez-Triana, et al., 2016).

In order to achieve these goals of the principle, effective professional development opportunities need to be offered so that those implementing the technology are informed on its appropriate uses and able to determine the accuracy and efficacy of the results.

Establishing this principle will primarily benefit the development and growth of the instructor. By establishing the instructor as the authority figure and providing him or her with training in this capacity, the administration will have enable the instructor to integrate technology in the classroom more effectively and to make greater and more meaningful use of the results from this technology application.


Works Cited

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