Today’s educators have had an immense burden of responsibility placed upon their shoulders. Our country has recognized the diversity of our student population and understands that we must find new ways to educate and prepare these students for life. Next to scientists and engineers, the plethora of technology is indispensable to our field in equipping each of our students to one day compete in a globalized market economy. Laws that endeavor to provide every student the access to a fair and appropriate education, such as No Child Left Behind and IDEA, have been instrumental. Supplementing current instructive methodologies and strategies to teach so many different subgroups within special and gifted education is a difficult and persistent challenge. One thing is certain, we must be sure each child’s strengths and needs are aptly identified across all areas of exceptionality.

If there ever was a poster child for assistive technology it would be Stephen Hawking. A brilliant mind may have been lost if he had been born earlier. Suffering from ALS, Stephen employs an Intel app that learns how he thinks and can even suggest the words he might use to communicate his ideas. From medical innovations such as Cochlear implants, to the apps used by Hawking, assistive technology is giving our exceptional students more of a chance to be successfully integrated into our society. This exponentially growing field has only begun to be proven revolutionary in the lives of our exceptionally challenged population. To stay informed of the accessibility of such devices may mean the difference of whether the minds of our students with disabilities atrophy or whether these precious resources are tapped to benefit all mankind.

Today’s classrooms contain students with such a myriad of capabilities that, without the basic instructional technology available to us, a wealth of potential would be lost. A typical classroom today most probably houses both students with exceptionalities and those who are able to learn at our new core curriculum’s unprecedented pace. How does an educator provide accelerated learning opportunities for his or her gifted students, along with those that have any number of other learning or behavioral developmental challenges, *and* their ELL students? The availability of this immense reservoir of instructional technology is a powerful resource for educators preparing themselves for the daunting task of teaching so many unique individuals.

Instructional technology can allow teachers to provide accelerated learning programs for their gifted students, while substantially meeting the needs of other children with exceptionalities. Technology provides instructors with the means to solve the diverse educational needs that we are presented with in our classrooms. It allows teachers to fulfill the UDL prescription for presenting multiple ways for students to access and interact with information and develop new skills. It broadens the boundaries that used to limit learning for their students to their immediate environment with regard to physical and social stimuli. Where once time, cost, and distance, kept us from wide-ranging interaction with the rest of the world, Web 2.0 is permitting us to expand our horizons for students with exceptional abilities.

We, also, cannot ignore the social impact of our new multicultural diversity in this nation.

Our classrooms are of critical importance to giving our new students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds an even chance at success and fulfillment. Technology gives teachers working with ELL students a decisive edge. They can read into a headset that provides audio/visual help with pronunciation and makes it more efficient to acquire English language expertise. For decades countries have had student exchange programs which often placed a financial burden on families. Technology in our classrooms cuts across socio-economic status and allow students via e-pal and blogs to take part in virtual exchange programs. It brings the world to students where they can expand on and share new ideas, viewpoints, and experiences.

Computer programs offer our younger students drill and practice sessions with immediate rewards. For those students with ADHD or autism, they can provide synchronized auditory and visual presentations that better hold their interest for longer and more fruitful periods of time. For our students requiring special education, study programs can be formatted for their specific needs and allow them to proceed at a greater than usual speed. New software also gives us instantaneous feedback and monitoring to make sure our students are understanding the material. Using technology we can create more intrinsic motivation for learning in our students by making lesson materials more interesting and meaningful.

The field of special education, perhaps more than any other, desperately needs us to stay on top of these new developments. However, the exponential growth of this technology often does not allow sufficient time to explore and master the use of these applications. Upon seeing the effect these tools have in our classrooms we are, nonetheless, encouraged to do all we can to increase our mastery of them for they are in the best interest and welfare of *all* our students. This is where general and special needs educators can pool their resources and work together to provide a very necessary comprehensive approach to our lessons.

Technology is vital when it comes to enhancing our teaching skills and expertise in order to meet the needs of our students. In collaboration, we can learn to meet the ever increasing demands being placed upon us. Educators hold the keys to success for the students we are schooling today to become the next generation of leaders, doctors, inventors, engineers, *and teachers*. Teachers not only serve, guide, and pass on knowledge to those entrusted to them, they have the power to change the future.