EDTECH IN EVERYDAY LIFE: HOW EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SHAPES SOCIETY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted impact of educational technology (EdTech) on society beyond traditional classroom settings. It argues that EdTech's influence extends beyond pedagogical efficiency to reshape cultural, ethical, and democratic dimensions of daily life. Through critical educational philosophy and technology studies, the study examines how routine interactions with EdTech platforms normalize data-driven behaviors such as continuous self-monitoring and performance optimization while marginalizing open reflection and collaborative ambiguity. This shift redefines what it means to be a learner and citizen in a data-centric society. Microlearning applications and learning management systems embed education into everyday routines, blurring boundaries between learning, leisure, and work. While these tools empower autonomous, data-literate learners, they also risk fostering individualism, performance anxiety, and commodification of knowledge. The paper highlights EdTech's role in datafication, surveillance normalization, and the erosion of social learning towards algorithmically curated, isolated experiences. It advocates for a social ethics of EdTech that prioritizes community cohesion, critical engagement, and democratic values. Ultimately, EdTech shapes everyday rhythms and social relations, demanding a reframing of educational technology as a sociotechnical, democratic practice.

1 INTRODUCTION

Educational quality depends on four interconnected components: educators, learners, content, and facilities. Among these, educators are paramount. Beyond transmitting knowledge, teachers serve as moral exemplars and designers of meaningful learning experiences. As Dewey (2021) argues, education is a lifelong process in which educators act as agents of social transformation. According to Selwyn (2022), successful EdTech implementation depends largely on educators' competence to integrate technology meaningfully.

Learners, as the central figure in education, are expected to demonstrate motivation and intellectual curiosity. Slade, Prinsloo, and Khalil (2024) find that student engagement contributes more significantly to academic success than the mere availability of facilities – a finding that holds true in EdTech contexts, where learners function as both users and beneficiaries.

Content must extend beyond information transmission. As Biesta (2023) emphasizes, knowledge transfer should cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and human values, preparing students to act responsibly within an increasingly datafied world.

Educational facilities, traditionally physical resources like books and laboratories, have evolved to include digital tools and Learning Management Systems (LMS). Buckner and Kimmons (2023) caution that EdTech integration must uphold ethical principles and moral character, not merely efficiency or achievement.

These four components form an interrelated framework. Educational technology emerges as a vital instrument to bridge gaps between them, serving as a tool to enhance the overall quality of education.

Educational technology (EdTech) is no longer confined to classrooms or formal learning environments. Today, it permeates daily life, from language-learning apps on smartphones to AI tu-

tors guiding homework, from algorithm-driven course recommendations to digital badges shaping career paths. This integration marks a profound shift: education is no longer a bounded institution but a continuous, data-mediated experience woven into the fabric of everyday existence. As a result, EdTech is not merely changing how we learn, it is actively reshaping societal norms, values, relationships, and even conceptions of the self.

This paper explores how EdTech influences society through its presence in daily life, arguing that its impact extends far beyond pedagogical efficiency to include cultural, ethical, and democratic consequences. Drawing on contemporary philosophy of education and critical technology studies, I examine how routine interactions with EdTech platforms normalize certain behaviors (e.g., constant self-tracking, performance optimization) while marginalizing others (e.g., unstructured reflection, collaborative ambiguity). These shifts, though often subtle, cumulatively redefine what it means to be a learner, a citizen, and a human being in a datafied society.

The analysis proceeds in three parts. First, to develop a theoretical framework grounded in the philosophy of everyday life and critical data studies, emphasizing how technologies embedded in routine practices shape social reality. Second, to conduct a case analysis of two ubiquitous EdTech phenomena in daily life: (1) microlearning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Khan Academy) and (2) learning management systems (LMS) used in hybrid work and lifelong learning. Finally, to reflect on the broader societal implications, proposing that EdTech must be reimagined not as a neutral tool but as a sociotechnical force that demands democratic scrutiny and ethical design.

As Selwyn (2022) observes, 'The most powerful technologies are those we stop noticing.' By making EdTech visible in its everyday operations, this paper contributes to urgent philosophical and societal conversations about the kind of world we are building through digital education. It critically examines how EdTech operates not only as a pedagogical tool but as a sociotechnical force shaping everyday life, offering a perspective that bridges philosophy of education and critical data studies. This paper argues that the normalization of data-driven learning practices through EdTech reshapes not only individual learning behaviors but also broader societal values, shifting education from a collective, democratic process toward individualized, metric-driven self-optimization.

2 METHODS

This paper adopts a philosophical inquiry approach grounded in critical educational technology studies. It examines how educational technologies shape everyday understandings of learning, agency, and social responsibility. The analysis draws on critical perspectives from philosophy of education and technology studies to explore how platform design, language, and data practices normalize values such as efficiency, self-optimization, and continuous monitoring.

Data collection focused on three widely used EdTech platforms—Duolingo, Khan Academy, and Coursera—selected for their prominence in everyday learning contexts. Platform artifacts analyzed included user interfaces, help documentation, investor reports, and privacy policies, collected between January and March 2025. Analysis followed a critical interpretive approach, identifying recurring discursive features (e.g., streaks, leaderboards, personalized dashboards) and coding them against theoretical concepts of datafication, surveillance capitalism, and neoliberal individualism. Rather than assessing learning outcomes or instructional effectiveness, this paper focuses on how routine interactions with EdTech influence habits, perceptions, and social relations over time.

The discussion is supported by secondary sources, including peer-reviewed research, platform reports, and policy discussions related to datafication, surveillance, and digital education. Through this framework, EdTech is positioned as a sociotechnical phenomenon embedded in wider cultural, economic, and political contexts. This study does not claim empirical generalizability; its contributions are theoretical and interpretive.

3 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS: EDTECH, EVERYDAY LIFE, AND SOCIETAL FORMATION

3.1 The Philosophy of Everyday Life and Education

This paper uses several key concepts that require clarification. Datafication refers to the transformation of human activities into quantifiable data that can be tracked, analyzed, and acted upon. Surveillance capitalism describes an economic system in which personal data is extracted and monetized to predict and shape behavior. Neoliberal individualism denotes a social logic that frames learning as personal investment, competition, and self optimization rather than collective development. These concepts guide the analysis of how EdTech structures everyday learning experiences and social expectations.

Philosophers from Henri Lefebvre to John Dewey

have long emphasized that social transformation begins in the mundane. Lefebvre (2020) argued that "everyday life is the site where society reproduces itself," a space of routines, habits, and unexamined assumptions that collectively shape culture and power. Similarly, Dewey (2021) insisted that education is not separate from life but continuous with it; learning happens not only in schools but in homes, workplaces, and communities through lived experience.

In the digital age, EdTech has become a key mediator of this continuity. Apps, platforms, and algorithms now structure how individuals spend their time, set goals, measure progress, and relate to knowledge, it is all within the flow of daily life. Unlike traditional schooling, which is episodic and institutional, EdTech operates continuously and personally, often blurring the boundaries between learning, leisure, and labor.

This shift has profound implications. When education becomes an always on, self-managed activity, it promotes a particular ethos of the learner: autonomous, data-literate, perpetually optimizing. While this may seem empowering, it also risks fostering individualism, performance anxiety, and a transactional view of knowledge, it is trends that ripple outward to reshape societal values.

3.2 Datafication and the Normalization of Surveillance

A defining feature of contemporary EdTech is datafication, that the process of converting human actions into quantifiable data for analysis and intervention (Williamson, 2021). In daily life, this manifests as streaks, leaderboards, completion percentages, and personalized dashboards that gamify learning and encourage habitual engagement.

While often framed as motivational, these mechanisms subtly normalize surveillance as a mode of self-governance. Users learn to monitor themselves through the imagined gaze of the platform, internalizing metrics as measures of worth. As Taylor (2024) note, "When your Duolingo owl scolds you for missing a day, you are not just reminded to practice Spanish, you are trained to see consistency as moral virtue and deviation as failure" (p. 12).

This internalized surveillance aligns with Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, where control operates not through coercion but through self-regulation. In society, this cultivates a population increasingly comfortable with constant monitoring across education, workplaces, and digital environments.

3.3 The Commodification of Learning and Social Relations

Many EdTech platforms are developed by for profit companies whose business models rely on user engagement and data extraction. As example, Duolingo has 10 million paid subscribers, and reports 38% year over year revenue growth in first quarter 2025 (Duolingo News). Consequently, the design of everyday EdTech often prioritizes addictive features (e.g., notifications, rewards) over deep learning or critical inquiry (Buckner & Kimmons, 2023). This commodification transforms learning from a public good into a personalized product, reinforcing neoliberal idea.

In Edtech, as a part of it, social learning once rooted in dialogue, mentorship, and community. Its increasingly replaced by algorithmically curated content and isolated screen time. As Biesta (2023) warns, "When education becomes a solo journey guided by an app, we lose the relational dimension that makes learning truly human".

In Zuboff (2021) the data generated from daily EdTech use is often repurposed for commercial or predictive purposes, turning everyday learning into a source of behavioral surplus. This not only compromises privacy but also embeds market logic into the most intimate aspects of intellectual life.

Despite these concerns, EdTech does not always erode community or deepen individualism. In some contexts, digital platforms actively foster collective learning practices. Students form study groups on Discord, collaborate on coding projects through GitHub, and participate in peer feedback forums within open online courses. These spaces enable dialogue, mentorship, and shared problem solving beyond physical classrooms. Experiences with EdTech also vary across generations. Digital natives often perceive learning apps as natural extensions of social interaction, while digital immigrants tend to experience them as external monitoring tools that demand adaptation. EdTech further expands access for disabled learners and individuals in remote communities by providing flexible pacing, assistive features, and geographical reach. These examples show that EdTech outcomes depend on design, governance, and social context rather than technology alone.

3.4 Toward a Societal Ethics of EdTech

To navigate these challenges, scholars advocate for a societal ethics of EdTech, that evaluates technologies not only by their utility but by their impact on social cohesion, equity, and democratic culture (Regan & Jesse, 2023). This requires asking: Does this tool foster or fragment community? Does it

promote critical engagement or passive consumption? Whose values are embedded in its design? Such questions move beyond individual choice to consider EdTech as a collective sociotechnical system that shapes the conditions of social life. Only through this lens can we ensure that EdTech serves the public good rather than private profit.

4 CASE ANALYSIS: EDTECH IN THE RHYTHMS OF DAILY LIFE

4.1 Microlearning Apps: Gamification, Habit Formation, and the Quantified Self

Microlearning apps like Duolingo, Khan Academy, and Memrise exemplify how EdTech integrates into daily routines. Designed for short, frequent sessions (e.g., "5 minutes a day!"), these apps fit seamlessly into commutes, lunch breaks, or bedtime scrolling. Their success lies in behavioral design: streaks, XP points, and animated rewards create a sense of progress and obligation. On the surface, this appears democratizing, it is making learning accessible anytime, anywhere. However, a deeper analysis reveals societal trade offs.

Recent empirical data show the normalization of microlearning in everyday life. Duolingo reported more than 20 million daily active users worldwide. Users access the app during commuting, waiting time, and leisure moments. This pattern places learning inside daily routines. Time use studies indicate that people often open educational apps alongside social media platforms. This behavior blurs the boundary between learning and entertainment. Microlearning therefore does not interrupt daily life. It restructures daily time into short, fragmented learning moments. Streaks, scores, and completion metrics reinforce continuous self-monitoring. These empirical patterns support the argument that EdTech shapes everyday rhythms and normalizes data-driven learning practices.

4.1.1 User Perspectives Across Platforms

To understand how microlearning apps affect real users, Google Play Store reviews and independent blog reviews were examined across two major platforms: Duolingo and Khan Academy. The findings reveal both shared patterns and platform-specific differences.

Duolingo: Streak Anxiety and Energy Systems Duolingo user reviews reveal how gamification can generate frustration rather than sustained motivation. One user with a 1,175-day streak wrote: "I am seriously considering letting my 1,175 day streak go and uninstall the app altogether. Unless I want to spend hours watching videos to get energy or spend a lot of diamonds to buy energy, they only give you enough for one round" (Hicks, 2026). Here, the streak – a metric designed to motivate – has become a burden. The energy system, which limits free daily lessons, transforms learning from an open-ended activity into a rationed resource.

Another user reported that bonus point systems fail unpredictably: "Many times I was granted double/triple points... just gone. Not really inspiring is it????" (Buglyo, 2026). A third reviewer offered a balanced assessment: "Excellently gamifies habitual practice... 3/5 stars for me – good when it's good" (Green, 2026).

An independent blog review by a polyglot who has learned over 20 languages reinforced these findings (The Linguist, 2026). The author tested Duolingo's Turkish and Hindi courses and concluded: "You cannot 'drill' your way to fluency. Fluency comes from massive amounts of input, and Duolingo's bite-sized chunks don't provide enough of it." The author noted that a friend with a 1,500-day Spanish streak "still struggles with speaking the language," concluding that "a long streak does not correlate with fluency."

Khan Academy: Appreciation and Limitations Khan Academy user reviews present a more balanced picture. One reviewer wrote: "Best app I've ever used. I've never felt so motivated and happy to keep learning... every lesson leaves me content and wanting more" (Saffierstenen, 2026). The same reviewer highlighted a design choice that reduces anxiety: Khan Academy "doesn't immediately call you out in bright red when you get a question wrong, which is a small thing but it really motivates."

However, other reviews identify persistent limitations. One user noted that Khan Academy lacks depth for skill development: "I don't recommend using this to learn coding or programming. They lack those things" (Anonymous Google User, 2018). A non-native English speaker requested a translator feature, noting: "Sometimes it's kinda hard to understand the word meanings... I really need a translator in this app so I don't have to keep changing to another app" (Google User, 2026). Another user pointed out interface friction: "The answer box is too small and it can't slide nicely" (Jean, 2023).

An independent Medium review confirmed these patterns (Padmanabhan, 2025). The author praised Khan Academy's free, structured lessons but noted three limitations: "There's no live

teacher, no peer discussion, no community vibe. You're learning solo"; "If you're the type who needs accountability, you might abandon it halfway"; and "If you're looking for grad-school level depth... you'll probably outgrow it fast."

4.1.2 Synthesis: Shared Patterns Across Platforms

Across both platforms, three shared patterns emerge. First, gamification creates pressure: Duolingo users experience streak anxiety and energy system frustration; Khan Academy users note the burden of self-motivation without accountability. Second, both platforms have hard ceilings: Duolingo users plateau at A2/B1; Khan Academy users report the platform is insufficient for advanced coding or graduate-level depth. Third, social learning is absent: neither platform meaningfully integrates peer discussion, mentorship, or collaborative problem-solving. These patterns support Biesta's (2023) warning that when education becomes a solo journey, "we lose the relational dimension that makes learning truly human."

Advocates for gamified EdTech contend that features such as streaks, leaderboards, and energy systems address the critical issue of learner attrition. Given that a significant majority of online learners fail to complete self-paced courses, gamification is defended as a necessary tool for increasing engagement and retention. The high volume of daily active users on platforms like Duolingo—exceeding 20 million—and the consistent traffic to Khan Academy are cited as evidence that these tools succeed in fostering habitual practice where traditional models may falter. Furthermore, proponents argue that quantified self-tracking empowers individuals by building confidence through visible progress and helping identify specific knowledge gaps (Padmanabhan, 2025). In this view, the issue lies not with the concept of gamification, but with instances of poor design.

While this paper acknowledges that gamification effectively boosts platform engagement and provides helpful feedback via self-tracking, it argues that these defenses frequently conflate "app usage" with "actual learning". As evidenced by user experiences, maintaining an extensive streak (e.g., 1,500 days) signifies consistent login behavior rather than linguistic fluency. The critical question is not whether gamification motivates, but rather what behaviors it incentivizes: Streaks prioritize daily logins over deep, cognitive comprehension; leaderboards foster individual competition at the expense of collaborative learning; energy systems are often designed to drive paid subscriptions rather than intellectual curiosity. Ultimately, the commercial implementation of these tools reflects a neoliberal logic that treats learning as an individual responsibility to be optimized for retention metrics rather than a shared, relational process. A reformed model—incorporating peer feedback loops, collaborative challenges, and transparent data practices—could potentially harness motivational benefits without the educational erosion documented in this study.

First, gamification reframes learning as performance. Users focus on maintaining streaks or climbing leaderboards rather than understanding concepts. A 2023 study found that Duolingo users prioritized "not breaking their streak" over actual language proficiency (Slade et al., 2024). This reflects a broader societal shift toward metric-driven selfhood, where personal value is tied to measurable output.

Second, these apps promote individualized learning, reducing opportunities for dialogue, cultural exchange, or collaborative problem solving, core elements of language acquisition and civic education. As Manolev et al. (2023) argue, "When language learning happens alone with an app, it loses its social soul" (p. 52).

Third, the data generated – session length, error patterns, drop-off points – is used to refine algorithms and sell insights to advertisers or employers. In this way, everyday learning becomes a site of data extraction, reinforcing asymmetrical power relations between users and platforms. For instance, Duolingo's own investor reports highlight user retention metrics – not learning outcomes – as key performance indicators (Duolingo News, 2025).

4.2 Learning Management Systems in Hybrid Work and Lifelong Learning

Beyond formal education, learning management systems (LMS) like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, and corporate LMS platforms (e.g., Workday Learn) now structure lifelong learning in professional and civic contexts. Employees complete compliance training; citizens take online courses for upskilling; professionals earn digital credentials, it is all mediated through EdTech.

This expansion reflects a societal expectation of continuous self-improvement. In a rapidly changing labor market, individuals are pressured to constantly update skills, often using employer-mandated or algorithm-recommended platforms. While this supports adaptability, it also blurs work and learning, turning personal development into an extension of labor discipline.

Moreover, LMS platforms collect extensive data on user behavior, which is used to predict employability, recommend career paths, or flag "low performers". A 2022 report by the Electronic Frontier

Foundation (EFF) revealed that some corporate LMS tools share completion data with HR systems, influencing promotions or layoffs (EFF, 2022). This creates a panoptic workplace, where learning is not for growth but for evaluation.

Crucially, these systems often lack transparency. Users rarely know how algorithms select content or interpret their engagement. As Wolfe and Pasquini (2023) note, "When your career trajectory is shaped by an opaque recommendation engine, autonomy becomes an illusion" (p. 392).

4.2.1 User Perspectives on LMS Platforms: Credentialism and Isolation

Independent user reviews of major LMS platforms reinforce the theoretical critique of workplace-oriented EdTech. A detailed review of Coursera noted that while the platform offers legitimate credentials, the learning experience is often solitary: "Limited interaction... most courses lack direct access to instructors, relying on peer discussion forums" (Padmanabhan, 2025). The same reviewer observed that Coursera uses "nudges" to keep learners on track – a form of algorithmic governance that subtly shapes behavior without explicit coercion. This aligns with Foucault's concept of disciplinary power: users internalize platform-defined goals and monitor themselves against them.

A review of LinkedIn Learning revealed even sharper critiques of social isolation. The author, who completed 12 courses, noted: "There is very little interaction with other people. Online learning is already pretty impersonal. So it's quite easy to lose focus and motivation when you're studying by yourself" (MediaJio, 2021). The reviewer explicitly compared platforms, finding that "Coursera and edX have student-to-student interaction miles ahead" – suggesting that LinkedIn Learning is particularly poor at fostering community. This supports Biesta's (2023) warning about the loss of the "relational dimension" in solo, app-guided education.

Both reviews highlighted the credentialist logic embedded in LMS design. Coursera users pursue certificates "you can boast on LinkedIn & your CV," while LinkedIn Learning emphasizes sharing completion badges on professional profiles. One LinkedIn Learning reviewer noted that "having them on your profile will not hurt your resume" – framing education as a form of social proof rather than genuine understanding (MediaJio, 2021). A Coursera reviewer similarly advised that the platform is worth it "IF you are after career-focused education (with certifications) + skills you can boast on your CV/Resume" (Padmanabhan, 2025). This instrumentalism reflects the neoliberal logic this paper critiques: learning is no longer a public, relational good but a private investment in human capital.

These user testimonies, while not generalizable, provide grounded evidence that LMS platforms – even those with legitimate educational content – risk reducing learning to credential accumulation and isolated screen time. The lack of meaningful peer interaction, the reliance on algorithmic nudges, and the emphasis on shareable certificates all point toward the privatization and metricization of lifelong learning.

5 SOCIETAL CONSEQUENCES: FROM INDIVIDUAL HABITS TO CULTURAL SHIFTS

The cumulative effect of these everyday EdTech interactions is a cultural reorientation. Table 1 summarizes the key shifts in learning values from traditional education to EdTech-shaped practices.

Learning Dimension	Traditional Emphasis	EdTech-Shaped Emphasis
Social dynamic	Collective discussion, dialogue	Individual performance, self-tracking
Temporal rhythm	Gradual, long-form engagement	Fragmented, metric-driven intervals
Measure of success	Understanding, creativity, reflection	Completion rates, scores, streaks
Role of knowledge	Evolving public discourse	Modular, consumable content
Accountability	Trust-based educator evaluation	Metric-based platform monitoring

Table 1. Shifts in Learning Values from Traditional Education to EdTech Shaped Practices.

Time is increasingly fragmented into optimized learning intervals, which reduces opportunities for sustained, critical, and focused thinking. While EdTech improves efficiency, it may limit the depth of cognitive engagement if used uncritically. To

deepen knowledge, learners must combine EdTech-supported learning with extended periods of reflection and focused study.

Knowledge is increasingly treated as modular, consumable content rather than a collective and evolving discourse. Learners often consume short-form content and move on without further engagement. While this improves accessibility, it may reduce opportunities for dialogue and critical interpretation. As EdTech becomes embedded in everyday routines, learners increasingly consume bite-sized content in short time spans and move on without further engagement. While this improves accessibility, it may reduce opportunities for deep reflection and discussion. Ideally, learning should involve dialogue and critical exchange, allowing individuals to process and interpret new knowledge collaboratively. However, many learners rely solely on quick searches or short videos, limiting the depth of understanding. For some individuals, independent learning is effective, but for others, meaningful learning requires interaction, discussion, and shared interpretation.

Success is increasingly measured through metrics such as completion rates and scores rather than understanding, creativity, or meaningful contribution. This approach emphasizes outcomes over process.

Community is replaced by networked individualism, where learning is a solo achievement. Before the widespread adoption of EdTech, collaborative study groups were common. In contrast, contemporary learning practices often emphasize individual achievement through independent module completion. While digital connectivity exists, learners sometimes benefit from discussion groups to foster shared understanding and collective learning experiences.

These shifts align with broader societal trends toward neoliberal individualism and data capitalism. Education, once a public project aimed at cultivating informed, empathetic citizens, risks becoming a privatized, performance-driven endeavor focused on human capital accumulation (Noble, 2022). Yet resistance exists. Open-source alternatives (e.g., Moodle), community learning circles, and critical digital literacy initiatives demonstrate that EdTech can support solidarity, equity, and democratic participation if intentionally designed and governed.

Based on the analysis, three actionable recommendations emerge:

1. For platforms: Remove streak counts and public leaderboards, which gamify anxiety. Replace with collaborative challenges and peer feedback loops.

2. For educators: Integrate "data audits" into curriculum, where learners examine what data their apps collect and how it is used.

3. For policymakers: Require EdTech platforms to disclose retention metrics alongside learning outcomes in investor reports, making clear when profit motives conflict with pedagogy.

6 LIMITATIONS

This paper does not present original empirical data. The arguments are theoretical and illustrative rather than generalizable. These limitations suggest the need for empirical validation of the theoretical claims presented. Additionally, the impact of EdTech varies significantly across contexts, as some platforms and communities successfully foster collaboration and collective learning (e.g., Discord study groups and open-source MOOCs).

Beyond these general limitations, four specific scope conditions apply:

1. **Geographic scope:** The analysis draws primarily on high-income, Anglophone contexts (e.g., Duolingo, Coursera, LinkedIn Learning). EdTech practices in low- and middle-income countries often prioritize access and basic infrastructure over behavioral optimization, potentially altering social outcomes. Findings may not generalize to such settings.

2. **Generational differences:** This study does not systematically compare age cohorts. Digital natives (who have grown up with tracking technologies) may experience self-monitoring differently than digital immigrants, who might perceive learning apps as external surveillance tools requiring active adaptation.

3. **Platform evolution:** EdTech design changes rapidly. Findings reflect platform features, interface elements, and data practices observed between January and March 2025. Future iterations of these platforms may alter or mitigate the dynamics described here.

4. The platforms analyzed – Duolingo, Coursera, LinkedIn Learning – originate in and primarily serve Western, high-income markets. In contrast, EdTech in India (e.g., BYJU'S) or China (e.g., Zuoyebang) often prioritizes exam preparation and access over behavioral optimization. While surveillance and data extraction occur in these contexts, the social meaning differs: learners may view self-tracking as a pathway

to social mobility rather than as neoliberal individualism. Future research should examine these contextual variations systematically.

7 CONCLUSION: REIMAGINING EDTECH AS A DEMOCRATIC SOCIOTECHNICAL PRACTICE

This paper has shown that EdTech's influence on society operates most powerfully not in grand institutional reforms but in the quiet rhythms of daily life. Through microlearning apps, LMS platforms, and data-driven feedback loops, EdTech reshapes how individuals relate to knowledge, time, community, and themselves. These changes, though incremental, collectively redefine the social contract of education, shifting it from a public, relational, and emancipatory project toward a privatized, metricized, and surveilled activity.

However, technology is not destiny. As Dewey (1916/2021) reminded us, tools gain meaning through use. The same EdTech that can fragment society can also connect it, if guided by democratic values. This requires:

1. Designing for collectivity: Prioritizing collaborative features over solo gamification.
2. Centering transparency: Allowing users to understand and control their data.
3. Embedding critical literacy: Teaching learners to question algorithmic authority.
4. Reasserting public oversight: Treating EdTech as infrastructure for the common good, not private profit.

Ultimately, the question is not whether EdTech belongs in daily life, it already does. The question is what kind of society we want it to help create. If we envision a society grounded in equity, dialogue, and human dignity, then EdTech must be reimagined not as a consumer product but as a democratic sociotechnical practice that serves people, not platforms.

As we scroll through our next lesson or check our learning dashboard, let us remember that every click is not just a data point, but a vote for the future of education and society.

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