

Technology in the Classroom

In a short amount of time, developing technologies have changed the landscape of the education system. Students of the 21st century have grown accustomed to technology and good teachers have figured out how to implement it into their lesson plans. As with everything else, there are some pros and cons to using technology in the classroom. Here are some examples of the good and the bad.

PRO: Resources are found with a touch of a button

Back in the day, doing your research could mean spending hours sifting through musty old encyclopedias for a quick blurb of information. Nowadays, kids seem to have it easy when it comes to research. A quick Google Search can send thousands of pages of information directly to your students. If you're a librarian or Merriam Webster, this may sound like the downfall of the American education system, but in fact it can make working on a research paper seem like less of a chore for your students.

CON: Not all information is accurate

While information can be accessed in seconds thanks to the Internet, your students have to be careful on where they get information. For every primary resource that can be accessed online, there are literally thousands of sites that are not credible sources of information. Anything can be written on the web and students should be aware that finding the right source is as important as finding the right information.

PRO: Plenty of tools at your disposal

As an educator, if you use technology to your advantage, you can really open up your lesson plan. Tablets and smart phones have a wide variety of apps that can be used as educational tools that you can implement for your lesson plan and can make learning fun. 21st Century learners are tech savvy and teaching them on their literal and figurative playground is a way to meet them halfway.

CON: Those tools can also be distractions

Let's face it: for every useful app you can find to help your students learn, there are more than enough time-wasting apps to really become a distraction for your students. Whether they are playing the new hottest games or are chatting with their friends on any number of social network platforms, getting kids to pay attention was hard enough for teachers that didn't have to contend with Candy Crush.

PRO: Technology Opens Up Discussion Outside of the Classroom

The Internet can be a wonderful tool to communicate with your students outside of the classroom. Many teachers set up Facebook groups for their students where they can further the discussion outside of the classroom. This teaching practice allows the kids to ask questions

in a setting other than the class and can help encourage lively discussion about the topic at hand between the students.

CON: Social media and the Internet can be dangerous

Opening up your classroom to the Internet can be a great way to lead discussion, but just like any other online activity, it opens your classroom up to the darker side of the Internet. Any information being shared has the potential to be hacked, so it's important to monitor what is being shared among your students. If you're not careful, outside forces such as spammers can infiltrate any discussion group you set up. Internally, it's important to monitor the discussion between your students, as discussions can turn heated.

Every technology that we have ever invented has had its good qualities and its bad qualities. Keeping these dueling sides balanced can assure that it remains an effective teaching tool in this young century.

Top 12 Ways Technology Changed Learning

In the 21st century, technology has changed the ways in which we communicate and go about our lives. Very few educators would disagree with the notion that technology has dramatically changed the teaching and learning process.

With the help of some fellow teachers, here is a short list of the top 12 ways how technology has changed education:

Communication Evolution

Because we text, our students have learned a dialect that we don't always understand. Kids communicate in many different modalities as a result of technology. Maybe it's 2M2H (too much to handle) for some adults.

Expanding Audience

Students' sense of audience is completely different. When I was in high school in the 1980s, the audience was the teacher. When I started teaching high school in 1988, the audience was the teacher and peers. In the 21st century, it's the **WORLD**. Blogging, Twitter, Facebook, and other online platforms changed our notion of audience.

Poster Boards: A Thing of the Past

Do you remember the history or science fair presentation boards that we created? Web 2.0 tools like Glogster have changed this experience. Glogster is a platform where students can create a multimedia "glog" or poster to demonstrate what they know and understand about a topic.

Bye Bye to 3-Ring Binders

There's no need to carry around a bulky three binder anymore. A computer, tablet computer can keep all of those files and handouts in neat folders. There's also a web 2.0 tool, LiveBinders that allows users to create a binder online.

Interactive Textbooks

The way that we think of textbooks is completely changing. It is no longer limited to merely text and pictures. Today's textbooks often have web-based sites that include assessments, animations, additional materials, videos, and other materials to support the learning of new content.

eBooks on the Rise

Speaking of textbooks, ebooks are becoming more prevalent in schools with the advancements of e-readers and tablet computers. I think in the near future that students won't carry around big bulky backpacks filled with heavy textbooks.

No More Note Passing

I'm not sure if this is directly connected to learning, but we don't pass notes in class anymore. Students text one another instead. It's just another funny way how technology has changed education.

Disappearance of the Chalk Board

Much attention has been placed on interactive gaming as a powerful platform for student learning. Every day, new programs and web-based tools are teaching our students content that was once paper or chalkboard based.

Assistive Tech for Better Communication

Voice recognition software has improved greatly in the past few years and is more accessible. Children with special needs and limited English proficiency are able to more effectively communicate in language based contexts.

The iPad: A Game Changer

iPads are such adaptable and powerful tools for teaching and learning. There are so many applications but I think the most powerful and exciting aspect is the enhancement of learning experiences for students with special needs, particularly those on the autism spectrum.

Extended Classroom Communities

Technology facilitates our ability to extend classroom community by using web-based platforms like Edmodo. Teachers and students can use this platform to discuss homework, post assignments, and interact with peers as they work on projects.

Rise of Web-Based Research

We still use libraries, but so much of our research and learning is now more web-based. What used to take hours in the library to find, we find instantaneously. As a result, we need to sort through huge amounts of information efficiently. We know how to get and use information. I would argue that because it takes less time to find information, we spend more time digesting, thinking, and learning about new information.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners

As educators, we know the power of Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Technology facilitates our ability to meet the needs of all kinds of learners.

Sixth Grade: Argumentative Prompt Set 2

Write an argumentative essay justifying whether or not using technology in the classroom is beneficial for students. Support your claim using evidence from the texts.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages
- Plan your essay
- Write your essay
- Revise and edit your essay

Be sure to:

- Include a claim
- Address counterclaims
- Use evidence from multiple sources
- Avoid overly relying on one source

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Remember to spend time reading, planning, writing, revising, and editing.

STUDENT NAME _____

PLANNING SHEET

Use this sheet to plan what you will write. The writing on this sheet will **not** be scored.

A large rectangular box with a black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

This sheet will not be scored.

Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.

Lined writing area with 25 horizontal lines.

