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Do you like using tech in the classroom--REALLY like it?
Manager's Choice

Jacqui Murray
Master Teacher, Technology at Curriculum Study Groups
Top Contributor

What do you think? One I get a lot from parents is 'kids need to play outside'. Do you ever hear that?

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Pamela Jimison
Educational Technologist at William Jessup University

Yes - I do enjoy using it because it helps my students! As a K-12 teacher, I used the document camera daily, recorded my math lessons using a Livescribe under the document camera, then uploaded the lessons to our web site at night for review, and students used tools such as edlinks4U or creating a PowToon of a watercycle during center time. In higher ed, my students use Google docs all the time, Google sites for journaling, our LMS weekly, poll everywhere and socrative...among other things. It helps them connect to the lessons, provides real-world problems with solutions (collaborative document), and I can use it as a formative assessment. :)

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Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

I too have 1:1 iPads ,doc camera and projector in my elementary class room. They are tools and I am very mindful that face to face collaborative learning is also important and all the screen time these technologies provide us must be balanced with authentic interactions. These tools are powerful and I teach using them daily but am mindful of the need for my students and myself to interact face to face with low tech activities, discussion, hands on manipulatives etc. This is also true at home and after school for all - students, parents, educators etc. We need to be mindful that we need to unplug and interact in meaningful ways and use these devices wisely.They can be rather addictive. I am sure we all have our preferred devices- smart phone, laptops, tablets.. I have all three as do many of my students.. So like my classroom, we must balance the time we spend outside, with real people and connect with ourselves.

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👍 Deepti S., Rosa D. like this

Jacqui Murray
Master Teacher, Technology at Curriculum Study Groups
Top Contributor

I'm so impressed, Pamela and Debbie. This is what tech should bring to the classroom. Seemless, convenient, a tool (not an obsession or the latest toy). I love what you-all do. Do you realize it's not that common? Many teachers see tech as a time-waster. I don't get it.

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👍 Rosa D., Pamela J. and 1 other like this

Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

I run into resistance largely due to poor training, teachers being too overwhelmed & overloaded and lack of knowing what tech tools can do. I have not experienced the time waster belief. I see teachers seeing the possible benefits and knowing it is important but unable to squeeze one more thing to learn...

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👍 Tamika J., Rosa D. and 1 other like this

Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

I teaching courses ranging from programming to digital architectural design to ANDROID development. My kids learn to use the computer and other digital tools as a means to self-expression, creativity and design. I love using technology, BUT...the biggest issue at hand is not whether it should be in the classroom or whether teachers should be using them, facilitating their use. The primary considerations should be:

1. Are the teachers adept, prepared to be effective facilitators and
2. The training of teachers need to be ample, effective/constructive, continuous and mandated.

I can't count the number of "training" sessions that left me frustrated b/c of the time wasted b/c the instructor/trainer poorly communicated the intent and substance of the training. Thank goodness I can figure things out on my own. Not so for so many others.

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👍 Rosa D., Debbie R. and 1 other like this

Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

Richard I agree many of our trainings are very poor if at all. Teachers like so many others are busy people and they need to use their time well. This is a large hurtle and focus on quality plus time to learn with followup training is crucial.

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👍 Rosa D., Christy P. N. like this

Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

Debbie,

Agreed. QUALITY and TIME. Post-training needs/support must also be readily and easily accessible to the learners/teachers as well. I have had too many trainings where we walk away and there is the sense that we are expected remember all that has been thrown at us. Okay, the training has to end at some point, but then, there should be access to resources that re-explain what was to be learned during the training. Those resources should be well thought out, easily accessible, organized, concise and simple enough for the least tech-savvy person to understand. This often does not happen.
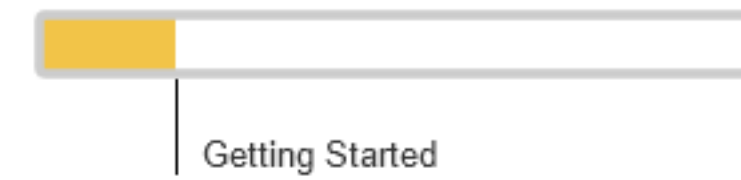

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Joel Kahn commented on a discussion in International Society for Technology in Education. Teresa E. New report from Nat'l Academy of Sciences on STEM Integration in K-12 Education. Worth the read. http://ow.ly/uClFn ^T The National Academies

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Christy P. Novack commented on a discussion in International Society for Technology in Education. Jacqui M. Do you like using tech in the classroom--REALLY like it? What do you think? One I get a lot from parents is 'kids need to play outside'. Do you ever hear that? 13 Reasons For and 3

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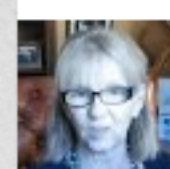International Society ...

Feedback

Jacqui,

As a very strong proponent of the use of technology, I also find myself thinking that the "trainings" are a waste of time. You don't have to convince me why I need to use technology, but many others need a well-thought out pep rally on why the use of technology WILL make the teacher's lives better, easier AND improve the outcomes as it pertains to student achievement. Administrations push the use of technology, but do not provide the overwhelming positive rationale for using it. Administrations often fail to make the instruction, support and environment required for the successful implementation of technology along side the push to simply utilize it b/c it's the trend.

It's a waste of time especially if the use of technology doesn't not convincingly show that outcomes fare any better than traditional methods.

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👍 Rosa D., Debbie R. and 2 others like this

Jacqui Murray
Master Teacher, Technology at Curriculum Study Groups
Top Contributor

I agree, Richard. I get tech, but it doesn't matter how much training--lots of others teachers think they can't do it so they can't. Exactly as we teach students. It break my heart to see papers piled on top of the computers or students playing repetitive IPad apps rather than higher order thinking.

I was curious if others had the same feeling. I think you-all do.

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👍 John B., Rosa D. like this

Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

Jacqui as a teacher wo uses great deal of tech and where each class has doc cameras, smart boards and some iPads... I disagree strongly that it is not that teachers think they can't so they don't but rather time , lack of training and being so over loaded that they do not have the ability to add on one more thing ...(BTW your viewpoint is rather negative in my opinion and I would love to know why you hold such a low opinion of teachers) . I assume you work in a school It is sad if that is all you are seeing...

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👍 Rosa D. likes this

Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

Most teachers I see are willing. Some are going to resist b/c they don't see the benefits or are not convinced that the use of technology will improve instruction, learning and in some instances I don't disagree. But I have yet to meet a teacher who felt that they couldn't use it if there was enough enticement, motivation, incentive.

Again, love technology and all the classes I teach use it as an integral part of the course, but I am also dismayed at times with the "over-emphasis" for the use of technology and the "exaggerated" enthusiasm for it. There are times when it seems that we oooh and ahhh ANY TIME technology is used and label it innovative, creative, etc. when in reality it is not. Some teachers and schools use technology as selling point rather than as a tool for improved instruction and learning. A lot of money is wasted in school districts throughout the country on technology that will do little to improve educational outcomes. It's too bad.

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👍 Rosa D., Debbie R. like this

Nigel Thomas
ICT and AV Technical Support Manager and Learning Spaces Design and Development Manager at Aberystwyth University

Richard talks about tech as a tool. This is exactly the term I use when informing lecturers about new tech I have installed.
At home I hafe some very nice power tools, however I often use traditional hand tools for particular tasks. They can be quicker, more accurate and more environmentaly friendly. It is simply about common sense and using the tool that the teacher and the students get the best results with. Of course in order to exercise that choice teachers must know how to use the tools. A ch ain saw demonstrates the point. It will do the job much quicker than by hand but used incorrectly it could take your legs off.

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👍 Rosa D. likes this

hiba elbawab
english teacher at Al Mawakeb School - Barsha

I totally agree with what has been said , for technology can help with making the education process as meaningful and as real as life itself. However, I do have a question or more like an inquiry. For my masters course i have to research an ethical , social , or legal issue when using technology in the classroom . What are the hottest topics at this moment ?

Like • Reply privately • Flag as inappropriate • 22 days ago

Pamela Jimison
Educational Technologist at William Jessup University

Funny, Hiba...my students (who are teaching candidates) are all writing on the same topic right now! I think social media in the classroom is one of the hottest topics at the moment. I'm sure there are many!

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Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

hiba- Privacy concerns about student data, not all students have tech or wifi at home, cost and training are concerns are issues I see. How to use social media in the classroom (or not) and the range of digital devices available... sure there are more.

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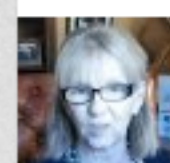
👍 Rosa D. likes this

hiba elbawab
english teacher at Al Mawakeb School - Barsha

Thanks Pamela and Debbie!

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👍 Debbie R. likes this

Jacqui Murray
Master Teacher, Technology at Curriculum Study Groups
Top Contributor

So sorry, Debbie--had no intention of 'sounding negative'. You actually said it well--that teachers don't embrace technology because of lack of "time , lack of training and being so over loaded that they do not have the ability to add on one more thing". Definitely the biggest reasons. I know schools are trying to solve this, too. Sometimes effectively, sometimes where teachers end up feeling overwhelmed.

Dunno the answer. Eventually, tech will be the educational paper-and-pencil--used when strategic, ignored when a more appropriate tool is available.

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👍 Rosa D. likes this

Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

Thanks Jacqui I appreciate your response . As a teacher the pressure to do it all but not supported, given time, resources, funding, etc. and then blamed for it all is disheartening for many

I am sensitive to this. The increasing demands and piling on more to already stretched and tired teachers yet hearing criticism for not applying, changing etc. is a common theme I hear repeated. Yet, it so overlooks the real 'why' and what teachers are doing for children during such change and blame. Sometimes with their own money and always on their own time they will add to what they know is lacking or embrace a small manageable change. (How I learned the iPad and much of the tech and much more of what I do - but I have no life ;-) I know from experience there are those who are unsure of change because education is in a pretty constant state of change and when another "I have an idea that can fix education." rises up yet again teachers wisely will pause... fads move in and out and teachers especially experienced teachers have experienced huge swings and grand ideas that often flat or are poorly implemented etc.. I agree tech is here, powerful and I train many on how it can actually help and reduce some of the sheer amounts of paper we touch... but again my staff is so worn out with all the demands they look at me knowing and say .. maybe this summer?

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👍 Patrick Lawrence D., Rosa D. and 1 other like this

Christy P. Novack
Elementary teacher, instructional designer, after hours musician

Christy P.

Jacqui, in addition to Debbie's thoughts, which I totally agree with, part of the issue is also having leadership that is supportive, motivating and encouraging. I have found that teachers are asked to do or use something but the leaders themselves are not necessarily versed in technology or meaningful ways to utilize for content in the classroom. Teachers need a supportive hand to power through the challenges that can arise when using tech tools in the class. However, the organization or lack of meaningful training is the persistent issue in many districts. There are other ways to train teachers besides having someone come in after school when everyone is brain dead, show you something and then never see them for months, or ever. Districts need to realize that having a tech coordinator/specialist(s) who can work internally on such challenges in the district is more important.

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👍 Debbie R., Jacqui M. and 1 other like this

A Cron
Instructor at PSJAN HS/South Texas College

A

As a technology (computer/calculator) users in the classroom for the past 34 years, I have found most teachers have not been properly trained to use technology; however, most technology PD is poorly done by none educators, even most teacher training colleges and universities do not understand the training needed (too theoretical on education theory).

Tony

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👍 Debbie R. likes this

Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

Richard

Tony,

Poorly trained. I am constantly amazed at the lack of recognition that the training provided is often more complicated than the actual technology. There are a lot of people who know about the technology, but often don't have the teaching skills, presentation skills to transfer that knowledge effectively.

There are far too many technology computers today, for example, peddling their products to schools and providing training that is lackluster and inadequate. But, of course, in-house training is often this way as well.

I can't tell the number of times I've been asked to implement this and that w/o proper discussion of their PROVEN merits. As longs as it has something to do with using technology, it seems to find its way into our professional lives as some necessity.

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👍 John B., Jacqui M. like this

A Cron
Instructor at PSJAN HS/South Texas College

A

Having been involved for a short time in purchasing of tech, the standard budget for training is about 10-20% of the total budget, which in some cases was 2-3 hours total on-site training of newbies...this is totally worthless training...I recall one multi-million investment in a student management system where our school district ended up being the companies beta test site for districts of our size...I had applied to be the manager and was denied by the district as being too knowledgeable to be in charge; within 6 months at being on the user end, I figured out the district was sold a bill of !#$?!#! which they continued to use for many years...

Tony

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Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

Debbie

I agree with much of this discussion. Christy makes an important point but I want to add a bit more with what I am experiencing myself.. She wrote "Districts need to realize that having a tech coordinator/specialist(s) who can work internally on such challenges in the district is more important." I agree and we now have two BUT they are NOT teachers. They know tech hardware, networks, manage our website and basic software but are not trainers or teachers which is a BIG difference in the quality of trainings. For example all teachers received a Mac Book and at my school 1 teacher iPad. Many had no idea how to turn the Macbook on being only familiar with Windows & desktops. Our Sd has only had Windows on very old desk top computers slowly adding mac carts to each site. The ones that got the iPads received no training . I am in the year one iPad cohort and we trained ourselves
(brutal) and created our own learning group. This iPad cohort is beginning to train others but we are so busy ourselves teaching as well! The macbook 'trainings' I have been told were useless and unorganized very unhelpful and many just shook their heads and are not using the MacBooks. So for me it is crucial the tech folk also be teachers as well but maybe Teachers on assignment (meaning they leave the classroom for a time to help train other teachers) .

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👍 Richard P. likes this

Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

Richard

Debbie,

That kind of waste of technology and human potential is so typical with this crazy drive to institute technology at all cost. A heavy cost... it makes companies like APPLE, MS happy, but as a whole, it has made education more fun, more engaging, but not very productive and BETTER per se. I think using teachers as part of the on-going training/support system is a great idea! An extended IT support group when IT often overwhelmed or unwilling to be helpful.

I often shake my head when our kids are given assignments or technology that amount to no more than playing "interactive" games using apps teaching them, among other things, how to be the next generation of apps consumers instead of creators. Many of those kids are still doing poorly in math, science and certainly writing. Man, would love to be able to help create a technology-based agenda for a school just starting off. I have some ideas, but so many schools simply jump on the bandwagon to one fad to another. One trend to another b/c some school has been deemed innovators or b/c there is anecdotal, limited indication that it works.

We've allowed too many of these tech companies to bamboozle us into believing that their product, app will improve education in a profound way when the construction of such technologies have not been proven in any appreciable way. But, if it's championed by some district or experts, it automatically becomes the next "answer" to our complex education woes. Sheesh.

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👍 Jacqui M., Debbie R. and 1 other like this

Debbie Rice
Teacher at Cambrian School District

I agree SD are moving fast to integrate technology but a good question is why.... The new CCSS and Testing industry is forcing SD into this situation faster - jumping on bandwagons is actually being pushed onto cash strapped SD . This is causing huge implementation , training and host of other problems. It is a huge concern of mine.

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Richard Perrine
Computer Studies & Science Instructor

Debbie,

Good question as to why? I think it's an avoidance and image reaction. There are clearly for traditional and fundamental ways to improve education, but requires too much energy and is too politically/socially polarizing. The other is b/c you don't want to be seen or rather, you want to be seen as a progressive, innovative school in the midst of all the other schools wanting that same image.

Fixes that require no technology:
1. Better teacher pay for good teachers (requiring teacher's unions to be more open about the poor quality of some instructors and how to replace them and districts and states better managing finances so that better pay is possible)
2. Smaller class sizes
3. Less emphasis on standardized testing and greater emphasis on early education and monitoring
4. Better community involvement, ownership by both community AND teachers, staff

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👍 Debbie R., Christy P. N. like this

A Cron
Instructor at PSJAN HS/South Texas College

Richard, I agree with the non-tech needs (especially steps 2, 3, 4)...the problem with Unions trying to fix administrative problems needs to start with the union hierarchy starting to listen to the memberships' desires on political action committees rather than the politics of the Union leaders...most rank and file members are very conservative, compared the very liberal and radical leaders in the power...unfortunately, the conservative members have little interest in voicing and participating unless they get really aggravated with the liberal members...in fact many of the conservative members would prefer not to be required to join a Union which rarely does much for them personally, they join for the insurance provisions and due to state laws requiring them to join the Union in order to work...this is a violation of the Bill of Rights and other parts of the Constitution...(get off soap box! ok!)

Tony

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Laurie Duma
Education Technology: Consultant | Trainer | Sales Manager | E-Learning | Facilitator
Top Contributor

Jacqui I love your question HOWEVER being an Educational Trainer (and past educator) I see a lot of ... sides to your question.

First, The teachers that are loving/enjoying/embracing tech.... did they request it? Were they properly trained? Are they the teachers that continued their learning on their own time? Are the admins supporting it and modeling it during their meetings?

Second, The teachers that are finding more of a negative view... was it dumped on them? Just because the community, parents, administration says we need MORE tech in our schools? Were they properly trained (did they watch the trainer or were they involved?) Did the district/school expect them to learn how to use it on their own time? This is more then the case with budget constraints. Are they afraid of technology? Districts would better conserve their funds IF they did NOT "Just give everyone" tech! Teachers that don't see the need are only going to let "it" collect dust/claim it doesn't work/hide it! I recommend districts listen to their teachers and slowly add tech into the schools .. the teachers who are against will come around once they see the SIMPLICITY and VALUE and EASE of the tech. (or a good frd that will help them learn it)

Ok YES i love tech and love it in the classroom HOWEVER i also love a balance. cube manipulatives, geo boards, goowie paint, real piano keyboards, needles to sew, architect models to build out of Popsicle sticks, glitter and glue! Match that up with clickers, doc camera, interactive white boards/projectors! Oh my! Now that is MY VISION of a perfect classroom!

Yes teachers are constantly getting new ideas/curriculum/tech DUMPED onto them each year WITHOUT proper training (and I'll address this in a moment!). PD is usually (not always) the first CUT out of the deal! And this BAFFLES me to NO end! I figure district's know they have a small percentage of people within the district that will figure it out on their own. I'm figuring then the districts are in hope that person(s) will turn key to the rest? I see this a lot. HOWEVER, (again from experience) I hear all the time yes so and so trained them but they aren't the best to turn key the info.. so teachers once again lose out on PROPER PD.

Ok lets talk about training as so many have mentioned above. As an independent trainer, I teach teachers how to use the tech the district invested in. Teachers are sometimes the most difficult people to teach.. sorry guys! I love you all but its the truth! When i train I want you working along side with me. I want you playing with the tech and talking with me. I set my rules up front with admin.... the teachers are to have the laptops, or whatever.. they are NOT to be watching me. This is NOT a demo its a hands on learning experience. A proper trainer will (or should) know how to listen! and read body language! Recently, I had a teacher tell her principal how unhappy she was about a training (from another company) so the principal hired me to come in... after talking with her and reading her i figured out she never been exposed to Microsoft word or email or anything along those lines so I was able to redirect my training to her needs. A good trainer needs to be able to readjust the training to the TEACHERS individual tech learning level! I also set up rules for teachers! Yes i do! You may keep your cell on (emergencies happen) just take it in the hallway. No texting/emailing in my class. No talking unless were talking about things we're doing. I am a fantastic lip reader. Then the fun begins! If your not laughing and trying your new tech device then I'm not doing my job! Make mistakes and make fun of your frds THEN we'll figure out how to get out of that mistake before your alone with your students! I want you to learn!

I loved being in the classroom. But I LOVE more tech training educators and now if i can pass my "tech" enthusiasm ... you'll pass yours.

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👍 Annette A., Claudie G. and 1 other like this

Meltem Kuscu
Bilgisayar Öğretmeni / Ayvalık Cumhuriyet Ortaokulu

I think technology strengthens education in classrooms.

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👍 Jacqui M. likes this

Nigel Thomas
ICT and AV Technical Support Manager and Learning Spaces Design and Development Manager at Aberystwyth University

Meltem, it does but not on it's own.
I just posted this on an ISTE group discussion:
Jim writes 'Whatever the platform, technology utilized correctly in the classroom with a motivated teacher who is properly trained WILL increase student engagement and achievement! That is what we all want!
I agree whole heartedly, but I hope the decision makers and budget holders who read this discussion consider the consequences of technology not correctly utilized, with a de-motivated teacher who is not properly trained. At the very least it equates to a profligate waste of money and some very unhappy students.
Unfortunatley that scenario is far too common. I've said it before and I'll say it again, tech on it's own is not a panacea for an advancement in teaching and learning.

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👍 Laurie D., A C. like this

A Cron

Instructor at PSJAN HS/South Texas College

A

Technology can strengthen education, yet it can also weaken it...plagiarism due to technology has become more rampant, poorly trained teachers in the use of tech, and many other problems...it can strengthen, but it needs the assistance of trained teachers...too many students have trouble doing 1 - 1, without a calculator...

Tony

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