

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Obviously, as a business education teacher, technology is very important to me and my students. Technology competency is an important part of the “continual learning” process. As teachers, we never stop learning and growing. Sometimes, I feel that my students know more about the current classroom technology than I do. Nancy Shanklin (2010) clarifies that technology is used in the classroom at all levels. Teachers use technology when taking role at the beginning of the school year until they enter the student’s final grades (para. 2). She makes suggestions that teachers should keep current with their own personal technology in an effort to keep abreast of all technology in the classroom (para. 3).

Schools will not always have up-to-date technology due to budgets and the time it takes to outfit new technology in an entire district. Also, not all technology developed can be/should be used in the classroom pedagogy. Advancing technology in computers, Smart Boards, and virtual books are wonderful for bringing information into the classroom and relating it to students; however, schools look to technology that they can use currently and build upon in the future. With some future funding, schools hope to improve their existing technology without taking it out and completely replacing it year after year. Upgrades will always be available to make technology purchased today perform better when needed. In truth, the hardware should only need to be replaced every few years. If teachers continue their educations by keeping up with current technology in the classroom (i.e. updating their technical competency), I think that teaching our students will be easier and more efficient.

As future and current teachers, we must teach students that are more technologically inclined than we are. Today’s students crave technology. They were raised with it and are used to knowledge sources being directly accessible twenty-four hours a day seven days a week, no matter what. We must prepare ourselves to teach them the way they are “wired” to learn. Technology is an indispensable and irrefutable source in the classroom today.

I think a great deal of emphasis should be placed upon teaching teachers about the new technology that our students already are using and, quite frankly, could possibly teach US a thing or two about. But just use of this technology is not enough. Teachers need to be schooled on how to use this web 2.0 technology to enhance course material and use it effectively with the maximum results being better understanding and higher retention rates of material. This effective use of technology could be classified as learning, building, and developing pedagogical techniques that are effective and timely.

I believe that courses and seminars should always be offered to keep teachers abreast of new developments in their prospective fields. I see technology being used to enhance the rate of which teachers obtain updates on Math, Science, English, etc. Using Blogs, Wikis, and webpages, streams of information can be downloaded in the blink of an eye. I believe that

technology competency is rightly a large part of the teaching certificate renewal and extension process. Technology is not a fix-all to the classroom curriculum, but when used properly, technology can enhance the learning experience of all involved.

As with any technology there are limitations. Teachers must understand the uses of the technology and how to manipulate it for classroom instruction. Teachers also must be able to instruct students on how to use the technology properly and troubleshoot if something goes wrong. With computers, there are many glitches that can cause an issue. Multiple component parts that can break down with lots of student use causes a major issue. Teachers and schools need to have a repair kit or alternative parts in order to keep classes working hard. The use of simulations and clickers in the classroom is unique and they have their own set of limitations. Because they are new technologies, teachers need to be trained in their uses and students need to understand how and why they are being used in the classroom. Wear and tear are also a factor with the component parts of the clickers. Simulations that are not loaded to the school server will need to be taken care of because they usually come in the form of CD's and classroom sets. If one CD is cracked, scratched, or broken simulations won't work.

Teacher training and troubleshooting is the key to solving most technology problems. Good instruction to the teacher can lead to good instruction from the teacher and, in turn, good use of the technology by the students.

“The power of technology for student learning doesn't come from the presence of classroom computers or the Internet, the real power of technology in education will come when teachers have been trained well and have captured the potential of technology themselves. Teachers must model the behavior students are expected to learn. (Carroll, 2000)”

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