

Using Technology with Heart: A Plan for My Elementary Class

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Technology in the classroom is changing the way we teach. Technology can be used in many different ways. There are many different views about this movement we are making as a society. Some people view this as a positive while others see it as disruptive. Students today are raised in a different culture than years ago. They are constantly being stimulated and entertained with the newest technologies. It has gotten to the point that when they are in a classroom, it is hard to hold their attention. The problem we are facing now is how do we implement these technologies and use them in a way that we can enhance the way students learn?

Slowly over time classrooms have been moving towards a focus on technology. Interactive Smart Boards are taking the place of black boards, teachers require typed work over hand written and some schools even have laptops provided for every student in the class. Every day new technology is being released and it is up to us as educators to use it efficiently. “It is important that educators do not view technology as teaching basic computer skills but integrating technology across the curriculum in a way that will deepen and enhance a student’s learning experience” (Why Integrate technology into the Curriculum, 2008). We must not resist this change we must embrace it and change with it. As educators we are life long learners. We must educate ourselves at all times and find the best ways to reach our students.

Technology can be a very positive thing in a classroom. A common argument against its integration is that students struggle today with communication. There is a belief that the constant use of devices such as iPhones and iPads has helped this trend. There are tools now that can help stimulate communication. There are applications such as iMovie that can be used as a fun project for a class. Students can make and produce their own films. This can be a great project if students have to write a story. Making a movie will help stimulate imagination and will

increase active participation with the classroom curriculum. Students will work together on these videos and this can improve classroom climate. “In particular, these tools have transformed how parents and families manage their daily lives and seek out environment, how teachers use materials in the classroom with young children and communicate with parents and families, and how we deliver teacher education and professional development” (NAEYC, 2012, pg. 2). Integrating technology as a teacher can extend past teaching students.

Creating a class website is a great way to integrate technology. Parents like to know what their children are working on and how they are performing. A very simple way to stay in touch with parents is by creating a class website. A teacher can list class assignments that they will be doing and any other important information. Parents have a way to always know what is going on. There is also an app called Class Dojo where a teacher can create a virtual classroom. This app allows a teacher to list his students and gives each student an avatar. There is also a point system based on student activity. Positive behavior earns points while negative behavior takes points away. Class Dojo has parent letters that teachers can download if contact is needed. Parents can view this application and see how their child’s grades are and how they are behaving. It is just one more way teachers can use technology to help their classroom.

Technology can be very beneficial but the educators must know how to use the tools effectively. “Although educators do get technology training, most do not feel prepared to use technology for instructional purposes, especially for individualized instruction. Educators in urban and rural schools are much less likely than suburban educators to feel adequately trained” (NEA 2008). Apple has come up with tools that can help implement the Universal Design for Learning that is important for helping all students learn. This includes students with disabilities and impairments. Students that have vision or hearing problems were always put in the front of

the classroom. This can make them feel singled out and like an outcast. iPads and laptops now allow for students to follow along with the lesson from their own seat. The zoom feature helps enlarge writing so the students can read and dictation reads the contents to the student. Also, subtitles on videos help those that have a hard time reading.

“The myriad resources of the online world also provide each classroom with more interesting, diverse, and current learning materials” (Edutopia 2008). With tools such as Twitter and Facebook, the latest news is available at all times. We must be able to use this in class. Research projects have the potential to extend past traditional book reports. Databases and online journals offer a variety of sources and information that was not provided to us in the past. This can improve students writing and help keep them informed.

Technology is a positive. It helps create classroom equity but we must remember to not stray away from traditional methods. We must continue to teach handwriting and other motor control exercises. As a teacher I think it would be great to use technology as often as I can. I do not think it should be the focus of my classroom but I definitely believe that it has a place. Society changes every day. Classroom curriculum is different than in years past. In order to be an effective teacher we must change with the times. This includes learning new technologies. Some students struggle. By using technology teachers can follow the UDL model and help students fulfill their full potential.

Reference:

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