

Teaching with Technology

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Students are easily distracted because their varying interests compete for their attention. Unfortunately for some students, learning has become secondary. As one of my colleagues often says, “the grade is the motivation and learning is only a by product”. We need to flip this sad fact on its head with the use of technology in the classroom.

The challenge we face is that our generation Y students have been raised on technology and expect media to be available in multiple formats. Generation Y cannot envision a world without the internet and an array of media at their fingertips (Ontario Public School Boards Association 2009). Consequently, I have incorporated more technology in my classes to stimulate greater interests in my students and to enhance their learning.

In the teaching of Business and Geography, I am using technology in different forms to meet the needs of students based on the lesson objectives and the grade level of the students. The use of PowerPoint and the LCD projector are now staples in my lectures and discussion exercises. I make my PowerPoint simple and attractive. It should be noted that such presentations are not a substitute for textbooks. In other words, PowerPoint slides should not be text-heavy and should incorporate relevant pictures, diagrams and interesting animation relating to the lesson. On many occasions, it is the pictures and animations that have captured the interests of the students and trigger class discussion.

Using technology, with its rich variety of media tools, is a good way to support the different learning styles of students (Ontario Public School Boards Association 2009). Endless possibilities can be achieved with computers and multimedia. The teacher has to manage and monitor the students’ activities in the classroom, of course, to ensure that the desired goals of the lessons are achieved. This monitoring is required because computer games, surfing the internet and visiting social networking sites are key hobbies of generation Y.

I have started to explore more of technology possibilities. Like other students, Geography and Business students are motivated when they use the computer. In teaching these courses, I incorporate simulated business games and online interactive business analysis. Students produce marketing and advertising videos which they post on YouTube and use when they are making class presentations. Geography students use windows software to create brochures, newsletters and maps.

The use of the computer and the internet has shifted the role of the teacher from “knowledge dispenser” to “learning facilitator.” Learning has become more interactive and hence more relevant and stimulating. In this form of self-directed learning, students are able to work at their own pace within the schedule of the course.

Technology use also allows many more students to be actively thinking about information, making choices, and executing skills than is typical in teacher-led lessons. Moreover, when technology is used as a tool to support students in performing authentic tasks, the students are able to define their own goals, make design decisions, and evaluate their progress.

The use of technology does not necessarily guarantee an improvement in test scores but it has generated greater interest in the learning process. The computer and internet have allowed both students and teachers to explore previously untapped information inside and outside the classroom.

Reference:

- *What If? Technology in the 21st Century Classroom*, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, November 22, 2009.