

## **Musings of an Out-of-the-Loop Teacher...**

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“My students all have cell phones! And over half of them are smart phones!” “They can live-feed my class and I wouldn’t even know it!!” “What’s this Epson Brightlink on my wall? You want me to do WHAT with it?!!”

These thoughts ring in my head as I adjust to the bombardment of technology in my classroom. This fall, I returned to teaching after taking five years to travel and enjoy recruitment. The accessibility of technology has greatly astounded me. Technology used to be restricted to the computer lab where you had your scheduled one period a week. Now every day can be ‘computer’ day. Here are some lessons about technology that I have learned since returning to the classroom:

- 1) Embrace it – open your mind to the idea of allowing students to have access to their gadgets during class. My students take pictures of the board during note-taking sessions. Therefore slower writers can finish their work as I keep pace with faster writers. Other students use the Bible app for their Bible assignments. Still others type out the closure question and email it to me before leaving class. Students can factcheckon-the-go during lectures and it hardly interrupts the flow. Some of my students talk to me more via text message than by comments in class.
- 2) Explore it – give it a try, otherwise you don’t know what it can do for you. During an in-service for my Brightlink, I was shown [www.toondoo.com](http://www.toondoo.com). This website allows students to create their own comics. I immediately recognized the possibility of using it during my media unit. Although it would be great for elementary, high school students could also make comics that incorporate propaganda techniques. Another exploration foray of mine is the incorporation of GoogleDocs into my class assignments. Students complete questionnaires/surveys, and then record their responses into *one* document. Hopefully for my next essay assignment, I would like to try [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) and go paperless!
- 3) Engage it – bring it into class and watch the eyes light up. Students these days are so techie that nothing outside of a power button exists. Get them on the Internet or include a Youtube clip and suddenly the daydreamer in Row 2 has perked up and a learning moment is available. Also, have your students engage you! One day this semester a student shared a link that was so powerful. Immediately I changed it to be the worship thought and it launched an incredible discussion. Students have considerably more time to “surf” than I do.

Take a moment to embrace, explore, and engage technology. In many ways, it could strengthen the connection between you and your students. Incorporating technology into your lessons and assignments may not be the most efficient for you but the greater benefit is for your students. To borrow from Nike – Just Do It!