Technology Use and Digital Learning Inside of Classrooms

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The use of technology and learning inside of classroom based on the use of computers and other forms of technology is becoming a phenomenon throughout the United States. The way our society functions and uses technology as an aid, it is not surprising that schools are pushing for the use of laptops and incorporating technology inside of the classroom. In my school where I conducted my observation, Waggoner Road Junior High School, they do not allow cell phones or laptops, but many students bring their phones and ipads into the classroom. Many teachers allow the students to look up information from the lessons on their different forms of technology to be able to help them better understand what they are learning. There are many arguments being made that students should have computers in every classroom. Some schools have already made the switch to digital learning, while others are still stuck using books and listening to lectures.

My philosophy towards the digital learning is that it is something that is helpful for now and later. It will help students become more actively engaged to learning, while it teaches them skills with technology that they will have to learn to continue their education onto the next level and beyond. It is important that inside of these classrooms the teacher has strict rules and guidelines and that they are able to incorporate the technology in a useful way. I feel that the use of the technology is beneficial to the student’s growth and understanding of topics. It is important that teachers continue to create more engaging lessons, and with the technology and possibilities that are given based on the presence of the technology, this is more achievable than without the technology and a cliché textbook and lectures. I’ve discussed with a teacher who has digital learning in her classroom and she informed me that with computers in the classroom allows the teacher to use different approaches of teaching and learning for the students. The teacher will be able to play around with different ideas of group work and individual work while giving lectures and having the students learn from articles and online sources.

Students and teachers alike feel immediate changes from the technology boost inside of their classrooms. The students have to change everything they have thought they learned about what school is and what the demands of school are; while teachers have to be creative and change their teaching to implement this type of learning. Schools all across the United States are trying to install programs like some of the schools that have already made the switch and become more technology based. In research done by Paul Lam and Aiden Tong (2012), they talk about how teachers can have a handle on technology use in a classroom, “On the one hand, there is a relatively guided use of these devices in classrooms – i.e. teachers have controlled and well-defined tasks for students to work on their computers in the classroom.” Guided use is what was seen and should be seen to be successful when these types of programs are instituted. The guided use allows the teacher to have control of what the kids are doing on the laptop. This gives the teacher the power while the students are still learning and using technology.

“Moreover, the use of computers, coupled with wi-fi connectivity, had increased active exploratory learning and was effective in promoting interactions between students and the instructor in large classes” (Lam & Tong 2012) Students will be able to learn without being lectured and needing to take notes. This is a benefit to most students because learning is more engaging to them. They are able to expand their interest by looking up other information and reading articles online based on their interest. This helps with engaging the students with topics that may not be as interesting to them. For example, if you find yourself in an English classroom learning about some of Shakespeare’s plays. The students can look up versions of the plays that will help them better understand the plays. A teacher can create more engaging lesson plans and opportunities for the students to be engaged.

The use of laptops in classrooms also changes the classroom setting to a teacher based learning style to a student learning based classroom. The students have more responsibility on their own and have a higher responsibility for their education and what they get out of it. In a study done by Fouzieh Sabzian, it is apparent that this change is beneficial. “This is because replacement of the traditional seat-work to some extent traditional seat-work with the use of computers as learning tools. Instead of the static teacher-centered environment where the students act as receivers of information from a single source.“ (Sabzian 2013 p. 685) This shows truth in the results of my survey as well.

In my survey that was conducted last week, I asked the students questions about using the laptops, and how they felt about the laptops. I also asked the students if they had access to a computer outside of school. Surprisingly, only 65% of the 16 students that filled the survey out had access to a computer or laptop at home. To me, this proposes a large concern for the teacher. How do you make sure that the students that do not have a computer at home have the opportunity to finish their assignments at school, and have enough time to do so? The teacher I observed managed this by giving the students time in class to be able to go to the library or work on the computers in the classroom so be able to finish papers. She would tell the students ahead of time when a paper was due, so they would have plenty of time to be able to work on a computer.

While talking to a few other observers who had laptops in their classrooms I also found negatives to technology in the classroom. All though the students are being monitored on what they are using on the laptops and what websites they are going on, it was a common from some students to find themselves off task and getting sidetracked by the laptop.

Overall, through the research of different case studies, and the class survey, I stick by my philosophy of using technology in the classroom. The benefits of having students work on their own, finding information while the teacher guides them and leads them in the right direction, and increase of the skills with technology, laptops inside of a classroom will benefit all of those using them. There are negatives in using them, but like all teaching approaches, there are flaws, and it is directly on how the teacher reacts and uses them to his or her advantage.

Works Cited

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