Goal Nine Essay: Using Technology Effectively

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Using Technology Efficiently

 The rate of technological advancement in the world today is greater than it has ever been in the history of mankind. And many students of Secondary schools are more skillful at using certain forms of technology than their teachers are. For years and years, teachers relied on paper and pen, or chalk and the blackboard. But times have changed and they demand that teachers integrate the technology that students use in the real world every day with their education. One thing that any experienced teacher knows all too well about technology in the classroom, however, is this: technology can be used to enhance learning or it can be a distraction. There are incredible ways that technology can enhance and accelerate learning for students, but, especially with the growing size of classrooms, throwing technology at a problem can just cause more problems. Applied correctly however, I believe that technology in the classroom can yield tremendous results. In this paper, I will discuss a few possible examples for how technology can be used in the classroom effectively.

One example of a very effective use of technology in the classroom is what is known as a flipped classroom model. According to Aaron Sams and Jonathon Bergmann, “the flipped learning model simply leverages new technology to provide an audiovisual option to students as they prepare for class. More important, it redefines class time as a student-centered environment” (17). In the classroom is the only time that students have access to face-to-face time with the teacher. However, in some, if not most classes that time is used to provide a lecture. Then students are sent home to apply what they learned from the lecture on homework. But wouldn’t it be better if students were able to utilize their face-to-face time with their teachers in classes? Flipped learning proposes that class time be used to do “homework,” with the students having had watched the lecture at home in preparation. This allows for more face-to-face time with students in class as they engage in formative assessments.

At this point in my internship, I have only taught my Algebra 2 class the traditional way: lecture in class and homework at home. While my students are generally excellent in terms of their engagement, I have been struggling with varying my methods of instruction. The pace of the class and the nature of the material is such that if I take a day to do a math game or a different form of instruction, we fall behind schedule. So I have decided to try my next chapter unit as a flipped classroom model. With the help of my host teacher, I have been creating lesson videos and I am excited to start with the flipped classroom model next week, and compare how it with the traditional classroom model. All of the teachers I have talked to that have tried the flipped classroom model reported increased homework grades.

A second way to use technology is to implement the internet for class projects. This generation of Secondary students for the most part have very high use of the internet these days. It is our job as teachers to get our students ready to be contributing members of society. A great way to do this is to teach students productive and innovative ways to use the internet, ways that go beyond their normal daily use of it, and ways that are applicable to life after Secondary school. This could also help with engagement. “Current surveys suggest that the strong interest of students for involvement on the Internet could make schoolwork more appealing if assignments permitted individual and collaborative activity online” (Strom, et al. 112). There are multiple ways to do this. Some ideas are: Internet research essays, blog entries, assignments from virtual learning environments, or creating e-portfolios (Paily 42-44). In the few years the internet has existed, it has changed the way we research, plan, communicate, and live. Designing projects and assignments to aid students in their internet use is a great way to implement technology in the classroom.

Overall, I would say that the use of technology in the classroom is a very important, but often tricky task of teachers. I have seen technology be the cause of great distraction, and I have seen it cause high engagement and understanding. Like anything, it takes foresight and experience to apply the correct parameters when asking students to use technology, but if it is applied correctly—to enhance instruction and not merely to replace it—the use of technology can cause wonders in the classroom.

References

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