

Technology Integration

Why use it?

When students are using technology as a tool or a support for communicating with others, they are in an active role rather than the passive role of recipient of information transmitted by a teacher, textbook, or broadcast. The student is actively making choices about how to generate, obtain, manipulate, or display information. Technology use allows many more students to be actively thinking about information, making choices, and executing skills than is typical in teacher-led lessons.

Increased Motivation and Self Esteem

The most common--and in fact, nearly universal--teacher-reported effect on students was an increase in motivation. Teachers and students are sometimes surprised at the level of technology-based accomplishment displayed by students who have shown much less initiative in the past.

A related technology effect stressed by many teachers was enhancement of student self esteem. Both the increased competence they feel after mastering technology-based tasks and their awareness of the value placed upon technology within our culture, led to increases in students' (and often teachers') sense of self worth.

Students clearly take pride in being able to use the same computer-based tools employed by professionals. Technology is valued within our culture. It is something that costs money and that bestows the power to add value. By giving students technology tools, we are implicitly giving weight to their school activities. Students are very sensitive to this message that they, and their work, are important.



Examples of Technology Integration:

Using Video in the Classroom – using video helps students retain more information. Video also helps students grasp difficult concepts. There are several ways you can incorporate video into your teaching. If you're teaching about the Civil War, you can show video segments that have been put online by PBS. If you're teaching about anatomy, you can show your class a video of a frog or worm dissection. Of course, using video in the classroom should not replace any portion of your lesson. Instead, it should complement your existing teaching methodology.

Collaborative Writing - A wiki is a website that users can edit without having any programming skills. This makes wikis great for use in the classroom. Several companies (Wikispaces and Mindtouch) provide free wikis for teachers. You can use a wiki for a group project in which you want your students to incorporate videos and/or images. You could also use a wiki to translate or annotate poems, plays or passages from books. A wiki allows you and your students to add and edit text, add images and videos, upload different files and create links to other web-pages. Changes made in the wiki are able to be tracked, which makes it easier to evaluate individual student work on group projects.

Blogging - Many people are familiar with blogs. A blog is a website to which the author or administrator posts an initial entry and other users respond. Blogs introduce a unique form of dialogue to your classes. For example, you can post a question about a character in a book the class is reading. Students would submit their answers in the comment section of the site. Or you can post a list of vocabulary words for your students to define. Blogs are also great for language courses. Posting questions to which students respond gives them a chance to practice their reading and writing skills in the language they're studying. Since all comments on a blog are public, you are encouraging students to learn from one another, and to talk to each other via their comments.