October 8, 2019

Dear PAC executive,

Technology is all around us and we are continuing to move into a more digital world. Digital literacy skills and citizenship is more important than ever. There is also a new focus on conserving resources and trying to eliminate as much paper waste as possible. I feel these are also important aspects for children to learn as we try and navigate the environmental challenges that the world faces.

Many students that I have worked with in the past have enjoyed using technology, specifically iPads. They are exhibiting more comfort with these devices each year I teach as many of them have them at home. It is important that they view these items as learning tools in addition to entertainment options. Here are some of the benefits of using technology in the classroom.

**Improves engagement**

When technology is integrated into lessons, students tend to be more interested in the subjects they are studying. Technology provides different opportunities to make learning more fun and enjoyable in terms of teaching same things in new ways. For instance, delivering teaching through gamification, taking students on virtual field trips and using other online learning resources. What is more, technology can encourage a more active participation in the learning process which can be hard to achieve through a traditional lecture environment.

**Improves knowledge retention**

Students who are engaged and interested in things they are studying have a better knowledge retention. As mentioned before, technology can help to encourage active participation in the classroom which also is a very important factor for increased knowledge retention. Different forms of technology can be used to experiment with and decide what works best for students in terms of retaining their knowledge.

**Encourages individual learning**

No one learns in the same way because of different learning styles and different abilities. Technology provides great opportunities for making learning more effective for everyone with different needs. For example, students can learn at their own speed, review difficult concepts or skip ahead if they need to. What is more, technology can provide more opportunities for struggling or disabled students. Access to the Internet gives students access to a broad range of resources to conduct research in different ways, which in turn can increase the engagement. Access to more resources and the internet though needs to be taught regularly in a responsible way. The students need to feel comfortable using these vast resources at their disposal while knowing that they are being held accountable for their online behaviour. This helps them become responsible digital citizens going forward.

**Encourages collaboration**

Students can practice collaboration skills by getting involved in different activities through technology. For instance, working on different projects and sharing documents in their virtual learning environments. Technology can encourage collaboration with students in the same classroom, same school and allows them to share their learning quicker and easier.

**Students can learn useful life skills through technology**

By using technology in the classroom, both teachers and students can develop skills essential for the 21st century. Students can gain the skills they will need to be successful in the future. Modern learning is about collaborating with others, solving complex problems, critical thinking, developing different forms of communication and leadership skills, and improving motivation and productivity. What is more, technology can help develop many practical skills, including creating presentations, learning to differentiate reliable from unreliable sources on the Internet, maintaining proper online etiquette, and writing emails. These are very important skills that can be developed in the classroom.

**Benefits for teachers**

With countless online resources, technology can help improve teaching. Teachers can use different apps or trusted online resources to enhance the traditional ways of teaching and to keep students more engaged. Virtual lesson plans, grading software and online assessments can help teachers save a lot time. This valuable time can be used for working with students who are struggling. What is more, having virtual learning environments in schools enhances collaboration and knowledge sharing between teachers.

I am wanting to create a classroom where digital learning can be maximized. I have been borrowing iPads from other classrooms for the past couple of weeks to implement a digital plan. I am able to exhibit more control over the students access to devices and monitor their learning closer through technology. When they each have their own iPad to work on they are able to individually show me what they are learning, what they need help with while minimizing the waste of paper copies when not necessary. They are learning how to collaborate and share their work quickly and efficiently with peers, teachers and the class as a whole. The students love to be able to show their work and be recognized by their peers without a formal presentation. While working on the iPads, we are working on following explicit instruction, practicing our reading skills, critical thinking, and proem solving skills regularly while still focusing on curriculum content areas. They are given leadership opportunities within the classroom by helping peers troubleshoot an issue that they have encountered and resolved previously.

I am hoping to use my classroom as a pilot project in our school to explore how to effectively integrate technology into the learning environment. To help me with this, I have enrolled in a Pro-D workshop series on iPads and technology in the classroom. I have attended one session already and have another few upcoming over the next several weeks. These workshops are helping me with ideas, skills and the knowledge base to effectively roll this type of pilot project out in my classroom. I will use this experience to help guide my fellow teachers in their classroom practice and hopefully have all students at Langley Meadows become more technology literate and capable.

In order for me to create this digital learning environment that I am envisioning, I am needing more technology. I am in need of more iPads so that each student has access to one everyday for all activities that they are needed. The district has a price of $399.99 for each iPad and I need 6 more to have a full class set for all 21 students. This would be a total subtotal of $2399.94.

Thank you very much for reading and allowing me to show how these devices can be used in the classroom to enhance the learning for the students in my class this year and in future years.

Sincerely,

Tristan Raphael