

The Technology Age By Sabrina Shisler

Learning is continuous. Everyone should be life-long learners. If someone stops learning, they are either dead or completely shut out from the world. Each day should bring some new revelation, whether that is new knowledge about a friend's life or a philosophical realization into the meaning of life, learning is never-ending. As a teacher, continuous formal education is a requirement that every teacher should embrace as an opportunity to discover innovative methods of instruction. Since my masters program is coming to an end, I must consider how my formal education will proceed from now on. As I contemplated the many areas of study possible, I came to the realization that the use of technology in the classroom is what I would like to explore in the future.

In a time where smart phones and other technological devices have changed our society so that my seven year old cousin is more apt to solve a computer problem than my fifty year old parents, education seems to be stuck in the ice age and attempting to thaw. Due to a myriad of issues, school districts are very behind on the incorporation of technology in the classroom. Higher education has begun to adapt curriculum in order to have effective learning without even requiring the students to set foot in a classroom. Online learning caters to a certain type of student, one who is self-motivated and can learn by reading. This type of learning works for graduate students who have the internal drive to learn, but I fear how effective the online method would be for high school or younger students. Adolescents need the social interaction and the kinesthetic and visual learners would suffer with the style of information delivery if elementary or high school was all online. One of the main advantages of online learning is the freedom to complete the assignments whenever the student has time. This could be very helpful for students that need to have a job in order to support the family. While I feel that online learning would be ineffective for many students, it could also be effective for some. It would be nice if students were given the option of online education. Online education is not the only innovative idea about how to use technology in the classroom, there are many other ideas that are starting to make their way into the high school setting and I plan on continuing my education so that I can determine which of these initiatives will work best in my Chemistry classes.

A specific area of interest is turning my classroom into what is called a "flipped" classroom. Instructional videos are recorded and posted online so that students can access the instruction as many times as needed in order to understand the concept. This connects to the direction my district is taking toward incorporating more technology in the classroom and making more resources available to students online. Davison is switching to a new grading software that will allow for parents to view their son/daughter's grades and download the actual assignment. Now that I feel confident in my ability to create a website, I am going to make a classroom website where students can see what activities were completed on a certain date and they can download any worksheets, labs or activities.

While technology incorporation in the classroom will be the focus of my formal education, I will continue to learn in many other ways. Every day of work brings new interactions with the students. The students are constantly teaching me about the effectiveness of general teaching practices based off of their performance and conversations I have with them. They also give me various insights into the lives of adolescents, which help me to understand how to better motivate the students to learn.

I have invested a lot of time learning how to become a better coach as I completed my masters degree with a concentration in sports administration and coaching, and I plan on continuing to learn how to be a more effective coach. The other tennis coaches I work with and the players will continue to educate me on how to be a great coach.

Whether the new concepts learned focus on technology, instructional techniques, or coaching, I will continue to learn formally and informally for the rest of my life. I look forward to all the learning opportunities the future holds.