

THE TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED LESSON

Is Educational Technology a Boon or a Bane?

Today'sMeet

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According to Dr. Ruben Puentudura, the SAMR model helps us to see how we integrate technology in our classroom through the process of substitution, augmentation, modification or redefinition.

Technology enabled lessons allow the lessons to be conducted online in a synchronous or an asynchronous manner. A synchronous lesson will allow shy students to speak up and participate in group discussions.

Everyone shares their perspectives and learn from one another. In an asynchronous lesson, students have the flexibility to log in at any time, except for the attendance part, download materials and watch videos posted at their own time.

In a way, students are better prepared to meet the demands of the 21st century which requires them to be tech-savvy. Lecture notes, videos and powerpoint slides can be posted online through a learning management system or a virtual classroom like Edmodo. Like students,



they also enjoy flexibility in that they can record the lesson at any time and are only required to post the videos on the day itself.

According to Mary Beth Hertz, there are 4 levels of technology integration, namely sparse, basic, comfortable and seamless.

I have chosen a variety of digital tools like Pinterest, Youtube, Facebook, Todaysmeet and Popplet for my classroom.



Pinterest help learners learn about dogs quickly through pictures and videos. However, the search engine tends to turn up unrelated content and may not be that reliable as compared to Google.



For Youtube, it has an education section related to dogs dedicated for me on top of the general search function. However, undesirable ads which are not meant for children may pop up when trying to load the video.



Facebook is used as almost every student is on it. It helps me to build rapport with the students and getting them to comment on their peers' writing.



For Todaysmeet, it allows me to post answers to the comprehension passage on dogs. Students get to comment on whether they agree or disagree. The downside is that the chat can get too messy as students debate or sometimes drift from the original topic.



For Popplet, students benefit from the mind map as it allows for visual representations of dogs through drawings and videos. However, it does not offer me flexibility in editing the content once it is on Popple.

In conclusion, the effective utilisation of all these digital tools allows me to present the topic in visual, auditory, read/write and kinesthetic ways, catering to all types of learners. This multimodal approach is my best showcase because I have seen how motivated and engaged the students are in the technology-enabled lesson.

The digital tool is TodaysMeet. The URL is <https://todaysmeet.com/>. TodaysMeet allows students to participate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions. Teachers create a room and get students to join in the virtual classroom to discuss about topics. TodaysMeet allows the teacher to gauge the progress of the learner. Students would less likely be singled out in an online environment and would therefore be daring to speak up and give their honest opinions and this can help the teacher in providing a more holistic assessment of the progress of the learner.

TodaysMeet functions like Whatsapp which most students are familiar with. They would be more likely enthusiastic to respond and use it like how they would chat in Whatsapp. On TodaysMeet, students can share links, take a poll, chat and ask questions. It has the potential of simplifying concepts since they can only use 140 characters at one time. However, face-to-face experience is lost and this may affect their communication with peers in the future where everyone chats online.

For a subject like Maths, it may be difficult since mathematical equations are involved. There is Facebook which allows for lengthy discussions above 140 characters and has the same functions as TodaysMeet. A lesson activity using TodaysMeet is to discuss the answers to the short passage on dogs. Students get the opportunity to logically reason and debate about what they think the correct answer should be.

Another digital tool is popplet. The URL is <https://popplet.com/>. Popplet helps teachers and students make graphic organisers. Teachers can use popplet to present information in a visual way whereas students can use popplet to organise their ideas for their school projects. Popplet is perfect for visual learners. With its user-friendly interface, Images, videos, drawings and links can be added to engage the learner.

According to Harmer (2007), young learners can be so attracted to the visuals that they can stay focused till the end of the activity. Learners can do



a presentation on a particular topic. They can create brainstorm for ideas before breaking up to write in a group. According to Vygotsky (1978), weaker learners can learn from more capable learners when they collaborate to share ideas. For individual writing, learners can create their own mind map and share it with the class to get feedback and possibly add on more ideas.

However, learners may be overly dependent on popplet. This may result in a lack of creativity since they are not immersed in a natural environment. Also, a maximum of 5 popplets can be used for one account and may not be feasible for a large classroom size. A lesson activity using Popplet is to get the students to do a mind map on dogs. Students would have an idea of their main topic and subsequently branch out to different breeds of dogs, their habitat, their diet etc.

The 21st century requires every learner to be technologically savvy. To be literate, it is no longer about reading, writing and mathematical skills but more of solving global problems and

the ability to use technology. Technology is not here to replace me but instead it complements my teaching. Using the Read, Reflect, Display, and Do (R2D2) model to find out about the different breeds of dogs, I have used technology at each phrase to cater to the different learners in my classroom. In the reading phrase which targets verbal and auditory learners, I get students to listen to audio files on the different breeds of dogs. In the reflecting phrase which caters to reflective and observational learners, students reflect on what they have learnt by creating a blog and writing on it. They also participate in synchronous chats in Todaysmeet to discuss about the different breeds of dogs. In the displaying phrase which caters to visual learners, students are shown a Youtube video of the different breeds of dogs. I will also create a mind map to guide learners on the different breeds of dogs. In the doing phrase which caters to tactile and kinesthetic learners, learners download and play the Dog simulator app on iPads to have a feel on how it is like to be a type of dog and interact with other breeds of dogs. Then, using playdough, they will experiment

kneading the dough and making a dog of their liking.

Once the students are done with building knowledge in the R2D2 model, they proceed to writing an informational report on dogs. Using the SAMR model and Bloom's Taxonomy, instead of writing on a piece of A4 paper, they substitute paper by typing on the notepad which has limited functions using the iPads provided so that concepts are remembered. Next, they transfer their writing onto Microsoft Word to increase the font size and bold the verbs that they use so that the students understand how verbs are being used. The modification stage would see students collaborating and giving feedback on peers' writing on Google Docs which is in line with the analysing stage in Bloom's Taxonomy. The redefinition stage coincides with the creating stage of the Bloom's Taxonomy where new tasks are created. The students post their writing onto Facebook and share their work with the world. From a closed environment to an open environment, this opens up the audience to the global audience to comment, making the information report a highly interactive experience.

In conclusion, technology is here to stay. How teachers embrace technology in their classroom will translate to how they feel it will value-add to their conduct of lessons. As highlighted by Lage, Pratt and Treglia (2000), students have different learning styles, abilities and preferences. The ideal teaching and learning environment that teachers should aim to create will be one that is learner-centred and prepares one to work in a highly volatile high-tech world.

References

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES (SPLDS) PART 1



Does Academic Excellence Anchor the Success of All Students?

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Daniel Goleman (1995) wrote in his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence', 'IQ is only a minor predictor of success in life, while emotional and social skills are far better predictors of success and well-being than academic intelligence.'

Intelligence (commonly measured by IQ scores) should not be the sole factor influencing a child's future success or overall positive adjustment in life. The secret potion therefore cannot be explained solely through biological factors. It is in fact, through the provision of a nurture enriched home environment and the cultivation of positive habits such as resilience, perseverance and optimism

that would have a deeper impact on a child's successful academic functioning.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in children displaying distress and a lack of motivation to learn. For children with Specific Learning Differences (SpLD), the disappointments that they experience in the classroom are often manifested in their behaviour. They can display an extreme range of behaviours from being outwardly disruptive or reacting impulsively to instructions or tasks, to inwardly daydreaming or procrastinating instead of being attentive. However, with the right encouragement and support, these seemingly troubled students have shown resilience and the resolution to persevere with difficult tasks.