

Four Challenges Classroom Teachers Face When They Integrate Technology Into Their Teaching

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Classroom teachers are embracing the use of technology to enhance their classroom teaching more today than ever before. But in order to effectively use the technology in their classroom they must prepare themselves for some of the challenges they will face in accomplishing this goal. Listed below are four of the major issues classroom teachers identify when they discuss the challenges of infusing technology into their teaching and some brief thoughts you as an aspiring educator might consider in order to prepare yourself to meet those challenges.

1. **Availability of Technology Hardware:** Our public schools are a mixed bag when it comes to what type of computers and other technology devices are available to the classroom teacher. There is also the question of how many computers will be available for teacher needs. Are the computers in the classroom or in lab situations? All of these hardware questions and more can only be answered when you actually have a classroom in a school district. Until that time make sure you learn a variety of different technology tools, prepare yourself for the possibility that you will have to group children on computers and learn other strategies for making the most of the fewest available computers. There is a whole set of instructional activities for the one computer classroom, and you may want to learn some of them
2. **Availability of Technical Assistance:** Rare is the school district that has enough technical resource specialists to assist teachers at the building level, let alone in the individual classroom. As a result, future classroom teachers need to familiarize themselves with simple trouble-shooting technology tasks. Knowing how to connect peripheral devices and load software packages are but a few of the many simple little skills you can master in order to help yourself keep the technology tools going in your classroom.
3. **Software Applications:** There really are an unbelievably large number of software applications available to the classroom teacher. That's the good news! The bad news is that they all require some time to master their use and format of operation. Some good advice is to select a few multi-use packages and master them well. Surprisingly, they all start to look alike when you get the fundamentals for a few mastered. Make sure you have a specific use for the application in mind before you start learning how it works. People generally learn computer applications more quickly and completely when they have a specific purpose in mind. Remember this practical idea when you have your own classroom. You might avoid that all too familiar student response, " Why do we have to learn this stuff? We will never use it."

4. **Time to Integrate Technology into Teaching:** Even if you have the hardware, trouble shooting skills, and knowledge of how to use the software, it still takes time and experience to effectively integrate the technology into your teaching. While you are developing the skills associated with becoming a good teacher, bring your technology integration skills right along. When you are learning how to plan for effective teaching, build the technology into those plans right then. A yearly planning calendar might just as well be developed as a computer document instead of written in a 3 ring binder. If your goal is for your students to communicate the results of their work and effort, have them use the computer to enhance their presentation. Be a technology advocate from the beginning of your career. It truly is more difficult to relearn old practices in new ways than it is to learn the new way in the beginning.