

Chapter 7

Technology Tools for Integration in the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to help educators learn about tools, techniques, and resources that can help them use technologies to increase engagement and enhance learning outcomes for their students. The chapter will introduce free and low-cost programs and resources available on the internet and app stores for teachers as part of the instructional and administrative process. Instructional technologies have the inherent potential to assist educators in addressing the challenges in this modern-day world. Many of the resources and tools can be accessed through most connected devices and web browsers.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces free and low-cost programs and resources available on the Internet and App Stores for teachers as part of the instructional process. Instructional technology has the inherent potential to assist teachers in addressing the challenges in this modern-day world. Numerous resources and tools can be accessed through most connected devices and Web browsers. Instructional technology refers to the development and application of technological tools and devices such as software, processes, and hardware, which are geared towards ethical practice and study in the field of education with an aim to achieve, facilitate, and promote student learning (Ajay Kumar & Umadevi, 2015). Due to the necessity of education today, there is a need to improve students' learning capacity by obtaining less expensive educational resources. Instructional technology plays a crucial role in accomplishing this vital mission of providing a broader range of student learning modalities and the achievement of teaching excellence.

The chapter explains various techniques and resources that are responsible for enhancing education outcomes. The technology resources presented here are categorized into the following eight sections:

1. Blogs
2. Course Management Tools
3. Educational Games
4. Social Media
5. Student Response Systems
6. Videos and Screencasting for Flipping Classrooms
7. Classroom Management and Assessment Tools
8. Additional Technology Resources

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Blogs

A blog refers to a website created by specific publishing software and consists of posts or comments and links which enhance user interactivity. Blogs, due to their openness to everyone, promote and encourage free dialogue and strong community interaction through a consistent exchange of opinions, attitudes, and ideas. Teachers can use this platform to produce and publish instructional resources for their students to access and make comments. Students can be instructed to create blogs for various subjects, and then teachers assign tasks through those blogs (Benson, Szucs, & Taylor, 2016). As students respond to the questions through comments, teachers can monitor and observe their progress and intervene to steer students toward desired learning outcomes. There are several ways in which teachers and students can use blogs for learning purposes. Teachers can use blogs for publishing assignments and resources, keeping students updated on the events of the class, coursework coverage, and degree of content delivery. They can also use blog platforms to improve students' mastery of the subject matter and writing skills. Students can use blogs to teach one another on numerous topics and publish their writings (Crawford, 2005).

For successful blogging, teachers must ensure that some rules or guidelines are followed. These instructions include staying in line with guidelines and expectations of the school. To achieve this, teachers need to develop and strategize clear goals, objectives, and expectations for students. Conforming to the school rules makes the work easier and result-oriented. Teachers should also set criteria for quality commenting and use of appropriate language. This can be attained through monitoring of comments and provision of feedback. Networking with other bloggers is a useful component of enhancing learning through blogging. The collaboration can either be local or global by encouraging students to follow and read different blogs. Students should be warned of plagiarism when making their contributions.

Blogging may seem easy at first, like applying your thoughts to a pen and paper. However, blogging requires a learning curve similar to some social media platforms. Blogging can include missteps and mistakes. Ideas and opinions can come across in the wrong way, or not interest your prospective readers. For instance, bloggers may write something that they may later regret. Once something is written and shared online, it can become difficult to get it removed especially once it is shared or saved by others.

Problems can arise from students acting in ignorance of copyright law or failing to credit someone else's work properly. Students have become accustomed to sharing Internet information and images. While these implications may not always be apparent within an educational setting, without permission in the public sphere, things are quite different. Luckily, there are many copyright-free sites that students and teachers can utilize. Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>) includes many excellent free photos and graphics

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