Overcoming the troubled history of tech in education

Life under COVID dramatically increased the use of technology in schools. Forced to adjust to remote learning, teachers delivered lessons over Zoom and Microsoft Teams, with students sharing work via various cloud collaboration solutions.

It's notable, though, that it took a global health crisis for this to happen. Historically, a number of factors have hindered the widespread adoption of technology by schools. Limited budgets, for example, mean many schools struggled to roll out the latest tech innovations. There is a skills gap, too. The diverse range of experience and expertise of the individuals that make up a teaching body can make it challenging to ensure everyone can consistently utilise the technology available to them.

The value of technology

Despite the challenges that schools face in adopting technology at scale, there are clear advantages of its use in education.

Through our research from 1,000 parents and 600 primary school teachers across the US and UK, we found that over a third (36%) in the UK and almost half (46%) of teachers in the US struggled to properly engage children through

online resources. In addition, half of the teachers in the UK and US admitted struggling to meet individual needs in the classroom. Technology can provide this essential support to each student with a personalised and individualised learning experience, without all the burden on the teachers themselves.

As the past two years have proved, traditional lesson structures, such as a lecture format or the Socratic method, may not be the best way to get the most out of every pupil. Despite this, though, their range of responsibilities means educators can be pulled in multiple directions each day, unable to tailor their teaching approach to each individual student.

This is where technology can prove its value. For teachers, technology can provide insights, trends, and analytics on students, providing them with a greater ability to tailor lessons to meet their students' learning styles. This, in turn, will allow students to learn in a way and pace that best suits them.

When teachers were asked which technologies will shape children's learning the most in the not-too-distant future, our research found that Virtual Reality (VR) came out on top for over a third of teachers and more than 60% of parents in both geographies, followed closely by social networking apps and robot programming tools. These findings firstly establish that technology is both desired by students and will provide substantial benefit to teachers across the board, and secondly provide the potential methods to assist in securing high levels of engagement in the classroom.

Read also

[Play is the most natural form of learning, so why has society paused the game?](#)

Meeting students halfway

Part of the benefit of using technology in education is the way it can find common ground with students. With *two in five children* playing games on a screen for at least six hours a week, it stands to reason that schools should take advantage of this interest their pupils have. During lockdown, teachers found ways to gamify subjects in order to overcome the challenges of a virtual classroom.

Even with normal classes resuming, students will still be enjoying screen

gaming and educators should be encouraged to continue this practice outside of Zoom calls. It's not just because students enjoy gaming, there's hard data to back it up. With learners remembering _75%_ of what they learn through practical doing, the benefit of gamification as a learning tool can lead to genuine results in students.

It's important to note, however, that these benefits won't be achieved effectively by layering different technologies on top of each other. Consolidation is key.

Consolidation and consistency

Rather than using a series of disparate solutions, each with its own unique way of working, any tech innovation in education should be consolidated into a single accessible platform. Doing so allows for a consistent learning experience, and – importantly – consistent insights from that learning which can be easily shared between different educators, and across different lessons and levels of education.

A consolidated platform will also be more robust for the school. Individual classrooms won't need to worry as much about investing further funds into multiple different technological platforms, for instance, or about investing as much time into training teachers in its use. With everything on one platform, the experience will be essential – as everyone will have access to the same solutions, and no one teacher will require any more expertise than any other.

Until they were forced to adapt to working remotely under lockdown, factors such as budgetary restrictions and a shortage of skills meant that schools have been slow to adopt technological solutions. However, due to the current circumstances of the dramatically increased time period spent on remote learning, and the outlined benefits that edtech strategies can provide teachers and students, now is the time for schools to invest in edtech solutions to better their provided learning experience to pupils.

But now that its value as an educational tool has been proven, more schools are likely to invest in innovative technology. Consolidation is key to ensuring widespread adoption – enabling a cost-effective and consistent experience that will benefit both teachers and students alike.

Mark Horneff is CEO at _Kuato Studios_.

Article by MARK HORNEFF