How Powerful is Educational Technology?

Many schools around the world have embraced new
technological tools for teaching. iPads, PCs and phones are just
some of the new technologies that are now used in classrooms around the world. But is
technology really helping students' education?

The Benefits of Technological Learning

Technological advancements are taking place all over the world and lots of this progress is
designed to improve school education.

Many schools already use technology to help their students' learning capabilities. A large
amount of these opportunities are PC-based. This often increases students' enjoyment of
learning, as well as improving their typing skills and general IT literacy. It also enables
students to learn on websites such as SAM Learning (containing various quizzes), Active
Learn (interactive tasks for learning languages) and BBC Bitesize (an excellent revision tool).

Many schools opt in for the Apple best-seller: the iPad. It is argued that the iPad may be a
better device to help learning than computers. This is because, at home, students use the
iPad for browsing the internet and social media sites and therefore believe it's more fun to
use in schools. Another useful addition to the iPad is the Siri attachment in its system,
which speeds up their searches.

One of the few technological advancements that most schools do not accept is the mobile
phone even though it is the one thing that basically every student carries with them. It
would be useful for schools to allow phones, because phones give an on- the- fly option for
students to access information.

But, if schools give students permission to use their phones, it could boost morale and
productivity since it has been proven that students work better in a happy environment.
This does not just go for phones though; all types of technology- from tablets to PCs, can
facilitate a more student-friendly environment.

The idea of paperless education is also very attractive from an environmental point of view.
It fewer trees are being cut down for paper then forests could grow without danger.

Interestingly, at the cutting edge of educational technology, robotic teachers are now being
trialled in schools. The results show that some children work better with robotic teachers
because, unlike human teachers, these friendly robots are more fun and therefore better at
engaging the students.

Crucially, we must acknowledge that we all now live in a modern era where technology is
an unavoidable aspect of every workplace and schools prepare students for this.

The Cons of Technological Learning

While technology can be useful in the classrooms, there may still be a lot of problems. One cannot deny that these devices offer a vast number of distractions. Asides from the obvious appeal of the internet, phones can also be distracting due to their original purpose: calling and texting. If students are permitted to using their phones in class they have a high chance of trying to use that phone to text behind the teacher's back.

Also, they may use their devices to play non-educational or potentially violent games, which could go against their parents' wishes.

Not only that, but it provides a platform for cyber bullying with malicious content such as racism or sexual harassment.

The Long and Short of It

Overall the arguments of technological education stand fairly balanced. However, as a student, I am a firm believer that technology is the future of successful education and that schools should embrace the technological opportunities available to them.

By Lawrence