Tech in the Classroom

Gone are the days when the only tools in a teacher’s arsenal were a piece of chalk and a big blackboard. Just like every other aspect of modern life, technology has dramatically changed the classroom over the last decade—making it a place that adults who graduated even just 10 years ago might not recognize.

But are things really that different inside the modern classroom than they were in the more primitive days of chalk, ink, and notebook paper? We decided to find out by surveying 1,000 longtime high school teachers to see how technology has impacted their classroom.

How Tech Tools Affect Teaching

Out of our respondents, 73% of teachers agreed that technology had dramatically changed the classroom in the last five years. So, how has it changed exactly?

According to our survey, teachers say that 56% of their tools have become tech based—such as smart boards, student portals, laptops, tablets, learning software, and learning apps (a far cry from the worksheets and pencils of yesteryear). These tools have not only brought the classroom into the modern age, but they have also enhanced learning and teaching, according to 82% of the teachers we surveyed.

As far as access to technology goes, 80% of the teachers we surveyed indicated that they had access to most of the tech tools they wanted in the classroom, but private school teachers were 13% more likely to have access to this tech. Interestingly, teachers in the southwest region of the country have the most access to tech tools in the classroom.

How Tech Tools Affect Students

But how exactly are students interacting with all of these new tools that are being incorporated? According to the results, only 42% of assignments are done by hand and 73% of teachers say their students use laptops and tablets daily. It also seems like students have reasonable access to this tech gear, with 66% of schools providing tablets and laptops (and 25% of students bringing in their own). Just a mere 9% of schools are bucking this trend and do not permit laptops or tablets in the classroom.

Because of the distraction that the internet can provide (and with 86% of teachers indicating they have WiFi in their classrooms), 93% of schools have rules for smartphone and internet usage. Typical rules that are in place include silencing phones and putting them away during exams.

It’s tough to say how effective these rules are, however, with 62% of students using personal technology in the classroom and 70% of teachers who say student use of smartphones causes tension and disruption in class. Of our surveyed teachers, 50% said they deal with disruptions weekly and 36% said they deal with disruptions daily.

Out of all the tech tools, teachers say that only smartphones have a negative effect on the classroom. However, teachers indicated that WiFi, laptops, learning software, smartboards, and web portals had a positive effect.

Of the teachers surveyed, 66% said that technology in the classroom makes students more productive and 60% said it makes them more intellectually stimulated that undoubtedly makes for a better, more engaged class.