Teaching in a 1:1 Environment

Teaching in a 1:1 computing environment can be a very different experience from what you are accustomed to as a classroom teacher. Certain teaching strategies may help you to adapt to this new model. Others may not. What is your teaching style?

The Sage on the Stage
Your style leans toward direct instruction, with students as receivers of information. You, and the specific content students read for your class, provide the knowledge they need in order to succeed. Students mostly work individually, and demonstrate their learning through the reproduction of facts and data.

The Guide on the Side
Your style is one that incorporates cooperative groups, differentiated instruction and project-based learning strategies. Questions posed in class may not have hard and fast answers, and students may choose a variety of paths in order to find their answers. You are not the sole source of knowledge and in fact work as facilitator and coach in the student's own knowledge quest.

A Guide and a Sage
In all likelihood, you find yourself as both sage and guide. You blend your teaching strategies in ways that work for you, offering direct instruction where necessary, while providing opportunities for engaging projects and group work where relevant. You integrate technology on a regular basis but it does not drive your curriculum.

Teaching in a 1:1 environment will involve all of these aspects of teaching. And while you can get by having students use technology simply as a substitute for what they would otherwise do on paper (read, write, work on math problems), there is a much larger world of discovery and creativity now at their fingertips.

Tips and Considerations for Teaching in a 1:1 Environment with iPads
1) Start gradually: Technology integration is a process, one that starts with your comfort level, and doing things that are not too different from what you do now without the technology. Allow yourself time to adapt to the new environment. In the next phase we will discuss the levels of technology integration. For now, it's important to acknowledge that you can begin at the beginning.

2) The technology is just one more tool in your arsenal as a great teacher: One of the many benefits of the iPad is that as easy as it is to get up and running, it's just as easy to put away when not in use. Feel confident in the use of the iPad when appropriate, and have students set it aside when not necessary for the work at hand. As your comfort level increases in the use of the iPad as an instructional tool and as a learning tool, its integration into your curriculum will also increase.

3) You don't have all the answers, and students can help too: The fast pace of technological change requires us to be life-long learners. You simply can't start at the top, but must be ready to adapt when changes come. Students can be an incredible resource when you get stuck. They love to help you, and each other, and will have a sense of leadership and ownership in the learning process if you ask them for assistance. Take advantage of this built-in resource.

4) Learning from failure: Often when trying to introduce a new technology tool or strategy in our classroom, we run into a glitch, something that doesn't quite run right, or as we

anticipated. It could be the tool is not ready for prime time, or it could be that we don't understand it comprehensively enough to implement successfully. It is important during these times to raise ourselves off the ground, dust off our trousers, and try again. Learning from failure is sometimes the best recipe for success.

5) The class might be a little louder than you are used to: A natural outcome of engaged learning is a classroom with more "noise". In general it's good noise, as students are actively involved in their learning. They are discussing the questions that need answering, the problems that need solutions, who takes on the different roles, what research is necessary, what should the end product look like? All of this involves discourse and interaction.

6) Flip the screen: This is a handy management technique picked up from one of our neighboring schools. At random points during a lesson or activity, ask a student to flip his/her screen to you. It's a nice, simple way to check that they are working on their current task.

7) Check the multi-task bar for most recently accessed apps: The multi-task bar will reveal the most recent apps students were working on. So, by double-clicking the home button you can tell when a student was on youtube, instead of taking notes. The apps will be in order, starting with the most recently used at the far left.

8) Eyes on Me, iPads Face Down: There are a number of ways to get students' attention during group work or projects. Some teachers clap and have students clap back, others raise a hand and wait for students to raise theirs in response. With the iPad, it's extremely tempting for a student to want to continue working, even when you ask for focus back to the large group. Whatever your approach, when you need to get their attention back, make sure they have their eyes on you, and iPads face down. It will make for much better flow.

Technology Integration is a Process
This journey into a 1:1 classroom environment must be seen as a process of growth. You will most likely begin as you would in any given academic year, doing things in the same ways you have always done. As you try new lessons, new tools and new strategies, you will move forward through stages of technology integration. The next chapter in this bootcamp will help you to understand how technology integrates into your curriculum and in many ways can transform how you teach. This brief article, "The Challenge of Change", from Ian Jukes, describes the transformative role teachers must play in 21st Century classrooms.

The Flipped Classroom
Placing technology tools into the hands of every student, with access on and off campus, provides a means to access content from virtually anywhere at anytime. It's no surprise then, that movements like the "flipped classroom" concept and the Khan Academy are gaining so much traction in educational circles. The basic idea of a flipped classroom model is that students view a video lesson online the night before a class, then come into the class the following day to discuss and work on problems in the company of peers and the teacher. It flips the traditional class structure in that the lesson takes place at home (at the student's own pace), and the "homework" is done in class with peer and teacher support. The ubiquitous nature of technology, particularly mobile technology, is a driving force to support this model. Read this article, The Flipped Class Manifest, for more information on this topic.

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