Ryan Fields

Professor Ramos

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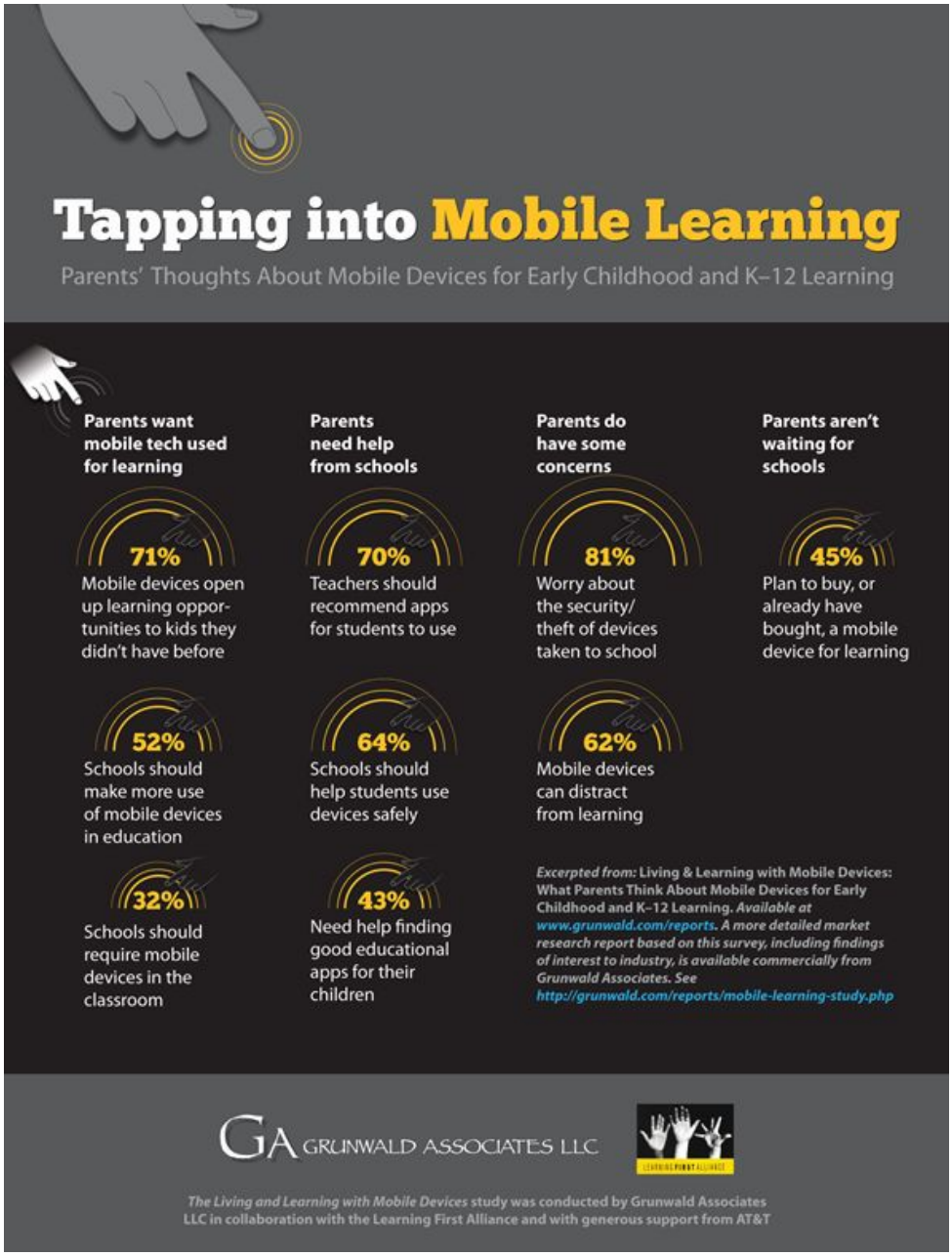
Technology in Schools

Technology has always been at the forefront of human education. From the days of carving figures on rock walls to today, when most students are equipped with several portable technological devices at any given time, technology continues to push educational capabilities to new levels. In looking at where educational methods and tools have come from to where they are going in the future, technology's importance in the classroom is evident now more than ever.

Although the first computers were developed in the '30s, everyday-use computers were introduced in the '80s. The first portable computer, in 1981, weighed 24 pounds and cost $1,795. When IBM introduced its first personal computer in 1981, the educational world knew that it was on the verge of greatness. It seems like years since MySpace, first introduced in 2003, Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2007) have changed both the communication and business worlds. Instant connectivity has branched out from merely a tool of personal communication, to a platform for educational instruction and outreach. Social media is now being recognized as an accepted form of instruction in some instances, and groups such as **Scholastic Teachers** provide excellent support and tips for instructors. Many instructors use social media to communicate directly with their students, or to form forum-style groups for students to communicate with each other, and the method seems to be proving valuable in providing one-on-one attention to student's questions and concerns.

Technology ushers in fundamental structural changes that can be integral to achieving significant improvements in productivity. Used to support both teaching and learning, technology infuses classrooms with digital learning tools, such as computers and hand held devices; expands course offerings, experiences, and learning materials; supports learning 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; builds 21st century skills; increases student engagement and motivation; and accelerates learning. Technology also has the power to transform teaching by ushering in a new model of connected teaching. This model links teachers to their students and to professional content, resources, and systems to help them improve their own instruction and personalize learning.

A new report, "Living and Learning with Mobile Devices," released by the Learning First Alliance and Grunwald Associates, with the support of AT&T, explores parents' perceptions of mobile devices for early childhood and K-12 education. Its authors argue that parents' perceptions are particularly important if schools plan on integrating mobile technology into the classroom.The authors find that although many parents have reservations about this technology in the classroom, 71 percent admit that mobile devices create opportunities their kids wouldn't have otherwise.

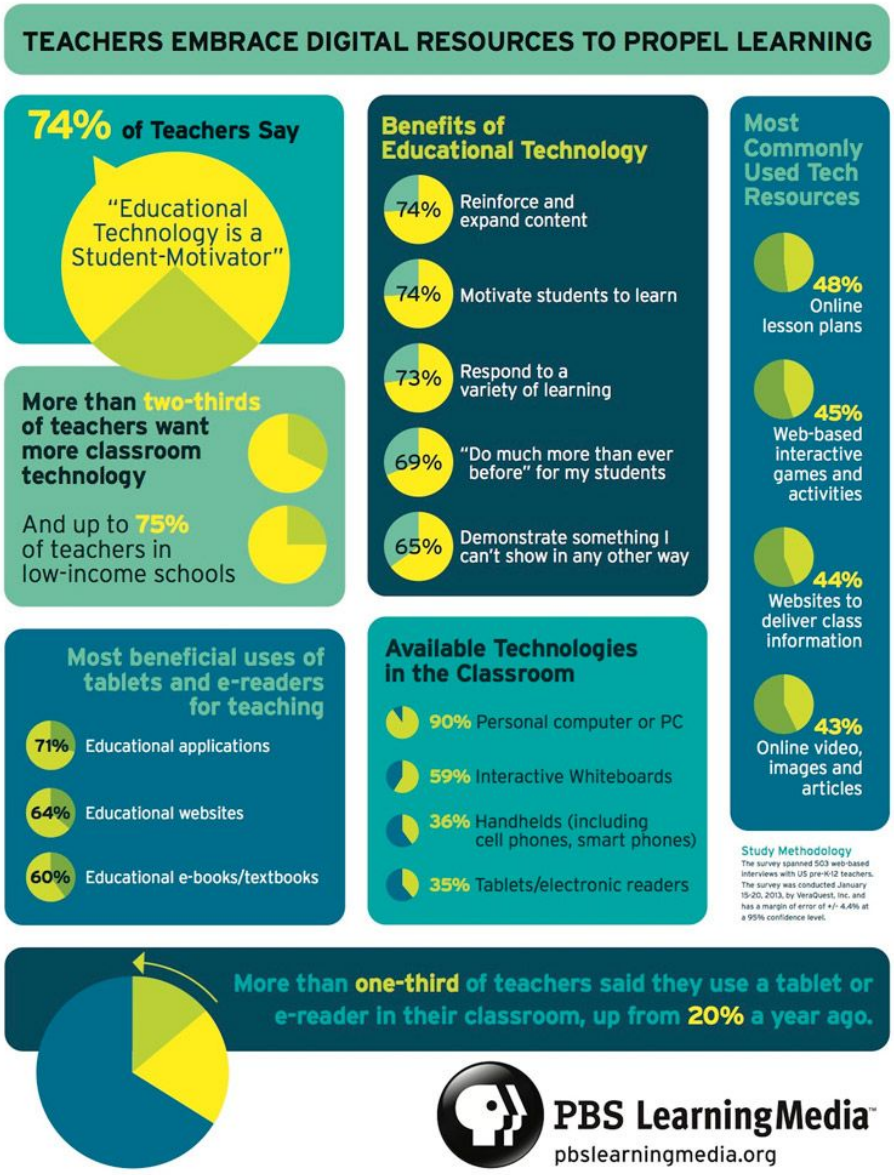


"Technology has the capability to improve how teachers run their classrooms. Tablets, SMART Boards and the Internet are all tools that can be used to improve the delivery of lessons and provide specific instructional plans based on individual student needs". Teachers who

incorporate technology into their classroom likely will add variety to the learning experience, which could ultimately benefit educators and students alike by sparking curiosity and creativity.

In preparation for Digital Learning Day, an online event hosted by the Alliance for Excellent Education, which takes place today, researchers at Virginia-based PBSLearningMedia released the results of a nationwide survey that says that three-quarters of the nation's teachers value the benefits of technology in the classroom; that's independent of budget or circumstance.

In fact, "**74 percent** of educators surveyed said technology is key to helping them expand on classroom content; the same percentage said technology is a motivational tool; and **73 percent** said it helps teachers respond to different learning styles". Moreover, **69 percent** said technology has helped do more than ever before for their students. Forty Eight states and the District of Columbia currently support online learning opportunities that range from supplementing classroom instruction on an occasional basis to enrolling students in full-time programs. These opportunities include dual enrollment, credit recovery, and summer school programs, and can make courses such as Advanced Placement and honors, or remediation classes available to students. Both core subjects and electives can be taken online, many supported by online learning materials. While some online schools or programs are homegrown, many others contract with private providers or other states to provide online learning opportunities.



Technology helps students be more responsible. Owning your own device or borrowing the school's devices gives students the opportunity to improve their decision making skills as well as taking ownership of a valuable (and often times expensive) device. Again, this needs to be complemented by proper digital citizenship training to see the best results. Technology transforms the learning experience. Students have access to an incredible amount of new

opportunities. From learning how to code to learning how to better collaborate across teams and with their instructors--technology empowers students to be more creative and be more connected. New tech has super-charged how we learn today. If used correctly, mobile devices and the applications they support, will help prepare students for their future careers. Integrating technology into the classroom is an effective way to connect with students of all learning styles. It gives students the opportunity to enhance the interaction with their classmates and instructors by encouraging collaboration. Using technology in the classroom gives teachers and other faculty members the opportunity to develop their student's **digital citizenship skills**. It's one thing to use mobile devices, it's a completely other thing to know how to use them correctly and responsibly. Integrating technology in education helps students stay engaged. Most students today have been using mobile devices like tablets and smartphones to play and learn since they could crawl. So it only seems logical to align today's classrooms with the way that your students want and are used to learning. Combining new tech like **VR (virtual reality)** with traditional classroom instruction is one example of how the introduction of new technology can enhance the learning experience and create new opportunities. When mobile technology is readily available and performing correctly in the classroom, students are able to access the most up-to-date information quicker and easier than ever before.The traditional passive learning model is broken. With technology in the classroom the teacher becomes the encourager, adviser, and coach.

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