

The Facts on Education

Under what conditions does technology impact learning?

Technology in the classroom is a controversial topic. While some educators embrace technology and have had success integrating it into their practice, others are concerned that the results are not always worth the investment of time, money, and effort. Despite the mixed reactions, funds are increasingly being directed towards improving the technology available to students, even though it is evident that the technology available in Canadian schools is under-utilized.

Educators agree that students need skills that prepare them for work in the 21st Century and that new ways of thinking, learning, and teaching are required. However, it is not clear what a technologically enhanced curriculum should look like and it is difficult to pinpoint the exact conditions that would make this transformation successful. What is very clear is that for every success story in the integration of technology into the classroom, there is a teacher who is motivated, engaged and committed to making that transformation. In addition, the following factors must be in place:

- Key players at all levels of the education system must collaborate in the process of transformation.
- Teachers need to be supported with adequate resources, time, training, and technical support.
- The focus must remain on the individual student's learning needs, content areas, and curriculum goals.
- Technological tools must be chosen for their ability to enrich the learning process or the curriculum.
- The use of technology in education appears to be most effective in a process called blended learning, a combination of student-driven on line work and teacher led classroom instruction/activities.

Technology may have an important role to play in a transformed education system; however, the addition of technologies in the classroom must not be the ultimate goal of decision makers. For technology to positively impact learning it must be carefully selected, accessible to all students, be teacher-supported and fully integrated within the curriculum.

For the research references that inform this issue, please visit:

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