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Classroom Technology Changing the Way Kids – And Adults Learn

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Textbook.

20th Century definition: A manual of instruction in any branch of study.

21st Century definition: Ancient learning methodology, last used by aging baby boomers. Killed lots of trees. Replaced by e-Books that are usually interactive and often open or free to use and sometimes edit.

Well, they're still around and being used, but textbooks may eventually follow the slide rule and one-room school house into learning oblivion.



Classroom technology, to put it mildly, has brought about – and continues to bring – a sea change in the way students learn - from kindergarteners to university graduates. And the opportunities for teachers to better engage and interact with their students have also increased exponentially.

One recent example is how journalism students at [Palo Alto High School](#) (Paly) are developing their editing/reporting skills. The school's new Media Arts Center makes the 1972 *Washington Post* newsroom made famous by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein look positively antediluvian, superannuated, cobwebby, démodé, fusty – pick an adjective – all apply.

Palo Alto Online reported that the journalism students, for instance, are “playing around with 20 sets of iOgrapher, an iPad mini dock to which a microphone, 37 mm lens, light and other filming accessories can be attached – meaning high-quality video reporting can be done from pretty much anywhere.”

And as Al Pacino quipped in *Scent of a Woman*, “I’m just getting started.”



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Thursday, Oct 30, 2014

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BLOGPOST With the world's

View from the second floor of Palo Alto High School's Media Arts Center

More than 200 students and four advisers currently run the school paper, [The Campanile](#), five niche magazines, a news website, a daily broadcast segment and a year book. And it helps, added [Palo Alto Online](#), to have all of these bells/whistles/gadgets/gizmos to churn out all that content:

- 200 new Apple computers
- Soundproof interview booths
- Dark room
- Audio recording studio
- Broadcast TV studio
- Ticker above the entrance streaming campus news
- LCD TV screens showing *InFocus* (Paly's broadcast program) playing next to CNN



Way across the pond in the United Kingdom, teachers, reported [The Guardian](#), are finding innovative ways to use social media to engage their students. Emma Lamb, a teacher trainer at [King Edward Hill School for Boys](#) in

Birmingham, uses Twitter to set homework and tweet reminders or extra reading, TED talks and YouTube videos.

Rachel Jones, an e-learning coordinator at the school, added that "I'll get students to live tweet what they're learning with a set hashtag, and project that on the wall so they can all see it during the lesson. Then you can use [Storify](#) (an information network; stories can be embedded anywhere online by simply pasting an embed code) to convert all their tweets into PDF and put it up on the school website for class notes."

Gamification (using tenets of game theory in creating/designing instructional sets) is also growing very popular in schools worldwide. [Brainly](#), an online social learning platform, has been using game elements to help students learn for more than five years. Initially launched for Polish schoolchildren as "Zadane.pl", Brainly now encompasses more than a dozen websites and claims to have 26 million users across more than 35 countries.

Writing in [Edutopia](#), Vicki Davis, a teacher and IT integrator based in Camilla, GA, added that "it's time to move forward into best practices, curation methodologies that will truly help us apply education theory to gaming, and an understanding of gaming that will help us apply gaming theory to education. I'm excited about gaming as a powerful "killer" tool in a 21st century teacher's toolkit."

Two more things to watch:

Big Data -- It's now catching on with educational institutions. Schools are discovering that learning analytics are becoming effective in personalizing the educational experience.

3D printing -- There are numerous educational opportunities for these devices. Ellyssa Kroski, writing in [OEDB.org](#), said the Poland and Hong Kong-based Gadgets3D launched a '3D Printer in Every School' project -- schools can purchase a RepRap G3D printer for \$245 as part of an educational kit that's ideal for the classroom.

Of course, teachers must have the requisite training and more importantly, know how to effectively manage the available technology so it becomes a true learning experience and not an expensive distraction.

Howard Pitler, a former high school principal and now chief program officer at [McREL International](#), an education research and development group, summed it up best:

"Doing what you've always done and just putting electricity behind it isn't going to change things," he said. "But if what the students are really doing is investigating, using simulations and going out and participating in real-world projects, then we see a real change."

population now exceeding seven billion, many municipalities in both emerging markets and developed nations are paying closer attention on how they manage their infrastructure and resources. A number of larger cities are well on their way to becoming smart cities. Market research firm Frost & Sullivan succinctly sums up how these cities are now being defined -- built on solutions and technology leading to the adoption of at least five of eight smart parameters -- smart energy, smart building, smart mobility, smart healthcare, smart infrastructure, smart technology, smart governance and smart education, and smart citizen.



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