

Mid Content Area Essay

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At the most fundamental level a teacher is expected to be a master in the area that they specialize in. For elementary school teachers that includes a variety of subjects, however for high school teachers that only includes one area. Regarding high school, english students are exploring a world of poetry, detecting hidden meanings of readings, learning phonetics, mastering fluency, vocabulary and overall comprehension of these concepts. Throughout this essay we will explore the role technology plays in the content area with teachers and students, and lastly the overall impact of assessments.

Technology in the classroom is interesting because now days with the increase of cell phone policies and the hope for the “good old days” back more school are integrating the use of technology. This is an easy concept for science, art and math classes but for the content area of focus (english) it is something that must be done thoughtfully and carefully. “Integrating technology into a high school classroom isn't a one-step process. You can't just slap a netbook [computer] on top of a textbook and say, 'Great, now we have technology (McMullen 2012).” Digital learning with texts creates an opportunity to have an extended classroom. The students have access to learning material past normal class time, “An extended classroom is one that allows learners to engage in material beyond the regular class period, so while a blended classroom is looking at ways that an activity might be enhanced by a technology, we also see technologies being used to make it possible to cover areas of the curriculum that there is just not enough time for in the busy world of formal education, particularly in primary and secondary schools (Motteram 2013).”

Research shows some teachers are taking advantage of social networks in the classroom to encourage literacy “You don't even have to bring the most popular social media sites into your classroom. You can use Fakebook or FakeTweet as students work on this form of conversation. Edublogs, Kidblog, Edmodo, and more will let you use social media competencies and writing techniques. Some teachers are even doing "tweets" on post-it notes as exit tickets. You can use mainstream social media, too (Davis 2014).” Another interesting use of technology that has been proven successful by teachers was the concept of a “flipped classroom”. “With this setup, they explain, the lectures and homework are reversed. Students will listen to a webcast or recording of the teacher's lecture at home, and then they will come to class and work on projects and problem-solving activities related to the lecture with the teachers. With this system, says Wise, The teacher is able to engage with each student and immediately determine what their needs are (McMullen 2012).”

The choice to integrate technology provides amazing benefits for struggling readers and english language learners. “Classroom technology use has the potential to provide struggling readers and ELLs with access to crucial digital literacies while working to improve vocabulary and reading comprehension outcomes Digital reading environments can also be designed and programmed to present important information in a systematic and consistent fashion, thus ensuring comparable access for all students. This is particularly promising for speakers of languages other than English, as supports relative to students' native language (e.g., translations) may be provided in their first language (L1), creating a rich linguistic environment in which to build relevant lexical and metacognitive skills crucial for facile English-language text comprehension. Programmable digital environments are most certainly not intended to replace

the teacher, but their use creates opportunities to present important information to students in such a way as to target individual differences in an effort to promote positive reading and learning experiences that can be supplemented offline through typical teacher–student interactions (Proctor, Dalton, Grisham 2007).”

After a student has been taught through the use of technology and a great teacher most of the time especially in the state of North Carolina they will be assessed. North Carolina have EOG (End of grade) testing for elementary and middle school and EOC’s (End of Course) testing for high schoolers. The state test in North Carolina are criterion based assessments, “Prior to developing test specifications, it is important to outline the purpose of a test and what types of inferences (Millman 2012).” The effects that I have first hand experience of with standardized testing is that they can be biased, students get incredibly nervous and teachers only provide information so that the students can pass. There’s less time for learning with testing and test prep.

Another limitation on student learning results from the negative perceptions standardized tests can give to students about themselves and their own abilities. Studies show that elementary school students can begin to lose their sense of themselves as capable, able to do well in school and graduate, when they see unknown adults as controlling the administration and consequences of the standardized tests they are required to take. Even the very best ELA teachers have difficulty fostering learning in students who do not believe in their own abilities.

In conclusion, we’ve discovered the role technology plays in the content area with teachers and students and the importance of it, and the assessments that are specific to the state of North Carolina and the overall impact assessments have on not only students but teachers as well.

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