

Integrating Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) can make a seamless integration into both the instructional process and the classroom curriculum in a multitude of ways. Engaging students to perform simple research on the Internet, to encouraging global communication via video conferencing, there are unlimited methods for all students, despite their varieties in learning styles or capabilities, to incorporate IT into their academic activities. Moreover, empirical data suggests that the collaboration of IT along with traditional instructional techniques can only serve to enhance the comprehension and mastery of subject matter.

The development and maintenance of a class website is a simple and low cost illustration of how to begin integrating IT into the classroom. A class website gives students unfamiliar with the internet a safe place to explore and practice their skills. Site offerings could potentially include instructional support, additional resources, further investigation of materials from class, and an avenue for parent teacher communication. The integration of IT through a class website allows for students to develop the technological skills required to succeed in our modern society.

In addition to teaching basic technological skills via the class website, implementing a classroom performance system (CPS) allows us as instructors to build upon the skills our students have acquired from their high tech lives. These computerized systems along with smart boards make learning any subject engaging and interactive. Teachers display questions aligned to standards on the board, as students each holding their own remote respond. CPS provides the instructor with the mobility to instruct the

lessons from anywhere in the room, the ability to actively monitor the class, and allows for individual help. As students participate, teachers gather responses on their computer, accurately assessing each child's comprehension of the material. The incorporation of CPS allows for every student to answer every question, keeping the entire class involved. Students also come up to the interactive smart board to draw, circle, and press corresponding buttons on the screen. CPS easily accommodates for both students of multiple learning styles and special needs. For example, a student that is hearing impaired can participate in a classroom discussion via on-screen text that they type. By integrating CPS and smart boards, instruction becomes both stimulating and promotes student centered learning

Integrating technology into the classroom can also be done through interactive websites such as national geographic and Google earth, where students can participate in simulations. These websites can be used along side of the smart board creating whole class explorations or individually with student laptops. Students can also participate in video conferencing to communicate with people outside the local community. United streaming offers extensive videos on a variety of subjects appropriate for specific grade levels. Exploring technology this way helps to make the curriculum more meaningful as well as connects students with the rest of the world.

The integration of internet technology sets precedence for a classroom that welcomes technology. It will increase our student's skills in a pertinent area and will also enrich the curriculum by fostering the creation of personal connections. Class websites, smart boards, and internet based applications only touch the surface of this integration.