

“It’s not the technology, it’s the learning,” is quickly becoming my mantra as I explain to people the graduate degree I’ve chose to pursue. This week’s reading supports this assertion. Edutopia has published five valuable articles regarding the initial steps and considerations of proper implementation of technology into classrooms. From research to reports from the field, each article touts, “It’s not the technology, it’s the learning.”

Vanessa Vega shares in the article, “Technology Integration Research Review” that though research is lacking on which aspect of technological implementation increases learning, research is showing consistent improvement in learning where technology is effectively used. These views are corroborated by several experts whose opinions are provided in the article, “Technology Integration: What Experts Say.” Some of the most thought provoking analysis comes from Professor James Paul Gee who believes that using tech based lessons provide constant assessment while framing learning as a series of problems to be understood and solved. Angela Maiers also points out that within tech based lessons students have the opportunities to cooperate, manage tasks, accomplish goals and contribute. These ideas strike at the core of goals I hold as a teacher. Not to create historical fact books, but to guide students to be better thinkers and creators.

However, Edutopia, despite the pun of its name, does not hold technology integration as the ultimate problem-solver whose mere presence can defend against poor teaching and apathetic students. In the afore mentioned article, “Technology Integration: What Experts Say,” Mary Beth Hertz reminds educators that significant student creation using technology might take time. Andrew Marcinek extols the adage, “it’s a marathon, not a race,” when considering technological integration. A 1998 study by Harold Wenglinsky found that the benefits of technological implementation were only present if challenging material was the focus of the lesson, as opposed to digital drilling of concepts.

The articles clearly paint a picture of technology as just one other way with which to connect students to a subject. Each lesson should be evaluated for the appropriateness of technological integration. It cannot be a babysitter or creator of busywork. Our students crave authentic knowledge, resources and experiences; often technology can provide just that.