

Snapshots

RESEARCH REPORT

Digital Citizenship in the Classroom



New technologies are being rolled out so often that it's hard to keep up with them. In the education arena, it's even more difficult, with shrinking budgets undercutting the purchase of new tools and the educator training necessary to use them.

In a new report, "The Common Sense Census: Inside the 21st Century Classroom," Common Sense Media looks at this issue in hopes of learning more about the state of education technology usage in classrooms across the nation. The goal of the report? To help education stakeholders—teachers, principals, school districts, and others—make evidence-based decisions on what tools make the most sense for students to use.

Survey Topic Areas

More than 1,200 K–12 teachers nationwide participated in the survey. From that data, the report focuses on four main topic areas:

Digital citizenship curricula and competencies. The study examines the prevalence of teaching digital citizenship and its perceived effectiveness, as well as the use of digital citizenship resources.

K–12 teachers' use of digital tools and perceptions of their effectiveness for student learning. The impact of educational technology on learning often depends on the context in which, and the purpose for which, the technology is used.

Access to technology for classroom learning. What does students' access to technology devices for classroom learning at home and at school look like?

Technology integration policies. To understand how technology is used in the classroom, school policies

related to educational technology are examined, especially in the context of teachers' technology-related concerns.

Key Findings

After reviewing the survey data, researchers created a list of findings. The following is a sampling of 11 key conclusions:

- 1. Teachers worry about students' ability to critically evaluate online content.** According to the survey, 35 percent noticed this "frequently" or "very frequently" in their classrooms. The second top concern was that "technology distracts students from the learning experience and interferes with learning," reported by 26 percent of teachers as "frequent" or "very frequent" in their classrooms. The issue was reported more often as grade levels increased.
- 2. Video is the king of education technology in the classroom.** Video-streaming services were the most commonly used digital tool. Roughly 60 percent of K–12 teachers reported using services such as YouTube, SchoolTube, or Netflix in classrooms. The second-most-common type of

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How do you help your staff grow their professional learning?



Chara Willaford (@DrCharaChats): I encourage (well, expect) everyone to use Twitter [and] connect with groups on [Facebook]. How do you get them to do it? Model and make it a fun, low-stress priority until it takes off organically.



Jeff Davis (@JeffDavisVAedu): I think we first ask them to work closely with their PLCs and then reach out to colleagues in nearby district/division schools, while also keeping a "filter" out there that scoops up info from blogs, newsletters, and Twitter.



Chris Wooleyhand (@principal64): A good PLN is found in seeking a variety of learning sources: conferences, Twitter, ed camps, local events, etc.

digital tool was presentation and productivity programs such as Google G Suite for Education and Microsoft Office.

Teachers place a high value on digital creation tools in developing 21st century skills, but these tools are among the least used in the classroom. Productivity and presentation tools, digital creation tools such as iMovie and Photoshop, and learning management systems such as Google Classroom and Moodle were rated as the most effective digital tools for developing students' skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.

3. **The gap between education technology products teachers use and what they say is effective is real—and it cuts across subjects.** The report cites an example: English language arts (ELA) teachers rated productivity and presentation tools and assistive technology as the most effective types of digital tools for developing ELA content knowledge and skills, but many of them used other digital tools they rated as less effective with greater frequency

Another example: Math teachers rated supplemental apps and

websites as the most effective digital tools for developing students' content knowledge and skills in math, but they used them less often than other digital tools they rated as less effective.

4. **Many teachers are not receiving effective professional development to support their use of education technology.** According to the survey, only 40 percent considered the professional development they've received to support their use of education technology to be "very" or "extremely" effective.
5. **Many technology products purchased by schools and districts go unused.** About one-third of teachers said they did not use or practically never used a technology product the school or district provided them. Why? Because the products were not relevant to students' learning, not engaging for students' learning, or not effective in developing students' skills.

To read the full list of findings and detailed teacher and school characteristics, visit the Common Sense Media website: www.common Sense Media.org. 

Improving Attendance

Regular school attendance is a major factor in student success. Those with chronic absenteeism are more likely to fall behind in reading, score lower on standardized tests, fail to graduate from high school, and not attend college.

To improve attendance takes a village of students, families, faculty, and administrators. These four tips are a good place to start:

1. **Enlist a team.** Assign a team of teacher leaders to a group specifically tasked with paying close attention to attendance trends by focusing on data, parent engagement activities, student behavior, and family support systems.
2. **Understand—and actually use—data.** District data can supplement the data you record in your school.
3. **Communicate with families.** Don't wait until there's a problem to address it. Communicate frequently with students' families via social media, a digital newsletter, or in-person meetings.
4. **Make sure students know what's at stake.** Get creative when it comes to letting students know just how much regular attendance increases their chances of success in life.

Share the Word

This year, NAESP is proud to partner with Attendance Works, a national and state initiative that pushes for better policy and practice to improve school attendance. Join us in September as we celebrate Attendance Awareness Month.

Find links to tools and resources you can put to use right away in your school on the Attendance Works website: attendanceworks.org. 



Kristen Breedlove (@kbreedlove1984): We can encourage our staff to expand their PLNs by sending them to conferences/PD, creating opportunities to collaborate/learn with other schools, hosting Twitter chats, inviting them to leadership functions, and getting them out in the community.



Jillayne Flanders (@jillflanders): You, the school leader, set the example. And then you make mistakes and think through them together. This is culture-building. You make time for teachers to talk, informally observe each other, get out of the building, wonder, wander, and discover.



Amanda Funk (@techietaach11): Every time a bell rings, a teacher in my school created a Twitter account! [It's] music to my ears [and] opens up a WORLD of resources!