

Emerging Technology Trends in Education: BYOD

Molly M Willing

There are new trends in educational technology emerging weekly. However, I think the BYOD is going to grow by leaps and bounds over the next year. BYOD stands for “Bring Your Own Device”. The basic idea of BYOD is each student brings any internet-ready device available to them. The device may be a laptop, iPad, Kindle, smartphone, etc. The students then have devices in their hands they are already familiar with.

In our current educational systems, technology should be at the center of our daily planning. For our students, future careers depend on us readying them for the workforce and the use of mobile devices (Scott, 2014). BYOD has three major positive arguments for its use in educational settings: familiarity of the device, time saver, and instant budget savings.

Students are already familiar with their selected device. The device is then customized to one’s needs and interests. Students also become more proficient with their own devices rather than struggling to use what technology is available at school. The devices are always available. Some students may not have personal access, but this lessens the load for the school then. Less computer carts are needed; perhaps students without access can checkout a computer to use all day.

Familiarity of the device then leads to the time saving aspect. Little time is needed to explain how to use the devices the students have. I usually spend and entire class period talking students through opening google docs, what sites to

search, etc. Students will be very aware of how to run their own devices and less instructional time will be necessary.

All this said, the major selling point of bring your own device is the savings to the district. Many school districts are struggling to maintain feasible budgets and everyone seems to be facing large budget cuts. With a technology option that costs no money to the district, it is the answer to our suffering and prayers. We must continue to plan for and use technology. However, this option allows us to keep up with new developments, rather than struggling to use out dated devices that have been used and abused by hundreds of students each day.

I have also found two drawbacks to the BYOD trend. Lack of training on all the differing pieces of technology and acceptable use policies are going to be challenges to any district employing BYOD.

It is impossible to train all teachers on all types of technology the students may bring into the building. However, with the kids being so familiar with the devices, perhaps the need for technology help may be lessened. If the district does see this as a possible drawback, maybe the district could assemble a group of proficient students to help fellow students troubleshoot problems. This core group, of students, could work to handle technology requests and forward on any serious issues to the technology department. "Officials at one school district say that have not encountered many tech problems or complaints from teachers. Rather, students are more engaged, they say, and the only problem that regularly crops up is that students forget to charge the batteries in their devices" (Richtel, 2013).

Acceptable use policies will also need to be developed. The policies will need to outline what is expected from the district for students to be responsible digital citizens. Perhaps a student/parent contract can be used, as the parents should be aware of the districts expectations. I also feel that waivers need to be signed by parents, releasing the district from responsibility should damage occur to any of the students' devices. "In most BYOD pilot programs, students have to sign some sort of agreement to only use the device during class time for specific projects" (Chadband, 2012).

While there are drawbacks to every trend, in my opinion, the positives outweigh the negatives. Our students must have access to appropriate technology everyday. However, budget constraints are preventing schools from equipping students properly. BYOD solves this issues with little to no cost to the district, save students and teachers instructional time, and allow students to use familiar technology devices.

Resources

Scott, J. (2014). Addressing the mounting challenges of BYOD: Multi-platform interoperability, customization and use of pre-existing integrated security Infrastructures. Retrieved from secureidnews.com.

Richtel, M. (2013). Digitally aided education, using the students' own electronic gear. *The New York Times*.

Chadband, E. (2012). Should schools embrace "bring your own device"? *NEA Today*. Retrieved from neatoday.org.