

# Essay topics



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Changing the face of education: 5 trends in technology Changing the face of education: 5 trends in technology Blackboards are out; Smart Boards are in. For those who haven't set foot in a classroom in a few years, schools may seem a bit like a foreign land. Educational technology has radically transformed how students learn today, and it isn't just those enrolled in online schools who are noticing the difference. Whether a child attends a traditional classroom, a blended program or a college online, here are five trends edu-tech experts are noticing as educational technology continues to impact schools everywhere.

Here are five ways that ed tech is changing the face, and pace of education today. 1. Mobile devices in every classroom The idea of providing all students with laptops has been bandied about in some quarters for nearly a decade. However, technology has finally hit the point where providing mobile devices such as laptops, netbooks, smart phones and tablets no longer seems like an unattainable dream. What's more, these devices seem to be well on their way to replacing the traditional computer lab. According to a 2010 report from Project RED, mobile devices make up 45 percent of all computing devices used in schools.

In addition, nearly a quarter of schools have a 1: 1 ratio of devices to students when it comes to providing mobile technology for use in the classroom. It also appears devices such as tablets are quickly replacing laptops as the educational technology of choice. In its second quarter earnings call, Apple reported it had doubled its sales of iPads to high schools and colleges with a million units sold. For comparison, the company said it sold 500, 000 MacBook laptops to schools during the same period. 2.

Mandatory online coursework Virtual learning may be shifting from an option to a requirement in some regions of the country.

The Evergreen Education Group found in its 2012 annual report on virtual learning that five states currently require students to take at least one online course to graduate: • Alabama • Florida • Idaho • Michigan • Virginia Districts in other states such as Memphis City Schools in Tennessee and Marietta City Schools in Georgia are also said to be considering their own requirements independent of any state mandate. 3. Online assessments become the norm Filling in bubbles may soon be a thing of the past as standardized testing moves online.

Educational technology is not only streamlining the testing process but also making it easier for schools and parents to review student progress and identify trends in learning. Some states, such as Delaware, have moved all their mandated standardized testing online. In addition, 45 states as well the District of Columbia have plans to use federal dollars to adopt new tests by the 2014-2015 school year which may mean more online tests are on the way. Online testing proponents say computer-based options can lead to less cheating, more personalization and the opportunity to conduct multiple tests throughout the year for shorter periods of time.

For example, the Northwest Evaluation Association offers modern measures of academic progress: a test that adapts to student's answers on the fly and is intended to be administered several times to provide a snapshot of changing student achievement throughout the year. 4. Altering offline teaching styles Technology isn't just changing the tools of the trade in the classroom, it also appears to be fundamentally changing how students learn.

Some teachers say gone are the days of classroom lectures and learning straight from the textbook.

A 2012 study from Common Sense Media found 71 percent of teachers say students' overall media usage has hurt their attention spans. To combat student distraction, teachers are shifting to new tactics that include multi-media presentations and interactive learning strategies such as games to keep students engaged. 5. More education opportunities at a lower cost Educational technology is proving to be a game changer when it comes to providing enhanced learning opportunities at a lower cost. Online schooling offers students access to coursework that may not otherwise be available to them.

And that applies to students at both ends of the learning spectrum. A 2012 Massachusetts law allows students who have been expelled from a traditional classroom the option of continuing their education through alternatives such as Internet learning modules. Meanwhile, high achievers may be able to use online schools to take classes not available through their local district such as AP classes or dual enrollment in online colleges. Online enrollment is proving to be a win-win for schools and students alike. While students get more education options, school districts may realize significant savings by using an online model.

According to the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, a fully online program costs an average of \$6, 400 per pupil while a blended model which combines online schooling with traditional classes runs \$8, 900 per pupil. Fully offline programs are estimated by the association to average \$10, 000 per pupil. As if there were ever any doubt, technology is now a

mainstream part of learning in classrooms throughout the country, and online schooling is no longer a fringe alternative. Instead, educational technology is having a profound impact on teaching at virtually every level.