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Paul Goodyear Technology in the Classroom 5-25-2012 One cold morning a young man by the name of Cyrus was awoken abruptly by his alarm clock. He had spent all the previous night playing games and browsing the internet. He took a shower, ate, threw on his clothes, a Carhartt and went out the door. He went inside the school feeling miserable because he knew he had seven hours left before he could do anything remotely fun again. The extremely disappointing thing is that Cyrus wasn't the only one. Everyone else walking in the bland metal doors felt the same way. Cyrus ran into some friends, greeted them coldly, and continued to his classroom in room 217. He sat in his seat and set down his twenty pound backpack and pulled out his textbook, notebook, and pen. From there he repeated this six more times. After the long day was over Cyrus had to lug the twenty pounds back home. After he had gotten home Cyrus changed into his work uniform and went to his job at Burger Town. At ten o'clock he came home and did homework till eleven at night. At this point Cyrus was exhausted and just wants to go to bed. A single day may physically drain this young man, but thirteen years of this will emotionally exhaust him. On the first dreary rainy Monday of school Jason woke up on time and jumped in the shower. He then combed his hair to impress Jenny later on that day and couldn't help but laugh at how silly the whole idea was. Jason put on his clothes and grabbed his bag and a slice of toast and headed to school. When he got to class he pulled the only thing in his backpack out and placed it on his desk. A shiny durable Lenovo laptop and opened it up. He connected to the school network and turned in all of his files for the day. From that point on he had no more responsibility other than learn and impress Jenny. He then left from a calm day of school and headed

to work. He used the same laptop to help him make a presentation at the Fire House where he volunteered. It is now about nine at night and Jason is now making his way home satisfied of a good days work. Jason then got his laptop out and did his homework the way he did every night. Answering the free response and doing his research, all on the same lightweight portable machine that makes so many student's lives easier. Obviously Jason has had a much better day, and for obvious reasons as well. Jason easily turned in assignments and kept organized the whole day. This easy approach to keep all things in one nice compact area is extraordinary. The annoying part is that it is so easy to implement. There are only three components that are necessary to pull off such an overhaul of the American High school educational system: funding, compatibility, and integration. I know what you all are thinking " Technology in school! That will only be distracting, kids will not know how to write, I turned out fine, why change the system? " To all of the baby boomers who have given birth to the digital age, thank you for the innovation, but you all have messed up the United States Education system. We as a country are losing ground quickly in education. No this education failure does not mean we need harder classes, or better teachers. What we really need is a revamped curriculum, and a re-definition of High School. Is the purpose of High School to prepare for college or to prepare for life. Most Americans think the latter, but believe the first. We need to improve high schools to prepare for life in a way other countries have already done, technology. The average USA high school still has many bulky desktop computers running Windows XP. This operating system (operating system throughout the rest of the paper will be referred to as OS not to be confused

with iOS which will later be referenced) is no longer supported by Microsoft. Why are students who are preparing for life allowed to use an outdated device for work, when in the workforce almost every computer has made the jump to the newest version of Windows on a machine that can properly run it? Kids understand the importance of technology and the huge benefit it will bring them in the future. With four years of math in high school. Two of those years few will use in careers, and no required computer classes we are setting up our country's future for failure. We are promoting and making certain educational fields mandatory while excluding most occupations such as Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Artesian, Photographer, Plumber. All of these jobs and economic stimulators are being shunned from educational stimulation in high school. Technology opens those doors by breaking down traditional barriers set up by rigid curriculums and mostly lecture based learning. A laptop in class for student would open doors. Technology in the classroom is not just about what they will learn through it, but it is more about teaching the students how to use it efficiently. A technological high school doesn't need to be futuristic or cutting edge. The school just needs to be smart about where it puts its resources. Many colleges and High Schools already have Smart Boards and most teachers have a laptop and projector. These basic devices bring multimedia learning to the classroom. Schools in Eden Prarie, MN have been using Smart Boards and tablets to teach the students and keep them engaged. A teacher in a younger class would have the students approach the board and swipe at an object to reveal an animal and name it. In older classes teachers used educational websites to track usage when the students were at home. They

would also use it for presentations because it keeps the kids interested instead of dozing off. At the end of the year they compared improvement percentages. Classrooms with technology improved 42% more than classrooms without it (storytellermn, 2011). The perfect school in the near future may look a little bit like this. A student named Kaitlin was woken up be her iPhone running Apple iOS (iOS is registered Apple Incorporated software to run their mobile devices such as the iPod, iPhone, and iPad) woke her up with a reminder that her project was due later that day. She ate breakfast and arrived at school only carrying her laptop and phone. She walked in to class, plugged in her laptop, connected to the school network, put her homework in the classrooms shared network folder (this folder could be either a web application like SkyDrive or a virtual drive like Dropbox) the teacher then received a notification that the homework had been received. The teacher after receiving the homework continued with the notes from the previous day. Kaitlin opened up Microsoft Office One, started recording the lecture and used her webcam to photograph the board for reference. After she went home Kaitlin worked with her friends on their video for history. Kaitlin Skyped her group and shared her screen so they could see how it was going while her partners edited the trifold in Microsoft Office Publisher, while all changes made to the projects were synced automatically to Skydrive. The next day she and her group connected to the Smart Board/projector via WiFi and presented their project. This situation is not impossible; all of the technology already exists. It just has to be integrated. Some college classrooms even work this way already. With the ability for easy collaboration and research why not go ahead and make this happen? The

issue with this is that there are some questions that must be answered first. The first of these questions is who should pay for this. This problem stems off into other mucky financial discussions, but when it comes down to it either the school can own the equipment, the student could own the equipment, or the school could provide a discount for a laptop. The last option seems to be the best, but there would also need to be repercussions to keep the parents from taking the computer and either using it or reselling it. A sticker could be placed on the laptop indicating it is an educational version. This option is beneficially because it allows for students who are better off to have a more powerful or newer device. Once the financial situation has been settled and a computer is in the students hands, what should it run? How would it all work together? With two major OS's in place (Windows and OSX [OSX is produced by Apple Incorporated and is part of their Macintosh line]) the integration between the two would be vital. A third part such as Google could be used to make the jump between the two. All three companies are making jumps to be more student friendly. With Microsoft's Windows 8 (set to be officially released by 4th quarter 2012) there will be much more simplicity in network and collaborating on projects. Microsoft's SkyDrive syncs to the internet and then syncs to any other computer with access to the files. While the two major OS's can work together there needs to be a clear initiative between the manufacturers to create the link between the two. The largest step to integration is through Microsoft Office's OneNote. OneNote can sync notebooks from the internet with the students Windows Live account/XBOX account. Schools have already adopted this kind of technology into their curriculum. Students in The Montclair Kimberly Academy in New Jersey were

ecstatic when they found a brand new MacBook for them at the beginning of school. " It is so much more organized, and it has helped me become a better student. " Said a student using their MacBook with Evernote on it (EvernoteAndrew, 2011). " I couldn't imagine going back'' said Aimee Mooney who is a teacher in Renville County West (Cherveny, 2012). " I love it," said Fernanda Garcia who is a fifteen year old at McAllen Memorial High School (Findell, 2012) . " We're going to learn a lot more from this -- I love the textbook app that came with it" said another student who had been given an iPad for school (Findell, 2012). " I myself am a student who has purchased a laptop from the money I have earned myself. The rewards from the machine are amazing. There is so much productivity that can come from just a single machine. I can only imagine a school that took full advantage of technology. My organizational skills are horrendous, but with programs like OneNote all of my papers are organized and I can find my notes easily. Teachers also enjoy the technology. They like the fact that when they reference something E. A. Poe wrote and the students can have the whole poem up in less than 10 seconds to reference it. Teachers also love the different media types. Computers allow for students to create videos and slideshows, rather than paper. This benefits students who learn in different ways. Students who have attended a technologically advanced school will tell you that they can accomplish much more in less time, keep them organized, and that they have less stress. If this is such a good thing why hasn't it happened? Technology at this point is advancing so rapidly that anything schools implemented would be outdated in 5 years. This is another reason to have the students purchase their own equipment with government

issued discounts on laptops for school. But who will pay for this? In short, Tax Payers who are already paying for the education system. But a restructure of the US budget is just on the horizon, and education will become a higher priority. The Federal Government will then allocate more money to the school system allowing for discounts for education to be available. After the money has been secured people will need to choose a device. Most will choose a cheap Windows laptop. Others will choose a MacBook or an iPad. All that really matters is that it has internet access and a word processing program. There are thousands of different options, but in general they are all the same. In reality the whole purpose of technology in school is to benefit the student. The issue is not whether tech will be integrated, but how much resistance it will get. Technology in schools will provide convenience for students and teachers alike. It will also make cheating more obvious due to word search, time stamps, and websites like turnitin. com. But most importantly it makes high school more like the rest of life. With tech at every corner in the work force why not use it in school. There still may be some concerns looming in your mind. The first of which might be " Technology will only distract, leading to worse grades. " Students who want to learn will. Students who do not, will not. But there are quite a few students on the fence between the two sides, and technology may be able to pull out some of the stops limiting the student. With technology students will be more engaged, organized, and more opportunities for excellence and acceptance will occur. Just like with the two example schools the children became more engaged and improved their scores. " Technology will only make students backpacks heavier because they will still need to carry their books, right? "

Wrong, Textbooks can now be downloaded to computers, saving weight and space in a student's backpack. The most notable advancement in this category is the Kindle by Amazon. Now allows for purchase of textbooks which can be downloaded to a Kindle or to a computer running a Kindle program. Another concern is handwriting. " But my students writing will get worse! " The answer is yes, handwriting will suffer, but in the digital age all writing will be for taking quick notes or fill in bubbles on ACT's. Please note I am not advocating the total abolition of traditional schooling, nor am I saying that handwriting is useless, but from kindergarten to 5th grade the students will learn like normal, and from 6th to 8th grade the students will transition to a tech supplemented curriculum. In High School students will use technology for everyday tasks preparing them for college. Because in college students are almost expected to use a laptop for notes. For example Full Sail University in Florida has initiated Project Launch Box. In this program every student receives a MacBook Pro the first day of class. In conclusion technology in schools is a good thing and it will provide a better future for kids. Technology equalizes students. With the more equalized playing field for college or work a more improved society will come about because of the push forward technology will give us. Students will also be able to express themselves in ways impossible traditionally. With programs like Photoshop, Autocad, and C++ there is a venue for every student, and is that not the whole goal of school? To Learn? Works Cited Cherveny, T. (2012, January 17). West central Minnesota schools look to adapt to latest in digital technology. Willmar, Minnesota, United States. EvernoteAndrew (Director). (2011). Evernote at The Montclair Kimberley Academy [Motion Picture].

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