

Teachers in everyday  
life. laptops allow for



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Teachers are increasingly incorporating technology in their lesson plans. In addition to classrooms, technology is becoming an even bigger presence in everyday life. Laptops allow for fast note-taking and better student-teacher interaction. Although there are benefits to having laptops in classrooms, such as a wider access to information and personalized learning, research suggests the technology can be harmful to the academic performance.

Technology, more specifically handheld devices, can cause distractions, a decrease in the process of information, a decrease in academic achievement, and more. Researchers have found that those who take notes by hand can retain information better and tend to have better assessment results. Although typing notes can be useful when there is a large amount of notes to take, a study by Princeton University and University of California offers evidence to suggest that typing notes can be more harmful than beneficial (Doubek par. 3 ). Their researchers claim that taking notes by hand forces students to pick out what is important, a skill that helps students retain more information by having to think about the content a little longer (Doubek par. 4).

Picking out important information when writing down notes can suggest, "longhand notes may have superior external storage as well as superior encoding functions" (qtd in. Doubek par. 11 ) Those who type notes are more inclined to type everything they hear, which can be beneficial because they will have more notes than those who write out their notes but harmful because they might not retain the information as best (Doubek par. 4).. Another study conducted at West Point military school observed students in

various environments: technology free, access to laptops and tablets, and restricted technology use (Carter par.

14-16). All students had to take a final exam, and what they found was that those who were without technology received the best scores (Carter par. 20). Both results help support the claim that technology can reduce academic achievement; however, these results could have been caused by other factors like dedication to the class or note-taking style. Those who took notes via laptops could have been distracted by various pop-ups, and engaged in non-academic activities that caused their lower scores. Laptops can allow students to access a wide variety of knowledge, but they can be distracting. Research from Michigan State University suggests that laptops do not enhance classroom learning (May par.

3). In an attempt to find out if laptops help students' learning, Susan Ravizza and her colleagues asked students to login in to a proxy server that monitored their web searches and received their scores from a final exam (May par. 4-5). They observed that the students " spent almost 40 minutes out of every 100-minute class period using the internet for nonacademic purposes, including social media, checking email, shopping, reading the news, chatting, watching videos, and playing games. In addition to the nearly 40 minutes students spent surfing the web, they also reported using their phones to text for an additional 27 minutes" ( May par. 6, 11). After looking at test scores, Ravizza and her colleagues found that those with higher use tended to score lower on their exams (May par. 6).

So, not only are students not properly using their laptops for educational purposes, but further research suggests that students around someone with a laptop are often distracted by what is on their screen (May, par. 12). If a student is watching a video, those around them might get tempted to watch along. A study published by Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project surveyed Advanced Placement teachers to find out how technology impacted students' studies (Lanir par.

5-6 ). 99 percent of AP teachers agree that the internet allows students access to a wider range of resources; however, 83 percent feel that the amount of information is overwhelming and 60 percent agree that it can make it harder to find credible sources and causes student to poorly assess the quality of information (Lanir par. 7-8).

This evidence suggests that majority of teachers can agree that laptops have negative effects. Although many people are opposed to laptops in classrooms because of distractions and potential negative effects on assessment scores, research reveals benefits technology offers. Author, Arne Duncan, observes Kristie Ford's classroom at the Brenda Scott Academy for Theatre Arts in Detroit (par. 1, 3). Having students work individually on personal devices allows students to work at their own pace, whereas they might be left behind in the lesson when the whole class moves on (Duncan par. 4). Technology is something that is evolving everyday in society and the current generation is growing up in the digital world, they are going to need some experience and knowledge about it.

Technology can help cause faster learning as well, in fact, “ according to the U. S. Department of Education and recent studies by the National Training and Simulation Association, technology based instruction can reduce the time students take to reach a learning objective by 30 to 80 percent” (The Digital Textbook Collaborative). In addition, implementing technology can result in cost savings.

It will reduce paper costs because schools can update their online textbooks instead of having to purchase a bulk of paper textbooks, a savings of about six hundred dollars a student per year (The Digital Textbook Collaborative). Both sides can agree that there are benefits to having technology. Technology can offer virtual textbooks and access to limitless information. They most strongly disagree on its effect on learning.

Those who think that laptops enhance the learning experience argue that students can get immediate feedback and can easily assess updated content (Duncan par. 14). However, laptops do have more negative consequences. They cause distractions and also cause lower assessment scores. Students are becoming more and more dependent on technology and it sometimes is not for academic purposes. Therefore, students should turn more towards pen and paper, than laptops.

Laptops offer both negative and positive effects, although the negative effects outweigh the good. Laptops can give access to a limitless amount of information, allow immediate feedback and better student-teacher relationships, but they also cause distractions, lower assessment scores, and lower academic achievement. Laptops harm the user, and potentially those

around them. It is important to decide how classrooms are taught and how students take notes. The current generation is the future and how well they get educated is vital. Work Cited Carter, Payne Susan, et al.

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