

# Strategies to Manage the 21st Century Classroom

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We've all seen the black and white images of the one-room schoolhouse. Students sit in perfect rows that face a teacher who is writing on a chalkboard. Up until the last decade, our classrooms hadn't drastically differed from those 100-year-old images. We are so fortunate to be living and teaching in a time of rapid educational change. Instead of personal student chalkboards, a number of students now have access to electronic tablets. Many teachers can now use Smartboards instead of dry-erase boards. The limits of the central textbook have transcended the limitless information gathered online. Although these changes are exciting, using technology in the classroom can seem overwhelming when you have multiple objectives to achieve each day and 30-35 students to engage simultaneously. So how do we manage the advancing 21st century classroom environment? Here are real-world strategies to slay the daunting, technology classroom dragon.

## **Start with your classroom set-up**

1. Make digital citizenship a priority.
2. Teach mini lessons before using devices.
3. Use the power of choice.
4. Remember that sharing is caring.
5. Conduct teacher check-ins.
6. Build in breaks from devices.
7. Software tools are your friends.

A time traveller from the mid-twentieth century would probably have a heart attack if they walked in a modern classroom during a lesson. Gone are the days when teachers stand in front of the classroom and talk at their students all day. Now, you will likely find students working together using various forms of educational **technology**. In this context, the term technology refers to any device used to supplement and enhance student learning. There are various types of devices that fall under this umbrella, and each will be discussed in this programme.

1. Computers
2. Interactive Whiteboards
3. Tablets
4. Cameras
5. Electrical outlets and USB ports
6. Wi-Fi
7. Term-paper review tools
8. How technology for teachers can make their job easier

With the advent of new technologies being infused in school curricula, educators and school leaders are beginning to rethink all facets of data in the classroom. New, innovative methods of data collection are continually being developed, which offer new options for ongoing formative, culminating summative and alternative assessments.

Although challenges in curriculum design may arise due to advanced technology integration, schools are nonetheless embracing the future. Here are five emerging trends for the 21st century classroom.

1. App Innovation and Gamification
2. Digital Literacy
3. Library Media Specialists
4. Self-Directed Professional Development

5. Collaborative Learning

***[Editor's Note: These are excerpts from the Address given by Mr. Muthu Singaram, Chief Guest, at the inauguration of the two-day National Workshop on 'New Technologies for 21st Century Teachers', organized by ELTAI in association with the Department of English, Loyola College (Chennai) on 6-7 December 2019.]***

#### **Letters to the Editor**

*I read with interest [Dr Z. N. Patil's] interview in the [Sept.-Oct. 2019] issue of ELTAI Journal. Your journey in teaching, especially teaching English, has been fascinating. Your views on several aspects Atul sought your reaction to are frank and thought-provoking. Many thanks. . . . I am interested in research. I am sorry that no substantive research has been made into curriculum and classroom teaching.*

*S. S. Rajagopalan, Life Member, ELTAI*

*Sir*

*I read the interview of Dr. Elango by Mr. Robert Bellarmine. I concur with him on certain responses. In those days, we studied English as we wanted to survive. That was the biggest motivation. Though my grandfather insisted on [my] learning words from the dictionary, mostly I learnt [them] based on the context or situation. When I took Literature as my subject, I began to read a lot – from chunks to classics. So I was exposed to the flood of words. Above all, my reading of The Hindu exposed me to the new world.*

*My listening started only [with] listening to the news and seeing movies like Benhur and Ten Commandments. My exposure to English was only limited. Never have I heard English songs as I couldn't understand. . . . I never attended any motivation class, . . . In spite of my efforts, I have never acquired RP like city students, as I did my schooling in vernacular medium. I agree with [Dr Elango], it is to be taught from the school itself. So, I conclude that exposure to English is needed even in childhood.*

*S Padmasani Kannan*