KINDS OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS

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Many different types of technology can be used to support to and enhance learning. Everything from video content and digital moviemaking to laptop computing and handheld technologies (Marshall, 2002) have been used in classrooms and new uses of technology such as podcasting are constantly emerging. Various technologies deliver different kinds of content and serve different purposes in the classroom. It is important to consider how these electronic technologies differ and what characteristics make them important as vehicles for education (Becker, 1997). Even the cellphones that many students now carry with them can be used to learn (Prensky, 2005).

Each technology plays a different role in students’ learning. Rather than trying to describe the impact of all technologies as if they were the same, researchers need to think about what kind of technologies are being used in the classroom and for what purposes. Two general distinctions can be made. Students can learn “from” computers—where technology used essentially as tutors and serves to increase basic skills and knowledge; and can learn “with” computers—where technology is used a tool that can be applied to a variety of goals in the learning process and can serve as a resource to help develop higher order thinking, creativity and research skills (Reeves 1998; Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002).

In a review of existing evidence of technology’s impact on learning, Marshall (2002) found strong evidence that educational technology “complements what a great teacher does naturally,” extending their reach and broadening their students’ experience beyond the classroom. “With ever-expanding content and technology
choices, from video to multimedia to the Internet,” Marshall suggests “there’s an unprecedented need to understand the recipe for success, which involves the learner, the teacher, the content and the environment in which technology is used.”

References:

Marshall, J.M. (2002). Learning with technology: Evidence that technology can, and does, support learning. San Diego, CA: Cable in the Classroom


