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10 DOs (AND 5 DON'Ts) FOR A SUCCESSFUL ONE-TO-ONE CLASSROOM



By Samantha Cleaver

Five Don'ts for the One to One Classroom

As you're implementing your one-to-one classroom, take our expert advice and avoid these mistakes.

1. Don't Assume Expertise

"Assuming that kids are digital natives," says Keeler, "gives teachers a cop-out that they don't have to worry about the tech, you do." In every lesson, think about where your kids currently use the technology, as well as what will be new for them. For example, "kids do well with social media," says Barr, "but they might not do as well organizing or going through the writing process."

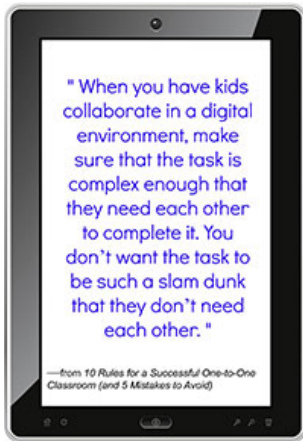
2. Don't Send Your Students in First

Digital learning provides students with access to a constant stream of good information. It also immerses them in a world of content that they may not be able to evaluate. "You can't

Each morning, when Laura Rahn's class of fourth grade students entered their classroom at Mountainview Elementary School in Loudoun County, VA, they got their laptops from the charging station, completed their daily math fluency practice, and checked EdModo for the day's instructions. The laptops "didn't replace me or become the full instruction for the day," says Rahn, "they were an additional learning tool."

If your school has yet to implement a laptop program like Rahn's, it may be on the horizon. More and more classrooms are going one-to-one, says Bob Berry, vice president of business development with TroxeLL Communications, as districts invest in web-based learning platforms and devices.

"Education is going through a huge transformation," agrees Verna Lalbeharie, Digital Learning Collaboration Co-lead with The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, "with this huge move towards personalized learning." One-on-one teaching happens at the intersection of content, pedagogy, and technology, says Lalbeharie. You're planning what and how students will learn, and how you'll use the technology to help them get there. This year, whether you're just opening your first shipment of tablets or setting up laptops for the tenth time, here are 10 ways to maximize your one-to-one classroom.



1. Take Sandbox Time

When working with a new technology, says Nancy Frey, professor of literacy at San Diego State University and co-author of *Teaching with Tablets*, "you have to give teachers some 'sandbox time' to play, to experiment, to find out what works and what doesn't work." Once you're familiar with the technology, you'll be able to incorporate it into good teaching and learning.

2. Restructure Your Room

The key to a one-to-one classroom set-up is flexibility. Depending on the learning goal, you'll want students to be able to work independently, in small groups, or with you. Set up your room to facilitate small group-work or with a seating arrangement, such as a U-shape, which will allow you to monitor as many screens as possible.

3. Create a Class Website

Alice Keeler, technology integration specialist at ACEL Charter School in Fresno, CA, swears by her classroom website. When her students enter the room, they immediately log on to the class website for the day's instructions and assignments. "The [class] website is your universe," she says, "every single thing goes one it, websites, notes, directions, videos." As an added measure of safety, and to reduce distractions, all the websites her students access are linked through the class website.

Email Signup

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responsibility and then

introduced blogging through KidBlog. The blog "jumpstarted the responsibility piece," says Rahn. "The students realized that they had to understand, to be mature and appropriate, and demonstrate that they could use the devices." The students used KidBlog throughout the curriculum. They posted and responded to language arts questions, wrote and solved each other's math questions, and responded to history books. In addition to establishing expectations for blogging and communication, make sure to create procedures for charging and storing devices, as well as policies on when and how to use email, chat, and other social tools during class.

5. Be the Facilitator

Tom Riddell, humanities teacher at Kent Technology Academy in Kent, WA, has found that teaching in a one-to-one environment requires a philosophical shift. "A lot of time," says Riddell, "the lesson will go in a completely different direction." Riddell often finds himself putting aside the lesson plan in order to follow a student question or interest. "That shift is one of the most challenging for teachers to make,"



everything to turn out okay," says LaVogue, "anything that's going to be awesome and worthwhile will take more time." Take the time to teach your students how to use the technology, evaluate web content, and demonstrate good digital citizenship.

3. Don't Worry About

Being One-to-One 100% of the Time
Just because you have 30 tablets and 30 students doesn't mean that everyone has to have a device in their hands all the time. "We don't want to turn a tablet into a digital shut-up sheet," says Frey. Frey warns against increasing independent work so much that you lose the benefit of having the kids in class together.

4. Don't Rely on Technology

It's such a given that it's a cliché: the computers break, the server goes down, the space bar doesn't work. Whatever the technology glitch, make sure that you have a back-up plan for each lesson that doesn't rely on electronics.

5. Don't Lose Your Strengths

Using digital technology and one-to-one is a new way of teaching, but it shouldn't replace what you already do well. "This is a new approach," says Scott Drossos, senior vice president of Pearson's One-to-One Learning Group, "but it's not at the expense of the things you're doing well." Feel free to structure your day with some non-tech time for the read aloud that defines your morning, or the active math games that your students will remember for years to come.

says Lalbeharie, "the move from being the bearer of knowledge to the facilitator of student knowledge." As you're planning lessons, review the materials, websites, and online content with your students in mind. Then, plan to facilitate student discovery of information, rather than guide them through the content.

6. Plan for Student Interactions

There's no substitute for good planning, and that holds true in one-to-one classrooms. "Some people think a device is a magic bullet," says Keeler, "but if you don't plan you'll amplify the problems that you do have." Keeler plans everything down to the interactions that her students will have during the lesson. "I realized that I have to be pre-thinking the interactions of the students," says Keeler. "I can't just assign something, I need to predict how they'll interact with the material." To do this, Keeler creates a spreadsheet with the students in her class and keeps track of how they'll interact during the lesson and react to the material.

7. Content Creation is King

The internet provides your students with access to up-to-date, high-quality content, but students should be creating their own content as well. Todd LaVogue, teacher and Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Educator Expert at Roosevelt Middle School in West Palm Beach, FL, encourages his students to be content creators. "Students need to switch from being content consumers and start becoming content creators," says LaVogue. His students have used tablets to create videos demonstrating eighth grade math standards and rap songs about Mesopotamian History. To get your students creating content, talk to them about their favorite content to consume (videos, articles, slideshows) and start from there.

8. Differentiate Everything

One-to-one provides an opportunity to differentiate everything, from ways of accessing content (e.g., video or online article) to ways of presenting information (e.g., Prezi, blog or digital poster). It also allows for various types of organization. Some students may use a calendar to organize their assignments, while others use sticky notes. "This aspect," says Alice Barr, instructional technology integrator at Yarmouth High School in Yarmouth, ME, "puts students in charge of their learning." Have your students work within and outside of their comfort zones and then reflect on how they're using their devices to keep organized, manage their work, communicate and collaborate, and be creative.

9. Manage Content

Opening your classroom to everything online learning has to offer is exciting, and overwhelming. Districts used to block a lot of content, which kicked out some quality content along with the inappropriate content. Now, it's about managing the online content that students can access. It's all a balance of safety and learning, according to Lightspeed Systems, "letting good content, resources, and connections in, while blocking the bad."

10. Flip Your Lessons

Going one-to-one allows you to flip the classroom experience for students, says Berry, and change how students spend their time at home and at school. For example, you can record a math lesson or think-aloud that students watch for homework while they spend class time practicing problems until you're sure they understand.

Ultimately, one-to-one classrooms provide the opportunity to expand your reach as a teacher. "The device gives you the ability to do something different," says Keeler, "and reach kids you couldn't reach before."

See Troxell's [1:1 Learning Suite](#) for solutions related to mobile devices, device management, learning management systems, wireless infrastructure, content filtering, peripherals and more.