Ways Innovative Educators Are Changing the Classroom

The education system has historically been slow to change. Rising technology adoption in classrooms around the globe, though, points to a new generation of spirited educators teaching new generations of active, engaged learners. Today, schools are leveraging emerging technologies to foster innovative learning experiences, and it's innovative educators who are leading the charge. Let's explore how they're disrupting the current system after years of stagnation.

Today's Teachers Raising Hands for Technology

From screens to wearables to virtual reality, teachers today are raising their hands for new digital classroom tools. This approach is not simply throwing technology at situations, but rather offering different ways for students to learn and interact with conceptually challenging subject matter. How do they do it? Let's take a look at the habits of these highly effective, classroom-changing educators:

They're fearless in trying new ideas. Getting through to a diverse student body has never been a cut and dry endeavor, and sometimes trying the same old techniques time and time again can leave both students and educators feeling frustrated and defeated. Those teachers who lean more toward innovation and less toward the status quo can find more solutions, not more struggles. By blending traditional concepts and ideas and new and exciting approaches, teachers are more apt to help students break through to those 'light bulb' moments.

They have faith in their students and strive to empower them through technology. Innovative teachers don't just use classroom technologies to challenge their students when it comes to subject matter. They also use tech to empower students because, ultimately, these educators believe their students are capable of more. A column on the Huffington Post recently described these compassionate educators as not being naively optimistic but having "a kind of persistence and passion for their students that is inextinguishable."

They use data-driven educational tactics. Big data is more than a business buzzword—it can be a tool for forward-thinking teachers, too. Samsung Insights, in fact, projected that big data "will be the tool that might help you the most as a teacher." That's a pretty lofty statement, but it's backed by sound logic. After all, the big promise of big data is that it is superbly poised to provide insight. Geared as a learning management tool in conjunction with a connected digital curriculum, this far-reaching technology allows educators to view student progress and adjust lessons or approaches accordingly. In these instances, both students and their teachers win.

They're in constant collaboration-mode. Through the use of video conferencing, innovative educators are choosing to connect with fellow teachers and classrooms from around the globe, take their classes on virtual field trips to have otherwise unavailable experiences, and even hold parent/teacher conferences. Consider the benefits, for example, of this Alaska school's 'Classroom Without Walls' program that has allowed students to connect with their peers in Israel, Yemen, Afghanistan. In another example, many educators are embarking on a yearlong professional development class called the TED-Ed Innovative Educator Program. Rooted in a desire to improve communication, the first two months of training are solely focused on how to spark curiosity and connect with other teachers and schools around the world. Although different, both of these scenarios have one thing in common: They are focused on collaboration, and innovative teachers are in constant collaboration-mode.

What's Next?

Innovative teachers today are being disruptive in a good way, using technology to change how they connect with their students and learn from their peers. Driven by data and a desire for new and collaborative experiences, there is no doubt this generation of innovative educators is here to stay.