

EDCI 786: Wireless Connections/Fall 2010

Module 2, Section 2: Laptop Initiative

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A 1-to-1 initiative proposes bringing one laptop per child into school districts. This is a great idea, and the districts that have started this program are finding great success. There are many advantages, from individualized instruction for students, to increased research opportunities, to complete student engagement. While pursuing a 1-to-1 initiative, it is important for teachers to remember to use the laptops in conjunction with traditional classroom concepts. There are some concerns, such as student handling of computers, the poverty level of schools, and the change this will bring to education. However, these concerns can be overcome with time and information given to instructors.

There are many advantages to a 1-to-1 initiative. Laptops can have a very positive change on a school's culture (Nemitz, 10). Students can feel a greater investment in their education when given the responsibility of a laptop for personal use. Laptops for each student can also be an excellent opportunity for individualized instruction. Teachers can give lessons that are specific to a student's academic level. There is also an increased chance of student engagement in every day lessons. With a personal laptop to have hands-on, authentic activities, students will be much more engaged.

It is important to remember to not lose focus of traditional classroom concepts, despite the technological advances (McCrea, 10). Students still need personal interaction with their teacher. With a laptop in front of each student, some teachers may be inclined to let it do the "teaching." While it can serve as a wonderful instructional tool in some aspects, there is no replacing the student-teacher interaction.

Some concerns still remain about implementing 1-to-1 initiatives. Most teachers will be understandably concerned with how their students will be able to handle the responsibility of a personal laptop, especially in an elementary school setting. According to Governor King, whose Maine schools have been using a 1-to-1 initiative for years, since beginning the program, "Well under one percent have been lost or seriously damaged" (Nemitz, 10). Instructors may also be feeling the pressure of changing their instruction from what they are used to. As Governor King aptly put it, "I think it's a deep-seated fear of change" (Nemitz, 10). The more teachers become familiar with the program, the more they will see the benefits of such an exciting new idea.

Despite any concerns about the program, the 1-to-1 initiative program of providing one laptop per student can be an exceptional and wonderful program. Programs like this are currently changing the face of education all over the country, and providing exciting new educational opportunities to students.

References:

McCrea, B. (2010). Prepping teachers for a 1:1 laptop initiative. *T.H.E. Journal*, Retrieved from http://thejournal.com/articles/2010/07/21/prepping-teachers-for-a-1-to-1-laptopinitiative.aspx?sc_lang=en

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