Technology Changes in the Classroom: One Student Compares Her Sister’s Education to Her Own

By Jenna Dietrich

August 2009: Skylar* starts Kindergarten at California Elementary in Orange, California
August 2016: Skylar’s younger sister starts Kindergarten at California Elementary in Orange, California

Seven years go by. While the curriculum may have stayed the same, the resources have changed greatly. Skylar recalls that she did not have any form of technology in her kindergarten class. Oh how times have changed. Skylar explains that her sister’s kindergarten class has “iPads for each student,” and that her sister is able to take the iPad home too.

With the advances of technology, this is amazing to see the inclusion of technological products within schools, but it is sad to see the divide between the generations of students. Within one family, the technology shift is showed very clearly. What does this shift mean for our schools? What should we expect from students like Skylar compared to her technologically saavy 5 year-old sister?

Joseph South, the Director of the Office of Educational Technology, explains that, “The National Education Technology Plan provides a vision of transformational learning experiences powered by technology that can shrink long-standing equity and accessibility gaps.” While this plan provides vision and a mission for the schools, the technology gap is seen between students like Skylar and her sister.

Students are now expected to be computer literate at a very young age due to the resources in schools. This creates a gap between the students who attend schools that have these resources compared to those that don’t. In a study in 2013, the U.S. Department of Education revealed that, “The percentage of internet users in the population age 3 and over was generally higher for those with higher family income levels. For example, 72 percent of people with family incomes from $40,000 to $49,999 used the Internet, compared to 85 percent of people with family incomes of $100,000 or more.” (NCES, 2014).

While the involvement of technology is necessary in today’s society, the gap between students and schools will remain in some regard. Technology is highly dependent on the school district, the teacher’s amount of integration, and the
resources overall. We cannot guarantee that every student across the nation is getting the same access to technology, which reveals the technology gap.

Skylar and her sister are a result of the technology gap. Due to technology growing and the schools integrating these changes, technological literacy is also changing. In addition to this technology gap within Orange, what should be done about the technology gap between school districts? Eventually, I believe that there will be a standardized curriculum relating directly to technology, but this still leaves out so many schools that do not have this technology. The technology gap is inevitable, but the goal is to serve the students to the best of our ability regardless of resources.

*name is changed*

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