

# READERS respond

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## POLL RESULTS

### Are Schools Better Than They Were 20 Years Ago?

Many feel the proliferation of educational technology has improved teaching and learning. Others attribute positive change to improved use of technology.

#### Today's Classrooms Are More Effective

Access to information is instantaneous, therefore schools are better! We—teachers alongside their students—learn today in this exact second about the past, present, and future. More important, students actually contribute to the information being generated and collaborate with their educators while learning.

*Ann Krembs  
American School of Bombay  
Mumbai, India*

#### Schools Are Definitely Better Today

Technology in classrooms has revolutionized teaching and learning. Learners are able to employ various strategies in their learning, and teachers are able to bring reality into the classroom—a far cry from 20 years ago, where learners had to rely solely on their imaginations in their learning. Technology is developing a new breed of teachers and learners who view the world as a global village full of endless opportunities.

*Monde Madiba  
Free State Department of Education  
Bloemfontein, South Africa*

#### New Practices Bring Change

Having been involved with educational technology for over 20 years, I can say “yes and no.” Technology has improved teaching and learning. The caveat is that the improvement only comes when educators fully embrace and integrate it into their teaching practice. The challenge that I had 20 years ago is the same as now: training teachers so that they can feel empowered and know how to harness the

power that technology can offer for teaching and learning.

*Ray Jung  
Richmond School District No. 38  
Richmond, British Columbia, Canada*

#### Better? Certainly Not

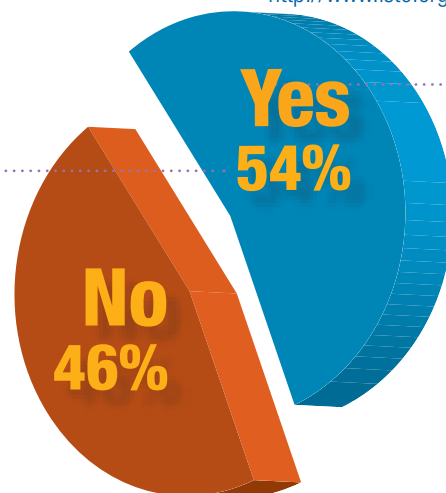
No! As we are trying to encourage our students to become “critical thinkers,” the advent of the Internet and the ease of research has encouraged many of today's students to become purveyors of data and opinions that they gather online. Many of today's students have never heard of an encyclopedia—yeah, maybe Encarta, but how many go to the library to do deep-down research? I am not nay-saying the advancements in technology, but a tack that I use is to have my students write their papers in first-person-singular. This way, I at least know that they have read and understand the material. If we simply allow our students to “cut and paste” data, they are not learning a thing.

*Jon Schwartz  
Downtown Magnets High School  
Los Angeles, California*

#### Classrooms Are Better Connected

Technology can extend class time and provide the rich and purposeful arena to promote literacy through the collaboration and access to many different audiences. At the same time, it gives students an opportunity to connect with the world and their peers in order to become more productive and socially aware citizens.

*Jill Burt  
Fairleigh Dickinson University  
Masters program  
Madison, New Jersey*



#### Schools Have Improved—Sort Of

Somewhat, however, not enough educational leaders seek to understand, promote, and implement the notion that technology integration is not about the technology—it is about focusing on future generations and leading teachers to a change in pedagogy to support these generations with 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching and learning methods and tools.

*Kristen Kozloski  
Perkiomen Valley School District  
Collegeville, Pennsylvania*

#### Transformation Is Underway

The fact that we still question the value of technology in education is revealing. Would anyone question technology's role in business, medicine, or entertainment? No, that's absurd. When technology has truly transformed education, it will become ubiquitous and transparent, and in time we will forget we ever taught without it.

*J. Alan Baumgarten  
eLearning Systems International  
Dallas, Texas*

## FOR FUN!

We entered our two contenders into a popular Web search engine and compared total hits. It wasn't a fair fight. Everyone's favorite sandwich, the classic PB&J, gets smashed flat by PBL! Peanut butter and jelly quesadillas anyone?

**PB&J = 493,000**

**PBL = 6,850,000**