

1. What grade and/or classes do you teach?

K - 6 Technology integration Teacher in a private Catholic school in Newton, MA USA.

2. How do you use technology in your classroom?

I am the technology integration teacher in the school so I use technology in my classroom in many ways. The students use Google App accounts to create docs and presentations. We use Skype to collaborate with project partners in different parts of the world, to practice our listening and speaking skills and to learn about other cultures. We use Voicethread to connect and share our work with others and to give feedback to others about their work. We use Scratch to practice computational thinking and to create collaborative projects with other project partners.

3. How do you connect online as a class?

We use DiscoverE and Skype. On occasion we use Google Hangouts.

4. Why is it important that your students are interacting with people outside of the classroom?

We are a small school of 238 students. It is important for my students to understand that they can be a part of a larger learning community.

5. What is your students' favourite technology to use?

I think that they like using the Google docs and apps. They like the idea that they can work with their friends on the same document. Many of them like Scratch as well.

6. How has technology helped your classroom? Technology has helped my classroom by allowing me to bring in virtual experts from as far away as a penguin education expert in Antarctica, a sailor as he has sailed 4 cross oceanic voyages via the internet with audio and video files, satellite phone calls, and email. Technology has helped me connect and interact with students in Australia by enabling me to record files in Voicethread when it was impossible for us to meet in real time. Technology has helped my students to connect and skype with a teacher in Sendai, Japan to understand the aftermath of the tsunami. It has helped my students to understand what it is like to go to school in Kampala, Uganda where there were limited resources for students and access was just barely possible. Technology helped me to create a project where students in my school sang a song that was then song in 14 other schools around the world. Via Google My Maps, it allowed me to invite teachers to "light a candle around the world" to go with the lyrics of a song that the students were singing in fourth grade. It allowed me to light a candle of understanding for the community of Sandy Hook. This map was viewed 7,636 times.

Technology helped me to ease the mind of a parent/teacher in New Hampshire when she was looking for her daughter who was doing research in Manila at the time of the Baha. Via twitter and a friend in Manila, I was able to locate her daughter who was fortunately fine. Technology has helped me to demonstrate to children that there are so many amazing people to meet in the world and that through working with others we can understand how we are alike and how we are different. And hopefully demonstrate that we can be peaceful ambassadors and friends to our global neighbors.

7. Do you recommend at particular to programs to use for certain grades?

I recommend Kid Pix Mackiev edition for K -1

Scratch for K - 6

Voicethread for K -6

Google Apps for 4 - 6 although I have seen it used successfully at a lower grade level.

8. What is one thing teachers need to be aware of when taking their students on an online learning adventure?

Always have a Plan B or Plan C since technology doesn't always work.

Be mindful of what the students are doing online. ALWAYS search for things before working with students.

Download Youtube videos and view them before viewing them with students.

Start small and take small steps..

Build a professional learning community outside of your school and community. We can all learn from each other.

9. What is the best advice for beginner teachers who want to connect their students to learning with technology?

Take small steps.

Join Classroom 2.0

Attend the Classroom 2.0 webinars on Saturdays

Keep in contact with the teacher who you met during your ECMP class and continue to be a part of your professional learning community.

Join Projects by Jen

Read blogs

Comment on blogs.

Share your successes with others

Join Skype for Teachers

10. What is the best thing about being online in the classroom?

The best thing about being online in the classroom is that you feel like you are part of a bigger community than the one that is between the four walls. The feeling that you are a part of the global community of educators is very empowering for both students and teachers.

11. What is the worst thing about being online in the classroom? Sometimes when I am online in the classroom I feel like I want to do all of the things that my virtual colleagues are doing and there is a limited amount of time. I have to choose what would be most beneficial to my students and myself.

12. What kinds of things do your students hope to do more of in the future with regards to online learning and connections? I only see the students for 40 minutes once a week. The skills that they need to be digital citizens takes hours and hours of work. I want to increase the time that students have access to technology during the school day. They should be able to pull out an ipad, a computer or a digital audio recorder when they need it.

13. What is the most interesting thing/story you can tell about learning with technology?

The first time that I used a computer and took a programming class in Logo, I cried every night when I went

home. It was way too complicated for me. I stepped out of my comfort zone and tried to learn something new. It was scary! The first time that I had my own classroom I did not have a laptop. Quite honestly, they were not invented yet. I had an Apple IIE. However I was so interested in using it, I would lug it home every weekend so that I could 'play' with it. The first computer 'lab' that we had in upstate NY when I was teaching was created by gutting out a school bus so that the computers would be on long counters. Students sat on benches. The bus was heated in the winter and could go from school to school. The most amazing connection that I have ever had was speaking with Rich Wilson when he was on his trimaran sailing from NY to Melbourne, AU. We connected (a room FILLED with students) via satellite phone. The students sat watching the black speaker phone as Rich connected to us and told us about the flying fish etc. The coldest place that I skyped to was Jean Pennycook in Antarctica. I believed that we could use my virtual classroom to connect with her in Ross Island because the classroom was designed to work well in low bandwidth. I tested it with her in California when she was there in the summer and then arranged to try it in Ross Island. When it worked, we were both pleasantly surprised. Since then skype has been invited and she skypes to classrooms often.