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## THE BENEFITS OF PRINT AND DIGITAL LEARNING



Throughout the course of a student's education, they will engage with many different materials to enhance their learning. While print-based educational materials have been around for decades, digital learning has quickly become a facet of many curriculums. The integration of print and digital materials in the classroom has been met with many different responses, but ultimately, they both have the potential to supplement student learning in a positive way.

## The Benefits of Print Material

There are many upsides to using print materials in the classroom, and it is largely considered a traditional way to learn and engage with information. Print material benefits include:

- **No need for additional equipment.** Once you have the print materials in hand, you are all set. There is no need to operate a device or make sure that anything is charged.
- **A concentration boost.** With print materials, there is less room for distraction and this can motivate a student to stay focused on the task at hand.
- **A simplified learning experience.** It takes no additional effort or skill set to utilize a print material.



For some students, using print materials may be more familiar and comfortable when completing certain assignments, and they may enjoy the experience of holding the physical materials in their hands and using a pencil, pen, or highlighter to annotate and familiarize themselves with the content. Print materials are an effective way to enhance a child's reading and writing skills, and having a variety of physical content, such as books, in a classroom can foster interest and passion in reading (Starke, 2020).



# The Benefits of Digital Material

In recent years, educators have been able to integrate technology into their classrooms to supplement student learning in a new way. Digital material offers many benefits, including:

- **Access to the most updated information.** Unlike print textbooks and resources that are costly to replace, digital information is able to offer the most updated information.
- **Engaging, interactive features.** From the ability to highlight or underline text, look up definitions for new words, and interact with embedded audio and video elements, digital resources can offer students a variety of opportunities to critically engage with their learning.
- **Unique user capabilities.** Digital materials often allow students to customize their experience by altering different features—such as text, size, and font—to make the learning experience more personalized and comfortable.
- **Compact, portable use.** Digital materials only take up as much space as the device they are on and, thus, allow for large quantities of information and materials to be transported and accessed effectively.



The various features offered by digital materials can enhance student comprehension, expand access to new information and skills, and improve accessibility for all student abilities (NAEYC, n.d). During virtual learning, digital materials allow students to continue their education and stay connected with teachers and peers from the safety of their homes. Although an entirely technology-reliant education is not ideal for most students, a curriculum that integrates print and digital materials allows students to experience the benefits of both.

# Integrating Print and Digital

In order to maximize the potential benefits of an integrated digital and print curriculum, there are a few things to consider. For example, the more familiar students are with a medium, the more likely they are to comprehend the information they are learning on it (Chen et al., 2014), meaning that it is important to make sure that students are given the opportunity to get comfortable with the medium before being expected to utilize it. This is especially important when it comes to using technology because if a student is deterred or distracted by technical difficulties, they will be unable to learn as effectively. Secondly, it is important to use discretion to determine when to use print or digital materials for a particular reading, task, or project. While digital materials are a great option in many circumstances, it can be beneficial to give students a break from technology by integrating print materials into their curriculum as well.



When trying to find a healthy balance of print and digital in your classroom, don't be afraid to ask your students for their input as well. They may notice pros and cons that supplement your understanding of how to utilize both. A curriculum that integrates print and digital materials effectively has the potential to enhance the way that students learn in a positive, well-rounded way.

# References



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