**Overview:**

* Name of reviewer: Amiee Stiverson
* The technological and educational innovation: The use of the internet as a research tool for students within an elementary classroom focusing on the positives and negatives the innovation.

**The problem of practice:**

The internet is a tool that is rapidly becoming a staple in the education and livelihood of students as well as employees in today’s society. Using this tool within my classroom will help to prepare my students to be successful students as well thriving employees once they gain employment. I will be an introducer to this innovation, my students will learn about using the internet as a tool to improve their learning. I teach in a low income school in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Our school library is our public library, and it is a small library. We do have the ability to inter-loan but our location sometimes hinders my students’ abilities to go and find a book specific to their research topic.

In third grade as part of our writing curriculum my students must complete report writing. As a teacher, and a lover of books, I think that using books is a very important tool while doing research. My students are able to choose whichever topic they like for their report writing, but when it comes time to find a book from the library there are not always books available. I suppose I could make my students choose their topics weeks in advance but teaching third grade has taught me that students tend to have change of hearts as the weeks fly by.

There are times that when we go to the library to search out of books for the project I always have two or more students that must change their topic because they do not have the books to go along with that topic. Using the internet as well as books gives my students opportunities to learn even more interesting facts that they would otherwise miss out on. They are learning more and they are also gaining the ability and knowledge to use the internet to gain appropriate knowledge that will aid in their learning.

Knowing the use of the internet in my classroom was successful would be as simple as listening to my students spout out their information that they are finding about their topic. There are times that I have to tell them that they shouldn’t tell me any more information because then I wouldn’t need to read their papers in the end. They are so excited about using the internet and telling me all about what they are learning about. They are put into control of what they are learning; the students are given the *opportunity to learn[[1]](#footnote-1).* This project lasts a total of one month and a half, from start to finished product. During those weeks, all of writing time is devoted to this project.

**The setting:**

Teacher-As the teacher I need to make sure that I am successfully teaching my students how to use the internet. This includes teaching them how to search, using the least amount of words to be successful in their search. They also need to be away that if they are in a site that they are not sure of the content that they should probably leave that site, I monitor but I can’t have my eyes on every single computer at every single moment, I have to have trust within my students. My students also need to understand the goal of this assignment. It’s not just busy work for them; it’s an opportunity to learn more about something that they are interested in as well as having the chance to teach their classmates about their subject.

Learner-If I have a student that has my trust and they are able to navigate successfully in their searches I may have that student help others if I am otherwise busy. This idea goes along with the Brophy article and his idea of creating *A supportive classroom climate[[2]](#footnote-2)*, my students usually, don’t have problems working together cohesively to help one another be successful. The students are also in charge of their own learning. They deem what is important information and what is not as important information. I will usually go over what their headings are with them and they find information that goes along with those headings, and I continue to check on them periodically.

Subject Matter-The subject matter in this case is the actual report writing. Learning how to correctly write a report is the end idea behind our report writing curriculum. The students go through two weeks of learning about how to write a report before they actually go and get books to start working on their content. The students are in charge of what they pick, the only stipulation that I give them is that they are not allowed to choose a topic that they had chosen at a previous time.

Setting-In my school we have a cart of laptops that we are able to sign up for and use. I usually go and sign up for them well in advance so that I make sure I get them at our writing time. This is less invasive for my students, if we stay as close to the schedule as possible. I choose two students to go and retrieve the cart and when they come back the students work in groups because the laptops have to be continuously plugged in.

**The technology-integrated solution:**

Using the internet in my classroom as an extra search tool gives my students opportunities to learn information that they would otherwise not have. My students are able to gain information that they would not normally be able to have. I have students that solely stay in the Upper Peninsula and never leave. Using the internet gives them the chance to be able to go to different places and learn about new and exciting things.

Students that are never given the opportunity to experience life will not have a chance to be the best that they can be. For example, the Soo Locks are located an hour away from where I live; I have students that have never been to see them. Using the internet as an education tool gives my students opportunities that they would otherwise lose out on. The internet as a research tools gives my students a *change with difference*, what they are able to do with the internet is a difference in their education. Having a teacher that is willing to work with the internet and have their students work with the internet gives them an edge over the students that don’t get to use the internet at school within the classroom or at their homes.

My students are given specific goals during this project. Using the internet as a tool for researching is a privilege not a right. This is very clearly explained to my students. Making good choices while on the internet is imperative. There are too many things that my students can get into; I don’t even think they realize what they could accomplish on the internet. Our goal is to use the internet as another resource. They use their book first and pull useful information from the books into their outlines. When their book work is complete they then are able to gain access to use the internet to further their discovery on their topic. I also get excited when I have a student nearly bursting at the seams to share with me something that they found on the internet. This research projects provides them with a chance to use something different as well as starts them down the road to use the internet for new and exciting things. When my students get into the working world they are going to be using technology that I would never dreamed possible. Think about it, I am doing that today. I am using the internet and my computer as a tool that my grandparents and possible parents never even dreamed about. I would like to think that I helped and encouraged their usage and love of technology.

**Benefits of this Solution:**

The benefit of this technology innovation is being able to have access to information that would otherwise be unavailable. My students show me that using the internet as a research tool is successful when they get so excited to share their findings with me. They are able to find interesting photos, information, as well as games and videos on their topics.

I believe that the benefits would be the same no matter who was teaching, if they were using the technology in the same way. The students are in control of what they are learning. The students are in the driver’s seat. The tool is effective because of the way they are using it and the information that they are gaining from using it. The learning is an active process for the students. It is building their experience and their knowledge.

**Implications:**

I believe that as long as technology is used safely and the goals that I set are met then it was successful. The internet in the past was harder to use, searches were not as easy, and student friendly sites where hard to come by. The current internet is a tool that is friendly to all ages. Young children can successfully use it while being guided by a parent. Third graders can be successful using it as long as the safety requirements are met and they have an understanding of what they are looking for.

References Page:

Brophy, Jere. Teaching, *International Academy of Education*

Making a Difference with Innovations in Education (<https://angel.msu.edu/section/default.asp?id=US09%2DCEP%2D810%2D733%2D866716%2DEL%2D14%2D204>).

1. Brophy, Jere. Teaching, *International Academy of Education*, 10-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Brophy, Jere. Teaching, *International Academy of Education,* 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)