

NEC Display Solutions

Classroom AV: A Student-Centered Approach

by Ken Kirkley



Schools are increasingly moving toward personalized and adaptive learning programs. The idea of tailoring teaching styles, materials and approaches to individual students promises deeper engagement and better academic outcomes.

Technology plays a leading role in making personalized learning possible. In previous generations, the ratio of one teacher to a few dozen students made an adaptive approach almost impossible, but today's students can engage with curriculum in new ways. For example, many schools are adopting one-to-one initiatives, where each participant receives a tablet or laptop for educational use.

In addition to school-issued devices, many students also carry at least one personal electronic device with them to class each day. Today's typical student is adept at a wide variety of devices, from smartphones to wearable technology. To keep pace with the students' technology-rich world outside the classroom, it's important for schools to use AV technology that meets – and exceeds – those expectations.

Essential AV Elements for the Classroom

Because the majority of students carry a high-definition screen in their pockets these days, bright, vivid HD displays in the classroom have become a necessity. Rather than following the traditional model of a single display at the front of a classroom, consider specifics such as room size, teacher preferences, and student needs to make sure the AV technology fits into wider plans for the

classroom. Many schools are choosing to install multiple displays for whole-class learning and individual or small group huddle spaces for studying. According to the Social Science Research Network, [visual learners represent at least 65 percent of the population](#), so it makes sense to develop classroom styles that embrace visual teaching and learning. A crisp, clear audio system is also vital. Make sure the audio system is easy to use and can be heard clearly regardless of where students are seated.

Multipresenter tools allow students to share content from their devices to any display in the classroom. Although such technology is still relatively novel, it will become an expectation in the near future and is worth prioritizing. Also, look for features like videoconferencing, remote collaboration solutions, and other ways for classes to connect with students and speakers in other locations.

Evaluating AV Technology

Before reviewing the large selection of AV technology on the market, it's important to evaluate your institution's individual needs. First, call a meeting with educators and relevant staff to discuss their AV expectations and how they mesh with the school's educational goals. Some products and tools may require training to enable effective use, so make sure you have IT staff available for teacher and student support.

Once you know the types of products you need, take a close look at manufacturers' warranties and reliability ratings as you compare choices. If the technology goes down, instructional time can easily be lost, so look for solutions with strong warranties and readily available technical support. As a rule, manufacturers should stand behind their product with a 4- to 5-year warranty in education. Look for "hot swap" warranties so replacements can be in place overnight, as opposed to waiting for your unit to be repaired and returned, which can sometimes take weeks. Anticipate your need for such consumables as projector lamps: Some manufacturers offer special deals or promotions on these and other replacement parts when you're purchasing an AV system.

As you move closer to purchasing products, take time to build a solid relationship with your AV integrator. Make sure you're on the same page regarding installation timelines and quality expectations. Discuss possible malfunction scenarios and find out what the manufacturer's protocols are for dealing with them.

Embracing Technology for the Sake of Students

Today's students are immersed in a technologically rich environment when they shop, travel, or even watch television at home. As adults in the workforce, they will continue to interact with technology in a myriad of ways and will need the skills they're starting to build now. It makes sense to mirror that level of media-rich technology in the classroom, meeting the students in their world to capture their attention, to keep their minds engaged, and to build the digital skills they will need in the future. The stakes are high: Creating an atmosphere that's an extension of a student's real-world digital environment goes a long way toward boosting engagement, achievement and retention.

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