

Teachers and tech anywhere and anyplace – how to carry your classroom cloud!

December 1 2015, by Debra Nowland



Faculty of Education's PhD student Christopher Blundell is researching technology in classrooms.

Schools need to do more to create "cloud" classrooms so students tap into their lessons from anywhere and anyplace but teachers remain crucial to learning, according to a QUT education researcher.

Faculty of Education PhD student Christopher Blundell said uptake of digital technology was widespread but the challenge was to personalise it and extend it beyond the routine of the classroom.

"The potential of [digital technologies](#) is best realised by teachers who

know how to find ways for [students](#) to use them as part of their learning," Mr Blundell said.

"But the promise of what's 'cool and new' may not always translate into improved learning without proper support."

He said, due to the dynamic nature of digital technology, it was at times incompatible with existing classroom routines and was difficult for teachers.

"When used well, and with access to cloud solutions, digital technologies allow for more personalised learning opportunities in a wider range of places and times," he said.

Mr Blundell, who is also Academic Dean, Redlands College at Wellington Point on Brisbane's bayside, is exploring as part of his PhD how teachers are using the new digital technology landscape within a well-established one-on-one tablet program.

"There's a lot of information about the introduction of digital technology in schools but little evidence of what happens subsequently," he said.

"It enables new opportunities such as teaching coding and robotics but any curriculum change can disrupt routines so teachers need support to develop new routines.

"Each child should have their own personal technology that is connected via WiFi to the internet and cloud-based solutions for communication, collaboration and file storage/sharing," he said.

Mr Blundell's research involved a team of teachers capturing personalised learning opportunities made possible by the use of digital technology.

He said at Redlands College students had been using iPads in their day-to-day learning from Prep to Year 12 for the past four years.

"They are fun to use and for many students and teachers another source of joy in learning," he said.

Mr Blundell said the Year 7 students had exceeded teachers' expectations in a town planning project where they had pitched and presented solutions to Redlands City Council about a parkland space that needed rejuvenation.

"It was a journey for students to design and build their own ideas in a project that merged subjects such as Geography, English and Digital Technology," he said.

13-year-old Georgia Howe and her classmates designed the project which included a nearby nature strip in a recreational reserve.

Her mother Bec Howe said it was important to keep a "balance" between the use of technology and free play, however, the school project expanded her daughter's understanding of local environmental and social issues as well as her mode of learning.

"She can communicate with her class group and they can come up with logical, almost-adult solutions to very real problems," Mrs Howe said.

Mr Blundell said while the technology allowed for learning to occur anywhere and anyplace, teaching was a specific skill and needed to be designed to fit with teachers routines and their students' learning.

"Schools should consider what support [teachers](#) require during innovation and change, particularly establishing new reliable routines.

"When used one-on-one the learning opportunities offered by digital

technologies are seamless and naturally integrated."

Mr Blundell has actively explored, through 22 years of practice, the place of digital technologies in teaching, [learning](#) and assessment.

More information: Conceptualising the challenge of integrating digital technologies in pedagogy. eprints.qut.edu.au/90567/

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