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Teaching Technology: 10 Lessons Every School Should Share

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According to the Center for Digital Education, schools spent nearly $20 billion in the last two years on technology costs, and with the increasing acceptance of tools like iPads or other tablets in the classroom, that figure should only continue to grow in the coming years ahead. But aside from simply having the right equipment and instructing children in basic technology usage, what else should educational institutions be teaching kids about technology, starting as early as kindergarten? Here are 10 essential technology lessons every school should teach - in many ways, our children can't afford to leave school without learning all of the below:

1. **Online Etiquette** - Perhaps just as important as table manners and other social graces, teaching kids how to act online is one crucially important way that schools can reinforce the lessons parents should be teaching at home. For those interested in learning more, we dive further into these concepts for kids of all ages (and adults) in our book *Netiquette Essentials*.

2. **Privacy and Safety** - As a major concern for parents as well as the federal government, keeping kids safe online and their information private will remain a top priority, and should be for schools too. While online platforms and the corporations behind them all need to act appropriately as well, it's even more important that kids be taught now how and what they can share online without divulging or losing their precious data.

3. **Permanence of Information** - It has been previously stated that any information disseminated online is permanent: The need to keep revisiting this topic is because of its importance. The fact is that information can be used against kids and will be if they're not careful. Above all else, kids need to realize they can't take something back online, even if they put it out there in a moment of haste.

4. **Digital Citizenship** - Technology can be used as a force for good, and Digital Citizenship is all about empowering kids to use it as such by acting appropriately and spreading positive messages. As previously explained in Section V, Digital Citizenship can be a cornerstone for how Generation Tech takes advantage of technology in their future, both for the benefit of themselves and other digital citizens they interact with. In addition to socializing and communicating online, kids who use technology in more of a philanthropic way will get much greater benefit from their time online.

5. **Texting and Messaging Basics** - Texting is perhaps the most popular tech-based activity for tweens and teens, so schools should make sure kids understand the ramifications and effects of these seemingly disposable communiqués. From avoiding overage costs to the consequences of negative or controversial texts, teachers can't afford to bury their heads in the sand to this ubiquitous young adult activity.

6. **Tech Isn't Everything** - While technology has no doubt made life more convenient, few if any are the experts that would argue against the continued importance of real-life interactions and play to the developing adolescent brain. There's still immense value in reading actual books or tinkering with real-world problems and building physical objects - offline play is more important than online in many cases. However, both prove a nice complement to one another: There's room for both in children's lives.

7. **Technology Addiction** - Just as with drugs and drinking, there are dangers that kids, teens and even grown-ups can become addicted to certain types of technology, whether it's a video game, social network or even texting. Schools need to help kids recognize the dangers and warning signs of too much tech and what to do if someone needs help, including providing support, guidance and - if needed - assistance with reaching professional help.

8. **What to Do When Mistakes Are Made** - Whether it's by themselves or through engagement with one of their friends, it's inevitable that kids will engage in inappropriate conduct or behavior using technology, whether such infractions are intentional or not. Kids need to know what to do when they access a questionable site, observe controversial content and

view or participate in online behavior that's unacceptable. Understanding that mistakes will be made - kids will be kids, after all - and providing appropriate support and guidance is crucial to positive growth and development.

9. **Technology as a Teaching Tool** - It's important that kids don't feel that technology is a negative aspect of life, or that it's only to be used as a reward or pleasurable experience. The truth is there are a great many benefits to technology, and kids should be taught them so they don't have to feel guilty about the role it will continue to play in their life. Those that provide continued learning, education and self-empowerment can easily be highlighted and prized most of all - especially with regard to interactive tools that promote real-world interests and social engagement.

10. **The Value of Technology** - Kids are just beginning to experience the impact that technology has on their lives now and will continue to in the future. And while it remains unseen what kind of innovation there is to come, by educating kids early on - both in the classroom and at home - about the benefits (and potential risks) of technology, it's more likely that they'll appreciate its value and truly become responsible digital citizens because of it.

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