Five technology skills every student should learn

What are the most critical technology skills for students to learn? We recently asked our readers this question, and here’s what they had to say.

From having the courage to experiment with different technologies to possessing online literacy, readers said being a tech-savvy student in the 21st century is about much more than learning how to use a certain software program or device—it’s about being able to adapt to what’s constantly changing.

What do you think of this list? Is there anything you’d like to add? Be sure to leave your thoughts in the comment section.

(Comments edited for brevity.)

1. Online literacy

"Students need to be able to read a news article and determine if there is bias and if it’s truthful. They then need to learn how to read the comment sections of online news articles and respond appropriately with a well thought-out comment.” —Sandy Harty, Salt Lake City

See also:

Why more schools aren’t teaching web literacy—and how they can start

Web literacy: Where the Common Core meets common sense

Are kids all that techno-smart? Maybe not

"The most important technology skill for students is the ability to judge the quality and hidden influences of content that they encounter in the online world. Thirty years ago, most research materials available to students were vetted by some kind of gatekeepers. Encyclopedias, books, newspapers, and magazines all had levels of review for
content before it was published. (Yes, those folks had their biases— but there was at least some level of review and fact-checking before publication.) Now, we live in a world where anyone can post content online that looks quite reliable. And it’s very hard to tell if the writer is slanting the information in support of their agenda, or giving equal time to all sides. ... Students will need to learn to cross-check information, check reliability of sources, understand types of domains and institutions, and how to take time and verify what they learn.” —Dick Carlson, chief learning officer, Applied Educational Systems

2. Critical thinking

“Critical thinking; from not texting while driving ... to understanding the difference between face time and screen time ... to employing sound thinking and decision making in each tech area and with each decision. You might find a wife, job, or car on Google, but you still have to nurture the relationship, show up with clean pants, and put oil in the thing; the skill, the tool, the ‘app’ aren’t the final destination.” —Ed McManis, head of school, Sterne School, San Francisco, Calif.

“It is using **technology** in the questioning of what is known and unknown; developing new facts or theories from what is known; questioning assumptions and fact with new knowledge and facts. These are the skills needed, not an office suite or set of things.” —Dr. Neil Schaal, director of grants management, EAGLE-Net Alliance

**See also:**

[Why more schools aren’t teaching web literacy—and how they can start](http://www.eclassroomnews.com/2012/09/05/five-technology-sk...)

[Web literacy: Where the Common Core meets common sense](http://www.eclassroomnews.com/2012/09/05/five-technology-sk...)

[Are kids all that techno-smart? Maybe not](http://www.eclassroomnews.com/2012/09/05/five-technology-sk...)

“The most important technology skill that students need to learn in the 21st century is learning how to learn. When students are equipped with this skill, they will know what resources to seek out and what methods to apply to help them gain the knowledge and skills they need.” —Mamzelle Adolphine
3. The science behind the technology

"It is dumbfounding how, in this day and age, educators still think learning a specific piece of software or using a specific piece of hardware is important for ‘technology’ learning. When will there be real technology-literate people in education? The issue is not what piece of software/hardware to educate our future leaders about, but what it takes to make the software and piece of hardware."

"I've never heard an adolescent educator or student talk about any number system other than base 10. I'm always amazed when I mention another system (binary?) when in a math class—the students’ looks and comments are those of someone who thinks you are from some other planet! Let’s get back to the issue: *Teach the science, math, and history behind the technology* and how to communicate this information ... within the curriculum already in place.” —M12954

4. Adaptability

"I believe that *having enough resourcefulness, initiative, risk-taking, and creativity to learn and master any technology* is necessary, as we actually cannot predict what technology 10 years from now will look like.” —Jane Cacacho
5. Courage

"I think a great skill to have is fearlessness: **Being able to experiment with a technology or software and not worry if you’re using it ‘correctly.’** It’s important to remember that technology is there to bend to your will, not the other way around. Students are usually great about this, and we as adults need to let them explore their natural tech curiosities and just have fun." —Anonymous

See also:

[Why more schools aren’t teaching web literacy—and how they can start](http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/05/08/why-more-schools-arent-teaching-web-literacy-and-how-they-can-start/)

[Web literacy: Where the Common Core meets common sense](http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/05/25/web-literacy-where-the-common-core-meets-common-sense/)

[Are kids all that techno-smart? Maybe not](http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/08/13/are-kids-all-that-techno-smart-maybe-not/)

---

Article printed from eClassroom News: [http://www.eclassroomnews.com](http://www.eclassroomnews.com)

URL to article: [http://www.eclassroomnews.com/2012/09/05/five-technology-skills-every-student-should-learn/](http://www.eclassroomnews.com/2012/09/05/five-technology-skills-every-student-should-learn/)

URLs in this post:


