**Evaluating Effective Uses of Technology in the Classroom**

When evaluating effective uses of technology to support and enhance learning, consider the following:

**Consideration #1**

Is it…

* Doing old things in old ways?
* Doing old things in new ways?
* Doing new things in new ways?

The true transformation of learning with technologies will occur when we do new things in new ways.

**Consideration #2**

In the book, [Meaningful Learning with Technology](http://www.amazon.com/Meaningful-Learning-Technology-David-Jonassen/dp/0132393956/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1208647431&sr=1-1), the authors make the distinction between learning ***from*** technology and learning ***with*** technology. The "learning with" approach goes beyond information delivery to put digital cognitive tools into the hands of students: tools that enable them to create, explore, and innovate.

**Consideration #3**

The authors of [Classroom Integration of Type II Uses of Technology in Education](http://www.amazon.com/Classroom-Integration-Type-Technology-Education/dp/0789031108/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1208647570&sr=1-1) had this to say about the use of technology:

"We have found it useful to categorize computer applications as either Type I or Type II. Type I usage predominates and uses computing to make traditional teaching methods easier or more efficient. User involvement is relatively passive, and what happens on the screen is largely predetermined by the programmer. Rote skills are emphasized, and the computer is too frequently employed as an electronic flashcard machine. Type II usage, on the other hand, employs computers to make available new and better ways of teaching children. The user is the most important actor in the interaction and is the primary controller of what happens on the screen. Problem solving and other thinking skills are emphasized and the computer is employed as a tool to aid cognitive processes."

**Questions to ask when evaluating classroom uses of technology:**

* Is it something that can be done without the technology or is it a refinement or improvement of what we've done before?
* Is it something that fully engages the student in the learning activity or just another way to "deliver" instruction?
* Was it a true learning experience for the teacher as well as the students?
* How "invisible" was the use of the technology from the students' point of view? Did the activity bring the students' attention to the technology or to the content/curricular goals?
* Did the use of the technology create learning experiences that provoke student reflection in a new, more engaging and collaborative way?

When teachers prepare to integrate technology, they should be guided by the following planning questions:

1.) What knowledge will students learn?

2.) Which strategies will provide evidence that students have learned that knowledge?

3.) Which strategies will help students acquire and integrate that knowledge?

4.) Which strategies will help students practice, review, and apply the knowledge?

How can you best use new technologies associated with your content objectives to promote student learning?

Content focus: What content does this lesson focus on?

Pedagogical focus: What pedagogical practices are employed in this lesson?

Technology Used: What technologies used?

Do these pedagogical practices make concepts clearer and/or foster deeper learning?

Does the use of technology help represent the content in diverse ways to maximize opportunities to transform the content in ways that make sense to the learner?

Do the pedagogical practices maximize the use of existing technologies for teaching and evaluating learning?