



Low cost learning for 2015

*Investing in classroom technology doesn't have to equate to big dents to your school's ICT budget. **MATT BRITLAND** offers his top tips on how to enhance learning without too much capital spend*



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Writing about education technology can be difficult as there's a whole range of tools and services that schools can utilise and it can all be pretty overwhelming. Mobile devices are used in schools across the world to support teaching and learning; some schools opt for class sets and others opt for 1:1 strategies that enable students and teachers to get the most out of the devices. However, technology like this costs a lot of money. I wanted to share a couple of low cost or free ways in

which schools can use technology over the next 12 months

Schools and teachers often shy away from using social media for education purposes because of the negative stories found in some parts of the press. However, social media does have a use in education. For example, departments could set up Twitter accounts to communicate important links to news stories, department information and anything helpful for their students' studies. Trusted students could even take it in turns to tweet from the account on a rotational basis.

Closed Facebook groups are also a useful way of getting students to collaborate with teachers. Teachers don't have to be 'friends' with students; instead they can send them a link to the group. It's important in both these cases that teachers set up a professional account and don't use their own personal social media accounts.

Blogging can also be used by students to write about their work, what they've learnt and

a range of other activities in a public space. This can give them an audience beyond their teacher. When using social media the school should have someone overseeing it and there must be rules of use in place. We expect students to be productive users of social media, so incorporating it into their learning experience shows them how it can be used beyond posting photos and status updates.

Video is also an incredibly useful tool that can be used in a number of ways, the most powerful of which is to enable students to learn more independently. I've used it to create screencasts on how to use applications or websites and placed learning into the hands of the students.

Rather than standing in front of the class demonstrating how to do something students can teach themselves using the video created by the teacher – giving them ownership over the learning experience. Whilst this isn't suitable for everything, it can be useful in certain lessons,

and for the flipped classroom and cover lessons.

Websites like YouTube and Vimeo have a range of educational videos that could help enhance what students are learning. Using these sites

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could also save teachers time as there maybe be relevant videos online that have been created by other people. Many teachers also find filming their lessons to be an interesting and evaluative process. We can learn a lot by taking a step back and watching our own teaching. Of course, these videos can also be shared with students as revision material or if they've missed a lesson for whatever reason and need to catch up. ■