(This is one of 27 entries submitted in the College's recent writing contest on the topic of "What's Good in Education?". Visit the writing contest home page for links to other entries, including the winning one.)

WHAT'S GOOD IN EDUCATION?

Technology opens doors to global learning

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This is my third year teaching foreign language and, for me, what is good about education today is how technology has open the doors to be able to communicate and learn from people all over the world.

In my classes, I have had the opportunity to integrate technology in my lessons plans through video (movies, songs), audio (news articles, music) and homework (assigning and receiving students' homework though e-mail).

Technology can give you endless possibilities to help students learn. Here's an example that can be modified according to your audience: I started my lesson about an Indian tribe in Latin America by showing my students a short clip of Rigoberta Menchu talking about who she was and another short clip (from youtube.com) of her receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Then we read Rigoberta's testimonial in our class book.

After reading, we had an open discussion about Rigoberta's life in the target language. The students proceeded to write a letter to Rigoberta in the target language asking her about her life and commenting about what they have learned in the videos, the reading and class discussion. For our next class I started by playing music from different regions in Latin America where there are Indian tribes from music resources on the Internet (serindigena.cl).

Students were then separated in groups of four and each group was given a different Indian tribe to read about and inform the rest of the class (different Internet sources). To close our discussion, I gave the students a copy of the situation today of the Indians in Colombia from an article in bbcmundo.com.

Afterward, the students took a test and were very successful. The use of technology, reading, listening and speaking helps all the different learners in the classroom to understand the material better and it also gave them a greater appreciation of what they have.

When I am going to teach my students new material, I usually try to incorporate technology in some way because I know it makes a difference. I also put myself in their situation. I remember being bored in my classes when I was in high school because the chalkboards were filled out with material I did not understand. I do not want to be that kind of teacher. If we all as teachers take time to integrate technology in our classes, not only you will see the impact in your students, but also in yourself, because you will feel more confident and be able to expand your students' knowledge outside of the classroom.

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