

Educational Technology for Young Learners



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Introduction

The use of educational technology — or EdTech, for short — is skyrocketing. Across a field that's experiencing droves of suddenly-remote populations, educational technology can allow for some level of connection, even among virtual classrooms. Frequently, the use of common EdTech platforms is geared toward students who are slightly older, as students get more used to working with technology overall.

However, younger children can also benefit greatly from the use of educational technology. The skills that it promotes, such as advanced critical thinking and collaboration, are benefits that students can glean from very young ages — even when they're in kindergarten. Practically, EdTech can also be used to simply expose young learners to new concepts and worlds in an efficient and engaging manner. In this course, we'll discuss the importance of bringing technology to young learners and the implementation of EdTech for students in the Pre-K through elementary school populations.

Section 1: The Importance and Benefits of Educational Technology (EdTech)

Increasingly, more and more schools across America are leveraging the benefits of EdTech for their classrooms. However, it must be implemented with care in order to unlock its advantages for teachers and students alike. Later in this course, we'll provide practical tips for implementing EdTech in a classroom of young students; but, first, it may be helpful to provide a general definition of EdTech and its benefits.

What is EdTech?

EdTech is an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of digital methods and tools that can be used in a modern classroom. Through the use of EdTech, all members of an academic community — teachers, students, administrators, and parents — are able to help students learn in more engaging ways, track student data better, and make more informed decisions for the school population (Fecich, 2021).

As the use of EdTech in schools, particularly for young students, is a relatively novel concept, it's changing and evolving a great deal — as are the various guidelines and

regulations in place to help inform teachers and administrators about the appropriate use of this tool. Some organizations have released surveys and standards to help teachers understand and evaluate how effective their use of EdTech for their students truly is (Fecich, 2021).

After 2020's tumultuous events and the widespread recommendations for social distancing or sheltering in place, the use of EdTech skyrocketed as a safe alternative to in-person or close-proximity instruction. While there have been numerous benefits seen as a result of this new trend, there are also negative impacts that can be associated with EdTech if it is not leveraged in a logical or student-focused way (Fecich, 2021).

What are the benefits of EdTech?

The appropriate, strategic use of EdTech can result in many benefits, including (Lim, 2021):

- **More access to a wider selection of educational materials.** There is a bewildering amount of content available on EdTech platforms (and simply across the Internet) that is educational in nature. Where previously a teacher and student might have been limited to content that was physically proximate, now a student can access anything they like — from deep dives into a subject that isn't necessarily their primary teacher's area of expertise, to content that expresses one type of subject in different ways (e.g., in a podcast, video, interactive media, or essay format). This can help students hone in on their area of interest and discover and nurture the way they best learn.
- **Increased ability for learners to practice 21st-century communication skills.** Much of communication in the workplace (and in higher education, and in the world) occurs over digital platforms and on the internet. If students are able to learn how to communicate effectively over EdTech platforms while young, they may be better empowered to communicate persuasively and personally online when they are older.
- **A more engaging experience for students.** Many young students associate technology and applications with fun, low-stress, enjoyable experiences. By providing educational content in an area with which many students already have familiarity, we make that educational content more accessible. In addition, the different types of media available through EdTech — such as well-produced

videos and interactive games that help students practice their knowledge and skills — are much more engaging than a typical lecture or pop quiz.

- **Improved ability to stay up to date with new tech.** The type of technology we use to communicate, present information, and even complete our jobs changes frequently. By helping students adapt to consistently-evolving technological platforms, we help prepare them for a future in which technology will only continue to make huge advancements on a regular basis. Working with EdTech is an investment in the ongoing digital literacy of your students — an indispensable 21st-century skill that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

What is the appropriate use of such technology?

As with any other tool in an instructor's toolkit, EdTech platforms and functionalities can be leveraged in both helpful and unhelpful ways. Here, we'll discuss a few of the ways in which EdTech platforms can assist teachers in being more resourceful about their time — so they can increase the extent to which they can be useful resources for their students. These include (NewEdTech, 2022):

- **Automated Grading.** Ask a group of teachers what their least favorite teaching task is, and there's a good chance you'll hear tales of hours spent grading. Grading is a repetitive, thankless task that most teachers need to tackle on a very regular basis. As it doesn't lead specifically and directly to interactive learning experiences or improved relationships between teacher and student, it can very much feel like a thankless task. Today, there are EdTech options available that can make arduous hours spent grading no longer necessary. Teaching support applications equipped with machine learning can easily grade simpler, more objective assignments (such as multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank assessments), and, in some cases, may even be able to perform an initial review of essays or more complex submissions. Whether teachers use automated grading systems to supplement their own reviews or lean on it more fully for grading purposes, teachers stand to gain back hours of their week to focus on more value-adding activities.
- **Improved Classroom Management.** Whether a classroom is remote or in-person, it can be staggeringly difficult to get any group of young students to complete a series of tasks. With EdTech at the ready to assist, teachers can streamline communication efforts and make it easier for students to go about the logistics of

their day. That may leave increased bandwidth for both teacher and student alike to focus on their actual studies. In our opinion, anything that allows for a more collaborative, less chaotic environment in both in-person and remote classrooms can facilitate better learning outcomes. From apps that send automatic reminders to students and parents about assignments to apps that help students navigate Zoom calls more easily, the support that EdTech is able to offer young students and their teachers can be game-changing.

- **The Ability to Go Paper-Free.** Going paper-free in your classroom — or taking steps to get close to this goal — can be more than just a sustainable choice for your students. At many schools, the printing budget that is required to support the needs of K-5 classrooms can be staggeringly high. Moreover, many teachers, teacher's aides, and administrators spend an inordinate amount of time at the copy machine or managing paper printouts. Assignments submitted as hard copies can easily be lost or damaged, they don't necessarily come with time stamps (as would an assignment emailed in), and they make taking advantage of automatic grading through EdTech (or other types of data entry) extremely difficult. If your in-person classroom isn't yet paper-free or low-paper, consider taking advantage of EdTech tools geared to help make that happen. If you're looking for a good way to streamline paperless processes for your remote classroom, there's a very good chance that you'll be able to find an EdTech tool that's perfect for your needs.
- **Reducing time-wasting guesswork.** One common goal that teachers take on is the attempt to personalize their teaching strategies to the specific needs of each of their students. All students will have different strengths and various areas in which they need to improve. In order to provide more personalized lessons, teachers need to spend time assessing the skills of each student. While there is no replacement for the specialized focus of a teacher, EdTech tools can take some of the guesswork out of identifying specific student needs. For example, assessment software equipped with machine learning may be able to review and flag student-submitted work to identify or highlight any areas that may be worth a teacher's further review. EdTech may also be able to catch trends that a teacher previously wouldn't have been able to notice, such as detrimental studying habits on the part of a student. Much like the above teacher benefits, this may help teachers save time on redundant tasks so they can spend more time with their students — or provide specific support based on what they have learned about their students with the help of EdTech applications.

What are the guiding principles for elementary educators, programs, schools, and families on the use of technology by young children?

Since EdTech is such a new tool, there are many types of guidelines surrounding its proper use. The academic community has come up with several guiding principles that, if met, should result in safe, engaging, smart uses for technology that result in better experiences for all involved. These principles include (TeachOnline, 2020):

- **The use of technology must add value to educational processes.** The value added must be explicit and reliable. Teachers should not adopt new technology of any kind without being able to articulate a clear reason why it will make a positive difference in their lives or the lives of their students.
- **The use of technology should have an explicit pedagogical focus.** It's easy to get distracted when selecting new digital educational content or communication platforms! If a new EdTech application seems like it has an instructional aim but, in reality, is more focused on entertainment or solely administrative work, then the application will likely turn out to be a missed opportunity to concentrate more on educational aims. When your school is considering the onboarding of a new type of technology, it should consider whether the platform can adapt to various teaching styles, different grades, and equitable use by all students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the school community.
- **The specific technology that a student uses should be of high quality.** However well-intentioned, low-quality EdTech tools will likely detract from the quality of education instead of adding to it. All tools or programs that teachers wish to onboard should be vetted by the security and tech experts within a school district. At the very least, this should help teachers and students save the time and frustration that they might otherwise spend onboarding a glitchy, poorly-performing tool. This type of action could also mitigate other risks, including security breaches from low-quality EdTech platforms.
- **Any EdTech tools that a school embraces should be sustainable.** It's important that we offer our students as consistent an educational experience as possible. While some changes or events may be outside of our control and unavoidable, we should reduce preventable reroutes for our students. If we introduce a new EdTech platform one year, we should plan to stick to this platform so that students, educators, and parents can have time to embrace the new learning

system. This results in a lower-stress, more efficient experience for everyone involved.

- **The EdTech tools that we select should offer equal access.** Right now, there's a large push in education to ensure that learners from all backgrounds, with all different types of abilities, can all access a high-quality education without having to worry about any barriers they may be up against. The Internet and EdTech can go a long way in making truly equal-access education more widespread. To do this, as we onboard our students and academic communities to EdTech platforms, we need to ensure that the tools we select are easy to access for every member of our communities (and, preferably, that the makers of these tools or platforms show clear plans to increase access in the future).
- **The EdTech tools we select should be scalable.** A process or program is scalable when it can be shared or expanded significantly without undergoing too much central change. This is a way of making sure that your EdTech tool or platform is a future-proofed or sustainable choice: If your school undergoes any significant upcoming changes, for example, a good EdTech tool or platform should be well-poised to grow with you. As many schools are considering permanent remote departments, selecting easily-scalable EdTech platforms can be a good way to support your existing student base and even expand your offerings to help students outside your geographic area as well.
- **The EdTech tools that we use must be customizable.** As much as we may be searching for a tool that allows us to lower the amount of time and energy teachers need to spend on educational logistics — and, to that end, one of the attractive things about many EdTech platforms and tools is the idea that you can press one button and send out uniform notifications, and other similar functionalities — it's important to remember that every teacher, student, and family may require unique notifications, functionalities, and tools. The EdTech tools and platforms that we use must be easy to customize, or they won't be as accessible and scalable as they need to be.

How can EdTech be incorporated to increase access to learning opportunities for all children?

One consistent problem that the academic community faces is the reality of ensuring that all children have equal access to a high-quality education — regardless of their

background, ability, or circumstances. EdTech, when leveraged effectively, can go a long way toward helping rectify inequity in academic communities. Many school districts throughout America are already using technology in ways that allow students better access to engaging educational content.

Three ways that your school can consider increasing access to learning opportunities through EdTech include (Anderson, 2019):

- **Allowing your students access to educational materials outside of the school building.** Whether this is simply a solution you offer your students to bolster a remote learning experience or to help in-person students extend their classroom experiences after school hours, EdTech can help students access resources wherever they are. This can help students have more successful homework experiences, or review key explanations from you on-demand. If you have students who are struggling with a math concept, for example, they (or their parents) might be able to watch an instructional video that you have recorded. This can save students hours of time otherwise spent struggling to understand concepts or complete their required homework. If students' parents are unable to help them with projects or research, EdTech may be able to help students connect with appropriate mentors or subject experts who can provide support.
- **EdTech can help foster personalized learning.** One of the barriers to instructional equity is the scale of the task teachers take on every day — providing excellent educational outcomes for a wide range of students who have different areas of interest, learning modalities, and even types of abilities. While focusing on personalized learning through EdTech, teachers can support more variability among the students in their classrooms, facilitating deep engagement and ensuring no student is left behind.
- **School administrators and educators can collect data through EdTech to make informed decisions to benefit the students in their care.** Collecting and then acting upon data from real student work and activities is one of the most direct ways that teachers can ensure they're supporting the children in their care. For example, through EdTech tools and platforms, teachers may be able to view information surrounding homework completion and other academic aims in light of behavioral data. This can help teachers connect dots more effectively, glean helpful insights, and provide proactive recommendations for students and teachers alike to help any students who may be in need of heightened support.

A few further ways to leverage technology to create more equitable educational access might include (Anderson, 2019):

- Working with donors, local infrastructure funds, or academic grants to provide internet access outside of school for all members of the academic community.
- Spending some money on courses or platforms that provide professional development or further, more targeted resources for teachers.
- Investing in software or EdTech tools that specifically track data outside of test scores, so teachers can have a more holistic and comprehensive look at how their students are doing outside of traditional assessment structures.

Section 1 Key Points

- EdTech is an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of digital methods and tools that can be used in a modern classroom. These can include anything from family communication platforms to games that teach children basic academic concepts.
- The benefits of EdTech for your classroom may include more access to a wider selection of educational materials, increased ability for learners to practice 21st-century communication skills, a more engaging experience for students, and an improved ability to stay up to date with new tech.
- Potentially appropriate uses of EdTech may vary based on the needs of your community but may include automated grading, improved classroom management, the ability to go paper-free, and the reduction of time-wasting guesswork.
- One of the most helpful guiding principles regarding the implementation of EdTech is that it must be scalable. This will help your EdTech tool or platform be a more future-proofed or sustainable choice.
- EdTech can ensure more equitable access to a high-quality educational experience by fostering personalized learning, allowing learning to occur outside the classroom, and helping school communities better collect and leverage data.

Section 1 Summary

Clearly, EdTech platforms and tools can be used to benefit students and teachers alike - but they must be implemented in a strategic way. Fortunately, EdTech tools can be easy to leverage for every member of the academic community, including students, teachers and parents. Specific strategies for EdTech implementation will be discussed in the second section of this course.

Section 2: Implementing EdTech for Pre-K Through Elementary School Students

Aside from potentially large amounts of screen exposure that may inhibit a child's ability to interact with the real world, one of the most prominent concerns that critics cite when discussing the widespread implementation of EdTech for young students is data privacy and security.

This is valid. After all, as teachers and school administrators, our number one priority has to be keeping our young people safe. However, EdTech isn't necessarily going to put students or their data in harm's way. We simply have to adopt practices to keep our students' information secure — and teach students, from a young age, to protect themselves and their interests online.

Here are some specific privacy and security considerations that will likely apply to any EdTech used in early elementary settings (Managed Methods, 2022):

- Realize that if you don't do anything, you might have an issue on your hands. Data security is not something that you can leave up to chance!
- Even though most school districts are looking for low-cost, affordable EdTech solutions, be extremely leery of any solution that is offered to your school for free.
- Make sure that your IT department is aware of cybersecurity risks, and invest in low-cost solutions to keep your school's firewall and protection strong.
- Tell the parents and guardians of students in your school about security risks. This may or may not be something they're familiar with, and if they are aware, they can help their children take basic precautions to reduce their vulnerability online.

- Tell your students about the risks of sharing information online. This is one of the first steps in data protection literacy, and, while we don't want to scare our students, students are never too young to practice basic safety habits (like not sharing personal information with strangers online).
- Make sure that your school has a specific process for reviewing and vetting new EdTech applications. Every new tool or platform that a teacher wishes to use should be approved by IT before it's rolled out in any significant way.

How can EdTech help parents get involved?

One of the most significant indicators of a children's academic wellness is parents who are able to help them through their studies at home — or at least support their educational endeavors. As EdTech becomes a more prevalent educational trend, it's key that decision-makers make sure that parents feel they can use EdTech, too (or, at least, that their children's at-home learning plans and any required tech tools are accessible to them, too).

Along those lines, it may be beneficial to issue specific resources for parents to help them understand and use the EdTech platforms your school selects. A quick PDF guide that parents could access from their phones might be all that's needed. School districts may also decide to schedule an evening at the beginning of the school year, perhaps in conjunction with back-to-school night, to help parents walk through any relevant EdTech platforms (Oakes, 2020).

We've found that many parents are avid supporters of EdTech, and many (due to parents' cross-networking between school districts) are already very aware of the different EdTech tools and platforms out there. Some parents may even lobby your school district for specific types of software or tech settings (Oakes, 2020).

No matter which end of the parental interest and involvement spectrum your academic community tends to be on, it's a good idea to make sure your parents have the ability to be as involved as they want to be. To make EdTech as accessible as possible for parents, consider focusing on these four areas of attention (Oakes, 2020):

- **Family communication features.** In order to build strong teacher-student relationships, it's important to loop the parents in as well — particularly in a world where a significant amount of learning happens at home. It can be difficult to build an authentic student-teacher and teacher-parent relationship over video

calls, messaging, and email! EdTech may be able to help restore some measure of engagement and interactivity, but only if the communication features of your platform have been selected and implemented with care. Prioritize finding a platform that opens several different avenues for participation and immersion — easy video messaging, video calls, games people can play remotely, and different text-based messaging channels that include really simple ways to send links, files, and other assets. Then, at the beginning of the year (and, ideally, several times throughout the year), take time to create and strengthen clear expectations regarding familial communication.

- **Onboard and integrate your EdTech products mindfully.** Depending on the demographics of your specific academic community, you'll likely be dealing with a wide range of people who have extremely disparate familiarities with technology and new communication practices. Your experience onboarding young students onto software may be wildly different from getting their parents to be on board. To reduce chaos at the family level and bolster the teacher-parent relationship, it may be best for a central authority (school administration, or school district representatives) to create a universal parental onboarding process. Making your EdTech use as simple and parent-friendly as possible may help — for example, consider designing your EdTech platform with common social media-esque functionalities, using traditional classroom language on the EdTech platform, and only requiring parents to log in to the EdTech platform once (or once per day, etc) instead of multiple times. Every potential barrier to use will result in a few parents deciding that EdTech involvement is not worth their time, so reducing those potential barriers is key.
- **Make your EdTech as mobile-friendly as possible.** Ideally, you and your team should focus your efforts on getting your EdTech solutions to the place that parents will most likely use them: Their phones. At the very least, that is where parents will be receiving their notifications, scrolling through updates and communication, and reviewing instructions for helping their students succeed with at-home work. This means that ensuring that our EdTech tools and platforms look are compatible with mobile devices and are easily navigable with a few taps is a must. This isn't just for the parents: Research among EdTech platform users shows that school administrators and teaching staff rely heavily on mobile-friendly designs, as well. From watching helpful videos to checking items off a to-do list, a helpful and accessible phone user interface is best poised to accompany people throughout their busy days — busy days that leave little time to sit with a

laptop or desktop computer. Making it very clear from day one that your EdTech platform is something easily accessed via phone will help reduce confusion and trepidation that less tech-savvy parents may feel about embracing a new type of software. Mobile-ready EdTech designs are by their nature meant to be extremely intuitive and flexible — which, again, is a perk for everyone involved.

- **Reduce as many barriers to access as possible.** Embracing EdTech for our communities does presuppose certain levels of access and ability. For example, just the above focus area (concentrating on mobile-friendly design) assumes that most of the parents in your academic community will have a working smartphone and access to the internet. Perhaps most of the families in your community will. However, there may be others for whom that's an issue, and that's okay. Reducing or even eliminating barriers to accessing your EdTech platforms will require your going out into the community and surveying families to figure out what types of tools would realistically work for them — and then, after an EdTech platform or tool has been chosen, reaching out to any families who may be struggling to use the platform of choice and giving them what they need to succeed. For example, if your school's EdTech platform requires smartphone and WiFi access, it might be a good idea to establish a fund within your school's budget to supply these resources for families who may require help. It's also equally important to realize that not all barriers to access will be financial. Your newcomer families for whom English is a second language will need translation services, at least for some time after coming to America. Any families who are differently abled may require subtitles, audio-only cues, or other support systems to help them review information as efficiently as possible. Enabling ease of use for all families can also look like enabling offline access or autosaving features to help families living in areas that just don't have great Internet signals, or providing easy processes for multiple people to use one computer or device.

How should I focus on implementing EdTech solutions for very young Pre-K learners?

The debate over whether teachers should use EdTech platforms and tools for very young learners can be heated at times. On the one hand, EdTech tools and platforms offer many efficiency benefits for both young parents and educators. On the other, many parents try to avoid large amounts of screen exposure for their children.

While it may be true that young children do not need more exposure to technology, it's useful for them to be at least familiarized with technology uses. One might argue that teaching children to use technology and screens in effective, efficient ways might reduce the overall amount of exposure they have to these types of tools. In addition, for better or for worse, some amount of digital familiarity and literacy will be a required skill for people in most fields and situations. Starting children on the path towards helpful digital familiarity from a young age will likely help them later in life.

If you're experiencing difficulty with either getting the parents of young pre-K learners on board with your EdTech strategy or are having trouble yourself deciding how to use EdTech solutions in a valuable way with young students, here are some potential solutions (Athena Career Academy, 2020):

- **Demonstrate that the use of EdTech can help young students invest in their social and emotional development.** Using touch screens can be a very accessible way for the youngest among us to learn, as a young child's developing fine motor skills will support tapping and scrolling far before they support typing and grasping a pencil. Leveraging touch screens to meet children where they are can help them start to learn the concepts of creativity, working together with their friends, and communicating with others via simple emojis or similar visual media. They can experience taking turns to share their ideas, and (in a remote learning scenario) benefit from seeing their teacher's face over a screen. This can all be extremely beneficial for a young student's emotional development.
- **Help students learn to follow multi-step directions.** Most teachers know that it can be a bit of a struggle to teach young students how to listen to directions and follow them in an efficient manner. Digital devices can help with that. Not only are there myriad applications geared toward young students that can help them develop, remember, and follow specific step-by-step workflows, the very process of using a digital device requires the systematic following of directions. (You need to turn the device on before you can use it!) In addition, there are educational games that the youngest children can play which help them learn how to complete basic coding workflows for example, which can help young children bolster their sense of logic and structure.
- **Help teachers convey and reinforce specific academic skills.** Through simple applications, students can learn and practice skills from a young age — such as matching shapes, counting, identifying sounds, and even starting to learn the basics of reading and writing. While no app is a good substitute for the attention

of a teacher, these apps can provide interactive ways for students to practice skills introduced in class. A game teaching children how to shape letters well is far more engaging than a repetitive worksheet! Moreover, EdTech applications geared toward teaching very young children basic concepts can often be customized to each child's specific needs. For example, if one child is grasping a certain concept more quickly and easily than another, an app's machine learning might boost the first child up to a more advanced level automatically, while helping the second child through a review of the problematic material. This type of smart support can save time for educators and more helpfully match children to the type of activities that are best suited to help them succeed.

- **May help make learning a more engaging and enjoyable process for young students.** If we're being realistic, we need to admit that not every student is naturally going to love learning and school. Many students, however, do enjoy the sheer experience of using technology. While students are younger, teachers can take advantage of this natural inclination to get students more excited about spending time performing educational activities. For example, you may be able to help children play games that fortify information you've shared in class. You may be able to more easily save educational milestones for each student or share their progress with their parents. Finally, there is more and more technology becoming available that can provide valuable assistance for students who have special needs — e.g., communication aids — that can allow them to navigate life as a young student with significantly more ease.

How should I implement EdTech solutions for elementary school students?

Here are some practical ways you might consider implementing EdTech for your students in the elementary years (Robinson, 2022):

- **Leveraging EdTech for instructional use.** Through various EdTech applications, you may be able to create video clips or audio clips that you can send to specific students or to your entire class. In these clips, you can explain in more detail a specific point that you know your students may be struggling with. The benefit of this method is simple: Your students will have access to a personal resource that they can use whenever they need to, many times if necessary, without further effort on your part. This not only helps your students, but it also saves you time.

Additionally, it can also be an easy way for you to invest in your relationship with your students as a remote instructor if that is your situation. Other ideas may involve filming yourself narrating or performing the instructions for a specific process that your students will need to use. (For example, if you're a science teacher, you could film yourself washing out beakers properly; if you're a math teacher, you could film yourself performing a simple math equation while narrating the specific steps.)

- **Helping students realize and self-reflect on their progress with EdTech.** By helping students learn how to keep track of their own progress with the benefit of technology, you'll help them take control of their own learning journey. Students might be able to take short videos periodically in order to document their success or use EdTech applications to make a chart of their work output or increasing scores over time. At the end of the semester, students can even use EdTech tools to put together a video or presentation stitching together their various milestones. The result will be a very compelling summary of their learning journey over the past year (and, likely, a keepsake for their parents) that will help motivate them to keep learning in the years to come.
- **Using technology to help students feel more empowered, and to give them more ownership of their projects (and creativity through their projects).** Elementary school students tend to want to be able to explore more in their studies, but often don't have the freedom to do so in more traditional, rigid learning structures. Often, this is because facilitating more student freedom and choice makes teaching exponentially more difficult, particularly in a larger classroom with many different student personalities and abilities. With accessible, engaging EdTech platforms, students can take on a wide range of individualized projects — from creating digital art to coding basic workflows. Students can create comic strips illustrating mathematics concepts and even create mini-portfolios of the work they've been able to do, which should supercharge the pride that they take in their studies. Moreover, with EdTech, they can even create presentations and share them with the click of a button to pre-approved recipients (e.g., parents, classmates) for quick feedback and immediate praise. The positive feedback cycle of creative work done well will shorten, making it much more attractive for students to explore more projects.

Section 2 Key Points

- Adopting practices like teaching our students about privacy from an early age and creating a procedure for vetting new tech can help keep our communities safe.
- As EdTech becomes a more prevalent educational trend, it's key that decision-makers make sure that parents feel they can use EdTech, too. Adopting practices like prioritizing mobile-friendly design and using accessible and traditional educational terms online can make parental use of EdTech much easier.
- Easy-to-understand family communication features are among the most important elements you can prioritize when selecting a new type of EdTech. Having specific onboarding events to help parents set up communication with their students' teachers can be a game-changer for your community.
- EdTech can help students invest in their social-emotional development from a very young age by helping them leverage communication apps and hone their motor skills before they're able to write. This can be vital in a remote learning environment.
- Older students can benefit from EdTech in many ways, but one of the most important is the ability for students to take creative ownership of their projects. With more access to different types of media, students may be able to create more engaging, interactive projects that demonstrate their understanding (think: comic strips, songs, basic coding projects, and even mini-portfolios of their completed work).

Course Summary and Conclusion

EdTech, much like any other tool, can be used well or poorly. However, if leveraged well, EdTech stands to help academic communities enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships and allow students (even those who are very young) to practice their skills in a more interactive manner. In order to enjoy these tools and platforms responsibly, academic communities need to consider ways to vet software in the best way possible - and provide regular onboarding and resources to students, parents, and teachers to make sure that no one feels overwhelmed by the possibilities of EdTech.

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