

The Cyber Teacher

Becoming a teacher today is means learning to teach with new tools and resources that were unheard of only twenty years ago. There is almost no part of the education experience that is untouched by the computer or the internet. So the more you look to becoming a "cyber teacher", the more you will be tapping the great power cyberspace has given us to use for education.

A cyber teacher doesn't mean that you will no longer interact with your students in class. "Going cyber" means that you will take advantage of the internet even during the course of a teaching day to tap the incredible information resources that are there to make your lessons so much more rich and meaningful.

It is almost unheard of any more for a class room to not be equipped with not one but many internet connections and computers as well as all of the popular software to support the use of computers in the classroom. In fact, more and more students are bringing laptops with wireless internet access to use at their desks which means that the computer is now becoming as common a student tool as the pencil or the protractor for your students.

Staying up to date the latest that is available on the internet is critical so you are offering your students the best teaching available in this modern time. Moreover, you have to stay up to date and "plugged in" to what is going on in cyberspace because your students are knowledgeable about what is happening in the internet world. So to stay up with them, you have to stay current too.

Along with in class research resources, the internet has set up tools for communication that were unheard of before. When you assign group projects, they won't just communicate by sitting around a table and working out the project. They can interact via internet "groupware" such as wikis or Google groups to share information, pool their resources and even split up the work to be done which all can be easily merged into their final project report to turn in to you when they are done.

This new age of communication can be used by you as a teacher to open up communications channels with the students at home and with their parents in ways never known before as well. No longer do you have to worry about laboriously writing out the daily assignments for your students to write down and take home. You can now post them to a class online bulletin board or email them to the parents and to the student so every when the child gets home, the excuse that "I lost my homework assignment" just wont cut it.

To make this work, you also have to make sure the parents are internet savvy.

Don't count on the child to give his or her mom and dad a seminar in cyber education because the speed of cyberspace makes the student life more accountable. But you can schedule computer classes with the parents to show them how to find the student's assignments as well as grades, notes from the teacher or special announcements right here on the class web page in cyberspace.

We are really just getting started tapping the internet to make communications and education more efficient and powerful. Other ways to use this technology includes having the students do their homework online so they cannot say "the dog ate my homework." And because young people are very internet savvy, by making their education life internet enabled, they will be better students. And you will be a better teacher because you took the time to learn to tap the power of the internet to become a cyber teacher for your students as well.

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Word Count 637