The students filing into classrooms today are members of the generation known as “digital natives.” They’ve grown up with technology. Far more than older generations (known as “digital immigrants”), they understand how computers can be used for finding and assimilating new information. One challenge for school administrators is to take advantage of this predilection to help boost students’ ability to master new subjects. Another challenge is to use technology—particularly tablets—to increase teacher effectiveness.

Already, educators understand the value tablets can bring to the classroom. According to a 2013 survey by Futuresource Consulting:

- Spending in the global education technology market increased 23 percent from 2011 to 2012, to $11.6 billion.
- Tablet sales into elementary schools exceeded 3.5 million units in 2012, a growth of 340 percent over 2011.
- Tablet sales were expected to double again in 2013, to close to 7 million.

Why such dramatic growth? There are numerous reasons. Tablets have the capability, after all, to shift the classroom dynamic. It’s not just a question of replacing a paper-based system with digital textbooks, although that has its advantages. Given the inherent communication capabilities of tablets, teachers and students can engage in impromptu (and private) coaching chats. Teachers can gauge progress faster than ever before. And tablets free teachers from the blackboard, enabling them to teach from anywhere in the classroom.

Instead of relying on static (and perhaps even outdated) paper-based textbooks, teachers and students using tablets enjoy a higher level of interaction, interest and learning success. When classroom education is interactive, it offers the dual benefit of increasing student engagement and enhancing teacher effectiveness.

/// HOW TABLETS BOOST ENGAGEMENT

The benefits derived in the classroom from tablets start with improved interaction between and among students and teachers. The more connected individual students feel to the lesson and the teacher,
the higher their level of engagement. The more engaged that students are, the higher the likelihood that they’ll learn.

Today’s state-of-the-art tablets allow split-screen capabilities that give teachers far more flexibility in terms of overseeing classroom progress. Teachers can bring up the screens of individual students to gauge their progress. They can engage in chat sessions with students who have questions, without forcing the student to verbalize a question and risk embarrassment.

With this functionality, teachers can not only track the progress of individual students, but they can also gauge whether the group as a whole grasped the lesson plan. That means they can determine immediately when they need to reiterate or review elements of the plan.

In addition to aiding student engagement, tablets augment teaching options. With each student having an electronic device with which to participate, teachers can be more efficient by:

❱ Engaging in game-based learning, another element that entices digital natives
❱ Disseminating pop quizzes to gauge progress
❱ Identifying students who are having trouble grasping concepts

Most important, though, tablets aid participatory learning by supporting students’ ability to interact. They can ping a teacher’s tablet to ask a question, using the electronic equivalent of raising their hand, and be recognized in order—something teachers can’t always do in a traditional setting. In short, tablets can help shift classroom activities from teacher-centric lectures to student-centric learning.

/// THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEROPERABILITY

As important as tablets are for bringing change to the classroom, they must also be able to interoperate with other devices and peripherals. In the classroom, this starts with teachers substituting a piece of chalk with a stylus or an electronic pen. Imagine substituting a chalkboard with a whiteboard and connecting the tablet and the whiteboard wirelessly.

Teachers can now stand anywhere in the classroom (next to an unruly or struggling student, for instance), write on the tablet and have those notes appear on an electronic whiteboard at the front of the class. By replicating traditional chalkboard writing, these pen-based tablets eliminate the need for teachers to employ hunt-and-peck techniques on virtual keyboards. The value of this ability is buttressed by the results of a recent IDG Research survey, in which half of the respondents say that pen-based capabilities would improve productivity and be valuable in day-to-day tasks.

Another facet of peripheral interoperability is the ability to print out notes on wireless-enabled printers. Whether it’s special instructions for students or notes home to parents, teachers can quickly create hard copies for later use.

At the same time, teachers must be able to upload data from their tablets into back-end administrative systems. This data includes test results and attendance information. Having the data aggregated in a back-end database gives administrators the ability to better analyze classroom and teacher results against other teachers within the school and the district.

/// HOW SAMSUNG HELPS

With extensive offerings in hardware, software, peripherals and connectivity, Samsung has created the elements of a highly collaborative and integrated classroom experience. Its Galaxy Note 10.1 tablet is built to be reliable and to withstand the punishment inherent in the classroom setting.

On the software side, the Samsung School digital education solution incorporates interactive teaching tools such as screen sharing, screen monitoring, control of student devices and other capabilities, enabling teachers to:

❱ Manage semester scheduling, course and class modifications, and assignments
❱ Share local files, photos, audio recordings, movies, applications and URLs
❱ Answer questions and transmit school-wide announcements

Samsung’s extensive experience in the education sector has enabled it to develop tools that address the specific needs of students and teachers. With these targeted tools, teachers can transform the educational atmosphere into one that is both engaging and interactive.

❱ To learn more, go to www.samsung.com/education.

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1 Futuresource Consulting, TabTimes, April 30, 2013

Samsung Tablets for Education:

Galaxy Tab® 3 Series (7”, 8” and 10.1”)
Galaxy Note® Series featuring S Pen (8” and 10.1”)
Samsung School classroom management software