Are Laptops Helping Lower Merion Students Learn?

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A few years ago, the Lower Merion School District adopted a program that allowed every student within the school system to have his or her own computer. Once each student had a personal laptop, all teachers had to alter instruction to fully utilize the technology they now have access to. Students are given constant access to the internet and all the information it contains, teachers are not limited in what they can teach. It is expected with limitless information that teachers allow their students to go above and beyond in their learning, no longer tied down by “printable handouts.” In addition to more information, the computers allow students to demonstrate knowledge in infinite ways. Through music, videos, pictures and more, students can be as creative as they want without restriction.

The author, Nathan Susanj, does an excellent job of keeping his opinion out this article, but shares his findings on the opinions of some students. Many students who received a laptop during this program love what it has done for their education. Organization comes much easier because of the paperless atmosphere. Many programs are available to help students keep track of their assignments as well as additional extracurricular activities, ensuring they do not overlook any responsibilities. Another positive aspect of having personal computers is the continuous access to e-mail. When questions regarding assignments and projects come up, students can immediately e-mail their instructor or a classmate to find an answer rather than waiting until the next day and possibly having missed the assignment.

Despite the obvious benefits that can come from the one-to-one program, I do not think this is a great option for schools. Some students interviewed for the article agree, and conducted a survey to find what most students and teachers thought. From my own experience, technology can be quite the distraction. It is easy to tune out an instructor and play around on computers rather than taking in new lessons. Another problem with giving computers to each student is that some students do not have internet at home. This could be a source of embarrassment for those who cannot afford internet. A majority of teachers who responded to the survey agree, computers in the classroom are a distraction. As someone with a large work load, I know how important time management is and how simple it is to fall victim to the nonsense computers provide. I believe technology can be used for the good, but we cannot let it take over our schools. It is too easy to ignore fundamentals of learning and allow the machines to do them for us.