

Parents' Ed Tech Checklist

What you should be asking when your kids' school says "the iPads are coming!" Hear the full episode at: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/edtech>

- **"We're raising money so we can put a tablet in the hands of every kid."**
 - What training and development resources are you providing for teachers?
 - Where are you getting the curriculum?
 - What do we know about how successful the curriculum has been?
 - Who's reading the privacy policies on the apps my kids will be using?
 - What percentage of the money you're raising will go toward evaluating the outcomes of the new systems?

- **"We're moving toward a blended learning model."**
 - Walk me through what a typical day will look like.
 - How will expectations of my child change?
 - How will expectations of me as a parent change?
 - How will you use any information collected outside of the classroom?

- **"We want to experiment with a flipped classroom."**
 - What are you going to assign out of class?
 - How are you going to use in-class time if you use video lectures as homework?
 - What software and/or connectivity do I need to have at home to make sure my kids can complete assignments?

- **"We think games are the way forward. We're going to be using lots of games."**
 - What kind of games? What's the actual engagement with the game (fancy flash cards vs. multi-level narratives vs...)?
 - What concepts are the games trying to evoke? What are the higher-order skills involved (memorization, delivering content, higher order skills)?
 - What if my kid doesn't like games?

- **"We're partnering with Google to get coding into our schools."**
 - Which teachers will be working on this? What's their background?
 - Why is this right for my kid and this school?
 - What will coding classes do in terms of critical thinking skills that, say, a cooking class wouldn't?

Glossary of Some Useful Ed Tech Terms

- **1:1:** When an academic institution issues a laptop or tablet to every enrolled student.
- **Blended learning:** A method of teaching formally combining online and face-to-face activities. Students usually have some control over time, place, and pace. The [Innosight Institute](#) says most schools use one of four models: rotation, flex, self-blend, and enriched-virtual. Also called “hybrid learning.”
- **Bring your own devices (BYOD):** A model that allows and even encourages students to use their personal phones, laptops, or tablets to assist with classroom instruction.
- **Digital citizenship:** An umbrella term for teaching students to use technology in public, including social media education. [New York public schools](#) use the term to incorporate multiple Common Core standards into lesson plans.
- **Early warning systems:** Using data to determine which students are at risk of dropping out, based on benchmark indicators collected over a student’s educational career.
- **Flipped model:** A form of blended learning in which teachers assign video lectures or other instructional content as homework, and use in-class time to practice or review.
- **Gamification:** Involves using games to motivate and increase engagement in learning.
- **Khan academy:** A [website](#) featuring free micro-video lectures and instructional exercises.
- **Learning environment:** Refers to the physical space, context, and cultures in which students learn, which some argue [include online spaces](#).

- **MOOCs:** An abbreviation for “Massive Online Open Course,” such as those classes on [edX](#), [Udacity](#), [Coursera](#) and FutureLearn. They are mostly free, and mostly geared toward older students.
- **Personalized learning:** Tailoring lesson, assignments, and assessments to individual students using technology.
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Any data or information collected by an academic institution or partner that can be traced back to a specific student.
- **Rotation model:** A form of blended learning in which students rotate between instructional platforms, at least one of which is online. The Christensen Institute [breaks rotation out into four types](#).
- **Screen time:** According to the [American Association of Pediatrics](#), this includes any time children spend in front of televisions, computers, phones, video games, or other electronic devices.
- **Interactive whiteboard:** A touch-sensitive writing surface, that can be used to convey and save information across different local devices such as computers or tablets. Popular brands include “[Smartboard](#)” and [Eno Board](#).