

## **4 Emerging Trends in Educational Technology for 2018**

Each year, it is exciting to take a look at the emerging trends in education and speculate on how edtech will continue to impact student learning in the future. Across the country, students often arrive at school armed with their own devices and proceed to create simulations and track experiments in science, take online courses that supplement their traditional education, and collaborate on assignments in real time using Google Apps and similar programs. As technology continues to develop along with awareness of the need to increase edtech accessibility and training, an entirely new landscape for teaching and learning unfolds. Below are four trends in education that are expected to change the frontier of learning by the end of 2018.

### **1. Augmented reality**

AR provides a visual simulation that allows teachers to amplify their lessons and textbook content, and engages students by transforming the object or place being studied—or even by transforming the classroom itself. Rather than serving as a portal into a created or virtual reality, AR amplifies what currently exists. The result? The user experiences places, objects and concepts in a whole new way. For instance, when students use AR to step into a historical place or time, they can explore the setting firsthand, make determinations about what they want to learn or do, and follow prompts to explore inside, under, around, and through buildings, anatomy, or natural phenomena. Simply put, AR has the power to supplement education across the curriculum and actively engage learners in a way that is meaningful and reaches multiple learning styles.

### **2. Artificial intelligence**

In a world where we are growing more and more accustomed to (and perhaps reliant on) intelligent digital assistants like Siri for help with everyday life, it is easy to see how AI can make the jump into the classroom. Whether by offering insight into student learning, facilitating communication, or supporting teachers with grading, AI provides opportunities to transform the learning process and delegate time-consuming rote tasks, thereby leaving more time for enhanced learning.

### **3. Improved accessibility via learning tech**

Computer-based games, apps, and digital learning devices play an important role in the education of students with disabilities. As new tech emerges for both the home and classroom, students are better able to learn in a way that meets their needs and is more inclusive, all the while reducing the stigma of assistive technology. Audiobooks, dictation software, and reading apps already help many students with visual/auditory challenges or certain disabilities such as dyslexia. In this day and age, the increased presence of AI devices such as Amazon Echo and Google Home means students with and without disabilities are more familiar with the concept of speaking to devices, which may facilitate greater understanding and support of students who need to use assistive technology in the classroom. This also presents the opportunity for teachers to plan lessons and assignments that engage the class in device-based learning, thereby creating a more inclusive environment for all students.

#### **4. Data privacy and cybersecurity**

Data privacy has been on the minds of district administrators for years thanks to the increase in student device use—in fact, it was one of the big trends for 2017. With technology continuing to be integrated and broadly used in schools, cybersecurity remains a serious concern in 2018 and beyond. More than 32 million education records were compromised in the first half of 2017 alone, with the education sector making up 13 percent of total data breaches. And it is not just test scores that are compromised; student and personnel information, tax identification and financial documents are all at risk, leading to concerns over potential identity theft in addition to attacks on school infrastructure. Further compounding the problem is the fact that schools often have limited resources to deal with and prevent phishing, ransomware, and other common forms of cyberattack.

As new technology and additional uses for previously integrated edtech emerge, schools in today's cyber society should be more diligent than ever in creating a safe and productive digital environment for students. By harnessing the power of AR and AI, teachers can open the doors to learning in a whole new manner, and schools are likely to see an increase in both engagement and understanding of critical skills. When tied into successful learning practices such as blended learning and research-backed computer-based education programs, the learning of the future looks promising to say the least.