

# BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

Engaging Students &  
Transforming Instruction

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*Reproducible pages are in italics.*

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# Introduction

Technology's influence in our world has changed the structure and operation of our schools. With society's expectation that educators prepare students to be college, career, and citizenship ready using 21st century skills, we are quickly facing a shift in education that uses a paradigm still being created. As a result of rapidly evolving technology that provides access to information at will, we can no longer teach students the way we once did. Instead, we must provide a new pedagogy of instruction that promotes authentic learning (Jacobs, 2010). We must offer an education that is not only authentic but also rigorous, relevant, and daily to provide students with optimal learning whereby they graduate schools college, career, and citizenship ready.

There are many instructional programs and initiatives that can be put in place to achieve the goal of providing authentic, rigorous, and relevant learning. Creating seamless connections between students and teachers as they teach and learn is one way to accomplish the goal. Bring your own device (BYOD) is an instructional initiative that offers those seamless connections. With BYOD, students become active participants in learning by using their personal devices both inside and outside the classroom setting and connecting to the school's network (Ackerman & Krup, 2012).

For the modern learner, formal and informal knowledge is routinely acquired outside school (November, 2012; Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011). This is typically accomplished by using devices that are chosen based on student needs at the moment. For example, cell phones are used to text, tweet, send Snapchat photos or video messages, and quickly make status updates while students are on the go. Tablets are often used for more involved, personal activities such as reading books or creating videos that may be shared with social networks. Laptop computers are often used to create products such as documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. They are essential when creating

music or editing photos that are also shared with peers via social networking sites like SoundCloud and Flickr.

Students are using their social networks as teaching tools (Richardson & Mancabelli, 2011). They are selecting their device of choice to accomplish tasks that help them collaborate, communicate, share resources, create, and find solutions to real-world problems. Students participate in BYOD, or bring your own technology (BYOT), essentially everywhere. Mobile devices are becoming more widespread in our world and definitely more prevalent in the hands of students.

The idea of BYOD in schools is plausible and warrants serious consideration by all schools. After all, businesses and higher education have been using the BYOD approach to learning and working for quite some time (Helman, 2014). In fact, in higher education, it is typically expected, and in some cases required, that students own their own computers and use them while matriculating. Higher education has moved considerably beyond BYOD; institutions sometimes refer to BYOD as BYOE—bring your own everything (Helman, 2014).

So how do we handle this phenomenon? Should schools embrace the idea of students bringing their own devices or abandon the thought? The persistent debate regarding BYOD in schools deserves additional consideration to help teachers and administrators understand it and its potential opportunities and challenges for learning.

The literature available to guide school districts along the journey of implementing BYOD is scarce at best. Districts rely heavily on blog posts, professional learning networks, conference presentations, and education technology–related websites to assist them in shaping their thinking and planning. Empirical data available on much of what is found regarding implementation is anecdotal in nature, as very few districts that are implementing BYOD or BYOT have published replicable information for other districts to use when planning.

Businesses, institutions of higher learning, and K–12 schools that have implemented BYOD have done so to accomplish one or more of the following.

- Enhance learning and working
- Increase access to technology

- Capitalize on the familiarity of using one's own device
- Decrease the expense of purchasing new technology and updating old technology

No matter what the reason, there is no one perfect way to implement BYOD; if there were, certainly all school districts would be doing it. As such, this book is a compilation of BYOD experiences, lessons learned, and best-practice strategies gleaned from leading BYOD in my own district, assisting other school districts, and working with members within my professional learning network. This book is not meant to provide a prescribed method of designing and creating BYOD. Instead, it is designed to provide educators with ideas and strategies that may be helpful as they navigate the process of creating BYOD in their districts.





## A Framework for Using This Book

This book is structured with the administrator in mind. It is an easy-to-understand toolkit. It houses a number of documents to help organize the planning and decisions that are required to implement BYOD. In chapter 1, I define what BYOD is and what it is not. It helps districts answer the question, Why initiate BYOD?, and discusses many of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the program. The first chapter also helps educators determine the readiness level for a program in their district.

Once the question, Why initiate BYOD?, is answered, the information in chapter 2 offers educators eight steps to consider when planning an initiative. As with any new technology initiative, professional development must be an integral part of the implementation plan. In chapter 3, I provide you with several structural formats that may be considered for professional development. With time being a great concern for educators, several options suggesting when professional development may be offered are also provided. Chapter 4 follows with ideas for support systems that must be put in place in order to build capacity of school staff. I identify the need to meet staff members where they are with technology integration in their classrooms. Three types of *techucators* are identified in the chapter, along with specific strategies to help administrators support stakeholders during the BYOD implementation process. Chapter 5 presents ideas for integrating BYOD into the curriculum,

instruction, and assessment. Key points of consideration to enhance teaching and learning using BYOD are shared as well as specific strategies. Chapter 6 suggests steps to monitor the implementation process as well as the progress of the initiative once it is under way.

Following each chapter's reflection questions, there is a reproducible section called "Technology Target, Tool, Task, and Tweet." This section engages you with technology-related activities designed to increase instructional technology pedagogy and promote conversation surrounding topics related to BYOD.

-  **Target:** The technology target presents an instructional technology-related concept or skill.
-  **Tool:** The technology tool introduces a web-based tool that may be used to accomplish the technology target skill.
-  **Task:** The technology task utilizes the technology tool to practice implementing the technology target.
-  **Tweet:** The technology tweet provides an opportunity to extend the chapter topic conversation beyond the scope of the book by involving the Twitter nation.

To get the most out of this book, it is recommended that districts use the book in the order outlined. Doing so will provide an opportunity for committee members to independently read each chapter, process recommendations in small groups, and discuss recommendations in a large group. Finally, committee members will have an opportunity to participate in an activity that reinforces the concepts discussed in the chapter. Suggested steps for reading this book include:

1. Read the chapter.
2. Discuss the ideas and recommendations from each chapter in small groups.
3. Respond to the reflection questions at the end of each chapter, and in each group, offer participants five minutes to share their feelings about a topic in the chapter that they feel has important implications for group members' work. The group should take two minutes to respond to each member's comments before debriefing at the end of the meeting (see National School Reform Faculty [n.d.] for more team-meeting protocols).



4. Complete the reproducible activity in the respective chapter's technology target, tool, task, and tweet section.

*Bring Your Own Device: Engaging Students and Transforming Instruction* provides administrators with strategies and ideas to consider when implementing BYOD in their schools. I am hopeful that this book will serve as a resource for understanding all the pieces that go into planning and executing a successful BYOD. I am also hopeful that the program you create results in helping modern learners become more collaborative, productive, and creative and leads to an increase in their achievement inside and outside of the school's four walls.

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