Different Language, Different World: Bridging Gaps in Worlds Through Technology

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The experiences of immigrants who are still school age can be altered for the good with the use of technology. Technology can enable students to be more independent and have the feeling of inclusiveness within the school community. This is simply because technology can help with translation, can enable students to share their culture through a variety of means, and can also connect these students to the wider world. If students feel included and independent enough to keep up with academic work, although it is in a new language, they are more likely to succeed in the educational realm. Technology becomes a language in which the student becomes fluent in order to understand the English language and the colloquialisms which go hand in hand with the language.

The technology in a classroom for international students can provide translations as the lecture is happening. For example, handheld translators and online translators can allow students to access translation to their own language. International students can also easily teach their English-speaking classmates about their own native language through the translators. These translators can enable the students to become more independent and learn at rates similar to those of their English-speaking peers while tackling difficult textbook readings at home. Having the work in their own language allows for easier understanding of the lecture.

Staying in touch with their culture and sharing their culture is important to many international and immigrant students. Technology can help by enabling the students to share videos, pictures, and presentations with the students in their new schools. Also, as one elementary school demonstrated, technology enables the students to video chat live with schools in other countries. There is an example of this happening at Barker's Point Elementary School in Fredericton where a group of grade five students are in touch via Skype with a group of students in Africa. This communication can occur with students wanting to share their culture with students in their new school and also with students who want to experience what another school and culture is like.

By being independent and having the ability to share their culture with the students in their new school, immigrant students will start having a feeling of inclusiveness. The feeling of inclusiveness is important because often immigrant students feel unwelcome at their schools due to language, cultural, and racial barriers. Settling into a new country with different cultural norms, religions, and language can be difficult for anybody, but for a person still in school adjusting to the new community

is made even more difficult. Technology can ease this harshness by providing a quasi support system that includes the language they were raised with and also a connection to their culture. The support system allows the students to integrate into their new, while enabling them to merge both their Canadian and native cultures.

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