Choosing the Right
Technology
for your Classroom

When picking technology for your school, the number of choices can be dizzying. Tablets, computers, laptops, MacBooks, PC's, BYOD, iPads, Chromebooks... It can be difficult to figure out what the best technology for your classroom and school could be. So what should you choose?

Here are a few questions to ask before making a big purchase:

What is your budget?
If you have the resources, investing in high-quality laptops or iPads means that you get a warranty and good tech support. But both can be pricey. If your goal is to get a device in every student's hand, you may have to go with something less expensive like Chromebooks. Look at what funding you have available to you. **If you need help finding money to fund a technology purchase, check out our** <u>Funding Article</u> **for tips.**

Bring your own device (or BYOD) may appear to be a cheap option, but it can create a lot of headaches for schools that don't have plans to monitor usage or make sure students are using devices safely and responsibly.

How will students use the devices?
Will students be doing computer-based testing on the new devices? Will they be writing papers or blogging? Or will they be using them to do art projects? Different devices have different strengths, and are more useful for some groups.

For instance, elementary school students may be more comfortable with something intuitive that they can touch like a tablet. But high school students are very likely going to need a device with a keyboard so they can write papers and do research.

What are your goals?
What do you hope to gain from adding technology to the classroom? Schools that add devices without planning ahead probably won't make effective use of whatever they get. Think about how the devices will fit with your district's technology plan, and what you hope to gain from adding technology to your classroom.

How good is your Internet connection?
Most devices need a good Internet connection to access apps and programs. Others don't. If the Internet connection at your school isn't great, be careful about setting yourself up for a frustrating experience and running the risk of having what will end up being a bunch of expensive coasters in your classroom.

What programs would you like to use?

Not all programs work consistently across all platforms, so check to make sure your favorite programs work on the devices you're purchasing before you buy.

ExploreLearning Gizmos works on computers, Chromebooks and iPads through the browser. Reflex has an iPad app, and is easy to use on Chromebooks and computers.

Want ideas for using technology at your school? Check out our article on <u>Blended Learning</u> for suggestions.

ExploreLearning® develops online solutions to improve student learning in math and science. ExploreLearning currently has two products: Gizmos®, the world's largest library of interactive, online simulations for math and science in grades 3–12; and Reflex®, the most powerful solution available for math fact fluency development. Gizmos and Reflex bring research-proven instructional strategies to classrooms around the world. For more information about Gizmos, please visit www.explorelearning.com. For more information about Reflex, please visit www.reflexmath.com.