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Forever Changed:
Education Predictions for 2021

2020 packed a wallop unlike any other period in living memory. The pain is still with us — and will continue to be for a long time. But the start of this new year brings an opportunity for us to renew our hope and energy. How will that play out for K-12 education, especially in the area of technology? We turned to a number of education leaders to find out what they expect — or look forward to — in 2021. Here's what they told us.

Teachers Will Become Massive Social Media Influencers

Teachers will be subject-matter experts who other teachers feature in video mixtapes and that parents will follow to support their students. Expect teachers to go live in Twitch-style "going live" environments. What can we expect in video?

- Low-stakes feedback will be everyone's focus in live video. A quarter of live video classes will be gamified, and half of all time spent on live videos will be round-robin style check-ins.

- Recorded video will move onto the main stage. We're seeing that two-thirds of teacher video is recorded, which allows teachers to manage the one-to-many ratio.

- Video lessons will become serialized and broken down into predictable chunks. The maximum length student videos should be tracks by grade level: one minute for first graders, 12 minutes for seniors.

- Camera-off will be OK for students; audio-off will be OK for teachers. Teachers will learn that it's OK for students to have their cameras off. The goal is building a connection and getting them to engage in the lesson. Teachers will focus on going beyond speaking presence and creating lots of movement and visuals in their videos.

- The wall of text will come down. We'll see heavier use of images in videos for retention and accessibility. This is key for English Language Learners, special education students and kids with attention difficulties.

Data Privacy Concerns Will Draw Greater Interest

Alongside the herculean and mostly successful efforts to connect students and teachers in digital spaces during the pandemic, the past year has also brought stories of zoom bombing, proctoring and surveillance overreach, data breaches and inequitable student access to technology and its benefits. These events have shined a light on the privacy concerns related to educational data and technology use.

In 2021, we anticipate seeing administrators take additional measures to promote student data privacy, including greater attention to data governance and security measures across the kindergarten-to-college continuum. It is essential for these efforts to include actionable data privacy policies and practices that safeguard student data collection, storage, sharing and use and that ensure students have equitable access to the benefits of data and technology.

We also expect a greater interest by students and their families in understanding what data is collected about them, how their data is used, and what their privacy rights are related to that data collection and use. Schools and their third-party educational technology vendors will need to work to provide greater transparency and engender trust by clearly and regularly communicating when, how and for how long data are used. Moreover, schools and vendors should follow through on their promises to protect the data and information that students and families have entrusted to them.

2020 was a challenging year for education, but, if well-applied, the lessons learned can strengthen the protection of student data privacy as we move into 2021.

Sources:
https://thejournal.com/articles/2021/01/12/forever-changed-education-predictions-for-2021.aspx