

Reading 3

Skills:

- Details
- Scanning
- Main idea
- Analyzing cause-effect
- Vocabulary in context
- Understanding negative facts
- Inserting sentences in the text

Getting started: Where is technology most needed in a school?

AUTOMATED SCHOOLS



The bell rings, attendance is taken, homework is collected, and before your students are ready to learn, 10 minutes of class time have already been wasted. There are many aspects that decrease the amount of quality time that teachers have to work with their students. However, district administrators can do something about it. By automating classrooms and giving schools the resources they need, there will be a rapid return on investment, measured in both actual costs and improved student outcomes.

For instance, automated lighting controls have shown to reduce energy consumption in classrooms by 50%, lowering utility bills and adding an element of eco-friendliness to the schools. Technology has come so far that it is now possible for photo sensors to automatically adjust the illumination of a room based on natural light levels without disrupting the class. Furthermore, there is some research on the impact that good lighting can have on the learning environment. If an investment with so little cost can have even an incremental effect on student performance, it seems to be a good starting point for automating a classroom.

Another aspect where technology can **give teachers a hand** is attendance. Positive Attendance implies students being responsible for registering their attendance electronically. It comes with numerous benefits, like additional instructional time. By eliminating manual attendance processes, educators save five to ten minutes every day. Positive Attendance also allows schools to keep records on where students spend their time, and it can also play an important role in decision-making processes. Staff may notice that students spend a lot of time in the science lab but very little time in the library. Consequently, they may consider directing funds to the science lab over the library or using that money to turn the library into something more appealing to students.

Teachers should never feel they have limited options in the classroom because of procedural inefficiencies. A modern student information system should provide an automated notification workflow for discipline, attendance, and grades that includes the teacher, central office, and parents. Such a workflow brings multiple benefits. Firstly, the hours spent writing emails, repeating details, and following up on certain issues can be reinvested in instruction and communication with students. Secondly, information is now transmitted as it is happening, eliminating gaps and delays. Now, when teachers enter a grade or an incident record, they know all parties are being informed with one click, and all the documentation will be made automatically available to those who need access to it.

Automated classrooms have evolved to simplify technology for even the most technophobic of teachers. By automating a classroom's hardware via an intuitive interface, you can guarantee that teachers will use their high-tech tools more often and will bring more fun to the classroom. This advanced integration of physical resources will also reduce the training teachers need and keep IT teams from losing time in unnecessary calls.

[A] During an emergency, there is no time to waste. [B] Such systems should imply an integrated and easily accessible solution. With the press of a single button from any authorized location, classroom doors can be secured, emergency messaging systems can be activated, and a public announcement can be released. [C] Every second counts when disaster strikes, and if there is one situation that calls for automation as a top priority, this should be it. [D] Instead of worrying about procedures and checklists, an automated security system allows educators to focus on keeping themselves and their students safe in the face of adversity.

The phrase “automated classroom” can be intimidating, but it is important to say that the purpose of automation is not to replace teachers with robots. It is meant **solely** to support teachers and students in pursuit of a safer and more productive learning environment. You will find that, when automation technology is implemented correctly, costs are reduced by tangible returns in instructional time, administrative efficiency, and student outcomes.

**Adapted from <https://www.skyward.com/discover/blog/skyward-blogs/skyward-executive-blog/february-2015/can-automated-classrooms-contribute-to-your-district>*

Answer the following questions:

1. According to paragraph 1, what is something that makes teachers and students lose time?
 - a. Lack of resources
 - b. District administrators
 - c. Lack of qualified teachers in a school
 - d. Checking which students are in the classroom

2. According to paragraph 2, which of the following is NOT a benefit of automated lighting controls?
 - a. Reducing costs
 - b. Doing more research
 - c. Having an eco-friendly system
 - d. Students doing better at school

3. The phrase **give a hand** in paragraph 3 is closer in meaning to
 - a. help
 - b. beat
 - c. greet
 - d. Say hello

4. Which is a benefit of positive attendance?
 - a. Educators could save people's lives.
 - b. Students can spend more time in the laboratories.
 - c. Educators can decide how to invest their budget.
 - d. Students could make better decisions.

5. According to paragraph 4, what is the cause of teachers saving more time?
 - a. A student information system
 - b. Imposing more discipline
 - c. A modern central office
 - d. Communicating with students

6. What is the main idea of Paragraph 5?
 - a. Teachers who are afraid of using technology must use intuitive software.
 - b. IT professionals have to train teachers to teach them how to automate a classroom.
 - c. Teachers lose a lot of time calling people while they are teaching their classes.
 - d. Tools that are easy to use can bring great benefits to teachers and students.

7. Look at the squares [] in paragraph 6. Then, choose the square where this sentence can be inserted: **Automated school security systems eliminate manual procedures and can save lives.**
 - a. A
 - b. B
 - c. C
 - d. D

8. The word **solely** in paragraph 7 is closer in meaning to
 - a. alone
 - b. single
 - c. only
 - d. flat

What do you think?

Should schools worry more about students' safety and implement technological tools for emergencies?