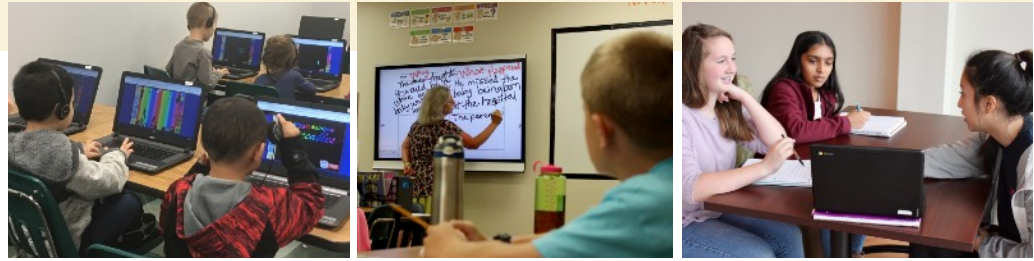




# THE ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Philosophy, Pedagogy, and Perspectives 4.29.19



Welcome to our fiftieth edition of "The Academic Journal," a bimonthly bulletin in which you can read about MCA's educational philosophy, instructional methodology, and the various viewpoints and positions of our faculty, staff, students, and families.

## What Guides Technology at MCA?

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES** in a classical liberal arts education play a helpful, supporting role when used wisely. When used thoughtlessly or carelessly, they can overtly or subtly undermine the end goal of education: the wise citizen with upright character. Whether used by teachers or students, digital technologies must be employed as a means toward that end, never as ends in themselves. At MCA, we value digital technologies primarily as a means of production of high quality products and presentations with consumption of information playing a lesser role. As new technologies arise, each must be evaluated to determine whether or not the technology can and should be used as a means of moving toward the fulfillment of MCA's vision, avoiding the impulse to adopt the latest just because it is the latest. Key questions to ask include: 1) How does a particular use of technology promote human flourishing? 2) Does a particular use of technology enslave or liberate the user? And 3) How does it affect the recipient?

Because education is foremost a relational enterprise, the primary mode of instruction in the classroom must always involve meaningful, face-to face, human interactions. We must guard against these interactions being supplanted by an overuse of technology, which can have negative effects on vision, emotional development, language development, concept development, and social skills. We must ask, "What is screen time replacing?" then, gauge the tradeoffs. The hearts and minds of students are to be shaped through actual, human interactions with their teachers and classmates rather than through a two-dimensional screen attempting to portray reality.

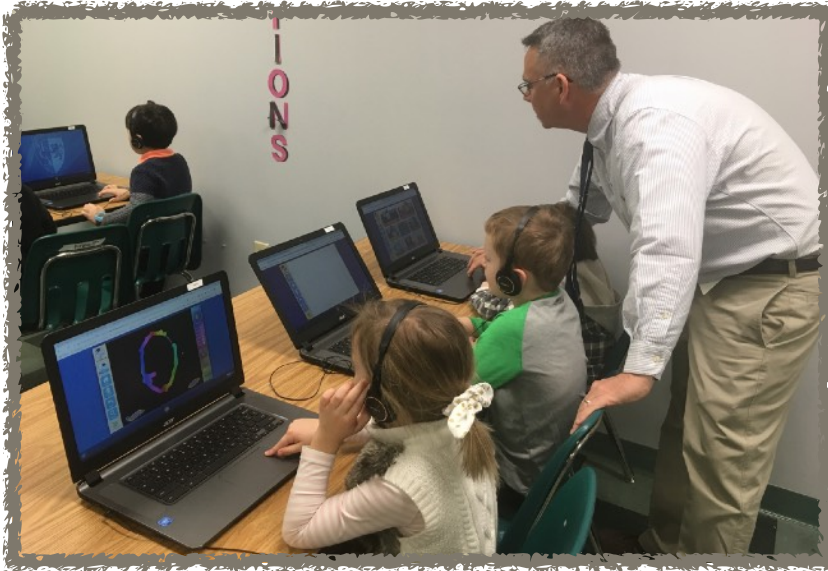
Technology use is, first of all, a skill that leads to access of content and to the production of content. In the classical model, both skills and content are subservient to ideas because in matters of order the mind is foremost. What one knows and loves drives what one does and produces. Therefore, technological skills should occupy their proper place in learning. As students move through the grade levels, instruction in technology develops hierarchically on two fronts: skills and ethics.

MCA addresses those fundamental skills that require direct instruction, such as the special functions of an application and those skills that require practice, such as keyboarding. Furthermore, MCA introduces skills at an age appropriate to a child's physical and mental



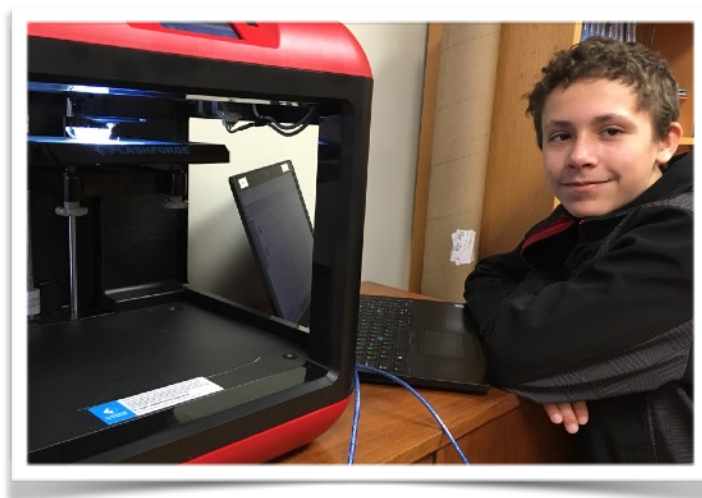
development. The school acknowledges that some aspects of technology are casually learned or intuitive, for example, a child learning to scroll by watching parents. The school leaves such skills to natural exploration and home instruction.

MCA teaches ethics concerning the use of digital technologies, including issues of honesty, confidentiality, credibility, and respect, including respect for intellectual property rights and social media, as well as love for the individual and respect for the common good, etc.. Since digital technology has an inherent bias in its format that impacts the recipient beyond mere content, as do other forms of communication, it is also necessary that users are mindful of the effects of particular digital formats. Since digital technologies also deliver content, and accessing that content involves maturity in making ethical decisions, instruction and guidance in making those ethical decisions occurs prior to open access.



The onus of responsibility in the use of digital technologies rests primarily on the classroom teacher. As teachers plan instruction and accompanying activities, it is incumbent upon them to determine the best means of reaching the desired end without defaulting to the ease of using technology. Whether or not a technology moves students toward the desired end must be carefully evaluated in every situation.

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Digital technologies open the world to our students in a way previously thought impossible. These technologies offer a world of opportunity to our students, while also offering a world of potential evil. It is our task to help them navigate these waters and to leverage digital technologies as a means to human flourishing. As we have to teach with the end in mind, the use of technology should extend rather than supplant human endeavor. We must be vigilant to ensure that digital technologies support an education of virtue. Ultimately, we ask *Does this technology or use of this technology lead to truth, goodness, and beauty?*