In the 21st century, technology is constantly changing and growing, and thus, so must our curriculum and teaching practices. Students' lives outside of the classroom are also changing, and as teachers we must try to accommodate this technologically-driven world by making the way students live and how they learn more compatible. Technology can absolutely make a difference in a 21st century education. Instead of me just lecturing and trying to impart my knowledge via notes or worksheets, I can instead use technology to facilitate this knowledge.

Applications like Web 2.0 and so many other apps/web-based approaches to learning can allow students to interact with what I want them to be learning more fully than I can as one person with limited knowledge. Instead of lecturing on the Russian Revolution as background for Animal Farm while standing in front of the class, I could make a more engaging and creative presentation or have the students make one themselves. Instead of writing annotations on a line sheet of paper for The Catcher in the Rye, the students could create a blog and do the annotations online. We use the idea of "show, don't tell" when talking about students' writing, and I like how in web-based apps, that idea can transcend initial ways of approaching student writing and learning in English. Many students learn much better by seeing something than simply hearing it. My class and probably other English classes can stand to become a bit more visual. We live, in English, in a world of words, but making these words come alive is the part we can absolutely stand to change. I like the idea of podcasts used to demonstrate knowledge and then posting to a classroom blog to share knowledge with one another. I think technology is all about sharing, and even though I may have always liked to have students collaborate in my classroom, this is an even better way to have them interact and share with one another.

Although I am often made aware of different technology practices, I have never once been made to incorporate these tools of learning by our administration. I still try to do so, but it has never been really enforced. In this global economy, using new forms of technology can help change the way students learn. Whether they create a video or a podcast or a blog, these tools can be useful in other realms of their lives, and not just within the four walls of the classroom. In thinking about my role as a grad student of an educational technology program, I started to think about so many new ways I am now well versed in integrating technology into the classroom. I would never have even known what Class Dojo, Edmodo, Popplet, Backchanneling or Splashtop were if I hadn't been exposed to these. These have been exciting classes because they offer the chance to think about the ways we impart knowledge and how students learn. Students these days have been brought up in a much different world. Technology is their lives, and we must at least try to keep up or we could end up falling short of where we need to be as teachers.

Increasing my skill in technology has been important when I then try to increase theirs. Sure students are constantly texting, on facebook, tweeting,   or Instagramming, but I'm very well aware of the fact some do not even know how to change the margins in a word doc, or add a row in Excel. Exposing students to more technology by changing my teaching practices and reevaluating our curriculum will be integral to keeping things in my classroom relevant to their changing lives. As my school, Berkley High School, tries to up the amount of technology used in the classroom, I will definitely have to take another look at my role as a teacher and reexamine what learning looks like or at least what it can look like, and the valuable information and learning I have gained from my masters courses will help me to do that. These classes have given me the tools I need to begin taking risks in the classroom with the technological tools that are most beneficial. I can try to integrate at least one into each unit of study while still addressing core concepts, and then reflect on if students were able to more fully engage in the material.