

Day in the Life: Denver

What would a day in the life of a Denver student look like if we took full advantage of the possibilities of the new technologies for teaching and learning? The text and video below follow some students through such a day.

TO READ (TEXT VERSION)

Let Alex and Maya, two Denver students, describe a day in their lives as they'd like them to be.

Connections

Alex: Connections make the world work. And learning is all about making connections that are meaningful to me. More than ever before, technology can personalize my education, and help me make those connections.

Maya: How will we build these connections, and the potential for making new ones? What will my learning in a connected Denver Public Schools look like?

Alex: My name is Alex. I'm 10 years old and in 5th grade. My mom drops me off at school on her way to work. While I eat breakfast, I look at Student Portal. I can see my schedule for the day and what I'll be working on in each of my classes.

Connecting activity

Maya: I'm Maya. I'm 15, in 11th grade but I'm taking AP Calculus and a college course, too. Before I even leave for school in the morning, I check in using the student portal. I start choosing from my day's suggested lessons and activities. My deadlines are all laid out for me. And I can tell my advisor that I'll drop by her office when I get to school.

Connecting concepts

Alex: In Math, we start with adding and subtracting fractions with different denominators. My favorite part is that I get to choose how I show what I am learning. Our teacher shows some of us on the interactive whiteboard, while a few of us already know how. We follow along on our tablets, or tap on some of the links for extra help. It is easy to learn more when everything is just a tap away.

Connecting students

Alex: We break into small groups. Ms. Foster knows who goes together because of the information she gets from her computer. The groups change all the time, based on what we need. But, we can get help from other groups or from Ms. Foster, just by asking a question from our tablet.

Connecting to the world

Maya: In the economics unit that I selected, we're working on a project with some students in Lima, Peru, studying the path of copper from the mines in Peru to its use here in the United States. We have meetings over video chat. We're collecting information and creating a script together that will eventually turn into a short documentary video. And we're able to do this as a group, even though we're 4000 miles away from each other.



Connecting to the Earth

Alex: We have a school garden that provides some of the vegetables for our cafeteria. It's my job to track these vegetables in our online spreadsheet. How many we harvest, how many are eaten, how much is thrown away. The information automatically goes to some high school students who are collecting this information from schools all over town. Then we're showing how growing our own food compares to schools where they buy all of it.

Connecting to nature

Maya: School is the hub for my learning, but it's not the only place I learn. No matter where I am, I can check in on the resources that my teachers provided, stay in touch with my teachers, or connect to my friends for help. And I can help them too.

Connecting to community

Maya: My internship is at water policy organization this semester. I got to go out and do



testing of ground water, I helped the engineers collate and present the data. My work counted towards mastery of many state standards and credit in chemistry and my journalism class.

Connecting language

Alex: When I moved to the U.S., I didn't speak English. I'm still not great at writing it. But, I can translate or look things up on my tablet when I need to. Ms. Santistevan has us publish our best pieces on the class site. When I know others can see my work, it makes me try really hard. Ms. Santistevan says that hard work has shown in my class projects and in my test scores.

Connecting school with the world

Maya: My Mandarin class is all online. I access the lessons, join conversation groups, and record and turn in all my work online. This lets me take the class when I want, so I can fit in things like the internship. And, it lets us pick some classes that only two or three of us might have taken.

Connecting body and mind

Alex: I don't spend the whole day doing school work. After school, I have soccer. I'm sure the adults think we're learning something, but we all just like to have fun together.

Connecting families with school

Alex (with his mom at a dinner table, looking at his tablet, working on a physical map showing pre-revolutionary America.): When my mom and I both get home, she can help me with

my homework. She can see everything that is due, and get links to directions that show her how to help me. I am proud of my portfolio and she can see my work.



Maya (with her dad video chatting with her mom): My mom travels for work a lot. It's pretty easy for her to stay in touch with dad and me.

Mom (in hotel room chatting with Maya and dad, checking parent portal.): I set up alerts and send mom updates so she can stay in touch with my schoolwork, too. She gets to see all the same cool things dad and I can see, including how I'm doing. She gets to hear from my teachers and she gets to stay involved with my life.

Connecting learning to everything

Maya: It's not quite as good as having her here all the time, but it's not bad. It's really good to feel connected.