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Secondary Schools: Five Years Fast Forward

Ben dashed out of the house, running down his road knowing he would barely 'scan' in time. He felt light as an arrow running without his school backpack. This year the school had entered the Schools of the Future program and all work was done without paper. Both he and his parents could go online and see what homework he had, when it was due and what mark he got on previous homework. For school he only had to wear his blazer with his school ID card.

Arriving at the entrance Ben scanned his fingerprint as he entered and then scanned again at his first class and the computer reminded him what his first lesson was and that he had homework due tomorrow. He settled in at his pod group and opened his notebook; school was wireless and they never had to worry about the computers being down. BT had gone through an upgrade throughout the UK and Ben's school had wifi throughout and wireless connections that were super fast. There was access to so much - well, not everything. High tech meant teachers and the school blocked content. Having notebooks and laptops meant that the school targeted a paperless environment. It was easier for students, is what Ben thought. He logged on to do all his class work and his homework. This meant he never worried about crumpling paper or losing his homework.

His first class, maths, was grouped in pods and each of them worked independently. The teacher walked around the classroom, helping if needed. And the computer could tell if the student was falling behind and inform the teacher. Some of the students had English as a second language and with their notepad they could get help in their own language if they needed.

His next lesson was music and they were doing work making songs with drums, guitars, pianos and more all with just using one keyboard. Today there was a replacement teacher for music and normally this meant that everyone would sit by their friends and talk all lesson and not get much work done. Now, due to new technology the computer mouse had a little window that could read your finger print and tell the teacher if you were in the wrong seat. Replacement teachers could then control the class better. It also made things a lot easier like how you didn't have to remember a user name or password to log on and when you used the computers after school in the library and it recommended books for your age and said what the popular book is for your year and gender. It also restricts you from checking out books that are not for your age.

Mr. Gotke walked past Susan and asked for her ID card. I want to top up your points Susan. Your work last week was superb. Ten points towards the school shop. "Sorry sir" said Ben "what was that?" "Oh right I forget you weren't here when I explained it to the class. You get points for doing good homework; eating healthy, participating in school clubs, but lose points for being late or skipping homework. For example you got

points for your homework, but then lost them when you were late yesterday morning. Then you can use the points to buy items like our current star prize the iPod touch or smaller prizes like CDs and school supplies.”

Ben couldn't wait till lunch. On the weekend he ordered bacon and pasta from the school website. They had the entire week's choice of meals online. Then each day at school, all he had to do was go up to the food window and scan his thumb and the window would open and give him his lunch. This way he didn't have to waste his time in a lunch queue and the best thing was if he forgot to order the computer would look at what he orders most and give him that. He and most of his friends got water with their main meal so they could earn points towards the school shop. The Healthy Eating Scheme was worth doing when points were awarded.

Once Ben had finished classes he went to his new after school club. Today was Monday so he had baseball. The school was trying to do more vast varieties of sports from around the world. So now there was baseball along with Indian dance, Brazilian soccer and Korean taekwondo.

Later that week he had signed up to Mexican food cooking, movie making, song making and some of his friends signed up for game designing, and paper Mache classes.

After school there was online homework help with step by step tutorials, for every piece of homework. The computer had a camera so it could see the child's work and say if the student was on track.

Looking back Ben thought about how much technology had improved his school and had made things quicker, easier and more fun. Ben still counted the minutes till home time.

