



Focus on Technology Integration or Focus on Pedagogy Using Technology as a Powerful Tool for Transformative Classrooms?

By Dr. Leah Christman

In fall of 2012, Southern Lehigh High School, in Center Valley, PA finally implemented 1:1 computing, after many years of preparation. Shortly thereafter, we launched **Project BLUE: Bridging Learning through a Ubiquitous digital learning Environment** as a spin-off of being accepted as one of the first Project Red Signature Districts. In addition to implementing 1:1 through a systems approach as recommended by the research, we knew that there was a need to measure our work. We wanted to better understand the progress we were making in transforming our high school to a 21st-century learning environment. As part of that study, I chose the focus of my dissertation- *Ubiquitous Computing: Systemic Transformation to 21st Century Teaching and Learning* (<http://bit.ly/2dpE13H>).

It was obvious that we not only needed to measure when and where technology was being integrated into our classrooms, but also **how** the technology was being used. Our goal was to transform teaching and learning to a more student- centered, authentic, and problem-based learning model as opposed to a traditional teacher-led classroom.

Today we continue to see amazing results in this transformation as students truly embrace and lead their own learning. So how do you do this difficult work? A systems approach is vital to ensure that everything is in place: the vision, leadership at all levels, professional development and curricular development, goal setting and expectations, community support, hardware, software, network capabilities, and measurement leading to continuous improvement.

A critical part of the professional development is personalization and choice based upon the needs of each educator. We provided time for teachers to collaborate and share best practices by changing our traditional forty minute high school bell schedule to an A/B block schedule. This provided more time for hands-on learning, in addition to allowing common planning time for teachers. Our highly effective technology coach is available to research, consult, and push in to classes for co-teaching in order to support teachers and model strategies that are effective with students. Our district Technology Council, comprised of our stakeholder groups with representation from a range of abilities and content areas, helps troubleshoot and bring forth new ideas and trainings. We've adopted a common language and embraced the SAMR model, by Ruben Puentedura to help everyone district-wide understand the vision. We continue to set annual goals for all buildings and measure student-centered learning and the implementation of SAMR with walk-through observations and data collection directly from students, educators and parents through the Clarity survey provided by BrightBytes. Teachers are encouraged as leaders of the work and are encouraged to share and collaborate on new ways to implement technology through workshops, during faculty meetings and common planning/sharing blocks, and by developing on-line workshops and tutorials for their peers.

Since our initial 1:1 roll out at the high school in 2012 we have now established a 1:1 environment district-wide. We utilize iPads in grades K to 2, Chromebooks in grades 3 to 6, and MacBook Air laptops in grades 7 through 12. We have implemented the Project Red Success Factors throughout the district. We also learned the Apple Distinguished Program recognition for the past four years. You can find more details in the story of our journey by downloading two Apple iBooks- **Educating Today's Learners for Tomorrow's**

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Opportunities, and more recently, **Empowering Today's Learners for Tomorrow's Opportunities**. Check out the books and hear directly from our teachers about the results they are seeing by utilizing new pedagogy that uses technology to transform teaching and learning.

