



Editorial: Turning to Technology

by Nicole Adrian

Adults are continually using new forms of technology to make their lives easier and more streamlined, and to try new ways of doing things. Take a smart phone, for example: Before they became popular, people had to carry around a cell phone, camera, date book, pen and pad of paper, and who knows what else.

Now, a small piece of technology provides all of those functions and many more. Many people have applications on their smart phones, allowing them to even explore thinking and mind games, like Sudoku and Scrabble.

It only seems fair—and makes sense—that these new technological inventions have expanded to the classroom. While students may not be using smart phones in English class to learn spelling words through games of Scrabble, more and more teachers and administrators are turning to new forms of technology to reach students and teach them through new concepts.

One such school is the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo, NY. Seeing students struggle through lesson plans, tests and assessments, teachers and administrators created a new cyclical, data-driven process. eDoctrina began as a tool to provide educators with formative assessment data and later evolved into software that helps teachers and district personnel with tasks such as unit and lesson planning, and standards prioritization. Using eDoctrina has helped students increase test scores and gain confidence.

Throughout Jenks Public Schools in Jenks, OK, the district uses two strategic objectives to look toward its technological future: increasing opportunities for students to use 21st century learning tools and facilitating access to data to make informed decisions. The article from Jenks' director of curriculum and instruction outlines how the district, month by month, defined the district's technology curriculum vision. The article is a good resource for teachers and administrators looking to create and implement their own plan and vision.

Lastly, Carol A. Brown, an associate professor at East Carolina University, writes about an event—the International Student Media Festival (ISMF)—that helps enhance student learning. ISMF provides a constructivist learning environment for students, which leads to an authentic learning environment. Additionally, with the media projects they are involved on, students learn systematic processes and valuable lessons in teamwork.

These articles provide just a sampling of the ways technology is being integrated into the classroom and exposing students to new ways of thinking and doing things. There are, of course, many other ways students, teachers and administrators are using technology in the classroom. These programs and projects mark just the beginning, and the end is nowhere in sight.