

The Parallel of Technology & Curriculum

Schools are under increasing pressure to implement the Common Core Standards and to develop students' career and college readiness skills. One way to achieve these goals is through the effective integration of technology in instruction which requires extensive teacher training and professional development. In fact, the 2011 Horizon Report on the outlook for education technology identifies digital literacy among teachers as the number one challenge faced by education.

Methacton School District, located in a suburb of Philadelphia in southeastern Pennsylvania, is no different. The district is made up of just over 400 staff and more than 5,000 students. Atomic Learning offers a comprehensive professional development solution for which Methacton uses to address this challenge.

"After evaluating a district-wide needs assessment of staff members, Methacton School District's Professional Development Committee identified two major needs: differentiated technology training and hands-on time to explore the technology," Brooke Mulartrick, an Instructional Technology Specialist at Methacton School District stated. Atomic Learning's complete solution meets these needs.

The Atomic Learning solution offers how-to support for the Methacton staff—technology training that they are able to do at their own pace, on their own time—with the resource being available 24/7. And, once the teachers grasp how the technology works, then can reflect on how they can include those practices in their teaching. The Atomic Learning library of workshops and tech integration projects gives the teachers the tools they need for seamless classroom technology integration.

Methacton started by developing a precise plan for Atomic Learning implementation for its first year which included support for the transitions from Outlook 2003 to 2010 and Microsoft Office 2003 to 2010. Next, Methacton planned to expose staff, parents and students to Atomic Learning for school and personal use to support differentiated learning. And, the last objective during this first year of implementation will be to survey stakeholders and evaluate the need for a custom-content library, another feature the Atomic Learning solution offers.

A recent research study proved to show that the Methacton differentiation in technology instruction situation was quite common. In fact, when SEG

Problem:

Lack of differentiation in technology instruction for educators

Solution:

Cost-effective solution that empowers educators to effectively utilize technology to impact student achievement

Outcome:

Increased alignment of technology and curriculum resulting in increased teacher support and student engagement



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Measurement conducted a year-long, multi-site study with approximately 1,000 6th, 7th and 8th grade teachers and students in 42 classrooms to evaluate the impact of the Atomic Learning professional development solution on student achievement, they found the results quite intriguing.

The goal of this study was to evaluate the impact of Atomic Learning's technology integration training on student learning. The results show that students in classes whose teachers use Atomic Learning learn significantly more than students in classes whose teachers do not use Atomic Learning.

Students in classes with teachers who were Atomic Learning users showed about a year more of growth in Language Arts and in Mathematics than students in classes with teachers that did not use Atomic Learning. The Atomic Learning-trained teachers made substantial use of technology in the delivery of instruction, and provided assignments and projects that required students to integrate technology into their work.

It's nearly impossible to miss the link between 21st century skills and student success. Educators, such as those at Methacton, recognize that these skills are important, but struggle to successfully integrate them into the existing curriculum. From professional development resources on key 21st century themes and concepts to classroom integration, Atomic Learning use assures that Methacton's teachers, and ultimately students, are 21st century-ready. The Methacton staff has the tools and resources available from Atomic Learning to further their professional development and transform their classrooms.

"We know that training teachers on technology just for technology's sake isn't going to impact student achievement," Mulartrick said. "Intentionally providing PD that aligns existing curriculum with technology already available in our district is the key to truly building student success."

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