



Using Technology to Support Student Success

William M. Habermehl, Orange County Superintendent of Schools

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Integrating technology into core curriculum enhances learning by helping students acquire the skills they need to thrive in a complex, highly technological world. Incorporating technology in classroom instruction deepens learning through problem solving, active engagement, and team participation. Technology integrated project-based learning allows students to be intellectually challenged while providing them with a realistic experience of modern working environments. An added bonus is that using technology makes teaching and learning both meaningful and fun.

For the past ten years, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) has created an opportunity to highlight the innovative, replicable ways teachers integrate technology in the classroom, and to share the successes students achieve on a regular basis. The best student curriculum technology integration projects within Orange County schools are chosen to participate in the OCDE sponsored, Student Technology Showcase (STS), an anticipated component of the Orange County Computer Using Educators (OC CUE) Technology Festival and the statewide CUE Conference in Palm Springs, California. The Student Technology Showcase serves to inform parents, teachers, administrators, legislators, and higher education representatives about curriculum-based student technology projects being undertaken in public schools in Orange County.

To start the process, teachers complete an online application describing their student project, technology's role, and how teaching and student learning have changed as a result of the technology tools used in their classrooms. A volunteer review team made up of teachers, district technology coordinators, business/non-profit leaders, and OCDE staff read and rate each application and decide which projects merit a site visit. The site visits provide a hands-on opportunity for students to describe and demonstrate how they are using technology to learn specific content areas and how technology has been integrated into the learning process. The review team then selects the most innovative classrooms to present at the local and state level.

Another aspect of OCDE's STS process is the "dress rehearsal" held prior to the Showcase. This provides students the initial opportunity to present their projects in a science fair format to an audience of adults, and it gives the review team a final chance to select the projects that will represent Orange County at the statewide STS. In 2012, teams have an additional opportunity to be selected for the STS at the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) conference being held in San Diego in June.

This year, projects include the use of iPods and iPads to increase reading fluency and comprehension and to improve math, science, and other skills; Story Kit, an application that incorporates pictures, text and sound; blogs; video broadcasts and much more.

For more information about the Student Technology Showcase, visit <http://www.k12hsn.org/resources/showcase/gallery/index.php/ocde/>.