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Trends in Digital Learning:
Empowering Innovative Classroom Models for Learning

"Innovating is a process, not an event."

from Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools by Michael B. Horn and Heather Staker

INTRODUCTION

While digital tools have long held the promise of disrupting traditional education, for too long the emphasis has been on finding a "silver bullet" device or product that can instantly transform the learning process in the classroom. As emphasized by Horn and Staker in their latest book, *Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools*, there is a greater understanding today amongst educators and policymakers alike that sustainable innovation in education is often the result of a sophisticated and complex process empowering a wide range of new innovative classroom models. In this enlightened view, the silver bullet is not a device or product, but rather a strategic planning process undertaken by schools and districts that marries desired student outcomes with the strategic use of targeted digital tools, content and resources to enable these new innovative learning environments that benefit both students and teachers. In this year's Trends in Digital

Learning report, we examine both components of this marriage – the desired student achievements and the strategic use of digital tools, content and resources – to understand from the perspective of the students, teachers and administrators on the front lines the opportunities and challenges associated with empowering new innovative classroom models.

With respect to the desired student achievement, education leaders have a heightened sense of urgency today to close the achievement gap and at the same time, ensure that all of their students are well prepared to compete and contribute to the global economy with appropriate skills. What district leaders identify as the type of challenges that may "wake them up in the middle of night" is a good litmus test for assessing the relative ranking of various administrator issues. **From the Speak Up 2014 data findings, 48% of district leaders noted that closing the achievement**

gap, the difference in performance between their high achieving and low achieving students, was a serious challenge. Three years earlier in 2011, only one-third of district administrators identified that same issue as a "wake up issue." While some may credit the introduction of new state standards around college and career preparation as the impetus for this 37% increase in just three years, parents' views on their children's future also are a contributing factor. A majority of parents of school-aged children (56%) representing urban, rural and suburban communities equally noted that their number one concern for their child's future is that their child may not be learning the right skills at school to be successful in this new world economy and society. Parental concerns combined with their interest in more personalized learning opportunities that address their child's unique educational needs definitely constitute additional wake-up issues for today's administrators.

The national discourse on the necessity for all students to develop college, career and citizen ready skills has changed not only the curriculum standards in most classrooms, but also educators' perspectives on the potential of technology as a significant asset in that process of skill preparation. **From the Speak Up 2014 data, more than 9 out of 10 administrators (school site principals – 93%, district administrators – 91%) say that the effective use of technology within instruction is important for achieving their school or district's core mission of education and preparation of students.** Parents' views closely parallel the administrators with 84% of parents indicating that they see school technology use as a value-add for their child's learning. Additionally, parents explicitly connect the dots between digital learning in school and their child's preparation for future success. Over three-quarters of parents (78%) say that the best way for their child to develop the college, career and citizen ready skills they will need for future success is to use technology on a regular basis within his or her daily classes at school.

In addition to the heightened urgency around the achievement gap, education leaders today recognize that the instructional practices which surround digital tools usage in the classroom is the key to realizing the long mentioned potential benefits of technology as a disruptive agent. The role of the teacher within the innovative classroom models is again rightfully at the center of the story. Teachers' views on how digital resources enable and sustain new learning environments are a critical finding in this year's trends report. **For example, a majority of teachers who have implemented a blended learning model within their classroom say that the technology that empowers that learning modality also helps their students develop enhanced critical thinking and problem solving skills.** In this way, the technology

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both services the innovative learning environment as well as provides students with tools to develop future ready skills. The students endorse this symbiotic relationship as well. Two-thirds of middle school students (64%) agree that effective technology use increases their interest in what they are learning at school and they like the idea of a blended learning classroom format where they have some control over the time, place, path and or pace of their learning with online curriculum or other digital resources.

Given the sense of urgency to transform learning environments and the focus on the learning process, rather than the digital tools themselves, education leaders are moving beyond the simple calculus of test scores to measure the impact of technology and relying more on the intangibles associated with effective classroom instruction. School principals say they evaluate the impact of digital learning by:

› assessing student engagement in learning when using digital tools (71%)

› observing classroom interactions and lessons to determine authentic teacher buy-in with digital learning (58%)

› determining the extent to which students are developing college/career ready skills (45%)

Following the administrators' lead, this year's digital learning report focuses on how various digital learning trends are empowering educators and parents to create more innovative learning environments for today's students. Specifically, we examine the use of digital content, tools and resources in the innovative classroom and impact of those learning experiences on students' engagement and development of critical college and career ready skills. Additional sidebars point to important emerging trends around mobile learning, virtual learning environments for students, flipped classroom models and the continued growth in innovative models for teacher professional development. Key findings from the report include:

› 45% of district administrators say their implementation of blended learning is already achieving positive results

› Three-quarters of principals attribute increased student engagement in learning to the effective use of digital content in their blended learning classrooms

› Teachers who have implemented blended learning are more likely than teachers in traditional classrooms to use online textbooks, games, animations and other digital content within instruction

› Librarians and media specialists are providing first responder support to students and teachers to support their use of digital tools and resources in blended, flipped and virtual classrooms

› 52% of teachers in blended classrooms say that their students are developing collaboration skills as a result of using technology within learning; 61% of their students agree!

Each year since 2003, Project Tomorrow®, a global education nonprofit organization, facilitates the annual Speak Up National Research Project and, as part of this initiative, tracks the growing student, educator, and parent interest in digital learning, as well as how our nation's schools and districts are addressing that interest with innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom. Since 2007, Project Tomorrow has collaborated with Blackboard Inc. to create a series of annual reports that focus on the year-to-year trends in the use of digital learning tools to change the classroom learning paradigm through an in-depth analysis of the latest Speak Up national findings. In this latest update report, we examine the trends from our analysis of the Speak Up data collected in fall 2014. More than 521,000 K-12 students, parents, educators, and community members participated in Speak Up 2014, and the findings of how teachers and administrators are empowering innovation with digital tools, content and resources is the focus for this year's trends report.

Driving New Innovations in Learning Environments
To address the new challenges facing schools and districts today, education leaders are exploring a wide range of digital approaches to empower innovative learning environments. The speed in which they are adopting these new innovative approaches underscores their urgent need to find solutions that produce increased student engagement, teacher buy-in and new outcomes. When asked to identify the types of digital initiatives that were already yielding positive results in their schools and districts, administrators noted a diverse set of solutions. Most notable in this list (see Table 1) is the dramatic change in adoption rates from 2013 to 2014. For example, while 28% of district administrators said they were seeing positive results from their schools' use of online textbooks in 2013, the number of administrators with a similar perspective jumped 82% in the 2014 findings. Today, 51% of district administrators herald the use of digital textbooks as having a positive impact on student achievement.

TABLE 1:

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOLS WITH POSITIVE RESULTS

Digital Solutions	District Administrators' 2013 Views	2014 Views	2013 to 2014 % Change
Use of digital content in the classroom	42%	61%	+ 45%
Use of digital textbooks rather than print textbooks	28%	51%	+ 82%
Mobile learning through the use of tablets or other devices	40%	58%	+41%
Online classes for students	26%	47%	+81%
Online professional development for teachers	26%	57%	+119%

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Virtual Learning Trends – Speak Up 2014 Fast Facts

› Administrators are expanding the audiences for fully online classes beyond the traditional students who need credit recovery. New audiences include gifted students (59%), homebound students (58%) and at-risk students (56%). Principals see virtual learning as the means to address key student outcomes metrics including how to increase graduation rates (34%) and increase student participation in Advanced Placement courses (24%).

› Almost three-quarters of technology leaders (73%) say that their school or district is now offering online courses for their students. Top subjects offered: Math, Social Studies/History, English Language Arts, Science and World Languages.

› Parents and district administrators are on the same page regarding the value of a virtual learning experience as part of a students' preparation for college and career success. When asked if taking a virtual class should be a requirement for high school graduation, 50% of the parents and 59% of the district administrators endorsed this idea. While only one-third of high school students liked this idea, 55% of students in virtual schools agreed that this should be a requirement for all students, underscoring the value of that.

› Approximately one in four technology leaders say that evaluating the quality of online curriculum or courses is a significant challenge. What are important quality markers in online course content? Per the tech leaders, the winner hands down is ease of use by teachers and students (75%) followed closely by alignment to content standards (70%) and then, student achievement results after taking the online course (48%).

Additionally, 45% of district administrators specifically called out blended learning classroom models as an innovative digital approach that was already producing positive results within their schools. As discussed in our national report on the Speak Up 2014 findings, *Digital Learning 24/7: Understanding Technology-Enhanced Learning in the Lives of Today's Students*, there are many interpretations of what constitutes blended learning today. For purposes of the Speak Up research, we leverage the landmark work of iNACOL and the Christensen Institute to identify the core components of blended learning that differentiate this innovative approach from the occasional use of technology in the classroom or a fully online learning experience.

> **Defining blended learning:**
>
> › Hybrid learning approach combining supervised learning in a brick and mortar school with self-paced learning that is online
> › Students have some element of control over time, place, path and pace of their learning online

At the heart of a blended learning approach in the classroom is the effective use of a wide range of digital content, tools and resources to support student learning. To more fully understand the impact of this innovative approach on the outcomes desired by administrators and parents, we examine the experiential views of teachers and administrators who have already implemented blended learning within their classrooms.

Administrators see high value in the use of digital content as a driver for instructional innovations, especially those school site administrators who have adopted blended learning within their school. For the administrators who are on the front line of empowering innovative classroom models for learning, the effective use of digital content within instruction is an agent for increasing student engagement, but also supports their other desired outcomes to transform the teaching and learning experience in the classroom as noted in Table 2. The majority of the school principals see digital content as the means for personalizing learning and providing students with more access to higher quality learning resources.

TABLE 2:

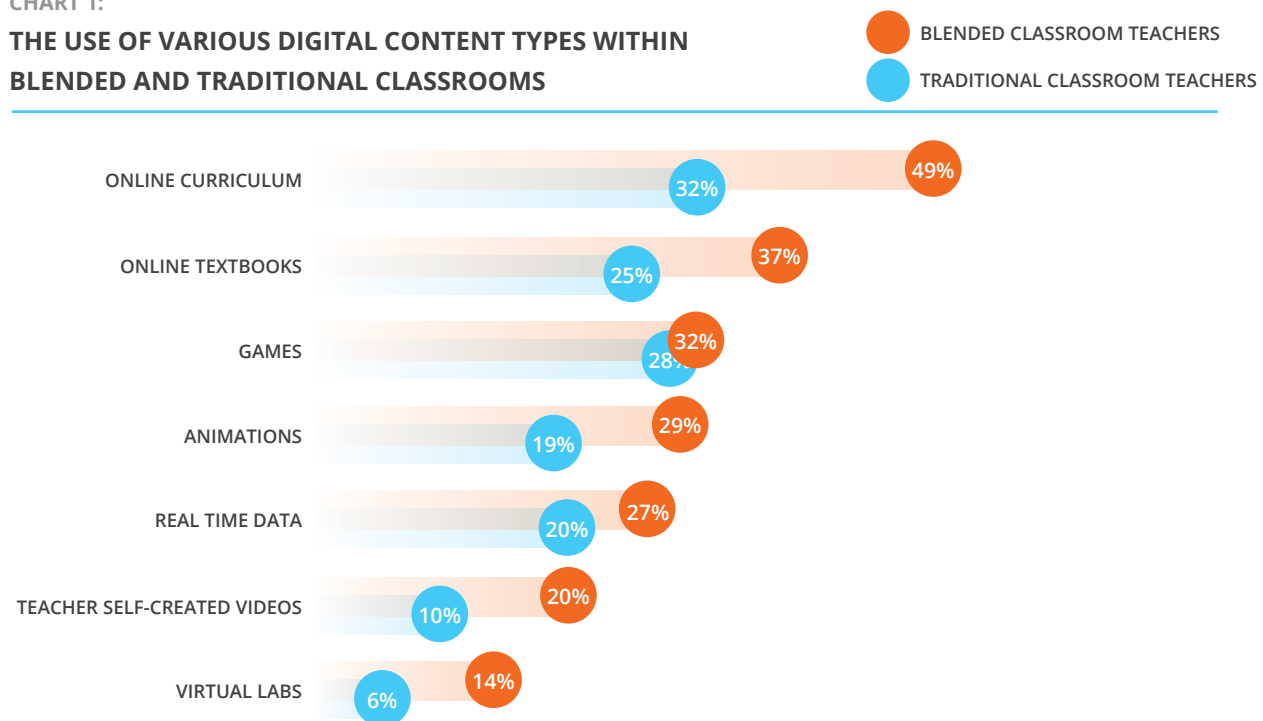## THE VALUE OF DIGITAL CONTENT USAGE WITHIN BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Benefits of digital content usage in the classroom	Principals who have implemented blended learning in their schools
Increases student engagement in learning	75%
Extends learning beyond the school day offering students opportunities for self-directed learning and remediation	72%
Increases the relevancy and quality of the instructional materials	63%
Provides an innovative way for instruction to be personalized for each student	56%
Decreases the traditional dependency on textbooks	51%

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Given the support of the school principals, it makes sense that teachers in blended learning classrooms are leading the pack in terms of their use of digital content to empower new instructional approaches. Whereas the recent Speak Up reports have documented a significant increase in teacher adoption of digital content over the past few years, most notably the use of video within instruction, the blended learning teachers are outpacing their peers across the board in their usage of various digital resources (Chart 1).

Beyond the usage however, how teachers are manipulating digital content components within their instructional practice is also illustrative of teachers' increasing comfort and sophistication with leveraging digital tools. In 2008, only 37% of classroom teachers were modifying or customizing digital content components to use in their classroom. Among the teachers that were using digital content within instruction in 2008, the vast majority were simply using it just the way they found it online. **Today, 53% of teachers say they are customizing the digital content that they find online with their own ideas, materials or resources prior to using that content piece within their lessons or class activity.** Teachers in blended learning classrooms are particularly adept at that manipulation of digital content with 64% saying that this is a typical process for them. The emergence of teachers as digital content creators is also a new innovative approach that is gaining traction in many districts. In many ways, this is a further extension of the customization process. Two-thirds of technology leaders (67%) note that this trend is having positive results in their districts.

CHART 1:

THE USE OF VARIOUS DIGITAL CONTENT TYPES WITHIN BLENDED AND TRADITIONAL CLASSROOMS

● BLENDED CLASSROOM TEACHERS
● TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM TEACHERS

ONLINE CURRICULUM — 32% / 49%

ONLINE TEXTBOOKS — 25% / 37%

GAMES — 32% / 28%

ANIMATIONS — 19% / 29%

REAL TIME DATA — 20% / 27%

TEACHER SELF-CREATED VIDEOS — 10% / 20%

VIRTUAL LABS — 6% / 14%

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As administrators aim to create more innovative classroom models such as with blended learning and the use of digital content, they identify two significant challenges to achieving those goals; how to evaluate the quality of digital content for classroom use, and how to elevate teachers' skills and ensure effective usage that results in meaningful student outcomes.
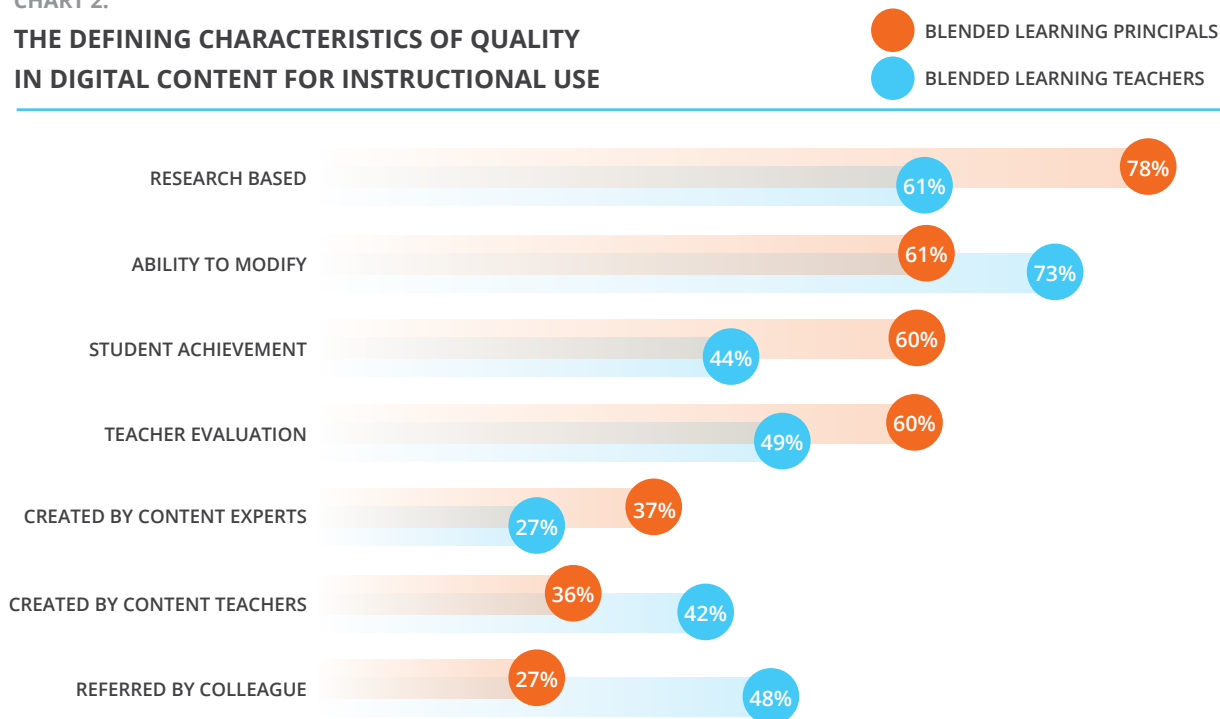
With the explosion of new online content, mobile apps and digital tools available for classroom use today, the challenge of evaluating appropriateness, rigor and quality is increasingly a significant concern for administrators and teachers. **When asked to identify the top challenges with implementing digital learning, 47% of school principals, including an equal percentage of principals in blended learning schools, noted that concerns over**

how to evaluate digital content quality is holding back their plans. Given that the teachers and principals who have implemented blended learning are on the front lines of these new classroom models, their views on the markers of quality within digital content can provide a more informed perspective on this discussion. As might be expected, even within blended learning environments, however, school principals and their teachers do not always see eye-to-eye on the relative importance of specific quality characteristics as depicted in Chart 2.

For principals who have made a school commitment to an innovative learning model such as blended learning, nothing trumps the research-based assessment of the value of that digital content to produce the outcomes they desire – student engagement and preparation of college,

CHART 2:

THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY IN DIGITAL CONTENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL USE

● BLENDED LEARNING PRINCIPALS
● BLENDED LEARNING TEACHERS

	Teachers	Principals
RESEARCH BASED	61%	78%
ABILITY TO MODIFY	73%	61%
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	44%	60%
TEACHER EVALUATION	49%	60%
CREATED BY CONTENT EXPERTS	27%	37%
CREATED BY CONTENT TEACHERS	42%	36%
REFERRED BY COLLEAGUE	48%	27%

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career and citizen ready skills in particular. From the teacher perspective, the ability to customize and modify the content to meet their particular classroom needs is the highest priority. In that regard, the blended learning teachers place a stronger emphasis on this characteristic than their peers do in traditional classroom settings. For the blended learning teacher, this is not about recreating the wheel just for the sense of content customization, but rather it speaks to how the teachers see digital content as a way to personalize learning for their students on a consistent and regular basis.

Beyond the scope of blended learning implementations, one-third of school principals say that the lack of teacher training on how to use digital content in particular within instruction is holding back their plans for more innovative classroom model implementations. In many ways, the administrators' concerns are justified. While 51% of teachers say they want more training on how to differentiate instruction using technology, only one-quarter (26%) identify that they need professional development on how to identify high quality digital content for classroom usage and only 16% acknowledge that they need support to learn how to successfully integrate that content within day-to- day lessons and class activities. This disconnect indicates that many teachers do not yet fully understand the role of digital tools, content and resources within classroom practice. To bridge this gap of understanding, many schools and districts are redefining the role of their school librarians and media specialists to support teacher skill development on a just–in-time basis.

83%
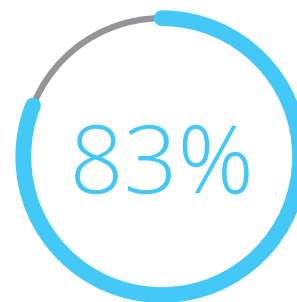
83% of teachers in Metro Nashville Public Schools report they are more comfortable and more likely to integrate technology into their classroom after learning with Blackboard.

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Teacher Professional Development Trends – Speak Up 2014 Fast Facts

›   Over one-third of teachers have taken a fully online course (38%) and 16% have taken a blended class through a college or university as part of their professional development. A smaller percentage of teachers (approximately 17%) has had similar learning experiences through their own school district. Only 5% of teachers have had a MOOC (Massively Open Online Course) experience.

›   Teachers' wish list for professional development this year reflects the current trends in digital learning. Tops on their list:
- How to use technology more effectively to differentiate instruction (51%)
- How to use educational games within the classroom (36%)
- How to use technology tools for formative assessment (32%)

›   Teachers are increasingly self-directing their professional development through learning avenues beyond their school or district programs. Often those avenues include social media tools such watching online videos (41%), using a mobile app (33%), pinning classroom ideas via Pinterest (33%), participating in webinars or online conferences (28%) or taking an online course on their own (22%).

›   When asked about their familiarity with digital badges as a form of professional development recognition, 81% of classroom teachers said that they have never heard of this concept before. But 17% said it might be a good way for them to get recognition of their skills and knowledge that they have developed outside of traditional school-based training activities.

Librarians and media specialists are increasingly providing first responder support to teachers and students in their implementation of new innovative classroom models including blended, flipped and mobile learning environments. On a special Speak Up survey, librarians noted that currently they are helping students with online research (93%), acquiring and making digital resources available to students and teachers (64%) and identifying digital content such as videos and animations for teachers to use in their lessons (53%). Based upon these experiences, these content experts identify four specific strategies for increasing teacher proficiency with using digital resources to empower innovative classroom models. The librarians' top recommendations reflect their understanding of both the challenge and the potential for changing the profile of teachers' competency in digital content usage.

Librarian recommendations for what teachers need to support greater usage of digital content within instruction:

› Provide teachers with access to a vetted, grade level, content specific set of curated digital resources that are appropriate for classroom usage
› Provide teachers with an in-school mentor or coach to both guide their usage and build teacher capacity for self-directed skill development
› Provide teachers with video clips of teachers in classroom instruction that demonstrate the effective, engaging and compelling use of digital content in the classroom
› Provide ways for teachers to participate in a professional learning community at their school with support from a librarian or media specialist to provide guidance in digital content usage

Mobile Learning Trends – Speak Up 2014 Fast Facts

› Students that are provided with a school tablet are significantly more likely to use emerging technologies to support their learning than students without that regularly daily access:
- Take an online test (tablet students = 69%, non-tablet students = 47%)
- Use an online textbook (47% vs. 32%)
- Post to a class blog (30% vs. 15%)
- Watch a teacher created video to help with schoolwork (38% vs. 21%)

› Interest in "bring your own device" programs continues to evolve with an increasing number of district administrators changing their policies to reflect both student and parent desires. In 2011, 52% of administrators said that students were not allowed to use their own mobile devices at school; this year, that percentage dropped to 23%.

› Principals say that their ultimate mobile app for their school would include general school information, ways to disseminate alerts, convenience systems for payment and registration, community building activities, and support tools for students and families. Parents endorse those same components.   In fact, 76% of parents say that they want a school mobile app that facilitates a connection between themselves and their child's teacher.

› New mobile approaches for school to home communications also increasingly reflect the general trends in the use of popular social media tools. For example, 48% of parents today would like to receive a text message from their child's teacher; just three years ago, only 8% of parents indicated that preference. One in five parents would also like to receive an automated phone message about their child's academic performance on a regular basis (not just about snow days!), reflecting a popular interest in push technologies for information dissemination.

As more administrators explore ways to implement new innovative classroom models, resources such as digital content and tools are insufficient on their own to drive the desired outcomes. Rather, administrators and teachers need to think beyond the products or devices and embrace new classroom approaches such as blended learning that can empower these new practices. Additionally, tapping into school assets such as the experiences of librarians and media specialists can further help to connect the dots between innovation and outcomes.

To save teachers time and to help them embrace blended and online learning Blackboard is continuing to expand it's digital content partnership program.

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Connecting the Dots between Innovation and Outcomes

Given a critical mission to both close the achievement gap and to prepare students with the skills they will need for an uncertain future, today's administrators are not just interested in the implementation of new classroom models to establish innovation street credibility, but rather they are seeking tangible outcomes and results that can justify further investments and initiatives. Therefore, to connect the dots between innovative uses of technology and the impact on student learning, the perspectives of both blended learning teachers and their students provide invaluable insights to inform school and district planning.

Teachers' reflections on how their classroom instruction benefits the development of student skills and learning behaviors is a good indicator of outcomes especially as the markers are applied to the use of technology within learning. Additionally, given that administrators noted that their three criteria for evaluating the impact of digital learning is student engagement, teacher buy-in and student skill development, the teachers' views provide substantiation for that criteria. Across the board, teachers in blended learning environments, as an example of an innovative classroom model, are more likely than their peers in traditional classrooms to say that technology use positively impacts student engagement and outcomes. These results are noteworthy because they support not only the use of digital tools and content, but also the way that these resources are implemented purposefully within a blended learning environment. Table 3 documents the differences in perspective between teachers in blended learning classrooms with their peers in more traditional classroom settings.

Teachers using Blackboard's Innovative Classroom Solution for digital learning share how their classrooms are being transformed.

"I don't make every kid march with me from point A to point B... I've created a way where a kid can move as quickly as they can through the chapter or as slowly as they need to."
David Hamman, *Medina High School*

"Every single student is engaged all the time, all day long."
Paula Barr, *Lawrence Public Schools*

"At the beginning, it was very teacher-centric. Over the years, I've learned how to relinquish control and turn it over to the students. They know how they learn best."
Leighann Ford, *Piedmont Middle and High School*

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THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL LEARNING ON STUDENT OUTCOMES –
THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

STUDENT OUTCOMES	TEACHERS IN TRADITIONAL CLASSROOMS	TEACHERS IN BLENDED CLASSROOMS
Students are working together more often	32%	52%
Students are developing problem solving and critical thinking skills	34%	50%
Students are more motivated to learn	50%	53%
Students are taking ownership of their learning	33%	50%
Students are developing their creativity skills	34%	47%

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When administrators think about the college, career and citizen ready skills they want their students to develop, the common skills identified often include collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. **While only a third of teachers in traditional classrooms have seen the impact of digital learning on developing student skills in these three areas, a majority of teachers who have implemented blended learning in their classrooms see that their students are developing critical thinking and collaboration skills, and almost as many say the same about creativity skill development.** Equally meaningful is the development of new student learning behaviors around self-directed learning. As espoused in the U.S. Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan , schools should aim to have students develop skills for life-long, life-wide and life-deep learning. Though still emerging as an innovative classroom model, 50% of teachers in blended learning classrooms already see that their students are taking ownership of their educational process and thus are on the pathway to developing a new personal ethos around lifelong learning.

The students' views on the impact of digital learning closely mirror those of their teachers, especially for students in blended learning environments. The students' views also reflect a significant shift in the value of technology within learning especially as it applies to the development of critical thinking and collaboration skills. For example, in 2006, only 3 in 10 middle school students in grades 6-8 said that the use of technology in their classroom was helping them develop critical thinking and problem solving skills (31%) and collaboration skills (29%). However, in data from Speak Up 2014, we see that almost twice as many students in blended learning environments connect the dots between the use of digital tools and the development of these important college and career ready proficiencies. The difference maker is not the tools, but rather the implementation of an innovative classroom model, in this case, a blended learning approach, where the tools are used purposely by a highly proficient teacher who is leveraging the innate capabilities of these digital solutions to personalize instruction for their students.

**Students in blended learning classrooms:
As a result of using technology to support
my learning...**

61% I collaborate more
with my classmates

54% I am developing critical
thinking and problem
solving skills

61% I am able to learn
at my own pace

63% I am developing my
creativity skills

48% I am more interested
in what I am learning
in class

These findings about students' valuation of digital learning are similar for students in other types of innovative classroom models including flipped classrooms and virtual learning environments. As noted in earlier Speak Up reports, today's students have a specific vision for what constitutes innovation in learning. **Students from kindergarten through senior year in high school share a common perspective on the type of learning experience that would best prepare them for future success. These students are especially interested in learning environments where they have more control over the learning process, learning is relevant and contextually rich, and they are able to use a wide range of digital tools, resources and content.** The ultimate innovative learning environment for today's student is therefore not predicated on the availability or access of emerging digital tools, but more importantly, on the effective utilization of those tools to fulfill this student vision.

This emphasis on the process, rather than tools reinforces the views of Horn and Staker, and supports how many schools and districts are approaching not only the implementation of new blended learning environments, but also their thoughts around innovative new models that integrate mobile devices and online classes within today's school environments. The students underscore this enlightened perspective with their thoughts on the role of their teacher and their learning environment. **For example, it should be encouraging to teachers and administrators that 78% of middle school students for**

example state that their teachers are important to their learning process, and 68% say that the subjects and skills that they are learning in school are important for their future. However, the wake-up call about the learning environment is a strident one as well. **Over two-thirds of students in grades 6-8 (67%) wish that their classes were more interesting and 50% say they are frequently bored in school. For these students, the solution to this situation is not difficult.** The effective use of technology within their classroom increases their engagement in the learning process (64%) and learning where they are in control of when and when they learn is optimum (65%). Innovative classroom models such as discussed in this year's digital learning trends report provide new ways for schools and districts to address this student vision. To summarize, the silver bullet is not a device or product, but rather a strategic planning process undertaken by schools and districts that marries desired student outcomes with the strategic use of targeted digital tools, content and resources to enable these new innovative learning environments that benefit both students and teachers. **Innovation in education is truly a process, not an event.**

Ending Thoughts – New Questions to Consider

This year's Trends in Digital Learning report focuses on how innovative classroom models empower more engaging and purposeful learning environments for students and teachers. And while the Speak Up data provides a compelling case for the expansion of these new and innovative classroom models, especially as they support administrators' twin goals of closing the achievement gap and preparing students for future success, the path to successful implementation requires thoughtful and strategic planning. To that goal, we hope that the following questions help guide new and dynamic school and district discussions around some key issues associated with the process of innovating within K-12 education.

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- What are the most effective ways to prepare today's teachers to leverage digital content, tools and resources within these new classroom models? What really works in terms of building teachers' capacities for innovation, not just their skills for technology usage?

- Beyond professional development, what types of ongoing support, coaching and mentoring do teachers need as they transition from a predominantly print-based classroom to a truly digital classroom? How can our schools better leverage existing human assets such as librarians, media specialists and instructional coaches to provide that first responder level of nurturing? What tools should be employed to facilitate greater collaboration and idea sharing within the school teams?

- Given that administrative buy-in is key to sustained success with any educational initiative, what is the best way to enhance the leadership capabilities of our school principals so that they are not only familiar with the technology and the new classroom models, but that the culture of the school supports innovation? How can we build the next great generation of digital leaders in our schools?

- How can emerging social media and engagement tools bring parents, students and community members more fully into new discussions around innovative classroom models? How can these tools help articulate new visions for learning and thus, build a financial as well as a cultural commitment for these new models? What is needed to ensure that the promising practices of today translate into an organic ethos of learning innovation with our schools and communities?

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About Project Tomorrow

Project Tomorrow® is a global education nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education. With 19 years of experience in the K-12 education sector, Project Tomorrow regularly provides consulting and research support about key trends in K-12 science, math, and technology education to school districts, government agencies, business, and higher education.

The Speak Up Research Project annually polls K-12 students, parents, educators and community members about the role of technology for learning in and out of school, and represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder voice on digital learning. Since 2003, nearly 4 million K-12 students, parents, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders, district administrators and members of the community have shared their views and ideas through Speak Up.

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