



Apex Learning Technology Courses Prep Students for the Future at Wautoma High School

Challenge

Not only is technology ubiquitous in the lives of today's students, technological literacy has become as essential as reading, writing and arithmetic to prepare students for the future. Yet fewer than half of K-12 schools are able to offer technology courses. Wautoma High School in the Wautoma, Wisconsin, was seeking a way to add more technology learning options for their students, but creating a new technology course that incorporated industry-standard tools would have been a challenge for this small, rural district. Small districts may have trouble providing this option to their students for a couple of reasons: 1) Developing curriculum that offers technology courses like coding and design often requires a partnership with a community college, and many of these schools do not have access to such a program. 2) The district does not have teachers available who are knowledgeable about industry-standard tools and can guide students through a course.

Solution

In January 2019, Apex Learning released a new digital curriculum offering: project-based Technology Courses that range from coding and design to gaming and animation. The new technology courses empower students to go beyond being tech users to become tech creators. Students use industry-standard tools to complete projects such as developing an iOS or Android app, creating a 3D video game, or designing a fashion collection. The technology courses include support from online experts to ensure students can successfully complete their coursework and projects. This gives districts the opportunity to offer technology courses to students even if they don't have teachers with expertise in the industry-standard tools.

Learning Impact Outcomes

According to Wautoma High School Principal Jennifer Johnson, students taking the technology courses are excited about the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, whether they already know what career they will pursue, want to have a better idea of what to study in college, or want to gain specific skills that will be valuable in other fields. They are using problem-solving and critical thinking skills, competencies that are important in preparing students for the future and are applicable to any career. According to Johnson, it's extremely important for the school to offer this type of technology. As students go off into the world, Johnson wants her students to be well-versed in the technology requirements of the future, whatever their career choices may be.

Return on Investment

Without the new technology courses, students at Wautoma would not otherwise have been exposed to this unique learning opportunity. Using the technology courses, students are able to pursue potential career interests and get a taste for specific industry professions—and industry-standard software and tools—well before college, while collaborating with one another on the progress of their project-based learning opportunities. Principal Johnson believes the courses will also provide a better transition for students from high school to college and the requirements every student will have with continuously advancing technology demands. Although the program is in its early stages, she believes it has already been a success and she intends to share the outcome of the pilot group with other students. According to Principal Johnson, most schools and districts are looking for ways to offer their students expanded access to technology, and the district selected Apex Learning Technology Courses because the new courses made it easy for Wautoma High School to provide this opportunity to their students.