

# iPadagogy

An Open Door teacher wins grant for tech in classroom and finds it changes everything

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The Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — Last spring, Open Door Christian School teacher Matt Loescher was among more than a dozen teachers at the small private school who had to tell school officials how he would use technology in the classroom if selected to win brand-new iPads for his room.

But Loescher, who is in his 11th year of teaching, said he had never been on an iPad before that moment.

“But I went on the Internet and got one fast,” he said. “I played around with it for a few hours, and it really opened my eyes to what I could do in the classroom. So I told the school I would replace my textbooks and develop my own website, where the material is coming from me moreso than a textbook.”

Wednesday afternoon that plan was demonstrated in his classroom. Loescher won the contest and now has a technologically enhanced classroom that boasts 25 iPad 2s, a 55-inch interactive HDTV and a Mac Pro XP.

“I’m the most popular man on campus right now,” said the 34-year-old teacher. “It’s not because of me. It’s because of what’s in my room.”

The iPads sit on a cart by his door. At the start of each class period, students grab the handheld devices and start their work.

“Sometimes, it’s the mundane work like taking notes, and other times they are taking quizzes on there or seeking out information to questions they may have,” Loescher said. “They are blogging and expressing their ideas with me and their classmates. On a rare occasion, we may go to our textbooks, but most of the time the information is at their fingertips and my day is not about the regurgitation of facts. It’s how to show them how to find the information they need to answer questions.”

Across the education spectrum, textbooks are being tossed for gadgets in a number of ways. From iPads in classrooms and online textbooks to podcasts and distance learning lessons across continents, educators are moving to embrace 21st-century learning.

“It is absolutely where teaching is at and where it is going,” said Charles Rudd, a technology implementation specialist with Elyria Schools. “Part of 21st-century teaching and learning includes actually publishing the work of the student. Then, the classroom becomes a part of the world. It’s an incredible way of interfacing with districts across the state and the world, and encouraging a new way of learning.”

Rudd, who started out as a second-grade teacher at Crestwood Elementary, came to the district seven years ago after almost two decades in business. His first



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Matt Loescher, a social studies teacher at Open Door Christian School, heads a seventh-grade class that won a technology classroom makeover of Apple iPads for the class. He uses an Apple laptop, and the class also has an electronic whiteboard that he’s pointing to.

career was technology-based, and Rudd has used those skills to help fellow teachers incorporate SmartBoards in the classrooms. He even wrote an accompanying SmartBoard computer program for a reading program called Wilson Foundations.

This year, Rudd is out of the classroom and is responsible for teaching teachers how to implement more technology into daily lessons. Getting an iPad or laptop into the hands of a student is only one part of technology implementation. Teachers likewise have to be trained on how to use things, he said.

“I know how teachers can struggle with new technology,” he said. “But once

they see how it can change the classroom they only want to use more. We focus on SmartBoards in Elyria because they are a great interactive tool, but unless a teacher is taught how to use all of its interactive capabilities, it is nothing more than a very expensive whiteboard.”

Ann Schloss, director of academic services, said Rudd’s position was designed to give teachers a resource on all of the different implementations they may come across, whether it’s a new website or new gadget. When new software is introduced in the district, Rudd learns it backward and forward and

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