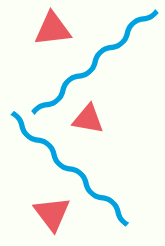**Active Classrooms Month**

Building a Legacy Through Technology and Movement

Story by Audrey Williams

As an elementary teacher, I always knew incorporating opportunities for movement in my daily schedule was important, but it wasn't until I started working at the district level that I discovered all the possibilities. When I taught third grade, my students had balance balls instead of chairs, we took regular brain breaks using GoNoodle, and I tried to incorporate as much movement into the daily curriculum as possible.

Eventually I moved to a district level position as a Technology Integration Specialist. I went from working with one classroom of students to working with multiple classrooms and multiple teachers at multiple schools. Every school was different, but one school in particular stood out for me. After I met with that school's principal, I knew the sky was the limit when it came to using technology. They were excited I was there and wanted to see growth as a school by creating an "Innovation Zone." Picture this: we wanted a place to test robots, fly drones, 3D print, and create, just to name a few of our big dreams. Problem was the school didn't have a lot of extra space. That is when I realized the gymnasium was the perfect spot.

Combining technology and movement meant we could help keep our students healthy while also helping them meet standards for physical education, math, and English and language arts.

I found a "tech savvy" PE teacher who was also interested in integrating technology in her classes but wasn't exactly sure where to begin. By working with this PE teacher, I realized the importance of including movement as a key feature of our Innovation Zone. Combining technology and movement meant we could help keep our students healthy while also helping them meet standards for physical education, math, and English and language arts.

I began collaborating with the PE teacher, school principal, and academic coach to come up with our vision for this Innovation Zone. After visiting several schools, our vision only got bigger and bigger. But now we had to figure out how to make our vision a reality. Every student in the school had an iPad, so we wanted to make sure that whatever we did all students would have access. Our team lived by this quote: "Mistakes are for learning." When our first ideas didn't work, we would try something else. We persevered through and kept trying until we finally figured out how to make our idea work. The school's motto is "Building a Legacy of Leaders", so our project became known as the Legacy Lab.

Legacy Lab: A Day in the Life

What did this look like in practice? Remember: This wasn't just about technology. It was about combining technology with activities that met math, ELA, and PE standards. Since March Madness was about to begin, our first set of Legacy Lab activities centered around basketball. Working with our PE teacher and classroom teachers, we set up four stations for students to rotate through using Apple's iTunes U:

- **Dash's Basketball:** Dash is an adorable robot that young students can code to follow simple commands. Their task was to code Dash to shoot a basketball and make it through the hoop. They were given several opportunities to adjust and make changes in their code to ensure success.

- **Osmo-Basketball Vocabulary:** Osmo is designed with reflective artificial intelligence that offers an "augmented reality" experience with real-world problems. We chose to do basketball vocabulary, so when a basketball-related image displayed on the iPad screen, students had to spell out the word with letter tiles. Osmo would recognize the letters, and when the student got the correct word, they were able to move on to the next term. We broke students into teams and made it a relay: one student would complete their word and then the next person in line would go. We usually had three iPads set up, so it added a little friendly competition as they raced to get the correct vocabulary terms.

- **Dribbling Technique:** The Dribbling Technique was always my favorite to watch! Students were assigned to a spot and given a basketball. They would prop their assigned iPad up against the wall and start the Dribbling Technique video from Jr NBA. Whatever the NBA player on the screen did, the students mimicked. When they finished the video they moved over to an area with cones set up, so they could practice dribbling on their own.

- **Shooting Technique:** The station for Shooting Technique is where we picked up some math skills. Younger students counted their shots and recorded how many they made and how many they missed. They constructed simple math sentences using the data they collected. The primary students recorded their data while completing a fraction activity. The older students used the data they collected to solve problems using equivalent ratios. So yes, they were practicing shooting the basketball, but they were also doing math. We never heard one complaint about doing math.

Students at the coding station, coding "Dash", the robot, to toss a basketball through the hoop.
Photo credit: Rick Barbero of the Register-Herald

Legacy Lab happened during a combined PE and Innovation specials class and lasted 45 minutes. Students rotated to each station in 10-minute increments with a minute transition in between. Some activities were completed back in the classroom with the help of their teacher (e.g., the math activities from the Shooting Technique station). After completing the sessions, they used [Seesaw](#) to record video reflections, which allowed the PE teacher to go back and make sure they had completed each activity. This helped hold them accountable and kept them on task.

We were able to give every student in the school the opportunity to participate in the Legacy Lab once or twice a month. After the success of our basketball activities, we created activities around golf and bowling and started working on volleyball, baseball, soccer, and hockey.

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After we created the Legacy Lab at this one school, I started sharing the idea with other schools in my district. The Legacy Lab was created for elementary school students, but I've seen the same concept adapted for older students or for schools with more or less technology.

I'm an Apple Distinguished Educator, so I thrive on seeing technology being integrated in every teacher's classroom. Since I was an elementary school teacher, it was easy for me to incorporate physical activity into grade level classrooms. Working with a PE teacher on physical education pushed me out of my comfort zone. It introduced me to a whole new group of people. Our team has done so many things since then, but this is how it all started: with a vision and a creative team.

Audrey Williams graduated in 2008 from Concord University in Athens, West Virginia. For the next seven years she was a classroom teacher, one year of Kindergarten and the rest third grade. In 2015 she became a Technology Integration Specialist for Raleigh County Schools. Audrey works directly with elementary schools throughout the district. She became an Apple Distinguished Educator in 2017. Follow her on Twitter @mrsawilliams86