New Options for Districts Looking for Evaluation and Feedback Tools

Project Tomorrow Announces Free Tools to Evaluate Mobile Learning Initiatives and to Inform Teacher Professional Learning Programs

Irvine, Calif. – While there has been huge growth in technology in schools, relatively few schools or districts have conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of these mobile devices in the classroom, usually because of cost and capacity. Project Tomorrow is now offering a new option for education leaders across the country: the Mobile Learning Impact Snapshot, building on more than 15 years of their Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning and more than a decade conducting mobile learning evaluations and efficacy studies in K-12 schools and districts.

"We have seen initiatives that give a mobile device to each student to use at school, often called 1:1 initiatives, double from 2013 to 2017," said Dr. Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. "As part of Speak Up 2017, 60 percent of school principals said they have implemented mobile learning using devices in their school. We have not seen studies of impact keep up with that growth, however."

Many districts say that the cost of evaluation research and lack of staff capacity are two predominant barriers to doing a comprehensive evaluation of their mobile learning projects, so Project Tomorrow developed a free tool to support more districts in this effort.

Each year, the Speak Up Research Project collects feedback data from K-12 students, parents and educators about the role of technology for learning in and out of school – and gives that local data back to schools and districts as a free service. Since 2003, more than 5.4 million K-12 students, parents, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders, district administrators, communications officers and members of the community have shared their views and ideas through Speak Up.

School leaders have the option this year, as part of Speak Up 2018-19, to use the Mobile Learning Impact Snapshot tool in conjunction with or in place of the annual Speak Up tool. The Snapshot will allow schools to gather feedback from their teachers and students between now and January 31, 2019. A second version of the Mobile Learning Impact Snapshot will be offered in the spring for schools to collect additional data from students and teachers. The comparative of the results from the fall and spring snapshots will provide school leaders with comparative data on the impact of the mobile devices from the beginning to the end of the school year. To support that evaluation of impact, Project Tomorrow will provide a free guide for school and district leaders to help them understand how to interpret their data in early 2019.

"While this is not meant to take the place of a fully featured evaluation, the Mobile Learning Snapshot will help schools and districts collect important data from their stakeholders and gain new understanding about the impact of their mobile learning projects," explained Evans. "Our goal with

the new Mobile Learning Impact Snapshot is to democratize mobile learning evaluations so that every school and district will have meaningful data to share with school boards, parents and their greater community about the value of their digital learning initiatives."

In addition, Project Tomorrow created a new Teacher Professional Learning Snapshot tool for schools or districts who want to dig to understand their teachers' needs and preferences for professional learning around the use of technology within instruction.

Speak Up data and focus groups conducted by Project Tomorrow show that the number one issue facing school principals today – relative to the use of technology within learning – is how to motivate and train their teachers to change their instructional practices to more seamlessly integrate technology into instruction.

And, more than half of the 33,000 teachers who participated in Speak Up last year identified professional development to help them use technology more effectively in the classroom as their top need last year.

This new Teacher Professional Learning Snapshot tool will allow administrators to learn more from their teachers about their preferences and interests in professional learning experiences to support more effective use of technology. And, like all aspects of Speak Up, there is no charge for schools and districts to use the Snapshot tools or to access their local data.

"While some districts get all the feedback data they need from participating in the annual Speak Up project, we have found that others either need additional data to drill down on a topic or only need a specific set of data on one topic," said Evans. "We have created the new Speak Up Snapshots to help meet those needs, beginning with a mobile learning evaluation tool and a professional learning feedback tool."

About Project Tomorrow & Speak Up
Project Tomorrow is the nation's leading education nonprofit group dedicated to ensuring that today's K-12 students are well prepared to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators and engaged citizens of the world. The Speak Up Project for Digital Learning is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow. Since 2003, the annual Speak Up project has collected and reported on the views of more than 5.4 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents representing more than 30,000 schools in all 50 states. This represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, schools of the future, science and math instruction, professional development and career exploration.

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