Welcome and Recognitions
Julie Evans
Chief Executive Officer
Project Tomorrow

Opening Remarks
Lee Blakemore
Senior Vice President, K-12
Stephanie Weeks
Vice President, K-12 Strategy
Blackboard

Release of National Findings
Highlights from the national report:
From Print to Pixel: The role of videos, games, animations and simulations within K-12 education

Panel Discussion
Students and teachers from Maryland and Virginia.

Audience Q&A
All participants

Speak Up 2015 was made possible through the generous support of Blackboard Inc., BrainPOP, CDW, DreamBox Learning, Qualcomm Wireless Reach, and Scholastic

Thank you for your participation in today's briefing.
Lee Blakemore
Senior Vice President, K-12
Blackboard

Lee Blakemore is the K-12 Senior Vice President at Blackboard, where he provides the leadership for generating new opportunities, driving sales and developing and executing the go-to-market strategy for schools and districts across the country. Lee is a successful enterprise software and services executive with over 25 years of experience building teams and solutions with a focus on sales, and including operations, marketing, professional services, product strategy and project management.

Prior to joining Blackboard in 2015, Lee served as the SVP of Global Sales at Velocity where he was responsible for field sales, inside sales, solutions engineering, sales and marketing operations, and customer relations. Prior to joining Velocity, Lee worked at IBM for eight years, where he held the role of Vice President of Worldwide Sales for two software and infrastructure brands. Also while at IBM, Lee served as Director of European Sales during which he helped launch the company’s Application on Demand business in Europe.

Lee lives in Northern Indiana with his wife and two daughters. He is also proudly serves on the Board of Directors for The Blackstar Project, a Chicago based non-profit focused on closing the academic achievement gap in Chicago. http://www.blackstarproject.org

Lee holds a Bachelor of Arts in history from Westminster College.
Stephanie Weeks
Vice President, K-12 Strategy
Blackboard

Stephanie Weeks is happiest when making change with purpose. She loves the analysis of what is and what is not, the incorporation of ideas from many people into one future-driving force, and the realization of the impact as the change begins to form something new. Innovation only appears when someone drives change. As Vice President of K-12 Strategy for Blackboard, she’s been driving and supporting change for more than 12 years, focused on how people can succeed through education.

Stephanie received her MS in Computer Science from The George Washington University and her BS in Computer Science from Kennesaw State University.
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Julie Evans is the CEO of Project Tomorrow (www.tomorrow.org), an internationally recognized education nonprofit organization that focuses on improving learning opportunities for students through the effective use of STEM resources.

Through a variety of high impact programs and initiatives, Project Tomorrow empowers K-12 students, teachers and parents to have a larger voice in improving education and learning especially in the areas of science, math and technology. Ms. Evans has been CEO of this organization since 1999 and during that tenure has created several innovative initiatives to impact education including the heralded Speak Up Research Project which annually collects and reports on the authentic views of 500,000 K-12 students, parents and educators on education issues each year. Ms. Evans serves as the chief strategist researcher on this important initiative. Over the past eleven years, 4.5 million K-12 students, teachers and parents have participating in the Speak Up Project representing over 35,000 schools from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and around the world.

Prior to this position, Ms. Evans enjoyed a successful 17-year career in national and regional sales and marketing management with Unisys and two education technology startups. Ms. Evans is a graduate of Brown University and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of California, San Diego in education leadership. She serves on several boards and advisory councils including the Project Tomorrow Board of Directors, Blackboard’s K-12 Advisory Council, the Reaching At-Promise Students Association Advisory Board, and the TechSETS Advisory Board. Ms. Evans is a frequent speaker and writer on K-12 and higher education issues around digital learning. In April 2008, eSchoolNews named Ms. Evans as one of the Top Ten Most Influential People in Education Technology over the past 10 years.
YouthTEACH2Learn

We stimulate and nurture the development of a new generation of K-12 teachers in math and science by building new, early career pipelines and strengthening linkage between K-12 and higher education around career development.

- 1,700 High School Students with 40% going on to pursue a STEM teaching career

YouthTEACH2Learn Educators Rising California

We execute two model projects in Southern California to drive economic competitiveness and innovation, and to encourage greater collaboration between all education stakeholders around science, math, and technology. Both projects have been developed for national replication.

- 10 Award Ceremonies
- 33 Award Finalists
- 6 Annual Summits
- 1000 Students

INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

Innovation in Education Awards
Youth Leadership Summit for Math & Science

We regularly provide consulting and research support to school districts, government agencies, business and higher education institutions about key trends and research in science, math, technology and 21st century education.

- 13 years
- 4.5 million participants
- 35,000 schools
- 50 states

RESEARCH

Speak Up Surveys Evaluation Projects

We execute two model projects in Southern California to drive economic competitiveness and innovation, and to encourage greater collaboration between all education stakeholders around science, math, and technology. Both projects have been developed for national replication.

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The Speak Up Research Project is a global initiative of Project Tomorrow (www.tomorrow.org), an internationally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education.

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Nearly Half of All Teachers Now Use Games as Part of Instruction, Marking a Big Jump Since 2010

Teachers, Parents, Administrators Catching Up to Student Use of Games for Learning

Washington, DC – The use of game-based environments and online apps among teachers has doubled in the last six years, according to the national Speak Up survey released today. In 2010, just 23 percent of teachers reported using games, compared to 48 percent in 2015. Use of online videos among teachers has also jumped from 47 percent in 2010 to 68 percent in 2015.

These findings are detailed in a new national Speak Up report: From Print to Pixel: The role of videos, games, animations and simulations within K-12 education. The findings come from the annual online Speak Up surveys conducted by Project Tomorrow. More than 500,000 students, educators and parents responded to the surveys last fall. Report: www.tomorrow.org/speakup/SU15AnnualReport.html

"Many more schools are demonstrating greater use of digital content, tools and resources today than six years ago and we believe that the increasing adoption of interactive, visual media in the classroom by teachers is the driver for much of that change," said Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. “The explosion in teacher interest and usage of videos and game-based learning could be a harbinger of a new awakening for digital learning.”

Principals and other administrators have long talked about the struggle to get teachers to change their practice to accommodate digital learning. Despite the growth reported this year, that is still a challenge in many schools. For example, more than half (54 percent) of principals said motivating teachers to change their practice is a top challenge.

Students have been using social media and interactive, visual media outside of school to self-direct learning and even to learn about careers for years. Quite often their tool of choice is a mobile device – underscoring that learning can happen anytime, anywhere, anyplace when students have access to devices and the Internet.

Speak Up has been asking teachers, students and parents to design their “ultimate school” by selecting a variety of tools and strategies for several years now. Nearly half (48 percent) of teachers included online or digital education games in their “ultimate” school, which is an increase from 34 percent in 2010. Among students in 2015, online or digital education games were selected by more than 50 percent of high school students and more than 60 percent of middle and elementary school students. The percent of parents adding games to their “ultimate” school doubled between 2010 and 2015, from just 19 percent to more than 40 percent.

When school and district administrators were asked in 2015 if they are implementing game-based learning to enhance student achievement and teacher effectiveness, nearly half said they have implemented this approach, but 38 percent of school administrators and 47 percent of district administrators said they have not and they have no plans to do so.

- more -
As the use of these tools expands in schools, there are new challenges that need to be addressed. There has been an increase in teachers looking for professional development opportunities from their schools and districts to support their use of digital content in the classroom. For example, in 2012 (the first year Speak Up asked about professional development and digital content), 26 percent of teachers said they were looking for professional development to better use games within instruction. In 2015, that number had jumped to 50 percent. Teachers’ expectations may not be fulfilled however. Among district administrators, just 27 percent said they were providing their teachers with instruction on game-based learning this year.

Teachers are also looking for guidance on approved and curated content for instruction. One-quarter of teachers said they are looking for curated sets of resources organized by grade level and content area to better support their integration of digital content. Others are looking for planning time to work with colleagues (57 percent), in school coaching on how to find and use high quality digital resources (36 percent) and online tools that help organize and keep track of digital resources (28 percent).

“There’s no shortage of content or tools -- the challenge and the opportunity is effectively discovering, curating and using these resources to enable student learning in exciting new ways,” said Stephanie Weeks, Vice President of K-12 Strategy at Blackboard, one of the sponsors of Speak Up. “The results of this survey point to the same trends that we have observed: students, teachers, districts and parents want innovative, blended learning experiences more than ever before, requiring change both inside and outside the classroom. We expect to see this trend continue, and our K-12 New Learning Experience Platform is focused on enabling teachers and school districts as they undergo this change.”

“This increased emphasis on digital learning in school is also shining a brighter light on the need to address the quality of students’ out-of-school connectivity, otherwise known as ‘the homework gap,’” said Evans. “Thirty-five percent of students in this year’s survey said they go to school early or stay late to access the school’s internet, 24 percent go to public libraries and 19 percent said they go to fast food restaurants and cafes for internet access. Nearly 70 percent of teachers told us they are reluctant to assign homework that requires Internet access because they are worried about this ‘gap.’” More on Speak Up’s Homework Gap findings can be found here: http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/speak-up-2015-homework-gap.pdf

About the Speak Up Research Project and Speak Up 2015
Speak Up is an initiative of Project Tomorrow®, the leading global education nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education. Each year, the Speak Up Research Project polls K-12 students, parents and educators about the role of technology for learning in and out of school. This survey represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder voices on digital learning. Since fall 2003, more than 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. K-12 educators, higher education faculty, business, and policy leaders report that they regularly use the Speak Up data to inform federal, state and local education programs.

In fall 2015, Project Tomorrow surveyed 415,686 K-12 students, 38,613 teachers and librarians, 4,536 administrators, 40,218 parents and 6,623 community members representing over 7,600 schools and 2,600 districts. Schools from urban (25%), suburban (40%), and rural (35%) communities are represented. More than half of the schools (58%) that participated in Speak Up 2015 are Title I eligible schools (an indicator of student population poverty). The Speak Up 2015 surveys were available online for input between October 1 and December 18, 2015.

The online survey is supported by many of our nation’s most innovative companies, foundations and nonprofit organizations including Blackboard, BrainPOP, CDW, DreamBox Learning, Qualcomm Wireless Reach and Scholastic.

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SPEAK UP 2016

Opens October 2016
www.speakup4schools.org/speakup

Stop Guessing.

- How many students access YouTube for learning?
- How many schools allow students to bring their own devices to school?
- How many administrators are worried about online capacity?
- How many parents would be willing to pay an annual school technology fee?
- How many teachers want to take online professional development courses?

Speak Up can answer all these questions and more!

The annual online survey collected feedback from more than 500,000 students, educators, parents and community members across the U.S. in Fall 2015 (more than 4.5 million responses since 2003). The data is provided to schools and districts who register for FREE. Administrators and policymakers use the data annually to help prioritize and reimagine educational goals and facilities.

Corporate sponsors and organizational partners also receive Speak Up data and analysis each year. Annual reports on the national findings can be found on our website at www.tomorrow.org/speakup. For more information, please contact Jenny Hostert at jhostert@tomorrow.org.
Ten Things Everyone Should Know about K-12 Students’ Digital Learning

Students Speak Up on the following...

#1 LEARNING VIA YOUTUBE
38% of students are finding online videos to help with their homework and 27% say they regularly watch videos created by their teachers.
Slow and inconsistent Internet is the biggest barrier with using technology at school.

#2 STUDENTS ARE MOBILISTS!
Personal access to mobile devices has reached several significant tipping points: 86% of 9-12th, 72% of 6-8th, and 46% of 3-5th graders are smartphone users now.

#3 MORE GAMES PLEASE
Almost two-thirds of students want to use digital games for learning in school. Why?
- Across all grades, students believe that games make difficult concepts easier to understand.
- 53% say they have received better grades by using technology within learning.

#4 STUDENTS WANT TO CODE - ESPECIALLY GIRLS!
53% say YES to coding as a class or after school activity with 1 in 5 being very interested in learning how to code.
Amongst girls, 64% of 3-5th and 50% 6-8th graders want to code!

#5 TEACHER - I HAVE A QUESTION!
Students are regularly using digital tools outside of school to communicate with their teachers about schoolwork questions:
- 48% by email
- 15% by texting

#6 TWEET-TWEET?
47% of 9-12th graders are Twitter users now - 4 times more than in 2011 when only 11% were tweet-tweeting.

#7 I’LL TAKE MY LEARNING MOBILE
76% of students think every student should have access to a mobile device during the school day to support learning.
Many are already doing that:
- 50% are using mobile devices to look up information in class.
- 39% are taking photos of class assignments or textbook pages.

#8 WATCHING ONLINE VIDEOS
74% of 6-8th graders say they watch online videos for schoolwork. And what class do they watch videos in the most? Science!

#9 CHANGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE
Students are interacting less with traditional social networking sites: 43% of students in grades 6-12 say they never use Facebook. But spending more time with content creation sites: 54% say they use YouTube all the time!

#10 GOODBYE 1:1!
Different tasks = different tools! Laptops top students’ lists for writing a report, taking online tests and working on group projects. Smartphones are #1 for connecting with classmates and accessing social media.

Source: Speak Up 2015 Research Project Findings - the results of the authentic, unfiltered views of 505,676 K-12 students, parents and educators nationwide. Learn more about Speak Up and other research findings from Project Tomorrow at: tomorrow.org

Speak Up is supported by:
What Do Parents Really Think about Digital Learning?

Parents of School-Aged Children Speak Up about Technology Use

Speak Up 2015 Findings

#1 Tech use in school is important
85% of parents say that the effective use of technology in school is important to student success.

#2 Surprise! Top parent concern about tech use
Top concern? Technology use in school varies from teacher to teacher – more parents are concerned about this than about student Internet safety or data privacy.

#3 Blended sounds great!
Parents have voted and 55% chose a “blended learning” model as the best for their child; in second place, the traditional classroom environment (42%).

#4 Learning on the go
Over 2/3rds of parents agree: it is important for students to use a laptop, tablet or Chromebook during the school day. Why? Mobile devices provide easy access to online textbooks, increases student engagement and extend learning beyond the school day.

#5 A mobile device in every backpack
41% of parents say they would buy a mobile for their child to use in school – if the school allowed that. Age of parent, grade level of child or community profile (urban, rural, suburban) doesn’t make a difference. 11% have already done this!

#6 Joining the social media revolution
Facebook continues as the primary social media tool for parents; 61% say they use it often or all the time. Up and coming for those new digital parents under 29: YouTube (43%), Pinterest (37%), Instagram (29%).

#7 Speaking of YouTube
Just like students and teachers, parents say watching online videos can help with learning – supports different learning styles (64%) and students can re-watch videos as many times as needed (59%).

#8 Text me!
55% of parents say they want their child’s teacher and school to communicate with them via text messaging to a mobile device; only 5% said that in 2010!

#9 The prefect school for my child would include . . .
Schoolwide Internet access (55%), digital textbooks (50%), mobile apps for learning (48%), laptops for every child (46%) and online educational videos and games (41%)

#10 And I’m willing to help pay for that!
Good news! 64% of parents say they would pay an annual technology fee to support classroom digital learning expenses

Source: Speak Up 2015 Research Project Findings - the results of the authentic, unfiltered views of 38,613 K-12 parents nationwide. Learn more about Speak Up and other research findings from Project Tomorrow at: tomorrow.org
Looking inside today’s digital classroom
Teachers Speak Up about technology use
Speak Up 2015 Findings

#1 More & more digital content
Teachers are using more digital content in their classroom than ever before. This year’s leader board: videos (68%), digital games (48%), online curriculum (36%), online textbooks (30%) and animations (27%), all showing increases over 2014.

#2 Let’s play to learn
At least in elementary school! More game-based learning environments are happening in elementary grades than in middle and high schools. 65% of teachers in K-2 and 59% of teachers in Gr 3-5 are regularly using games within their classrooms.

#3 Have you flipped yet?
16% of teachers say that they have “flipped” their classroom – using class time for projects and remediation and sending home videos for students to watch as homework. One-third of teachers would like some PD on how to do this in their class too!

#4 Teachers’ side job as video producer
While only 27% of teachers say, it is likely they will create their own videos for students to watch, teachers in some subjects are already producing their own movies as instructional aids for their students. Most likely to be self-producing videos: teachers in computer science, career tech education, the arts and world language classes!

#5 Homework Gap reality
68% of teachers acknowledge that they are reluctant to assign Internet based homework because they fear some students do not have safe access outside of school – a new digital divide.

#6 Teachers text? Really?
Teachers report using texting to communicate with colleagues (66%), parents of students (39%) and even their students (14%). Texting with students is on the rise – increasing from only 7% in 2014.

#7 Reading a printed page or on a screen – which is better?
49% of teachers say that the digital reading on a screen is more engaging for their students – but 52% say it is also more distracting than reading a classic paperback novel or traditional history textbook.

#8 Wish list for PD
Top vote getter: using technology to differentiate instruction (55%). Seems teachers want to differentiate using games and mobiles: 50% want training on incorporating games into lessons and 38% want to learn more about using mobile devices within instruction.

#9 How teachers want to learn
In school works best for most teachers as it provides convenience and context. Favorites’ list includes in school training days (52%), peer coaching (51%) and observations of other teachers (48%).

#10 Hurrah for social media tools!
Teachers are discovering the power of social media as a PD tool. Pinterest is quickly becoming a go-to spot for classroom/lesson plan ideas, especially for younger teachers. While 58% of teachers with under 4 years of teaching experience have pinned a lesson plan, only 38% of teachers with 16+ years of experience have done the same.

Source: Speak Up 2015 Research Project Findings - the results of the authentic, unfiltered views of 88,157 K-12 educators nationwide. Learn more about Speak Up and other research findings from Project Tomorrow at: tomorrow.org

Speak Up is supported by:
FROM PRINT TO PIXEL:
The role of videos, games, animations and simulations within K-12 education
Speak Up 2015 National Findings

WWW.TOMORROW.ORG
Introduction

“I feel that school in the future will refine the idea of technology in virtual, physical class, and the combination of the two. It would be cool to see that in 5 years, we use physical and electronic means of learning interchangeably.”

Male student, 11th grade, Maryland

In many ways, the migration of education today from an environment dominated by print-based content and resources to new learning platforms that leverage multi-media, multi-sensory content follows a pattern almost as old as education itself. At the heart of this pattern is the introduction of new technological advancements that transformed the information dissemination and education delivery. However, the sustainability of those changes is actually more dependent upon the ways that teachers and students respond to these disruptive innovations than simply the new tools themselves. Examples from ancient to current times illustrate the evolutionary process.

Teaching and learning in ancient Greece was based on an oral tradition where memorization and knowledge sharing through dialogue was the gold standard for education. The epic poems of the Iliad and the Odyssey are products of that oral tradition of storytelling and sharing. The popularization of written texts, however, by Socrates’ student, Plato, forever changed education as it provided a means for the rich history of stories and knowledge to be written down and shared more broadly beyond the steps of the Parthenon. The great philosopher and teacher Socrates was dismayed at this “technological development,” however. In his worldview, the written word was not truth but an inadequate facsimile of that truth as only in the transmission of his ideas directly to students was there validity. Nonetheless, this advancement could not be stemmed. Scholars changed their pedagogy from oral information transmission to reading written texts aloud to the students gathered at their feet. Suddenly, information was no longer resident only in the minds of the great scholars, but rather rested within the parchment they held in their hands.

Subsequent technological advancements in printing, publishing and transportation allowed the written texts to be distributed more widely. As in ancient Athens, this innovation was initially met by distrust and fear by those that previously had a stake in the status quo. The monks of the Middle Ages had positioned their role in medieval society as the keepers of knowledge and scholarship through their control of the creation and illumination of handwritten books. The disruptive innovation of printing presses suddenly allowed a new set of learned people outside of the monasteries to not only access information on a greater scale, but to be able to create these texts and thus, give voice to new ideas and new perspectives on knowledge. From that development evolved the use of written texts based upon a common set of knowledge, current for the time, as the foundation for education. The birth of the standardized curriculum and its primary delivery vehicle, the printed textbook, became the new tradition.
for transmitting knowledge from teacher to student.

Our K-12 schools are at a similar evolutionary point today. New technological advancements and the resulting disruptive innovations in education delivery are creating uneasiness amongst some educators about the role of the teacher, in particular, in a new worldview of education. Just as many ancient scholars believed that students were empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge, many teachers cling to the idea that their role is to fill the brains of their students with information that is exclusive to them. However, the pervasiveness of information, ideas and experts available on the Internet, and unprecedented ability of students to act upon their curiosities and interests to seek out that knowledge has forever disrupted that exclusivity of information that formerly defined the value of teachers and school. With one click on a smartphone, students can read not only the original text of the Odyssey if they wish, but watch a TedTalk video about its relevancy in today’s society and listen to a podcast debate amongst modern day scholars about the legacy of Greek lyric poems on today’s modern songwriting. Rather than wishing that the proverbial ship had not sailed, it is now time to understand that this move from a predominant print-based delivery system in education to new learning environments such as those where videos, games, animations and simulations are increasingly the norm for both teachers and students, is both evolutionary and advantageous.

For the past thirteen years, Project Tomorrow’s® annual Speak Up Research Project has provided schools and districts nationwide and throughout the globe with new insights into how today’s students want to leverage digital tools for learning based upon the authentic, unfiltered ideas of students themselves. Additional insights from teachers, librarians, administrators, community members and parents through audience specific surveys for these important stakeholders have painted a picture on the current state of education relative to digital learning adoptions. Each year, education, policy, research and business leaders leverage the Speak Up findings to understand how schools and communities can better serve the learning needs of today’s digital learners and how to scale high impact innovations in new classroom models and the use of technology to transform education outcomes. Speak Up reports over the past few years have focused on connecting the digital dots for learning, mapping a personalized learning journey and moving from chalkboards to tablets as part of a digital conversion effort. This year’s report departs from that tradition of examining the state of education change and focuses on a particular phenomenon that we have documented over many years, the emergence of pixel based digital tools, specifically, videos, games, animations and simulations, as legitimate vehicles for learning. Leveraging the views of 415,686 K-12 students, 38,613 teachers and librarians, 4,536 administrators, 40,218 parents and 6,623 community members representing over 7,600 schools and 2,600 districts in the United States and around the world, this year’s Speak Up report examines three aspects of this phenomenon. First, we will discuss what is precipitating the move within schools from print to pixel to lay the
foundation for then understanding how teachers and students are using these digital tools in their classrooms. As we know from past Speak Up reports however, students do not see learning as only happening from 8 to 2:30 each day. To understand fully the extent of the print to pixel migration, it is necessary that we examine how students are also self-directing learning beyond the classroom with these new modalities. Finally, our ending thoughts give a glimpse into the future in terms of what we should expect in further adoptions of these visually engaging digital tools in education. The voices and ideas of our students provide us with that glimpse into the immediate future of school in 2020.

“\[\text{I believe that in 2020 all of my classes will have online resources, and be almost completely digital. We will still attend school and interact but it will not be on paper, it will be on the computer. We will be able to find our own resources to learn from as well as what the teacher gives us.}^1\]\]”

Male student, 10th grade, Virginia

The journey from print to pixel in our schools

The increasing use of videos, games, animations and simulations across all segments of the population to support both informal learning and entertainment presents an interesting opportunity to explore translating those activities and tools from the everyday world into the school world. The pervasiveness of these engaging and interactive forms of information transmission in our society today cannot be underestimated. For example, in just 10 years, YouTube has amassed over a billion users worldwide with growth of at least 50 percent year over year for three straight years$^1$. The digital games market at $6.2 billion is ten times the size of the traditional board game market today$^1$. Following the lead of the military and corporate sectors, higher education institutions are increasingly interested in game-based instruction as a way to engage and motivate learners of all ages and backgrounds.

The K-12 education sector is also particularly interested in how to leverage these multi-media, multi-sensory digital resources to support enhanced student learning and teacher productivity. As well documented by previous Speak Up reports and others, the use of digital content, tools and resources in classrooms has also experienced year over year growth. For example, in 2005, only 30 percent of high school students noted that they used an online textbook regularly as part of their school activities. This year’s 2015 data reveals that 46 percent of high schoolers are now using online textbooks, a growth of over 53 percent from 2005. Teachers’ use of videos in their classroom has experienced even a faster rate of adoption. In 2012, less than half of all teachers said that they were using online videos within their instructional practice (47 percent). Today, over two-thirds of teachers (68 percent) are regularly sourcing videos from the Internet and using them in their classroom to stimulate class discussions and to bring a real world context to academic content for their students. Though long considered an unattainable goal in an education environment that has thrived on worksheets and poster boards, the proof of the sector’s journey toward more digital content may be best represented by their level of “paperlessness.” Almost 60 percent of technology leaders say that one-quarter of instructional materials in
their schools today are digital, not paper-based; 26 percent say that their level of paperless-ness is 50 percent.

“I think that schools will be completely paperless in 5 years. There will be a lot more online classes for younger generations. I think that a lot of learning children do will be through the medium of the Internet or interactive apps/games.”

Female student, 12th grade, Wisconsin

Whereas in the past, classroom use of tools such as videos, games, animations and simulations within instruction represented outlier behavior on the part of risk-taking teachers, today it appears that these activities are not only gaining scale within schools but are endorsed and promoted by school and district leaders. In reporting their districts’ use of various digital tools to support learning, 82 percent of district administrators say their districts have now implemented a variety of digital content and online resources in their classrooms. Additionally, five out of 10 administrators note that the implementation of digital content resources such as videos, simulations and animations was already generating positive student outcome results. Relative to game-based learning environments, 40 percent of administrators say their classrooms now include digital games as learning tools, outpacing even the adoption of 1:1 tablet programs in classrooms (33 percent).

School leaders’ reasons for endorsing more digital content and actively promoting its seamless inclusion in daily instruction mirrors what they see as the key drivers to increasing student achievement.

Principals: What are the primary benefits of using more digital content within instruction at your school?

1. Increases student engagement in school and learning (80 percent)
2. Extends learning beyond the school day (69 percent)
3. Provides a way for instruction to be personalized for each student (60 percent)
4. Increases the relevancy and quality of instructional materials (60 percent)
5. Improves teachers’ skills with technology (51 percent)

Engagement, extended learning, personalization, relevancy of content, and enhanced teacher effectiveness are the key words for developing new classroom models and instructional practices that support the development of students’ college and career ready skills. Of these, the last one may be the most telling about the current state of digital content in our classrooms. While the Speak Up results document the increasing use of digital tools by teachers, the speed of progress is not meeting the expectations of school principals.

School principals (84 percent) are almost unanimous in their belief that the effective use of technology within instruction is important for student success. However, they do acknowledge challenges or barriers to meeting the expectation of effective technology usage. A majority of school leaders (54 percent) say their biggest challenge with digital learning is how to motivate
their teachers to change their instructional practice to make better use of these engaging and contextually relevant resources. When asked what was holding back further expansion of their digital learning visions, an almost equivalent number of principals (57 percent) say the lack of teacher training on how to integrate digital content within instruction is their top barrier. This frustration point with principals is further validated by their high expectation that new teachers be fluent in using technology to differentiate instruction (76 percent) and to create authentic learning opportunities for students (68 percent) prior to being hired to teach at their school.

However, the explosion in teacher interest in and usage of videos, games, animations and simulations as learning tools may provide some interesting insights into new adoption paths for other kinds of digital resources. By examining how students and teachers are using pixelated content within the classroom and the valuations they place on those experiences, we can infuse these new findings into implementation strategies and plans that may address the challenges articulated by school and district leaders.

“I believe that more teachers will be using technology more, through videos and online simulations and games. Many students will be able to use these tools in order to have a more hands on education at their own pace. We will be able to connect with peers easier, and work on our critical thinking skills.”

Male student, 10th grade, Kansas

The use of videos, games, animations and simulations within classroom instruction

Whether it can attribute to new solutions or products available for classroom usage, or simply the increased familiarity with using pixel-based tools in their personal lives, teachers demonstrate higher usage of digital content in their classroom this year. As depicted in Figure 1, across all assignments or content areas, 68 percent of
teachers report using videos that they find online within lessons or classroom activities. Almost half of all teachers (48 percent) note that their classroom plans now include game-based environments for students also.

“Virtual reality simulations can help us with subjects like science, help us interact with chemicals or tools that can be dangerous in the real world. Even in History we could practically time travel and experience the Trojan War or experience what it was like to be a Pilgrim without any real danger.”

Male student, 6th grade, Texas

Looking more closely at teacher profiles and characteristics relative to their use of digital content, we see that classroom assignment, years of experience and classroom-teaching model influence the use of the digital content tools for instruction as well.

- Teachers in elementary grades are more likely than teachers in middle or high schools to employ game-based learning environments in their classrooms (K-2: 65%, Gr 3-5: 59%, Gr 6-8: 44%, Gr 9-12: 31%). Contrary to conventional thinking, years of experience are not a differentiator for game usage.
- Teachers in Computer Science (31%), Career Technical Education (21%), Arts Education (21%) and World Languages (20%) are leading the pack in terms of creating their own videos for student usage.
- Simulations are more widely used by teachers in virtual classes (23%) and teachers who have implemented a flipped learning model (26%) or a blended learning model (17%).
- Years of experience does play a role in the likelihood of teachers to use online videos within instruction, though only to a small degree. Almost three-quarters of teachers (74%) with less than 4 years of experience report using videos as part of their lesson and class activities compared to 65% of teachers with 16 or more years of experience. Correspondingly, 41% of first year teachers like the idea of watching videos as part of professional development activities; only 1/3 of the veteran teachers with 16 or more years on the job share that same value.

From elementary through high school, students report watching videos (both created by their teacher and found online) and playing digital games as part of their learning processes (Table 1). The greater percentage of students in elementary grades playing digital games follows the finding that the nexus for game-based learning environment adoptions is with elementary teachers today. Students in kindergarten, first grade and second grade report even higher levels of game play (77 percent). Students in high school are more likely to research and use videos that they find online themselves. Amongst those high school students, girls’ search/use video behavior (44 percent) outpaces their male counterparts; only about one-third of boys say that is a regular activity (34 percent). Again counter to conventional wisdom, game play has no gender differentiation across all grade levels.
Table 1: Use of technology for learning – watching videos and playing games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Watch a video created by my teacher</th>
<th>Watch a video that I found online</th>
<th>Play a digital game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Gr 3-5</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 121,690</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Gr 6-8</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 131,727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Gr 9-12</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 107,086</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I believe that school in five years will greatly depend on technology. For classes teacher will post videos and lectures before and after school to deepen the student’s learning and then discuss it during class. Through this students will be able to have a more in depth learning about the world because they will be reading and having interactive activities online.”

Female student, 9th grade, Texas

Deeper Look: Videos within education

The ubiquitous accessibility of academically rich content videos via services such as YouTube, Kahn Academy, NASA, Ted Talks and others makes the examination of videos a particularly interesting one for understanding how teachers and students are using these tools for learning. This ubiquity may be a contributing factor in the 45 percent increase in teacher usage of videos from 2012 to 2015. Though some video services require a license to access their content, the web is rich with free video-based content for students and teachers to use, thus allowing for equitable access from any web connected device. Additionally, the emerging classroom model of “flipped learning” is steadily gaining interest amongst teachers. Many iterations of flipped learning include the use of videos (teacher created or sourced) as homework activities and then class time focuses on project-based learning and personal remediation activities. While only 16 percent of teachers say that they have currently implemented a flipped learning environment in their classrooms using videos, over one-third of teachers (35 percent) say they are interested in receiving professional development on how to implement this innovative model in their classroom. In addition to examining the use of videos within instruction, this deeper look also discusses the roles that teachers and students ascribe to video watching as an instructional practice.

The top subject areas in which the students in grades 6-12 watch videos to support homework, research projects or studying are science (66 percent), math (59 percent), social studies/history (53 percent) and English/language arts (45 percent). Approximately one-quarter of the students also report that videos are part of their schoolwork activities in world language, health and physical education classes as well. Additionally, 20 percent of high school students note that they have created videos to
Table 2: Teachers – why are you using videos and animations within your lessons or class activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of videos and animations</th>
<th>All Teachers N = 35,909</th>
<th>Teachers using videos they find online N = 19,286</th>
<th>Teachers who are creating their own videos N = 3,432</th>
<th>Teachers who are using animations T = 7,697</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To introduce a lesson or unit</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To activate students’ prior knowledge</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To facilitate a class discussion</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To illustrate a difficult concept</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support students with auditory/visual processing needs</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide an alternative to text based class materials</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Teachers - what are the benefits of using videos and animations within your lessons or class activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of videos and animations</th>
<th>All Teachers N = 35,909</th>
<th>Teachers using videos they find online N = 19,286</th>
<th>Teachers who are creating their own videos N = 3,432</th>
<th>Teachers who are using animations T = 7,697</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased student engagement in the material</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressed different learning styles</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a different teaching approach than my own</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More relevant lesson</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced student vocabulary</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More efficient learning process by shrinking time students need to digest information</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The views of teachers who are using videos (self-created or sourced) as well as animations in their classrooms provide valuable experiential insights into the role of such tools within instruction and answer the question as to why these tools may be important for student learning and teacher effectiveness. Table 2 illustrates how teachers on the front lines of pixel based education are using videos and animations within their instructional practice, and Table 3 provides their perspectives on the impact or outcomes of those visually-based learning experiences.
Just as the teachers’ uses for the videos and animations span a spectrum of instructional activities, the outcomes or benefits they see from these experiences also cover a wide range from differentiating instruction to appreciating that these new tools actually can change the time variables associated with learning. Teachers’ valuations of the benefits of visually-based content tools are higher for those teachers who are immersed in using these tools in their classrooms. This supports the premise that teachers’ personal usage of the tools and realization of the student benefits from those firsthand experiences is a critical component of digital learning adoptions. To that point about shrinking the time students need to digest information, 45 percent of students in middle school agree with that assessment. Additionally, 44 percent of the students feel that they learn more from watching a video than reading a book.

The new paradigm of visual-based, pixel-oriented learning greatly appeals to students for a number of reasons, most having to do with personalizing the learning process, providing a context for academic content and the convenience factor associated with video watching. When asked to identify the reasons they believed that watching online videos is a good way for them to learn, students in grades 6-12 ranked the following benefits as most important:

1. I can watch it as many times as I need to (61%)
2. Makes it easier to understand difficult concepts (55%)
3. Connects what I am learning to the real world (54%)
4. Fits my learning style (53%)
5. Easy to find videos to help with schoolwork and easy to access on mobile devices (53%)
6. More engaging and keeps my attention (48%)

Parents are also supportive of the concept of videos as learning tools. When asked to envision their ultimate school for their child, 43 percent include online videos and movies in their wish list. This valuation may be the result of parents’ own increased familiarity with watching online videos themselves for learning, skill development or entertainment purposes. Two-thirds of parents report watching YouTube videos as a regular activity. Parents’ valuation of the role of videos within instruction echoes the student and teacher perspectives especially in terms of addressing different learning styles (64 percent) and connecting what students are learning with the real world (61 percent). However, the parents see the highest value of videos in complementing what teachers are sharing in class (71 percent). In other words, parents see the videos as supporting teacher instruction, not as standalone or self-contained learning activities. Especially for parents older than 50 years of age, this may be less of a response to current instructional practices with videos where teachers are building in interactivity and discussions, and more of a sad reminder of their own school days watching grainy filmstrips and out of date documentaries during class time.
Students’ self-directed uses of pixel content beyond the classroom

In addition to in-school use of videos, games, animations and simulations, students are also using these same tools outside of school to self-direct learning beyond the sponsorship of their teachers. As reported in previous Speak Up reports, today’s students are increasingly exhibiting “free agent learning” behaviors where they are tapping into digital tools to explore academic interests, curiosities and future careers online. A majority of middle school (54 percent) and high school students (50 percent) note that they are “learning important things for my future on my own outside of school.” Within that realm of self-directed, digital learning, videos and games as well as visually oriented social media feature prominently.

When asked about how they were engaging with learning outside of school but not related to homework or assignments, the students indicated a high level of regularity with using videos to learn how to do something or playing an online game or virtual simulation activity. Figure 2 documents the frequency of these activities for students in grades 6-8.

Over three-quarters of middle school students (78 percent) are tapping into online videos, and 6 out of 10 (61%) are playing online games, all in service of various types of self-directed learning goals. The students’ perspective on the best way to explore careers may provide some explanation as to the value associated with these kinds of digital learning activities.

While taking field trips to see jobs and careers in action is the students’ first choice for career exploration activities, 50 percent of the middle school students say watching a video about different jobs would be highly effective as well. Additionally, 43 percent of the students would like to play an online game about different careers to learn more about those professions, and 39 percent believe that they can learn about different jobs and careers through social media tools as well.
“I believe that in 2020 all of my classes will have online resources, and be almost completely digital. We will still attend school and interact but it will not be on paper, it will be on the computer. We will be able to find our own resources to learn from as well as what the teacher gives us.”

Male student, 10th grade, Virginia

**Deeper Look: Visually based social media**

Students’ use of social media outside of school for personal interests also supports this idea that today’s students are particularly interested in pixel oriented content and using engaging, interactive and visual tools to learn about the world around them. As is well documented in other reports, students’ use of specific social media properties is a fast moving target. The tool of choice today may quickly fall out of favor tomorrow. As the Speak Up research has been reporting on students’ social media use since 2003, we have had a front row seat on the dynamic nature of this space. Key findings around students’ differentiated use of social media today provides educators, policymakers and researchers with new insights into the pervasiveness of social media tools within students’ rich media lives, and how visually based tools play a particularly strong role.

The Speak Up surveys poll students in middle and high school on the frequency of their usage of various social media tools. Additionally, as standard practice we examine that resulting data through several lenses including by gender. Several interesting patterns emerge from this analysis of the fall 2015 data from high school students. Across the board, high school students are using a wide range of different social media tools to explore their world, communicate and share with friends and family, and be engaged in topics of interest to them. However, differences exist between boys and girls when comparing the frequency of their usage as documented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Tool</th>
<th>Never/Rarely</th>
<th>All of the time/Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online games/apps</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massively multipler online games (MMOG, MMORPG)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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More girls are engaging with the heavily visually oriented tools of Instagram and Pinterest than their male classmates are. Comparatively, the boys are more likely to interact with the online games and multiplayer games. While the online games and multiplayer games are also visual in nature, they also represent a more action-oriented visual environment than either Instagram or Pinterest. While students’ share a common interest and valuation on pixelated content, both in school and out of school, it is important to note that even with that category of visual content, students may be more or less interested in the use of certain types of media. As we have noted with other Speak Up findings, one size does not fit all when we discuss students’ interests in digital tools for learning or connecting with the world around them.

“Students would learn faster and more efficiently through technology use consisting of social media messengers, online videos and step-by-step formats given on google. I believe those learning methods can show a path that’s much easier for visual learners, including those with creative minds too.”

Female student, 10th grade, Guam

Ending Thoughts

The pervasiveness of visually based learning content in our workplaces, our homes and our schools cannot be denied. We use videos to teach us how to make that special Sunday roast as well as to learn about NASA’s plans for Mars exploration. Simulations and animations can help a teenager learn the basics of acceleration and braking before getting behind the wheel of Mom’s new Lexus. They can also help students struggling with physics to visualize and thus, better understand Newton’s First Law of Motion. Games are preparing our military to be able to identify enemies, especially in hostile territories at night where vision is obstructed; games are also teaching third graders to identify geometric shapes and calculate the perimeters of those shapes. Given that scientists say that human brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than textiii, it makes sense that in this information-intensive economy and society, content that is visual in nature is gaining widespread usage at a very rapid rate.

Our students see the future of education as being heavily oriented to visual learning also. Mobile devices, online learning environments and powerful digital content such as videos, games, animations and simulations will enable the visual learning paradigm. The insights of today’s students about the school of tomorrow provide a compelling way to start new discussions about visual learning and to plan for the expectations of tomorrow’s students. On the Speak Up 2015 surveys, students were asked, “What will school be like in 2020?” The following quotes provide a snapshot of the students’ views on the future of learning.

“Five years from now, everyone will be using tablets and technology every single day. Students play online games to study. Students will also have a class blog, so if they have question, they can get help. Five years from now, we use technology every day in school.”

Male student, 8th grade, Texas
As the use of these pixelated tools expands in our schools, there are new challenges on the horizon that education and policy leaders will still need to address. Teachers are very interested in professional development on how to use the tools effectively. In turn, schools are exploring different modalities for teacher training that can provide a more relevant context for their usage in the classroom; i.e., using videos to teach teachers about using games to help their students develop math proficiency and critical thinking skills. Student data privacy remains a serious issue. This increased emphasis on digital learning in school is shining a brighter light today on the need to address the quality of students’ out of school connectivity and access. Despite these challenges, or maybe in support of them, there is a new sense of urgency today within schools and districts to leverage technology more effectively to address both student learning outcomes and college/career preparation. Just as with the evolution of education delivery mechanisms over time, the use of pixel-based content, so pervasive in our society already, provides a golden moment to re-think and re-engineer our vision for education, classroom instructional practices and our support for students’ self-directed learning experiences. The time is now.

“I think that in the future there will be more videos of class notes/discussions for students to rewatch. Though PowerPoints are available online, having the class itself videoed would help the students be more successful, providing them with further ways to learn the materials on their own time.”

Female student, 12th grade, Illinois

“I think in the future more and more students will be able to learn better because of the use of technology. They will just have to watch videos to help them understand what they are learning. I think everything will be done online. Maybe the students won’t even use paper and pencils, but tablets and laptops.”

Female student, 8th grade, Arizona

“I think technology will be used more, as in the form of more virtual simulations, and online classes. Virtual simulations are cleaner, as well as greener, but real, say science experiments, create waste that isn’t always environment friendly. School in physical form could be shorter because more people would have access to the internet and be taking more online or virtual classes.”

Female student, 7th grade, Wisconsin
About Project Tomorrow and Speak Up 2015

Speak Up is an initiative of Project Tomorrow®, the leading global education nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education. Each year, the Speak Up Research Project polls K-12 students, parents, and educators about the role of technology for learning in and out of school. This survey represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder voices on digital learning. Since fall 2003, almost 4.5 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. K-12 educators, higher education faculty, business, and policy leaders report that they regularly use the Speak Up data to inform federal, state, and local education programs.

In fall 2015, Project Tomorrow surveyed 415,686 K-12 students, 38,613 teachers and librarians, 4,536 administrators, 40,218 parents and 6,623 community members representing over 7,600 public and private schools and 2,600 districts. Schools from urban (25%), suburban (40%), and rural (35%) communities are represented. Just over one-half of the schools (58%) that participated in Speak Up 2015 are Title I eligible schools (an indicator of student population poverty). The Speak Up 2015 surveys were available online for input between October 1st and December 18th, 2015.

The Speak Up surveys included questions about the use of technology for learning, 21st century skills and schools of the future, as well as emerging technologies (online learning, mobile devices, and digital content), the use of technology within specific curricular areas, and STEM career exploration. In addition, educators shared the challenges they encounter integrating technology into classroom instruction, and how budget challenges have affected these decisions. The data is collected from a convenience sample; schools and districts self-select to participate and facilitate the survey-taking process for their students, educators, and parents. Any school or school district in the United States (or worldwide) is eligible to participate in Speak Up. In preparation for data analysis, the survey results are matched with school level demographic information, such as Title I status, school locale (urban, rural, and suburban), and ethnicity selected from the Core of Common Data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov/). Speak Up data is cross-consulted with NCES statistics to ensure that data represent nation-wide school demographics. The data are analyzed using standard cross-tabulation analysis.

For additional information on the Speak Up methodology, please contact the Project Tomorrow research team.

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Project Tomorrow® is the leading global education nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education. With 20 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 and educators 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, almost 4.5 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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