

Lumens Document Cameras Let Instructors Think Creatively about Content

Johnston Community Schools Create Digital Classroom Where Flexibility is Key



Digital upgrade

As students in the Johnston Community School District returned to their classrooms this fall, many of the traditional classrooms have a new look—having been upgraded to digital classroom status over the summer.

“For instructional purposes, these digital classrooms give teachers so much more flexibility,” said Ann Wiley, Instructional Technology Coordinator for the Johnston Community School District in Johnston, Iowa.

“So much of what teacher and student’s do today is digital: visiting Web sites, blogging, letting kids create podcasts or videos, and more. A lot of teachers are looking for ways to do less with paper, and textbooks are even becoming digital now.”

Over three years, the school district will upgrade the five elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school that serve the 5,400 students in the district. Each digital classroom will be equipped with a wall-mounted projector, computer and a Lumens Ladibug document camera. “We decided to go with Lumens’ products for the flexibility of the lighting provided by the flexible arms on the camera,” said Wiley. “The Ladibugs also seemed more durable than other products we considered.”

Easy handling

With the new setup, teachers can access all of these input types with the push of a button. “Now, they don’t have to deal with wires or hook things up,” said Wiley. “Our teachers have truly embraced the technology and love these digital classrooms because it makes it a much more interactive.”

The document cameras have changed the learning process across the entire curriculum. Now, students can bring their work to the front of the room and demonstrate their thinking process to the rest of the class, Wiley said. In science class, the kids can see all the details of various lab processes.

“There’s no more crowd around and watch me mix these chemicals or dissect these specimens,” she said. “Now, teachers can take pictures and snapshots to allow students view a slideshow and review the process.” Already the teachers have discovered creative uses for the document cameras that include:

- Demonstrating the steps involved in a mathematics problem
- Using a picture in a book as a background for students acting out a scene from a story
- Making sure that all students can see a demonstration
- Allowing speech students to share props and visual aids during their talks

Bring the lesson to the speed of the learner

By capturing lessons, teachers can bring every lesson to the speed of the learner. Many teachers are posting lessons online to allow students to go back and review as often as they need to, said Wiley. In elementary school classes, teachers can read aloud from books while allowing students to see the pictures and the words from their seats—a powerful visual tool to help beginning readers.

These uses are just the beginning of the ways that document camera and other visual technologies can help students. “Technology is moving at the speed of light and we have a lot of irons in the fire with these technology initiatives,” said Wiley. “Lumens document cameras are an important tool that we can use for learning. They change the nature of instruction and learning. With these tools, teachers look at their lessons very differently than they used to.”

