

The high-tech classroom helps Texas district close the achievement gap

Lumens Ladibug document cameras are empowering teachers and driving achievement improvements

When Tyler ISD in East Texas started equipping all its teachers with laptops and docking stations in 2008, it also began to build a model of “baseline technology” – devices that district leaders considered essential to teaching and learning.

“We were trying to find ways to get teachers out of the stand-in-front-of-the-classroom-and-lecture type of delivery,” said John Orbaugh, director of technology. “We were changing our curriculum and looking for ways to help teachers be more engaging.”

Document cameras were high on the baseline technology list, and the district ultimately selected the Lumens Ladibug for its 1,100 classrooms. Lumens won a product shoot-out. Orbaugh recalled: “We brought the two best cameras into a room, side by side, with the same document, the same lighting, the same projector, the same computer. And the quality we saw in the Ladibugs was just amazing.”

The Ladibug DC-265 features three goosenecks – a High-Definition camera and two lights. All three can be independently positioned to light objects and view them at different angles. The device is capable of shooting high-resolution video up to 1080p, as well as taking stills. The Ladibug has a USB port to use with a computer and whiteboard and a VGA.

Flexibility and ease of use—both for teachers and students—are two of the key features and they contributed to the ease of implementation and training, Orbaugh said. He also noted it is not unusual to see four or five teachers working together in a classroom and sharing ideas on how to use the Ladibugs and other classroom technology.

One example would be the science classroom that used the Ladibugs to take time-lapse photos of a caterpillar morphing into a butterfly; or the agriculture class that documented the building of a cattle trailer with the camera and posted the time lapse photos on a website.

Orbaugh credits the Ladibugs and other technology in



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the classroom with helping the district close its educational gaps, especially among students classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

“It’s a combination of better curriculum, better training, better technology. We are seeing engagement rise, which has been a real positive in helping close our achievement gaps.” Test results bear that out. Over the two years that the district has had the Ladibug in every classroom, fifth grade science results among those students have dramatically improved, going from 40 percent passing standardized tests in 2008 to 70 percent in 2010. The percentage achieving a “commendable” level tripled from 7.56 percent to 21.22 percent in the same time frame.

The Ladibug gives these students, particularly, an opportunity to learn visually and hands on without stumbling over language limitations, Orbaugh said.

Earlier this year, Lumens introduced the first wireless document camera—the next step in freeing the teacher to be more creative and innovative. “The fewer wires you have,” said Orbaugh, “the better off you are.”

The Ladibugs have been an integral part of Tyler’s effort to equip its teachers with the technology they need, to train them to implement it more quickly and then to empower them to experiment.

“What we want is our teachers feeling as comfortable and natural with the technology as picking up a pen or pencil,” said Orbaugh. “The Ladibugs fit that. They just work and give you flexibility and advanced features, but they are still simple enough for the kids to use.”

For more information about Lumens and the latest in wireless technology, please visit www.mylumens.com or call 615-530-7236.

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