



Cisco's Global Education group is actively engaged in the work of transforming education systems to meet the needs of 21st century learners, educators, and organizations. This transformation will require a shift in the way teachers teach, leaders lead, and students learn.

Case Study



Moss Point School District Transforms Teachers into Tech-Savvy 21st Century Educators

Moss Point School District administrators share a vision for their schools: They want educators to be able to equip students with the technical skills and knowledge needed to become successful citizens in an evolving society. This lofty goal might have taken many years to accomplish if not for an objective and methodical plan developed by administrators and instructional technologists in this rural Mississippi school district to bring this vision to fruition.

The crux of the plan was to move toward a project-based and student-centered learning model, with teachers functioning more as facilitators than conveyors of information. Lessons would connect district learning objectives to real-life situations and engage students in higher-order thinking, such as analysis and problem solving. All lessons would integrate fundamental classroom technologies, such as interactive whiteboards, computers, and the Internet; as well as advanced technologies, such as podcasting and blogging.

Moss Point School District

LOCATION:

Jackson County, Mississippi

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS:

8

NUMBER OF STUDENTS:

>3,000

GRADES:

K-12

SCHOOL STRUCTURE:

Rural

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH:

85

The 21S Holistic Approach to Education Reform

After Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005, Cisco unveiled an initiative, known as the 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S), to help rebuild the devastated Gulf Coast schools and communities. In addition to equipping each school with instructional technologies and advanced networking equipment, the focus of 21S is to develop a blueprint for 21st century education based on a holistic approach to education reform, supported by Cisco's business experience in management and system change.

21S is a multiphase initiative that aims to create a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model of education reform that will extend beyond Mississippi and Louisiana. The 21S model incorporates transformative technology, tools, and training; backed by the expertise of a dedicated technology and business partner. Support for every implementation is provided by an onsite Cisco Fellow.



At about the same time that administrators were developing their plan, the district was invited to become part of the Cisco® 21st Century Schools Initiative (21S). The 21S initiative is designed to help school districts transform teaching and learning and improve student outcomes in record time by leveraging technology as an accelerant. The program complemented the district's vision for Moss Point students.

Aligning Skill Development with Certification

Superintendent Lt. Col. Kim Staley mandated that all Moss Point educators obtain their Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) within one year of district employment. Based on this requirement, the district planning team structured an ICT skills development program around the IC3 certification, which addresses three main aspects of technology: computing fundamentals, Internet proficiency, and key applications.

Rachel Mercer, the instructional technology coordinator for the district, asked teachers to self-assess their current skill levels, based on the IC3 model, and decide what type of training they felt they should receive.

"This type of informal assessment worked well in getting teachers engaged in the program," says Mercer. "It fostered the feeling of a more collaborative atmosphere around ICT skills training. We plan to be more prescribed about the process after everyone gets more comfortable with the requirements."

At the start of the 2007–2008 school year, the instructional technology team launched a series of training sessions designed to accommodate the varying schedules and learning styles of all the teachers in the district, including weekend and online classes. Mercer believes the key to successful training is organizing the sessions into digestible chunks of content, yet remaining flexible with the structure so teams can adapt sessions to address the individual needs of participating teachers. The team also offers customized training for those who have been through the basics and want to advance their skills. The instructional technology team uses the same tools in the training sessions that they expect the teachers to use in their classrooms—videos, podcasts, the Internet, and multimedia programs.

To assess how effectively teachers are applying their ICT skills, the instructional technology team observes classrooms. "Classroom observation is key to assessing how well teachers know the technologies," explains Mercer. "It provides a benchmark for teachers, which we use to assess their progress when we return to observe them later in the year. It also helps me develop topics for upcoming training sessions."

After teachers receive their IC3 certification, Mercer and her team must ensure that they continue to apply their skills in the classroom. Reinforcing skills and providing ongoing support and coaching are significant best practices for maintaining skill levels. However, Mercer has found that an even more critical factor is to continually promote a collaborative learning environment.

"Teachers helping each other is a wonderful way to maintain the momentum and excitement of integrating technology into the curriculum," she says. "It also makes our job easier—with only three of us to reach every teacher in the district, it helps so much when the teachers themselves maintain the momentum."

Accomplishments and Future Plans

As a result of the 21S program, approximately 80 to 85 percent of Moss Point teachers are now actively using advanced technologies in their classrooms. Additionally, the number of teachers who have attained IC3 certification has increased significantly. Within one year, 90 teachers obtained their certification, and the instructional technologists hope to help another 50 or 60 teachers attain certification over the next year. Among learners, 82 percent of students report using technology in their classrooms frequently—a sign that the teachers' training is having a positive impact on students.

In the next year or so, Mercer hopes to build training and assessment into the school calendar. She also hopes to formalize assessments, using an assessment checklist, so the team can more quickly and accurately assess teachers in the classroom.

“There is a great deal of potential in this program,” Mercer notes. “Creating a teaching environment in which students are at the center—where we plan, teach, and assess around the needs of the students, and in a way that promotes full engagement on their part—is very rewarding work.”

For more information about Cisco Global Education, please visit our website at <http://www.transformglobaleducation.org>.



“Creating a teaching environment in which students are at the center—where we plan, teach, and assess around the needs of the students, and in a way that promotes full engagement on their part—is very rewarding work.”

Rachel Mercer
Moss Point School District
Instructional Technology
Coordinator

Cisco Recommended Ecosystem Partners for System Transformation

Information on Integrating Technology

- **Metiri Group**
(www.metiri.com)
Education consultant that provides a broad range of services that empower educators to advance effective teaching and learning, use technology in powerful and meaningful ways, and foster 21st century skills.
- **November Learning**
(www.novemberlearning.com)
An organization that promotes the effective use of information and communication technologies to support and enhance learning for children and communities
- **Partnership for 21st Century Skills**
(www.21stcenturyskills.org)
An advocacy organization that is focused on infusing 21st century skills into education; Cisco is a founding member
- **WIDE World – Harvard Graduate School of Education**
(<http://wideworld.pz.harvard.edu>)
Offers online learning programs for professional development and using technology in classrooms

Online Content and Tools

- **Discovery Education Streaming**
(<http://streaming.discoveryeducation.com>)
A digital video-on-demand and online teaching service to help improve students' retention and test scores
- **ePals Global Community**
(www.epals.com)
A community of collaborative classrooms engaged in cross-cultural exchanges, project sharing, and language learning
- **History Channel**
(www.history.com)
Television station that offers free programming related to history and culture
- **Jing Project**
(www.jingproject.com)
An online resource that offers free software that allows teachers and students to capture and share videos and other content
- **NASA Education Program**
(education.nasa.gov)
Program that provides activities and information related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- **National Geographic**
(www.nationalgeographic.com/education/)
Online resource for lesson plans, activities, and information related to geography, history, culture, animals, and other topics
- **Ning**
(www.ning.com)
An online platform that allows individuals and groups to create their own collaborative networks
- **Promethean Planet**
(www.prometheanplanet.com)
An online resource that includes lessons and professional development materials related to interactive whiteboards
- **Smithsonian American Art Museum**
(<http://americanart.si.edu/index3.cfm>)
Provider of education resources such as state standards-based, multidisciplinary lesson plans that span the fields of art, design, science, technology, history, culture, and language arts



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

©2008 Cisco Systems, Inc. All rights reserved. CCVP, the Cisco logo, and the Cisco Square Bridge logo are trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc.; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn is a service mark of Cisco Systems, Inc.; and Access Registrar, Aironet, BPX, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCIE, CCIP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Cisco Unity, Enterprise/Solver, EtherChannel, EtherFast, EtherSwitch, Fast Step, Follow Me Browsing, FormShare, GigaDrive, GigaStack, HomeLink, Internet Quotient, IOS, IP/TV, iQ Expertise, the iQ logo, iQ Net Readiness Scorecard, iQuick Study, LightStream, Linksys, MeetingPlace, MGX, Networking Academy, Network Registrar, Packet, PIX, ProConnect, RateMUX, ScriptShare, SlideCast, SMARTnet, StackWise, The Fastest Way to Increase Your Internet Quotient, and TransPath are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or Website are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (0609R)