The Opportunity

Why use several different programs to achieve your district’s goals when you can use just one? That was Coachella Valley Unified School District’s discovery when they set out to accomplish the following:

- Professional development: Coachella’s Educational Technology department sought a tool that could host the SAMR course – a framework for technology integration in the classroom. They wanted something teachers could use for their own development, as well as one they could have students use for note-taking, collaborating with other schools and finding ways to redefine the classroom.

- Incorporate Common Core units of study easily into daily classroom use, and track student progress along the study units.

- Technological literacy for students and teachers: The district sought a tool that would encourage the development of technological skills on a daily basis, as well one that would be iPad-compatible for the district’s planned technology boot camp – a program to teach students social and emotional literacy, reading and math skills, and digital citizenship, among other skills.

For all its varied needs, Coachella found one platform: Edmodo and its Management, Sync and PD Tools.

The Solution

Coachella chose Edmodo to host the SAMR course based on how easily the curriculum fit the platform. Combined with the fact that nearly 65% of teachers were already using Edmodo and the benefits of its Sync feature, which creates teacher and student profiles and groups them into classes, the district began to explore its use not just for the course, but as a learning management system.

Coachella implemented Edmodo districtwide and has 100% of its teachers using the platform. They accomplished this by storing Common Core units of study written by district teachers on Edmodo, which teachers were required to reference for lesson plans. They moved the study units from an external website into Edmodo’s Library, which allowed them to organize by grade level for easy access.

The Results

By hosting the SAMR course on Edmodo, the district has been able to get 160 teachers SAMR-certified.
As a Microsoft district, teachers and students are able to take advantage of Edmodo’s integration with the software, using built-in Excel, PowerPoint and Word features for editing documents within the Library.

Edmodo’s administrative features help the district’s iCenter team view usage reports and share that data to meet local accountability plans. They can even check on what’s happening in a classroom.

“Usage analytics viewed through Edmodo Statistics are necessary and vital for making the case for why something is working and why a district should pay more,” said Edward Simoneau, Coachella’s Educational Technology Coordinator.

The Educational Technology team also views Snapshot data in the Administrative account to determine how students are doing on Common Core standards, and determine if Professional Learning Communities created for particular subjects and grade levels need additional support.

“Teachers see it as a powerful tool to drive instruction,” Simoneau said.

Coachella administrators also found students to be more comfortable with Edmodo compared to traditional learning management systems, while still giving administrators control.

“Edmodo has a social media feel to it that’s more relatable to what students see on a daily basis.” said Simoneau. “The way our kids learn nowadays and interact with the world — as much as we can replicate that in the classroom and get more real and authentic learning situations and environments for students, the better.”

What’s Next
Coachella is using Edmodo to develop an iPad boot camp, modeled after a framework developed by the Fresno County Office of Education. The district created an online self-paced course, using Edmodo’s Groups and Small Groups feature to divide the course by grade levels and subject matter.

Administrators said there was little friction in getting students the accounts they need to take the course: The student profile on Edmodo serves as a portfolio where they can collect badges for skills acquired, allowing administrators to track their progress year after year. The district also plans to use the gamification process for teachers’ professional development.

“Edmodo’s one of the rare platforms that has teacher badging built into it unless you go into an outside platform like Mozilla,” Simoneau said. “Again, it’s that one-stop-shop for us to produce these strategies.”