

Blended Learning From the Bottom Up

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Luella Middle School

**Ensuring Success For
Each Student**



Henry County Schools- Who We Are

- Metro Atlanta
- 40,000 students
- \$7200 per student
- GA \$8800 per student
- 51 Schools
 - 9 HS, 11 MS, 30 ES,



Luella Middle School

- 763 students
 - 36% Free and Reduced
 - 13% SWD
 - 48% Black, 37% White, 7% Hispanic, 8% other
- 41 Full Time Teachers
- 3 Administrators
- 1 Instructional Tech Specialist (ITS) , 1 Media Specialist
- Graduation Coach
- Not on the Needs Improvement List in 2009 after 6 years.

LMS-Our Beliefs

Est. 05

- All learners learn best when they are engaged, motivated, and intellectually challenged.
- All learners learn best when they feel safe both physically and mentally.
- All learners need effective, timely, and specific feedback to meet mastery learning targets based on performance standards.
- All learners need to feel ownership and membership in a community that they are both a part of and contributor to in tangible and intangible ways.

LMS-Our Vision

- We will utilize technology as a means of organization, communication, and creativity to close the feedback loop, monitor and track student progress toward mastery targets, and to engage students in meaningful standards-based learning projects.
- We will make demonstrating mastery learning the primary and ultimate focus of everything we do and constantly measure our actions against the question; How will it help my students to demonstrate mastery learning?
- We will make learning constant and time flexible. By utilizing block scheduling, flexible grouping strategies, and pyramids of academic intervention we will meet students where they are and move them to mastery of the performance standards.

We Must:

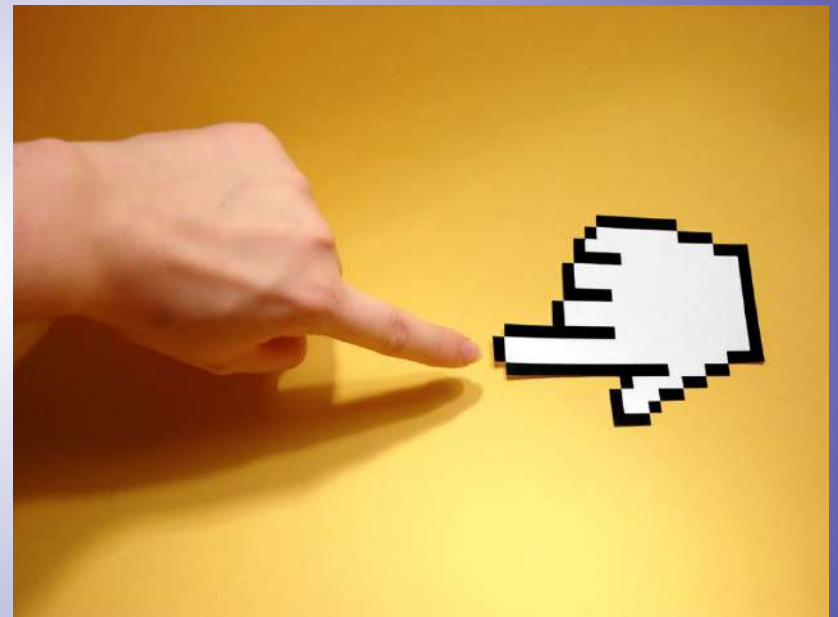
- Challenge students to solve authentic, real world problems that will allow them to demonstrate mastery of the performance standards through the journey and solutions they present to solve these problems.
- Provide students and teachers ubiquitous access to technology tools that are clearly linked to their demonstration of mastery learning.
- Ask the best questions.

The School Improvement Challenge

- We made AYP for two years in a row, now what do we do?
- How do you differentiate for students to meet their needs?
 - Specifically, how to offer intervention and acceleration simultaneously
- How do you create and implement performance tasks in all disciplines that force students to demonstrate mastery of the GPS?
- How do you engage the 21st century digital native in the learning process and make it engaging and meaningful preparation for the real world?
- How do you teach older dogs new tricks?

Our Answer

- Blended Learning-
 - Utilize an online learning management system (Angel)
 - Teachers author content for their online course simultaneously with unit/lesson planning
 - Maximizes collaborative planning groups already in place



Why Blended Learning?

- US DOE Meta analysis of Research on Blended Learning
- Digital Natives
- Internet as Entertainment
- What we know about teens and pre-teens
- District's vision to provide ubiquitous access to course material (multi year - technology plan)

Effective Blended Learning at Luella Middle

- Enroll all students in blended learning courses in all academic core areas.
- Provide consistent and targeted support for professional learning on instructional design for mastery, content authoring, the integration of technology with face to face instruction, and best practices in online learning.
- Realize we must undergo a *traumatic* (and dramatic) change process for students, teachers, and parents to make this shift.

Narrative - Comic Strip

Comics: We read comics for fun, but we can learn from them as well!

[My Notes](#) | [Previous](#) [Next](#)


By Ray Billingsley

Comic Strip Unit Objectives: What am I going to learn?
Standards, EQs, and Vocabulary

Comic Strip Directions and Rubric
Get started here

Resource 1: What is a Genre?
Find out how you will choose the right setting, character, etc for your comic strip.

Name That Genre
Read about each genre, and then identify each book's genre.

Task 1: Timeline

Task 2: Interactive Comic Strip Activity
Use this interactive activity to learn about comics and a story telling method. Have fun!

Task 3: Click and Pick
Build and Print!

Task 4 (Discussion): Elements of a Comic Strip
Let's talk about what you have learned so far. Respond to at least two posts.

Task 5: Chronological Order Activity
Do this activity to learn more about using chronology in your writing and in making a comic strip.

Quiz: Chronological Order
This is a quick quiz to find out what you have learned about the use of chronological order in writing and making your comic strip.

Resource 2: Character and Setting
Learn about character and setting. Please note that character and setting is part of the rubric for this assignment.

Task 6: Turn it in!- Comic Strip
Turn in your finished work here.

Resource 3: Website to Coach Comic Strip Builders
Step by Step (advanced)



Implementation Challenges

- Common Instructional Design Framework
- Teacher computer competency
- Training time
- Content Authoring Time
- Hardware availability



Common Instructional Framework

- Utilizing the concept of backward design we:
 - Mapped 12 Performance Tasks that would demonstrate mastery of GPS and utilize technology
 - Created 5 “mini-lessons” to be completed online that support completion of the performance tasks
 - Provided PL on how to use Angel and its tools to support this structure.
 - Embedded Formative assessment within the modules
 - Post-planning 2009 utilized for lesson planning and content authoring

Teacher Competency

- Post Planning Training – 5 days
- Pre-planning training – 3 days
 - Furlough days reduced these
- Grade Level Meetings- 15-30 min. a week on focused PL using Angel and ActivSlate
- Course Peer Review at monthly faculty meetings
- “Just-in Time” training on individual basis from ITS as need is demonstrated

Hardware Availability

- Used local school funds to purchase:
 - N-computing devices and Thin Clients to expand labs so that there is one lab of 30 computers for each team. (3 years)
 - LCD projectors for every classroom (2 years)
 - ActivSlates for every classroom (2 years)
 - Used older machines with upgraded memory to run as presentation station
 - 4 gig jump drive for each student issued like a text book



Student Competency

- Trial and Error
- Students use labs nearly every day
- Teachers started using Angel in school and classroom for first 6 weeks.
- Second 6 weeks started requiring kids to use Angel at home
- Connections classes provide supportive instruction in technology tools

Must Haves

- Clear Vision for Instructional Design Framework
- Clear Vision of Technology as a Tool to aid learning, not as the learning
- Clear Expectations for Implementation Guidelines
- Active ITS and support personnel from Technology Services

Must Haves for Success

Understanding that:

- 1. This is a transformational change for teachers.*
- 2. It is challenging to design effective work for mastery of the curriculum*
- 3. It is hard for teachers to give students responsibility and to allow them to self pace*
- 4. Best instructional practices are the same online, face to face and in a blended learning environment*

Must Haves for Success

- Non-negotiables
 - All teachers will effectively use the technology
 - All teachers will plan collaboratively
- Flexible time lines for implementation based on teacher competency
- Celebration of Short Term Successes
- Long Range Planning

Three Year Plan

Year 1 (crawling)

- PL for teachers on tools/Angel
- Build content from scratch
- Students use at home and in school as supplement
- Teachers learn how kids learn best online

Year 2 (walking)

- PL for teachers on blended learning best practices
- Refine content:
Performance Tasks and mini lessons better aligned
- PL on differentiated learning based on readiness, learning style, and interest.

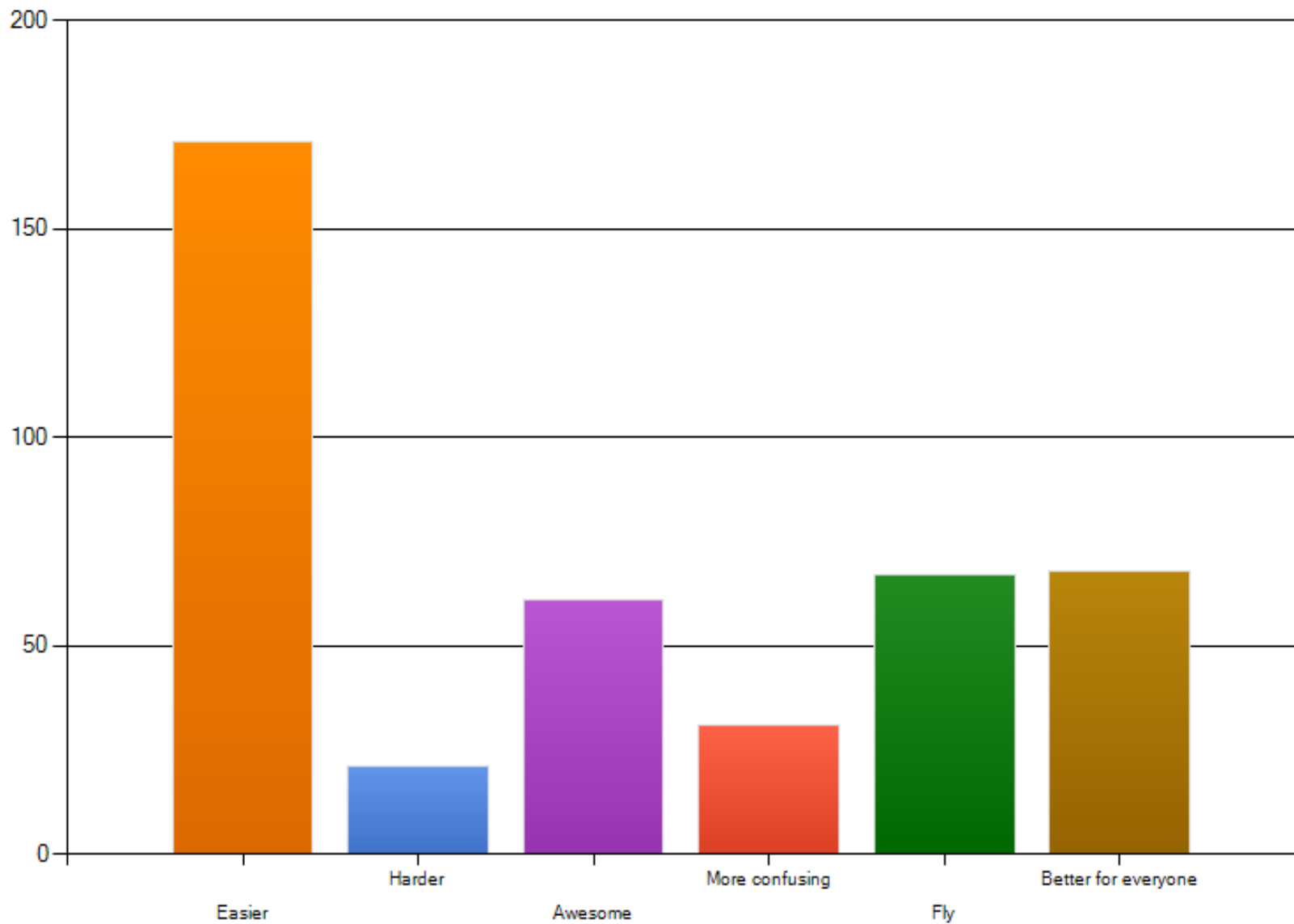
Year 3 (jogging)

- PL on using Angel and other web 2.0 tools for student self paced courses
- Instruction in class based on supporting self pacing and differentiated coaching for mastery
- Move towards ubiquitous access for each student.

More Blended Learning

- High School Blended learning
- Other middle schools
- 3 years all HS students will have access to blended content

Angel makes school at LMS...



Students say:

- “Angel has helped me get better at my typing with the discussion posts and drop boxes. That's a good thing because I write most of my time. Any way this helps kids follow directions better and improve their learning because just about any one wants to use the computer. Those are my thoughts on angel.”

– 6th Grade

- I as an eight grade student am hoping to use it in high school its is great and i wish my math teacher would use it more often i can do everything even when i was home sick i was able to not get behind and email my teacher and ask her what we were doing and she told me. it was awesome for me to be able to take my CFA oon angel it made so easy usually i would have to read a boring sheet of paper i hope they put the CRCT on angel.....please DO IT I LOVE ANGEL

7th Graders

- “is a great way to get school work done. I don't have to carry every book home. And if I ever lose it its on line. its better for everyone”
- “i like angel beacause it gives you the instructions and you can go back to them over and over again but when a teacher gives you instructions you have to remember them. There is nothing to realy dislike about angel. I think that while your in angel there should be some nice soft music”

I am a digital...



Questions?

Thank You!

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