



Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently made a call for online textbooks, saying that traditional textbooks should become “obsolete” in the next few years. The Manson Northwest Webster School Board had already gotten a step up on web-based high school courses by entering into a contract in the summer of 2012 with K12 to utilize the company’s online blended courses. A blended course is one in which the student goes online for the course content, but still has class time with the teacher. MNW teachers begin training for blended course format that same summer with a target of full utilization set for fall of 2013. Our 1 to 1 computer initiative begun two years ago provides MNW the platform on which to provide this blended, digital course content.

For MNW then, the transition to digital content involves much more than scanned books that are uploaded to computers, tablet devices or e-readers. K12 course work offers immersive, online learning experiences that engage students in ways a textbook never could. A student studying algebra might click to watch a video clip explaining a new concept or property. If they get stuck, interactive help features can assist in figuring out the problem. Personalized quizzes in all courses ensure that the students are reading and understanding the material—and if they aren’t, it can bring them up to speed before they move on to the next lesson. Social networking allows students to interact with teachers and each other students even when school isn’t in session. This concept is what MNW refers to as “Anytime, Anywhere Learning.” Students should be able to progress in their course work whether they are having a snow day, home ill or on an extended absence for whatever reason. If they can get to a computer and access the internet, they can go to school.--Anytime, Anywhere.

In his book, *Disrupting Class*, Clayton Christensen predicts that by 2020 over half of high school courses will be taken online. MNW is making this transition because of its inevitability and also because online interactive content can present material in ways a static text book cannot. Students and teachers will never again have to wait years for the textbook to be updated. Online content can be updated daily to include the most recent information or to improve the presentation format. The teacher’s management software allows her to view each student’s progress through the course content and the student’s success rate on checks for understanding along the way. Students who might have been held back in the traditional classroom can now be allowed to accelerate and enrich their learning experience.

In summary, Manson Northwest Webster is merely doing now what all schools will be doing in the end. In the beginning stages now, we will be improving and adapting online content to a curriculum that we know has to meet the demands of the 21st century. At a time when the amount of information via the world wide web is exploding in geometric proportions every minute, it is appropriate that the computer is our tool for accessing our course content as well--Anytime, Anywhere.

Mark Egli, Superintendent