

lethal to our children's education. They live in an incredibly fast-moving world significantly different than any before it, and they will demand things faster than "their teachers are used to providing them" as well as presenting other new learning needs. One teacher who has "adopted and adapted" technology is Merry Herbert, a seventh-grade language arts teacher at a middle school in Maine. The Maine Learning and Teaching Initiative (MLTI) that provides a laptop for every seventh-grader in the state had a transformative impact on her teaching, as Herbert notes in the following:

Using technology has transformed my curriculum and my teaching style. In particular, one-on-one computing has made the single biggest impact on my 27 years of teaching. My entire belief system has been tested and strengthened not only by the advent, but also by the intrusion of the laptop into my classroom. I'm no longer the expert, the disseminator of all-that-needs-to-be-known. I'm a learner, growing along with my students and along with my colleagues. We are a true community of explorers compelled by the MLTI motto: "If you know how to do it, teach someone else. If you don't know how, ask someone else." It's an energizing environment in which to learn: it's the environment of the connected generation (Herbert, 2008).

A New Generation of Students

To provide effective leadership for curriculum development, school leaders should understand today's tech-savvy students. With few exceptions, students are more "wired" than their teachers. Generations ago, students came to school with notebooks, pencils, and pens; today, they come to school with smartphones, laptops, tablets, and iPods. In addition, they "spend their days immersed in a 'media diet,' devouring entertainment, communication, [and] any form of electronic media. They are master multitaskers, social networkers, electronic communicators, and the first to rush to buy any new technology" (Rosen, 2010, p. 2). For example, 8- to 18-year-olds spend an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes with media each day. Because today's students are skilled at multitasking, their total media exposure is 10 hours and 45 minutes a day, an increase of almost 2½ hours of media exposure since 2004 (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). The most popular computer activities are social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, playing computer games, and watching videos on sites like YouTube (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010).

Many districts are creating blended learning programs that combine online and face-to-face instruction. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (2010) estimates that 50 percent of school districts are operating or planning online and blended learning programs. About 1.5 million students were taking one or more online courses at the end of 2010. The following selected policies recently implemented reflect the rapidly growing and changing field of online learning:

- Connecticut passed a law that allows online teachers to be certified in any state, instead of requiring that teachers be certified in Connecticut. In addition, the law requires that districts with a dropout rate of 8 percent or higher establish an online "credit recovery" program that allows students to make up course deficiencies online.
- In Idaho, Standards for Online Teachers were approved by the State Board of Education, establishing 10 core standards for online teacher competency.
- Online teachers in Wisconsin must have completed 30 hours of professional development "designed to prepare a teacher for online teaching." The professional