



Reinventing the U.S. History Class

Tiburon, California

Examples of innovative use of technology in science courses are more common than those in the humanities. A short drive from Edutopia's offices in Marin County, at Del Mar Middle School in Tiburon, is an outstanding example of how a 1:1 classroom is reinventing the teaching of American history. On a campus with a spectacular view of

the Golden Gate, Anthony Armstrong, Apple Distinguished Educator, has developed a classroom that harnesses the information-rich world of today's digital learners to enliven a course that they should all come to love: American history.

In 2005, Superintendent Christine Carter of the Reed Union School District in Tiburon, an affluent community, led the bold move to provide Apple laptop computers to every student beginning in the third grade. Armstrong came to the Del Mar school by way of teaching in Texas and South Korea. He developed his model using media and technology in part through his own experience with an online EdM program at Full Sail University, which has a physical campus in Florida but offers primarily online degrees. Armstrong puts a new wrinkle on the old adage that "teachers teach as they were taught," usually cited as a reason why some teachers find it difficult to adapt to new practices. Through an intensive, one-year online program, including eleven monthly courses and a master's thesis, Armstrong experienced the power of online learning himself, including the university's learning management system, and designed the course for his students.

During his studies, Armstrong read books such as *Social Studies for the 21st Century* by Jack Zevin, *Teaching History in the Digital Classroom* by D. Anthony Cantu and Wilson Warren and James and Margaret West's *Using Wikis for Online Collaboration*.⁹ He also was inspired by other teachers' use of wikis, such as Vicki Davis's use for Flat World Tales. They