SAMR: Modifying the Traditional Research Paper

by Susan Martin

Description: For most of our students, an introduction to research does not happen until ninth grade. In the past, I have had my students write the traditional research paper using MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation. At first, I tried to relate the research to our literature, and then I collaborated with the social studies teacher to relate the research to her curriculum. Finally, we decided to work on the theme of leadership, which related to both her class and mine. We designed the project to include research and an individual paper on a twentieth-century leader. Then we paired the students based on their leaders and required them to create a video that compared their two leaders. The computer teacher helped the students develop the technology skills they would need, including using MovieMaker. This past year we changed the topic to an aspect of the Industrial Revolution. We decided to replace the actual paper with a graphic organizer so that the students would have more time to focus on the process of gathering information and formulating a presentation with a partner. Unfortunately, MovieMaker was not available in the school any longer, although we continue to lobby for it. This year we required a PowerPoint presentation using timing and transitions. Many of the presentations were quite movie-like. In terms of the SAMR model, the use of technology for this project provided me the opportunity to modify the research paper into a multimedia presentation.

Impact: The planning for this year’s research project was intense and time consuming; however, working with my colleagues and seeing the results of our design and implementation made it clear that our students benefitted from this project. As teachers, we often work in solitude especially when we plan our lessons. Having my colleagues brainstorm with me, as well as challenge me, made this project truly worthwhile. The use of MovieMaker, and even PowerPoint, helped our students to develop twenty-first century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.

Intent: I intend on collaborating with my colleagues more often because this project is one that the students found challenging and meaningful. Their sense of accomplishment was obvious. We are currently planning another project for fourth quarter.