

Students' expedition to surprising places

Google's Augmented Reality software help students dive deeper into learning



First graders experience AR technology for the first time.

Lowell Elementary School students from kindergarten through fifth grade discovered virtual 3D dinosaurs, volcanoes, tornadoes and more using the Google Augmented Reality (AR) software. They walked around, inspected, and dove inside different animals, insects and weather patterns. The AR technology uses the classroom as a map, and virtually places 3D objects that students can explore. By the end of the day, the kids had even explored the scene of a sunken pirate ship. [Watch video](#)

Google designed this experience, called the Expeditions AR Pioneer Program, specifically for schools. "It helps kids learn the things they can't see," said fourth grader Calee, who participated in the expeditions at Lowell. Students studied different types of dinosaurs, inside the eye of a tornado, and what the layers of earth under a volcano look like. University students use this technology in medical studies, allowing them to virtually peel back layers of the human body all the way down to the cellular level.

Instructional Technology Facilitator Jennifer Chambers heard about the program at a conference she attended and submitted an application for Lowell, which is one of the district's first schools to provide 1:1 technology devices. "Technology is changing the way students learn by providing access to things we have never had access to, and in a way, we have never experienced and interacted with. Learning through technology provides our students the opportunity to practice 21st Century Skills, so they can be college and career ready," said Chambers. Throughout the day, every student at Lowell was able to participate in the expeditions.



A student holds a virtual dinosaur in her hand using AR technology.

Augmented and virtual reality software systems have been used for gaming and enhancing shopping experiences, but Google found an innovative way to use AR in an educational setting. The Google Expeditions AR Pioneer Program provides classrooms with technology for interactive curriculum.

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A group of fourth graders explore virtual objects through AR.

"This is bringing the learning to life," said Chambers. "It's a way for students to become more engaged, but it also enhances and deepens their learning." Teachers are able to take students beyond showing pictures, videos, and diagrams, immersing students in the material and topic.

The district is implementing 1:1 technology for all schools over the coming years. The first phase of this implementation, including staff and student training, are funded by the voter-approved 2016 Capital Levy. This will deliver equitable access to technology for students throughout our schools.

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For more information:

[Leanna Albrecht](#), Director of Communications,
425-385-4040



Fourth graders look under a virtual erupting volcano.