

A REGION ONE GEAR UP TEACHER'S JOURNEY TO TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The most powerful and ample resource for change in education is the teacher's own experience. As educators we know how the changes in our world, our country and our communities affect our schools, our students and our staff. A particular teacher is on the cutting edge of change and he is one of several teachers across the Rio Grande Valley with opportunities to impact his campus, peers, and students. As a crafted and seasoned math teacher, Tiberio Ramirez began his teaching career in Rio Grande City in 1993. He has taught algebra, geometry and calculus material during his tenure at Rio Grande City High School. He has seen math curriculum come and go and has persevered in making sure students reap the benefits of excellent math instruction. There is persuasive evidence that students benefit from high quality instruction and Tiberio saw the benefits of the GEAR UP program on improving his instruction for his students as well as updating his technological know-how. In order to

be a cutting edge teacher, he became an integral part of the Region One GEAR UP math initiative at Rio Grande City High School.

As a math teacher, Tiberio is on a journey, and it is his purpose to be a lifelong learner who is innovative, collaborative, a risk-taker and a leader at his campus. The training, learning, and implementation of new technology may have been time consuming and tedious, but once those hurdles were overcome, he and his students have taken off to new heights in the world of math. He is definitely on the right path to school change since his vested interest is in the success of his students in an increasingly competitive and changing world.

Tiberio also stated that the use of technology in the classroom has changed the way teachers teach. His experience with Texas Instruments has been a positive one and he will be an in-house resource for his peers and colleagues at his campus. He is in the trenches applying these strategies and providing evidences on the strategies that work in his school ethos. He is so convinced that the new technology is so beneficial, that he would have asked his school administration how they would have provided such innovative technology for his students just in case GEAR UP was not a part of the equation. "Thanks to GEAR UP, the technology does not have to be sought after, but is now part of the school math instruction for years to come." The use of technology will allow students and teachers to build their self confidence and give the students and teachers another resource that they can use to learn and teach mathematics. The new technology will also allow students to be engaged, and according to Tiberio's experience, this is what students need to learn mathematics.

As for administrative support for the Region

One GEAR UP math initiative at Rio Grande High School, he mentioned that the administration at Rio Grande City High School was very supportive and patient. Thanks to his principal, he is able to integrate technology in the classroom to make a difference in teaching, learning and assessment. When asked what he meant by patient, he explained, "the administration was willing to invest time and effort in seeing programs initiated and sustained long enough to see results. I am glad that I could be part of that change process as well as the results."

When asked about his opinion of the GEAR UP program, he said, "I am excited about the program. I can see how students can benefit from the program and how I can grow as a teacher."

Truly, that is precisely why Tiberio has become a teacher-leader within his campus. He sees how the GEAR UP program provides students opportunities that otherwise they may not have had and approach the challenges of change in the teaching field of math as opportunities for transformation.

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