



# Ken SHELTON

## How Students Are Changing the World with Technology

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A little bit about Ken

- ❑ Worked in LA Unified for 18 years.
- ❑ Now works for EdTech Team as a speaker with the primary focus on equity, cultural relevance and student voice.

What does it mean when students' voices are heard?

- Many times the student that gets their voice heard is the one who raised their hand. We can use technology (once we have the access) to ensure that every voice is heard.
  - Create a culture where every student knows that their voice matters and that their contributions are valued. More than just "everybody put something down in a doc"
  - **It isn't just about letting everyone respond. It's about making sure we do something with those responses.**
  - **Educators need to be both responsive and relevant in order to be a contemporary educator.**
    - If you are doing the same things in the classroom that you did 20 years ago then you aren't relevant.
    - Often times, in a diverse student population, you can see that when students are categorized as gifted, regular or remedial those identifiers can be drawn on race, gender, and socio-economic status lines.
    - **The more opinions you have from people of diverse race, gender, and socio-economic status the richer, deeper and more valuable the conversation will be.**
  - **How can teachers begin ensuring that every students' voice is heard in the classroom?**
    - Simple Google form:
      - Name

- How are you feeling today? Scale from terrible to amazing
  - Paragraph text asking if there is anything your teacher can do to provide you support and understanding if you are feeling great or if you're not.
    - A simple way to make sure that each student can communicate with the teacher and the teacher can check in on them. Provides a supportive and nurturing ear to each student.
  - **Have a conversation with students about their grade.**
    - Ask them to negotiate their grade.
      - Helps students take ownership of their learning.
      - Ask them which letter THEY would identify as a representation of their learning during the course of their class.
- How can we empower students to want to utilize technology to change the world?
  - **We can create the conditions within the content for our students to become active problem solvers in their communities.**
  - If you think about the problems that exist in our communities there are simple ways to bridge the content with the problems that they are solving.
  - Examples:
    - Alexander Ramsey Middle School
      - The students realized that the school was named after someone who committed genocide against the indigenous people.
      - Students developed an awareness around the fact that the adults would not be the ones to solve the problem so they needed to.
      - The students' utilized technology to amplify their cause, mobilization of classmates, presentations for the school board.
      - **They got enough awareness raised around the problem and were able to get the school board to change the name of the school.**
      - Ultimately changed the name to [Justice Paige Middle School](#). Justice Paige was the first African American to become a supreme court justice in Minnesota.
- **How important is all that curriculum anyway?**
  - Of all of the things I can be spending my time on, what will make the biggest difference in my students lives?
  - The more we look at things from a holistic perspective we can find examples of cross-curricular projects that will be far more lasting, beneficial or meaningful than just "getting through the curriculum."
  - **If we encourage a more holistic approach to learning you can provide a more inclusive environment where students are accomplishing rather than just playing the game of school.**

- What can we do in the classrooms to help students navigate the world of digital communication and collaboration?
  - **Create opportunities for students to have meaningful conversations around race, class, and gender.**
  - We have to start looking at the benefits of having diverse representations of who we learn with and who we learn from.
  - We need to stop being fragile with meaningful conversations.
    - Discuss the difference between empathy and tolerance.
    - **Understanding doesn't require agreement.**
      - Helps us become a better friend, educator, and person.
    - If you are teaching History or English think about the narratives that are being perpetuated by sticking to the standards as they are.
      - Ask questions what titles are being read? Is there diversity in the authors and characters?
  - **If we aren't aware of the need for diversity and the opportunities for access to diverse narratives then we can't be responsive and therefore we can't be relevant.**
  - Activity to help with awareness as we engage in these conversations:
    - Create a document with two columns one with constructive comments and the other with destructive comments to the dialogue.
      - Afterward discuss how we these words, phrases or ideas can be used in conversations face to face then discuss what it would look like in the digital world.
      - **If we have a deeper understanding of the terminology and strategies for having constructive dialogue face to face the greater the chance that it will translate into our digital conversations.**
      - Think carefully about how you can create opportunities to have meaningful conversations with our peers and our students.
    - If we don't talk to these kids about these topics then who will?
  - Be cognizant of creating a listening culture.
    - Don't listen to respond listen to learn.
    - The more we listen to each other's stories the less we pass judgment and the more we empathize.
    - Identify the conditions we need to create to provide others with the opportunity to listen to learn.

Resources:

- Blog Post by Ken [Understanding Cultural Appreciation v. Cultural Appropriation](#)