

PROPOSAL - TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Executive Summary

The objective of the Technology Needs Assessment is to determine how technology is being implemented in education at Somewhere Middle School and what interventions need to occur to make the use of technology more positively affect student learning. Using the Performance Pyramid model, the study will focus primarily on the classroom activities of teachers and students as well as past training efforts, opinions, feelings, and impressions. Data will be gathered from both secondary and primary sources, analyzed, organized, and presented as a written report no later than December 14, 2008.

Context Description

Somewhere Middle School (SMS) is a rural school of about 550 students in grades 6-8 and is part of the Somewhere School District (SSD). There are approximately 30 teachers with a roughly even mix of novices and veterans. The building contains a great deal of computer technology with 4 new computer labs, many classroom computers, and several SmartBoards.

In an optimal situation, technology in schools should be frequently integrated into lessons to facilitate knowledge construction and higher-order thinking. However, on the surface it appears that most teachers at SMS do not generally use technology to its fullest potential despite the district's push to improve overall student learning and achievement.

Work Plan

The Needs Assessment process has already begun with a careful examination of information and instruments from preliminary studies. These have been included, adapted, or discarded based on what was determined to be appropriate for this study. Other extant data such as Standardized Test scores for the SMS building, the SSD, and the State of Missouri as a whole is yet to be considered. Records of Professional Development training activities and participants will also be reviewed for the past year to determine where training efforts have been focused. To gain a better understanding of what kinds of technology are being used in daily lessons, information from online teacher lesson plans, web sites, and computer lab sign-up sheets will be collected back to the beginning of the current school year.

The data collection process will be initiated with a building-wide survey of the teachers at SMS using the same instrument that was introduced in the preliminary studies. An additional survey will also be administered to approximately 100-125 students. These data will help establish optimal and actuals based on the perception of

both the faculty and students. The data from the surveys will be summarized in the form of a line graph and analyzed question by question.

In addition to the surveys, further observations will be conducted, again using a similar instrument as was used in the preliminary studies. The observations, which will be conducted over five consecutive days, should reveal how computer labs are being used at SMS. The data from the observations will be presented as a bar graph.

At this time, no additional interviews are being planned and the data from the preliminary interviews will likely not be included in the report due to a lack of time. Furthermore, the surveys will serve a similar purpose as interviews would and will more accurately reflect the opinions of the entire teaching staff. It should be noted, however, that the preliminary interviews did help to shape the survey instrument by indicating what types of questions should be asked and how they should be phrased.

Deliverables

Following the conclusion of the data gathering and analyzing stages, the information will be organized into a written report. The following sections will be included in the report: Executive Summary, Problem Statement, Organizational Description, Audience Analysis, Primary and Secondary Data Sources, Data Gathering Techniques and Instruments, Data Gathering Process, Data Analysis Process, Data Table, General Data Summary and Interpretations, Knowledge/Skill Needs, and Recommendations.

Timeline

Completed Activities

- October 20, 2008 – Preliminary interviews
- October 27, 2008 – Preliminary observations
- November 10, 2008 – Preliminary surveys
- November 17, 2008 – Final Project Proposal

Future Activities

- November 19, 2008 – Requests submitted to administrators for extant data
- November 25, 2008 – Conduct student survey
- November 25, 2008 – Extant data gathering complete
- December 1-5, 2008 – Teacher survey open
- December 1-5, 2008 – Classroom observations
- December 8-12, 2008 – Organize and analyze data
- December 13, 2008 – Prepare final report
- December 14, 2008 – Submit Technology Needs Assessment report