

Debby Jones

9/14/2006

ACTIVITY ONE

Seeing Opportunities for Change (Weeks 1-2)

Title: How can I improve my practice as co-coordinator of Schools Integration Project 062?

Author: Máirín Glenn

Location or type of report: M.Ed in ICT in the Primary School degree awarded by Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (Glenn 2000)

Website: <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/mairinsip.html>

Date: 2000

Summary of Problem:

As a classroom teacher, the author wanted to use Internet-based collaborative projects to enhance student learning. She saw the need to include parents and the wider community in this project because her particular interest beyond the inclusion of technology in the curriculum was to break home/school barriers and to build an interest in other cultures and a pride in that of her students.

Literature Review Structure

Chapter 1: The Focus

What are ICPs? Definition—collaboration between students and others via Internet

Why include the wider community? Families should gain access to computers

The Problem: Will bringing schools into the infosphere justify the effort?
Berenfeld (1997: 14)

Chapter 2: Context of My Work: 19 year teaching veteran in remote Irish community which would be enhanced by virtual travels

Chapter 3: Method of Enquiry

The Plan—Action Research ref. McNiff, Whitehead

- Collected data
- Reflected
- Success Criteria Indicators

Ethics

- Student anonymity
- Permission for research in school

Chapter 4: The Project

Area of Investigation—Internet and Internet-based projects

My Concern—drive from interest in tech or interest in enhancing learning?

Evidence to Show My Practice Needed Improvement—Problems with previous partnership with Texas school didn't enhance learning

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What I Could Do—Reflection, sharing with colleagues, reading
What I Did—Read M. Reil's writing on learning circles, created a schedule of circles with students and parents, then Cyberfair

Learning Circles—created LCs with 6 schools, project title Places and Perspectives and Local Landscapes, sharing with Learning Circle Newsgroup online

Online Expeditions—Followed online a lone sea man rowing around the world

Cyberfair 2001—collaborative and competitive worldwide environment based project on a website

Parental Involvement—volunteer help creating computer room, 6-week tech skills course for parents

Impact of My Involvement in SIP—made learning more “real” for students

Conclusion I Drew from the Evidence

- Real and relevant learning
- Children's personal development
- Improvement in socio-economic disadvantage
- Developed intervention strategies to overcome problems

Validation

- Data
- Validation group
- Critical friends

Chapter 5: Significance

Personal Significance—assessment of knowledge, relevant learning, personal development

Significance for My Institution—improved home/school relationships

Educational Significance—generated a practical theory with model

Bibliography

The research question or questions:

How can I improve my practice as co-coordinator of Schools Integration Project 062?

- What are ICPs?
- Why include the wider community?
- Will bringing schools into the infosphere justify the effort?

Reflection:

This particular text drew me in first because of the setting. It involves a teacher working in a rural area in which none of the families had computers at home. For this reason she had to find new ways to find acceptance for enriching student learning with technology by increasing the family to school connection. It was

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only after this gap had been bridged that she could progress with her classroom research with the children. One of my schools, though neither rural nor completely absent of home computer skills, has some similar difficulties. We have a high number of family members who are recent immigrants and who do not speak English and whose computer skills are minimal. This means that sometimes there is a great deal more skill learning that has to be done as students incorporate technical tools into their learning because there can be no assumption of prior learning or skill support from home.

I was also drawn to her honesty in describing unsuccessful past attempts, because I have met some of the same stumbling stones with project attempts in videoconferencing. Her resolve to move ahead through research, planning, action, and reflection is moving and encourages me.

Quite frankly, I also love to read about interesting ways teachers engage students (and in this case the community as well) in learning with technology as a tool, but not as a driving force. I found her activities interesting, far-reaching, and applicable in most school settings.