

# Action Research Plan

## PURPOSE

The purpose of my action research project is to increase the use of available technologies for instructional purposes in elementary classrooms.

## PROBLEM/SITUATION

On this elementary school campus of about 570 students, there is a good deal of current technological hardware and software available for use as a tool in the learning process. An informal survey would indicate, however, that the available technologies are not being utilized to capacity in ways which will benefit students and teachers most. Pockets of daily and innovative use exist within most grade levels, but to this point have not been embraced more than verbally by the larger faculty. Various reasons offered by faculty members for the slow uptake include a too tightly-compacted curriculum, focus on mandated state testing, lack of professional development in the use of technologies, lack of personal comfort with technology in general, and a lack of time to plan and integrate new formats into the curriculum.

## CONTEXT/COMMUNITY ROLE

I am a member of this elementary school community serving as the campus instructional technology specialist. I have a background in instruction and planning, professional development, and technology integration. My work on this campus is part time because I serve in the same capacity at another elementary school in this school district on an every-other-day basis as well as at the district level from time to time for particular technology initiatives. The duties are varied and while concrete in the area of keeping technology running on campus, are more abstract and may be customized to fit the needs of the stakeholders in other areas including technology integration and instructional development.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Resources helpful in this pursuit include the following articles from research and professional journals.

Aguilar, Cynthia Mata, & Rivero, Heather. (2006). Blogs: Ending isolation. *Principal Leadership*, 7(1), 46-51.

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Chiero, Robin, Sherry, Lorraine, Bohlin, Roy, & Harris, Susan. (2003). Increasing comfort, confidence, and competence in technology infusion with learning communities. *Tech Trends*, 47(2), 34-38.

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- Wallace, Deb. (2006, February). The learning engine: Building capabilities through communities of practice. *Information Outlook*, 10(21), 27-30.

Wenger, Etienne, McDermott, Richard, & Snyder, William M. (2002, March).  
Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge -  
Seven principles for cultivating communities of practice. *Harvard  
Business School Working Knowledge*, 1-9.

## MY ACTIONS (Cycle 1)

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**QUESTION 1:** Will inviting teachers to help organize technology resources available on campus increase their use?

**Action**—Created a wiki for teachers to use in troubleshooting hardware/software, communicating ideas, sharing current ideas and research, and for technology discussion.

**Action**—Created an internal use only online technology resources reservation calendar.

**QUESTION 2:** Will recognizing and rewarding expertise in the community of teachers increase their use of technologies?

**Action**—Invited teachers who use particular technologies well to model use and mentor others (e.g. 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers training 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers in use of Classroom Performance System).

**QUESTION 3:** Will providing/offering opportunities for continued learning develop teachers' technology integration?

**Action**—Acquired \$1050 funding from the district to provide substitutes for teachers during technology-related professional development.

**Action**—Provided/offered just-in-time training for teachers who had questions about using technologies (e.g., connecting the television to the computer with an s-video cord and with proper audio cables for optimal presentation of streamed content).

**Action**—Planned and modeled technology uses in classrooms, inviting teachers to take over while I assisted--gradual release (e.g., guided online research for production of group documentaries).

**Action**—Created periodic technology newsletters including news about district initiatives, technology tips and tricks, frequently asked questions, and references to current practice.

**QUESTION 4:** Will the development of community sharing/reflective opportunities increase development of technology integration?

**Action**—(same as above) Created a wiki for teachers to use in troubleshooting hardware/software, communicating ideas, and for technology discussion.

**Action**—Began informal meetings with grade level/departmental groups during their planning time to share and reflect as well as to provide just-in-time training.

## **ARTIFACTS COLLECTED**

I will collect the following items:

- 1) My personal OMET blogs
- 2) Technology reservation/library checkout records
- 3) Exemplary student products never produced in previous years
- 4) Records of professional development opportunities with reflective results
- 5) Information posted to the wiki
- 6) Technology newsletters
- 7) Related email
- 8) TappedIn session transcripts
- 9) Survey results

## **EVALUATION**

I will evaluate this action through the following:

- 1) Informal meetings with teachers and administrators.
- 2) Comparisons to other similar campuses.
- 3) Study of the technology reservation calendar and library equipment checkout records.
- 4) Innovative student products.
- 5) Stakeholder input (parent, teacher, administrator, other email and phone messages).

## **PLAN (Cycle 2)**

At this point, I would like to begin and end my second cycle of action with a short teacher survey (20 questions I will post to Blackboard for consideration) covering attitudes and abilities to achieve grounding for how I can find true north for this campus. I believe that completing a hardcopy survey will provide my best results beginning at the campus professional development session on January 3<sup>rd</sup> when teachers return from the holidays. I really want the direction of my actions to be stakeholder driven but at the same time not lose sight of the direction that current research points. Many of my actions from that point will hinge upon the results of the survey, but may include providing funding for some teachers to attend the Texas Computer Educator Association conference in February who may then return to campus to share. Use of the funding which was acquired for

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professional development will be planned with the building principal considering the survey results and district technology initiatives in order that the most effective professional development may be provided. I plan to continue working with teachers on the digital portfolios which were presented to them in the fall, providing assistance as needed for training and related activities. I would also like to have an opportunity for students to share some of their products including digital portfolios on the evening of a PTA meeting in late spring.