

Technology Improvement Plan

Samantha Justice

Coastal Carolina University

EDIT 760 Section D1

July 11, 2019

Introduction

As stated by Metcalf and LaFrance (2013), NETS-A standards help leaders develop the knowledge and skills necessary to lead technology rich schools. Throughout the past five weeks I have studied St. James Elementary School's integration of NETS-A Standards one through five. It is essential that educational administrators demonstrate each of the five NETS-A standards, and the criteria outlined in their indicators. By doing so, educational leaders are "able to support students and teachers to ensure that optimal benefits from technology are in place" (Knezek, 2009).

In order to ensure that technology is being used to produce optimal benefits, NETS-A standards must be evident within a school or organization. By conducting interviews (with teachers, administrators, and curriculum coaches), collecting data, and conducting observations at St. James Elementary I have identified four overarching issues in regards to NETS-A standards one through five. First, I have identified a lack of acceptance of technology utilization by groups of teachers. Secondly, I have identified the limited availability of technology resources. Also, a lack of communication between various groups (including teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members) has been identified. Lastly, a lack of cultural understanding is evident. At St. James Elementary (SJE) standards one through five are exhibited, although lacking in some areas, and in need of improvement.

Improvement Plan

In the past few years there has been a growing interest for the integration of technologies in the formal education field. Among the key elements needed to successfully achieve technology integration is the acceptance of technologies by the teaching body (Teo, 2017). While

analyzing SJE's integration of NETS-A standards one through five I identified a lack of teacher acceptance of technology utilization as an overarching issue in regards to the integration of NETS-A standards one, two, and three.

As standard two indicator three states, environments are closely tied to each teacher's personal proficiency and confidence in technology use. From conducting interviews with SJE staff members who are reluctant to accept technology integration, I have identified a common factor. Most teachers who are not accepting in regards to technology integration feel as if integrating technology is a daunting task. They often feel overwhelmed when trying to implement too many technologies at one. When these teachers feel overwhelmed, they are less likely to participate in responsible risk-taking that fosters technological innovation.

Currently, our district provides teachers with trainings on specific software/programs during professional development sessions once or twice a month for a duration of 30 minutes each time. The issue with this model is that the allotted time does not allow for practice, many questions, or a wide variety of trainings. This has contributed to a lack of teachers' acceptance of technology integration. However, I have come up with a solution for this deficit. With the incorporation of web-based trainings and professional learning networks, I believe this deficit could be illuminated in a short amount of time.

A possible solution that is cost effective and utilizes available timing is web-based trainings. As stated in Chapter 2 of *Designing web-based training*, Web Based Training contributes to improved learning, large cost savings, and better social attitudes toward training. My district's digital integration specialists (DIS) provides web-based trainings, however, it is not widely known. My district's DIS has a YouTube channel in which they provide training videos on a very wide variety of technologies, software, and programs available to our district. These

tutorials are self-paced, can be viewed at home, over the summer, during planning, basically anywhere you have internet access. Best of all, the resources would be no additional cost to our school or district.

In addition to web-based training, I think professional learning networks would be a valuable resource in overcoming the technology acceptance deficits at SJE. In order to hold ourselves accountable, and continue to grow as educators, it is essential to form a professional learning network (PLN) as a support system. A PLN is a familiar place educators can go to learn and share. If you have a support system, incorporating technology in instruction would no longer have to be intimidating, because they are not independent endeavors. A suggested starting point for a PLN is to gather a few resources on how to use current technologies in the classroom, and explore them together (Watanabe-Crockett, 2017). A suggested PLN would be for grade level teams to form a PLN, and spend one afternoon or planning period sharing their experiences with web-based trainings.

The third indicator under standard three of the ISTE NETS-A guidelines states that educational administrators often facilitate staff and faculty participation in a learning community through incentives. The lack of incentives provided for integrating technology can be identified as a cause of low acceptance by some SJE teachers. From conducting observations and surveys I have determined that reluctant teachers are more apt to participate in desired actions if they receive desirable incentives.

My plan for implementing desirable incentives would not be an additional cost to the school budget. It would however, require an investment of time. One incentive I would offer is a "Spotlight". A Spotlight would be a shout-out on the school's social networking platforms (such as Facebook or Instagram). Often, a little recognition goes a long way in the world of education.

When a teacher is proud of their utilization of technology within a lesson they can snap a picture of their students at work, and write a short narrative (simply a paragraph or two) on how they are utilizing the technology. The picture(s) and narrative would then be uploaded to the social media platform. The educational administrator would add a short comment stating how awesome the technology integration is. Soon, parents, and other community members will join in and recognize the teacher for their innovative work. Although this sounds simple, I believe it would be a motivational incentive.

After conducting a study at SJE I have identified a lack of resources as an overarching issue in regards to the integration of multiple indicators in NETS-A standard two. Standard two indicator one requires educational administrators to ensure instructional innovation is focused on continuous improvement of digital-age learning. In complying with this standard, educational administrators must plan for technology use in classrooms. Although educational administrators plan for technology use in classrooms, the lack of devices (such as iPads, Laptops, and Chromebooks) can limit the practicality of specific integration plans.

Providing expensive technology to students in a non-Title 1 school can be a challenging task. It is simply not in the typical budget to purchase additional devices. My plan would be to host a school fundraiser once a year. This would be hosted by the Fun-Run fundraising organization. Fun-Run would visit our school once a year and encourage parents and community members to support our school. Fun-Run hosts challenges and gives away prizes when sponsors support the school. Money is collected through a website, so it would limit the hassle of teacher accountability for handling donations. In addition, it is no cost for the school. Although Fun-Run receives 48% of the total funds raised, that is still 50% more than the school would have received. Typically schools in my area raise twenty to thirty thousand dollars during this yearly

fundraiser. This would allow for ten to fifteen thousand dollars of new technology devices to be added to the school each year.

In addition to Fun-Run fundraising, I would encourage teachers to apply for technology grants and create projects on popular forums such as DonorsChoose.org and AdoptAClassroom.org. Charitable organizations such as the Gates Foundation, Microsoft, the Newmark Foundation, and Google frequently support projects on these sites.

By conducting a study at SJE I have identified communication as an overarching issue in regards to the integration of NETS-A standards one and three. As stated in standard one indicator two, educational leaders should encourage staff members to identify areas of concern with instructional programs and technology and to explain their feelings. Also, as explained in standard three indicator one, it is beneficial to seek out fellow educators who have similar interests and work collaboratively to improve skills. SJE staff and students would benefit greatly by enhanced communication.

As explained previously, professional learning networks would benefit teachers in the acceptance of technology integration as well as enhance communication. It is essential to form a professional learning network (PLN) as a support system. A PLN is a familiar place educators can go to learn, share, and collaborate (all of which support communication). If you have a support system, incorporating technology in instruction would no longer have to be intimidating, because they are not independent endeavors. This would allow for educators to communicate their feelings, experiences, and ideas in relation to technology. PLNs provide opportunities for likeminded educators (no matter their grade level) to communicate. A suggested starting point for a PLN is to gather a few resources on how to use current technologies in the classroom, and explore them together (Watanabe-Crockett, 2017).

Upon conducting a study at SJE I have identified culture as an overarching issue in regards to the integration of NETS-A standards four and five. The fifth indicator under standard two of the ISTE NETS-A guidelines requires educational administrators to promote and participate in local, national, and global learning communities that stimulate innovation, creativity, and digital-age collaboration. Although many SJE teachers seek out such collaboration on their own, it is not promoted by educational administrators.

The fourth, and final indicator under standard five of the ISTE NETS-A guidelines requires educational administrators to model and facilitate the development of a shared cultural understanding and involvement in global issues through the use of contemporary communication and collaboration tools. Educational administrators support and encourage the learning community within a school to try and understand how technology is used around the world as a learning tool. They also support and encourage the learning community within a school to understand the societal, political, and economic issues which affect the use of technology as a learning tool in other cultures. Lastly, administrators support and encourage the use of technology to authentically learn about learners and scholars in other cultures. At SJE educational administrators do not directly model a shared cultural understanding and involvement in global issues through the use of contemporary communication and collaboration tools.

In order to incorporate culture into SJE technology integration I would add lessons to the technology curriculum. This would be no additional cost to the school, as the information would be compiled from web-based resources. These lessons could be added to a technology class or a STEM class. These lessons would be compiled as a unit of study. The lesson would inform and allow students to explore how technology is used around the world as a learning tool. Lessons

would be designed to allow students to learn about the societal, political, and economic issues which affect the use of technology as a learning tool in other cultures. During these lessons, students would also learn about learners and scholars in other cultures.

Summary

Throughout the past five weeks I have studied St. James Elementary School's integration of NETS-A Standards one through five. It is essential that educational administrators demonstrate each of the five NETS-A standards, and the criteria outlined in their indicators. By doing so, educational leaders are "able to support students and teachers to ensure that optimal benefits from technology are in place" (Knezek, 2009).

In order to ensure that technology is being used to produce optimal benefits, NETS-A standards must be evident within a school or organization. By conducting interviews (with teachers, administrators, and curriculum coaches), collecting data, and conducting observations at St. James Elementary I have indicated four overarching issues in regards to NETS-A standards one through five. I identified a lack of teacher acceptance of technology, lack of resources, lack of communication, and a lack of culture representation. At St. James Elementary (SJE) standards one through five are exhibited, although lacking in some areas, and in need of improvement. By providing professional developments and incentives, promoting collaboration among various groups, providing additional resources, and representing culture, SJE staff and students would benefit tremendously.

References

- Horton, W. K. (2000). *Designing web-based training: How to teach anyone anything anywhere anytime* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Wiley.
- International Society of Technical Educators. (2009). International Society of Technical Educators National Educational Technology Standards for Administrators.
- Knezek, D. (2009). Updating tech standards for administrators [Web log interview].
- Metcalf, W., & LaFrance, J. (2013). Technology Leadership Preparedness: Principals' Perceptions. *Journal of Research in Education*, 23(1), 58-75.
- Teo, T., & Zhou, M. (2017). The influence of teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning on their technology acceptance. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 25(4), 513-527.
- Watanabe-Crockett, L (2017) *How Teachers Can Easily Keep Up with Technology Trends*.