

Action Research Questions:

1. What is the most important issue you see facing teachers in the classroom regarding their use of technology?

Actually I see three major issues, all of which are intertwined:

- Inadequate preservice and inservice training
- No accountability for their use or non-use of technology on the part of school administrators (Most principals don't recognize effective use of technology. They're just glad to see that the computers are turned on and students are sitting in front of them.)
- Inadequate support at the building level for technology integration

2. How do schools determine what kind of professional development to offer teachers?

This should happen through the technology planning process, where professional development is tied to the building's technology goals (which are supposed to be determined by the school improvement plan). In reality, what I see happening at most schools is that some attempt is made by the SAS to survey their staff to see what they need. Most of the results come back as lists of Tier 1 training needs such as how to make a PowerPoint presentation or how to use Inspiration or OS X orientation. Rarely is there any attempt to get to the real issue of how to integrate technology into the curriculum, which accounts for the fact that most teachers haven't a clue how to use technology in their classrooms.

3. In your opinion, why are some staff development classes more effective than others? The most effective staff development is ongoing over a period of time, not just a one-time event. Secondly, the staff development has to be relevant to the needs of the teachers. There must be an expectation that teachers apply what they learned with their students. Teachers need time to reflect upon and share their experiences with others. They need to see that their practice promotes higher student achievement. Only when they have had a positive experience, which is validated by their students, colleagues, and their supervisors will the professional development have a lasting effect.

4. How is professional development delivered to teachers in other schools? Are certain types of training more effective than others?

It varies from school to school. A lot depends on how the SAS is staffed. In schools where the SAS has more released time to work and plan with teachers, there is more evidence of classroom integration. In those schools, a coaching model is very effective. In other schools where the SAS is in the rotation most of the time, staff development opportunities are rare; because they spend what little time they have dealing with technical support issues. In those cases, most of the professional development consists of "one-shot" trainings.

At the district level, we are trying to compensate for this reality by offering opportunities, which reflect best staff development practices, which I outlined above. These include the Mobile Technology Integration and the Computers for Teachers programs.

5. How is this professional development being transferred into improving classroom instruction? What measurement is being done to determine the effectiveness of professional development?

The feedback is generally informal and anecdotal. **This is a huge issue, one that would merit your attention and perhaps become the main focus of your action research project.** We do use both formative and summative assessments of our programs, the formative one being the Evolution of Thought and Practice. We also have instrument based upon the NETS standards, which we administer to our C4T participants at the beginning and at the end, to determine growth.

5. How can I encourage teachers to use technology in their classrooms more?

If you're talking about the one or two computers, which are permanently in their classrooms, then you probably have to focus on learning center-type activities or hooking up one of the computers to the TV for presentations, day-starters, etc. Based on conversations I've had with you, I know that you are also frustrated with the games and rewards use of the computers. I agree with you. I know that you are also frustrated with the fact the teachers set up a computer for their exclusive use. Five-years ago I would have agreed with you on that point. However, it is becoming increasingly

necessary that teachers have access to a computer for their professional use: e-mail, grades, ILP's, etc. I can't think of another profession these days where the workers are not provided with adequate technology resources to do their jobs. We are arriving at the point in time where teachers are going to need better access to technology. In all the middle schools and high schools, they have their own computers. This will also happen in the elementary schools when PowerSchool is introduced.

I think that right now the best way for teachers to use technology in their classrooms is through the mobile laptop carts. (with adequate training and support, of course!)

Joel,

I hope that my answers address the questions you are asking. I have to add here that without a knowledgeable, supportive, and visionary principal, you're fighting an uphill battle. You've done a lot in your building in your short tenure to promote meaningful technology integration. I know that your principal is now seeing that. We were discussing that very issue today in our office - what's more important to the success of technology integration- a good principal or a good SAS. Our consensus was that a good SAS **can** bring the principal around. I think that what you are doing at Sagebrush is evidence of that. If you need me to clarify any of my answers before you make your presentation, please let me know.

Carole