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ENGL 7723—Proposal Project

Technology Literacy Training Proposal

An Opportunity to Establish Technology Literacy Training for District Personnel

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Introduction

Statement of Problem and Objective

To meet the Technology Literacy Challenge and comply with federal and state mandates, all district personnel need a minimum level of technology literacy. We propose to provide basic technology literacy training and support to all district instructional staff, including teachers, teacher aides, and resource people as professional development. We also encourage administration and clerical staff to attend.

Background

"Technological literacy—meaning computer skills and the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance--has become as fundamental to a person's ability to navigate through society as traditional skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic. Yet, for the most part, these new technologies are not to be found in the nation's schools. Students make minimal use of new technologies for learning, typically employing them for only a few minutes a day" (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

In his State of the Union address in January 1996, President Clinton said,

> *"every classroom in America must be connected to the information superhighway with computers and good software and well-trained teachers."*

In acknowledgment of the challenges facing the education community, on February 15, 1996, President Clinton and Vice President Gore announced the Technology Literacy Challenge, envisioning a 21st century where all students are technologically literate. The challenge was placed before the nation as a whole, with responsibility for its accomplishment shared by local communities, states, the private sector, educators, parents, the federal government, and others (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Technology*).

The June 29, 1996 Report to the Nation on Technology and Education, "Getting America's Students Ready for the 21st Century: Meeting the Technology Literacy Challenge," (US Department of Education, *Getting*) presents convincing evidence of the efficacy of technology use.

Additionally, we have received state grant monies from the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. According to the accompanying Public Law 103-382, Section 3134 Local Uses of Funds,

> *"Each local educational agency, to the extent possible, shall use the funds … for--*
>
> *…(2) funding projects of sufficient size and scope to improve student learning and, as appropriate, support professional development, and provide administrative support." (Improving)*

Need

A large percentage of our teachers are not using technology in the classroom, or are not using it fully. By providing a basic level of technology literacy, we intend to prepare our instructional and resource staff to continue using technology and to expand their teaching and learning.

In June 1996, Richard W. Riley, Secretary of Education, in response to the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 stated,

> *Over the last decade, the use of technology in American life has exploded. Yet most schools are still unable to provide the powerful learning opportunities afforded by technology, placing our children at a competitive disadvantage in the new, international marketplace of jobs, commerce, and trade.*
>
> *Computers are the "new basic" of American education, and the Internet is the blackboard of the future. But the future is here and now, and we cannot miss this opportunity to help all of our young people grow and thrive. I strongly believe that if we help all of our children to become technologically literate, we will give a generation of young people the skills they need to enter this new knowledge- and information-driven economy.*

Yet, we cannot educate our young people if we do not have the skills ourselves!

The first goal of the Technology Literacy Challenge states,

> *"All teachers in the nation will have the training and support they need to help students learn using computers and the information superhighway."*

Upgrading teacher training is key to integrating technology into the classroom and to increasing student learning (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

Benefits

We predict that the benefits of offering training for technology literacy could include the following:

Increased Retention of Staff—Offering free training to staff is a proven way to lower attrition of employees.

Better-Qualified Staff—Increasing technology skills allows staff to interact more fully with other schools, vendors, and clients.

Increased Efficiency—New skills will support new and more efficient processes and methods.

Positive Reputation— Parents and communities favor a school that fosters technology skills.

Student Benefits—Increased technology literacy of staff will carry over to the teaching environment and benefit students.

Qualifications of Personnel

Jeni Patton is an educator with more than ten years of experience in the classroom. Ms. Patton also has extensive experience in curriculum design and the application of technology to achieve learning outcomes. Ms. Patton has taught a variety of students both children and adults, with varying skill levels, beginner through advanced.

Mary Ann Romans is a technical project manager and has more than six years of professional experience developing content for the World Wide Web. Ms. Romans has taught technical subjects to business clients both virtually on the web and in a traditional classroom setting.

Data Sources

For information on our data sources, please see the comprehensive list of Works Cited that appears at the end of this document before the appendix. You may also refer to the Table of Contents.

Limitations and Contingencies

Smaller class size is beneficial to both the learner and the instructor, especially in this hands-on training, so multiple sessions at a variety of locations will need to be held to accommodate all employees. Additionally, most computer labs contain only 18-20 computer workstations.

Most of the teachers who are not using technology now will be very receptive to technology literacy training. Kathleen Schrock writing for *Teacherline* puts it this way,

> *Using technology to enhance the curriculum, extend the instructional toolbox, allow for alternative assessments, and extend the collegial model, is an exciting new avenue of investigation for the new-to-technology teacher. By first becoming comfortable with the use of the computer as a tool, then becoming familiar with the skills and concepts inherent in the information literacy arena, and finally, experimenting with various Web-based instructional models, these "newbies," who take the risk and the time to learn, will soon become the technology mentors in their schools!*

Pairing enthusiastic participants with the few reluctant teachers may reduce that reluctance.

Scope

All district personnel, including teachers, aides, resource people, administration, and clerical staff will have access to the training. It will be scheduled during work hours as in-service training.

Discussion

Methods

We intend to do a survey of all personnel in the next 30 days to determine technology literacy levels (*Technology Survey*). An analysis of the survey results will determine the content of the training needed and allow us to customize offerings for maximum benefit and the least disruption of work schedules.

Assessment of learning outcomes will be carried out after the training to determine its efficacy. A sample assessment rubric is Doug Johnson's "The Code 77 Rubrics."

Timetable

We will survey to determine need, analyze results, develop materials, schedule training, and assess outcomes of training. The results of this survey will determine our timetable.

Personnel

Instructors are available from our existing district staff.

Available Facilities, Materials, and Equipment

We are fortunate to have the necessary computer infrastructure already in place. The existing computer labs in the high schools and/or middle schools throughout the district are adequate for training in basic technology literacy. Each lab contains enough Internet connected computers for a class (18-20) and has a data show for instructor illustrations. Training guides will be available on the web to reduce duplicating and production costs. These guides will also allow reinforcement of lessons and serve as reference for staff outside the classroom setting.

Needed Facilities

We will need to bus participants to their local high school or middle school for training because the computers in the elementary schools are distributed among classrooms in small numbers.

Cost

Development costs will be covered under our regular salaries supplemented by our grant from the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. Instructor stipends will be covered under the grant from the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund. Bus driver pay and van or bus expenses will be included under Professional Development travel funds.

Expected Results

Our students will benefit from the increased technology literacy of district personnel. Students will receive competent basic skills instruction from technologically literate teachers, leading to enhanced student achievement and motivation (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

Teachers will be able to expand their opportunities for training and communication with colleagues using email and the Internet. Sharing resources and experiences with other teachers contributes to increased competence, confidence, and enthusiasm (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

Administrators will benefit from technology literacy much as the business world has used it to streamline operations and save money. Principals and superintendents can use email and the district's computer network to eliminate unnecessary travel, saving time and money. Data gathering, analyzing, and reporting can be more efficient and effective using computer programs (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

Future Direction

The training we propose is just the start of complementing the curriculum through technology use. Extensive resources are available and teaching teachers how to locate, evaluate, and use them is another project altogether (Information Literacy). The currently proposed training is necessary to bring everyone to a level to take advantage of the resources and to learn how to integrate technology into the curriculum.

Feasibility

Teacher in-services are already on the calendar for 2001-2002. The Administrators and support staff will require release time to attend training.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Points

To meet the Technology Literacy Challenge and comply with federal and state mandates, all district personnel need a minimum level of technology literacy. We propose to provide basic technology literacy training and support to all district instructional staff as professional development. We also encourage administration and clerical staff to attend.

Technological literacy means computer skills and the ability to use computers and other technology to improve learning, productivity, and performance (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

A large percentage of our teachers are not using technology in the classroom, or are not using it fully. By providing a basic level of technology literacy, we intend to prepare our instructional and resource staff to continue using technology and to expand their teaching and learning.

We predict that the benefits of offering training for technology literacy could include increased retention of staff, better-qualified staff, increased efficiency, positive reputation, and student benefits. Students will receive competent basic skills instruction from technologically literate teachers, leading to enhanced student achievement and motivation (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*). Teachers will be able to expand their opportunities for training and communication with colleagues using email and the Internet. Administrators will benefit from technology literacy by using it to streamline operations and save money. Data gathering, analyzing, and reporting can be more efficient and effective using computer programs (U.S. Dept. of Education, *Getting*).

The training we propose is just the start of complementing the curriculum through technology use. The currently proposed training is necessary to bring everyone to a level to take advantage of available resources and to learn how to integrate technology into the curriculum.

Request for Action

The funding is already available and in-service dates are set for the next school year. We request permission to proceed on determining existing skill levels and developing appropriate training materials. May we have your approval to implement this proposal? If you have any questions or comments, call either Mary Ann Romans or Jeni Patton at 515-0500.

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Appendix

The Technology Literacy Challenge

The challenge consists of four goals:

1. All teachers in the nation will have the training and support they need to help students learn using computers and the information superhighway.

2. All teachers and students will have modern multimedia computers in their classrooms.

3. Every classroom will be connected to the information superhighway.

4. Effective software and on-line learning resources will be an integral part of every school's curriculum.

The challenge can be viewed in its entirety at the following URL:

http://www.ed.gov/Technology/TLCF/ltr.html