Individual Teacher Technology Assessment Narrative

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When the recent task of assessing a colleague's level of technology use was presented to me, Mrs. W. immediately comes to mind. Mrs. W. is a veteran teacher returning from a seven-year hiatus, during which she was a stay-at-home mom. Because technology moves at such a rapid pace, you can imagine how drastically the landscape of teaching has changed during her absence from the classroom. Consequently, Mrs. W. has minimal knowledge and experience with interactive whiteboard technology, and, her skills with office productivity software have weakened during her absence from teaching. Despite these challenges, Mrs. W. is eager to learn new skills and strategies so that she may enhance her instructional proficiency in today's technology-focused classroom.

Last year, Mrs. W. was hired at Buford Elementary School as a long-term substitute filling in for a colleague who was out on extended leave. Upon completion of her term as a long-term substitute, Mrs. W. was offered a contract to teach kindergarten at BES for the 2014-2015 school year. Her classroom consists of a diverse group that includes students getting EIP services, English Language Learners, and students in various tiers of the Response To Intervention Program. Mrs. W.'s classroom consists of about nineteen to twenty-one students, and she has a full-time paraprofessional to help her throughout the day. A wide variety of technology can be found in her classroom, including an interactive Mimio Xi bar for converting a dry-erase board into an interactive surface. The classroom is also outfitted with a Viewsonic projector, a Lexmark black and white laser printer, a Lenovo T420 teacher laptop, five Lenovo student workstations, and five iPad minis. Two online surveys were administered to assess Mrs. W's level of technology use and her attitude towards the adoption of these changes.

The first survey, based on the Levels of Teaching Innovation Framework, or LoTi, was used to determine Mrs. W.'s level of technology use within the classroom (LoTi Framework, 2013). The questionnaire contains a variety of response types to better assess both her access to technology and the frequency of technology use within her classroom and throughout her instruction. Survey participants choose from the following responses for six of the questions: "don't know", "never", "once a month", "once a week", "most days", or "other". The remaining survey questions are open-ended to elicit a written response from participants.

Mrs. W. indicates that she uses the computer or Internet to accomplish classroom assignments and to deliver technology related lessons on most days. Additionally, the interactive whiteboard is incorporated into instruction on most days. According to Mrs. W, "We use an interactive whiteboard daily. It is very effective in motivating and engaging students. I would like to use it more during small group instruction. Right now we typically only use it during whole class instruction" (personal communication, October 1, 2014). Mrs. W. indicates a lesser frequency with regards to differentiating lessons using technology and recording, exploring, or analyzing data; these two survey categories are rated with a "once a week" frequency. Classroom blog and webpage maintenance are used less frequently, i.e. "once a month". Finally, Mrs. W. indicates a desire to learn MimioStudio, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft PowerPoint. Overall, she is satisfied with the amount of technology within the elementary school, but she would prefer to have more diversity in the selection of technology tools within our system.

The second survey delivered to Mrs. W. is designed to assess survey participants' willingness to adopt new technologies and to evaluate their attitudes toward change. Mrs.

W. indicates that she views technology as a tool that can enhance instruction and improve student achievement. When new technologies are introduced in the school setting, she reveals that she assesses how well others like a product before implementing the product in her own classroom. Mrs. W. prefers face-to face professional development and is reluctant to try a technology a second time if the technology fails during first use. When asked how she is currently using technology in the classroom, Mrs. W. responded, "I use Mimios for lunch choice, phonics, science, and social studies. My students use English in a Flash, Accelerated Reader, and ABC Mouse daily. I show a lot of YouTube and BrainPOP videos. Sometimes I use the interactive math lessons but they usually don't work well" (personal communication, October 1, 2014). Finally, she indicates her reluctance to redeliver technology skills to her colleagues and showed an interest in further enhancing MimioStudio, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel skills.

The responses collected from both the LoTi Questionnaire and Adopter Level Survey (see table 1) indicate a number of things about Mrs. W.'s relationship with technology in the classroom. Mrs. W. falls somewhere between LoTi Level 1: Awareness and LoTi Level 2: Exploration. As previously indicated by Mrs. W.'s survey response, she uses classroom technology "to enhance teacher lectures or presentations (LoTi Framework, 2013). Her effective use of implementing MimioStudio presentations is in line with LoTi Level 1: Awareness. Mrs. W.'s desire to use the interactive whiteboard for small group instruction indicates that she is emerging into the next level, LoTi Level 2: Exploration. At Level 2, "Digital and/or environmental resources are used by students for extension activities, enrichment exercises, or information gathering assignments that reinforce lower cognitive skill development relating to the content under investigation" (LoTi Framework, 2013). In

regards to where Mrs. W. falls on Everett Rogers' continuum of Diffusion of Innovations, she falls in the Late Majority Adopter category. Mrs. W.'s Adopter Level Survey responses indicate that she is willing to adopt new technologies when "innovation-decisions of earlier adopters result in social and/or economic benefit" (Orr, 2003). Regardless of where Mrs. W. falls on the continuum of change adoption and the LoTi frameworks, she shows great promise and is receptive to coaching sessions and learning new ways to implement technology in her classroom.

The planned coaching approach will address Mrs. W.'s desire to learn Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, and MimioStudio. Five coaching sessions will be conducted to enrich Mrs. W.'s technology skills within the classroom. Each of the five coaching sessions will utilize tutorial instruction and Experiential Learning. According to Knight (n.d.), "Experiential Learning involves structured learning activities that simulate the instructional method or other content about which participants are learning. Thus, learners participating in Experiential Learning activities actually "liveout"; the content about which they are learning" (p.1). Knight indicates that Experiential Learning is a key learning structure in a partnership. The partnership approach will act as a necessary foundation for the coaching sessions and will ensure Mrs. W.'s overall successful implementation of new technologies and her acquisition of new technology skills. The three initial coaching sessions will address new software skills, and the fourth session will address any ongoing teacher concerns with the new technology. Finally, the fifth coaching session will be utilized to explore and address reflection about the overall success of the coaching sessions. The hopes are that Mrs. W.'s final LoTi Level will be at the high end of LoTi Level

2: Exploration and that she will lead other Late Majority Adopters further along the path of innovations and change diffusion within her school.

Table 1. Questionnaire Responses

Adopter Level Survey Responses
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Write your first name and last initial. (Ex. Jane D.) Your responses will be handled accordingly and responsibly with your privacy being of utmost importance. Melanie W.
Which of the following levels of education apply to your background? Bachelor's Degree
I view technology as a tool that can enhance instruction and improve student achievement. strongly agree
When a new technology tool or website is introduced to you or your school, do you? Wait for others to see how they like it, before proceeding
What types of Professional Development do you prefer? Face-to-Face
How likely are you to try a new technology first? Not Likely
If a new technology fails the first time I use it, I will try it again. disagree
How are you currently using technology in your classroom?

I use Mimios for lunch choice, Phonics, and Science & Social Studies. My students use English in a Flash, Accelerated Reader & ABC Mouse daily. I show a lot of YouTube videos and BrainPops. Sometimes I use the interactive math lessons but they usually don't work very well.
What technologies would you like to learn more about and potentially integrate into your teaching? I would like to be able to create Mimios, PowerPoint presentations, etc.
Would you be willing to be part of a technology pilot team who gains knowledge about new instructional technology, to possibly re-deliver to your teammates? I'm not sure I would be the right person for that job since I am not very good with technology.
LoTi Questionnaire Responses
Do you have access to functioning computers and internet at your school? Yes
How often do your students use the computer or internet to accomplish classroom assignments or tasks? Most days
How often do you use technology related lessons, web-based activities, or webquests in your instruction? Most days
How often do you incorporate the interactive whiteboard into your lessons? Most days
How can a projector or interactive whiteboard be an effective tool in your classroom? What instructional strategies would you utilize to make these tools effective? We use an interactive whiteboard daily. It is very effective in motivating and engaging students. I would like to use it more during small group instruction. Right now we typically only use it during whole class instruction.
How often do you use a computer to maintain a class webpage, class blog, or publish student writing?

Once a month
How often do you differentiate lessons using technology? Once a week
How often do you use technology to record, explore, or analyze data? Once a week
What sort of new technology or Web 2.0 skills would you like to acquire to improve instruction in your classroom? List any programs, hardware, social media tools, or Web 2.0 sites you would like to know better. Mimios and PowerPoint
What direction would you like to see technology move in your school or system? We have a lot of technology at the elementary level but need more at the middle school level.

References

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