Technology Survey Community of Practice Summary

The purpose of the survey was to get some data to review on how our community of technology integration practice is at Wadsworth STEM School. The school is located in Chicago on the South side and was established after the 50 school closing in 2012. As a newly formed STEM school the focus is providing students with tools to explore the integration of technologies to develop skills that prepare them for the unknown market place of the 21st century. This will be our third year as a new school. The school services about 500 students from prekindergarten to eighth grade. We have 95.5% students that meet the qualifications for free and reduced lunch.

The school employs one full time technology specialist and one full time math and science specialist. They are knowledgable and helpful in providing support for any and all staff even with all the duties and expectations of the administration and central office on the new concept of what a STEM school should look like. These individuals are committed and resourceful in what they do to support technology integration as best practices for our community.

The survey was sent to 42 teachers and staff members which of 16 participated in the survey. So 38% of the population participated in the survey. I was hoping for a larger data set but many might be on vacation. Through the questioning of the survey I am set out to find how colleagues are using technology in their professional practice, what changes or improvements might be needed, and what type of support is necessary to act on improving the current practices.

Based off the reponses 100% of the staff consider learning objectives when integrating technology in a lesson plan. This shows the professionalism of our team and how student learning is of the highest priority. The staffs' use of technology shows 87.5% is for presentations while only 12.5% are using smartboards for video and other resources. The school has smart boards in most classrooms, but the use is not as strong as I predicted. This appears to be where the support is needed. When I review the results for the technologies most often used to support student learning, Google products and Microsoft Powerpoint are in the lead with 62.5%, but some teachers branched out to resources like Youtube and Pinterest. This implies the diversity of technology integration in the classrooms. Not one response indicated the use of a classroom blog or Twitter but 50% are using Edmodo. One question addressed how teachers would feel about implementing social media for educational purposes in the classroom. I was surprised to get the willingness to consider it at 37.5% as well as the definite yes at 31.3%. This is an indicator of the possibilities that could enhance student learning once trained and feeling more comfortable with the social media for educational purposes.
When I evaluated the response on the barriers or improvements that could provide a greater use of technology for integration to support teachers in their professional practice, it was apparent that teachers are looking for ways to enhance learning and differentiation. This is where the

knowledge of TPACK would be useful. Teachers need to practice intertwining the knowledge of pedagogy, content, and technology to produce a seamless fit for student engagement and learning. The idea of creative repurposing is important because most technologies that teachers use typically have not been designed for educational purposes. This, in connection with student centered learning, would intrinsically motivate the culture of a STEM community preparing our students for global competitiveness.

After reviewing the results of where teachers feel the need for support and training it is evident that more smart board training is needed with 87.5% responding specifically towards smart board lessons training to improve the comfort level of the staff. There is a simple solution to this issue. Our two specialists are very capable of this type of training so it can be done in house and without much expense. Most teachers would like to see this support during the weekly grade level meetings which is an efficient way to accomplish this need by tailoring it to grade level while demonstrating the cross curricular possibilities.

Overall, the community of technology practice at Wadsworth STEM is emerging. As a start to the new year we can review and address some of the hurdles that educators face when integrating technology. With the proper support and training we will be better prepared to infuse an engaging agenda of practice that will increase student learning through creative technology instruction.

Resources:

Mishra, P. & Koehler. M. J. (2009). Too cool for school? No way! Using the TPACK framework: You can have your hot tools and teach with them, too. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 36(7), 14-18.