

**Reflection – In-service Training Initiative**

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In-Service Training Video Part 1 – <http://youtu.be/4d32z4Rlf6w>

In-Service Training Video Part 2 - <http://youtu.be/OqI8eFjuOwU>

Teachers are facing big changes this year in Johnston County schools as schools adopt the Common Core State Standards and the emphasis on performance and assessment continue. Related to both of these issues is the presence of technology in the classroom. However, how it is used is what is important. Teachers and Teacher-Librarians should be using technology and providing responsible and ethical modeling of the use of software and the Internet. The American Association of School Librarians' (2012) Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner stress the importance of technology skills for meeting future employment requirements, while the Common Core State Standards (2010) are designed to align with our nation's college and work expectations – two ends reached by one means. It is important for teachers to avail themselves of training opportunities, especially with regard to the integration of technology in the classroom and means to effectively communicate lessons. Cognitive research as identified by Roschelle, Pea, Hoadley, Gordin, & Means (2000) in Krotcoski, Bates, & Hopkins (2009) indicates that there are four factors which influence effective learning: 1) active engagement; 2) group participation; 3) interaction and feedback; and 4) real-world connections (p. 47). The use of technology, specifically the SMART Board, is an important tool in creating a learning environment complete with all four of these characteristics.

The high school at which I am interning, West Johnston, recently purchased 38 SMART Boards that are being installed this summer in all remaining core classrooms that are without. To ensure that the teachers are comfortable with the boards and able to effectively utilize them in their lessons, there was a critical need for basic and intermediate training on the SMART Board and its SMART Notebook software so that teachers are using the boards as interactive teaching tools, not simply as large-screen projectors or simply as very expensive white boards (Keasley, 2010). After inquiring about training

needs, I was approached to take part in developing a two-day training session on using the SMART Board. I joined a small group of teachers, including one media center specialist and the school's technology facilitator, to organize and deliver the training that covered everything from turning on the SMART board, to linking or embedding relevant websites in their lessons, to saving and uploading lessons to the teacher's website for future use by students. This session was held during their work days at the end of the school year (June 11-12, 2012).

My section of the training was to focus on the SMART Notebook gallery and SMART exchange (<http://exchange.smarttech.com>) to give teachers a primer on how to quickly and easily utilize the board's features to create interactive lessons and activities. The elements of this section were to be developed so that an introduction to both resources could be presented to the teachers via SMART Notebook. The goal here was to demonstrate to the teachers how the SMART Board can be used as a "conduit" to the material as noted by Giles & Shaw (2011). Their take on utilizing the SMART Board is as follows:

Like any quality instructional tool, a SMART Board is simply a conduit to the curriculum, providing a valuable method of delivering content in an interactive and meaningful context to facilitate student engagement prior to a hands-on learning activity or for reviewing rock concepts after exploration. For teachers, the use of the SMART Board uses technology that many students are familiar with already and helps bridge the difference between learning styles, abilities, prior knowledge, and interest levels that exist within any group of children. (Giles & Shaw, 2011, p. 37).

As the new Common Core elements are rolled out next school year, my hope was that the teachers would see the SMART Board as a user-friendly tool for engaging the students and effectively introducing them to their lessons.

The integration of technology in the classroom requires teachers to continuously upgrade their skills in this area. Now that SMART boards have been installed in all core classrooms, teachers are expected to be able to fully utilize the interactive features of the board. Accordingly, the teachers not only had an opportunity to learn about the basics of using the SMART notebook software, but were provided with

demonstrations and exercises that allowed them to see the features at work. Teachers were required to prepare a group and an individual lesson (with the help of a trainer if needed) in order to receive their CEUs. Additionally, these lessons were uploaded in a shared drive allowing the teachers to draw upon the work of their colleagues and use these initial lessons as a springboard for creating more complex activities.

In preparing for my training session, I conducted a literature review, identifying ways that the SMART Boards were being perceived and used in education. Additionally, I received some instruction on the SMART Board as well, including some hands-on experimentation with using the features and creating interactive activities with SMART Notebook, as well as uploading images and videos to create depth and context for lessons. I also was able to meet with teachers proficient in the use of SMART Boards in their classrooms and talk to them about (and see examples of) best practices.

My goal for the session was to provide the teachers with usable information. One of the teachers at the school commented about how she judges the success of any training she attends by how easy it is to take the information back and immediately apply it to her lessons. The pace and depth of the session I presented also had that goal in mind. I was advised by my site supervisor that given the newness of this technology for most teachers, it was best to keep things straightforward and to provide ample opportunities for the teachers to use the SMART Board themselves.

On day two of training I had an opportunity to introduce teachers to VoiceThread, a website that allows users to create “collaborative, multimedia slide show[s] that holds images, documents, and videos and allows people to navigate slides and leave comments in 5 ways -using voice (with a microphone or telephone), text, audio file, or video (via a webcam)” (VoiceThread, 2012, About). This session was not videotaped, but the presentation itself (a VoiceThread) can be found [here](#). A group of about 12 teachers attended this introduction during which they were provided with an overview of the

application and a walk-through of the various types of lessons that they could build with it. The VoiceThread session was offered as another means for teachers to engage students and encourage participation in an asynchronous environment. Allowing students to contribute outside of class has benefits for students as well, particularly those who like to reflect on the lesson before commenting or for those who

All in all, this was a very educational experience for me. I am grateful to have had an opportunity to participate in the group planning process for the 2-day training. Seeing how the teachers approach the design of the agenda and listening to them discuss the learning needs of both teachers and students at the school was quite enlightening. Understanding their needs for information and training was an important part for me. As for my part in the training, I learned a tremendous amount about how I prepare and present and how my expectations for the event were very different from the reality. Working in front of a group involves a different skill set than conducting reference interviews or reading advisories. I should have anticipated some bumps along the way, including the odd technological glitch, the question to which I have no answer, and the poorly timed memory lapse during the presentation. I could have been better prepared and know now that I should really expect the unexpected. One thing that worked well was providing the teachers with laptops so that they could work independently with the SMART Notebook software and gain immediate hands-on experience. As this was my first venture into in-service training, I was fortunate to have the benefit of my MLS coursework as well as the guidance of the faculty at West Johnston High School to assist me. It is my hope that I fulfilled my goal of providing the teachers with a foundation for the SMART Board features and SMART notebook gallery that they will be able to build upon going forward.

## References

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