

Individual Teacher Needs Assessment

Rebekah Yoder

Kennesaw State University

Individual Teacher Needs Assessment

Wayne has been at Alcova Elementary School for three years and has taught 4th grade. For the upcoming 2016-2017 school year, he will be teaching 5th grade reading and writing. Wayne's technology use has gone from none to integrating it almost all day long in just a matter of three years. As a result, the technology coach believed that he, as a fairly new teacher yet very open to technology, would be a great person to assess and interview for the purpose of determining strengths and weaknesses and deciding on next steps for the Alcova technology team to take in supporting their teachers. Wayne represents the vast majority of the staff very well because he has jumped into the world of technology integration. Most of Alcova's teachers are in that same spot – very few teachers are hesitant to at least try technology out with their students.

Alcova's technology team will be brand new for this upcoming school year. There is a new LSTC/local school technology coordinator (who also acts as the technology coach); media specialist; and half-time LSTC. In addition, the LSTC is in the process of forming a vertical technology team that will be made up of at least one representative from each grade level. Alcova's LSTC firmly believes in the partnership philosophy that Jim Knight (2007) highlights in his book. This philosophy sees the teachers and the instructional coaches as equals – as partners. This philosophy allows teachers to view a coach as someone working right alongside them instead of viewing him/her as their “boss.” Equality is key (Knight, 2007). As a result, the technology team will use the results from Wayne's survey answers and his interview to give them a starting point for how to best provide the staff with what they need regarding technology assistance and training.

Assessments

First, Wayne was given a survey to help the LSTC better understand his LoTi level (see

Appendix A). *LoTi* stands for Levels of Technology Innovation, and his survey answers signify how authentic his technology use is in his classroom. According to the LoTi website, “The LoTi Framework focuses on the delicate balance between instruction, assessment, and the effective use of digital tools and resources to promote higher order thinking, engaged student learning, and authentic assessment practices in the classroom--all vital characteristics of 21st Century teaching and learning” (Fisher, 2016). There are six levels of technology integration beginning with non-use and going all the way to refinement, so this framework is a great thing to use with teachers when determining where they currently are and where they would like to end up (Fisher, 2016).

Based on Wayne’s survey answers, he is well on his way to reaching a level six on the LoTi framework. According to the data, his comfort level in using technology with his students is very high. In addition, he believes in the benefits of Web 2.0 tools, and he also is confident in his abilities to effectively utilize digital tools in his classroom. When asked if there are obstacles to advancing his use of digital tools in his classroom, he indicated that there are none. An area that he did not appear strong in is using alternative assessments to allow his students to showcase their understanding of the content standards in nontraditional ways. A goal that he has for this upcoming school year is to implement more project based learning in his classroom. Finally, he sees technology as a tool that can benefit his students, increase engagement, and altogether impact student learning for the best.

Next, Wayne was given another survey to determine his adopter level (see Appendix B). According to Everett Rogers, people can be placed into several categories based on how likely they are to adopt a brand new initiative or innovation. These categories are Innovator, Early Adopter, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggard (Orr, 2003). Wayne’s survey answers would place him in the Early Adopter category. Similar to the first survey, Wayne indicated that he has

a great level of knowledge and comfort with utilizing technology with his students. His attitude toward technology is very positive, and he indicated that he is always on the lookout for new things to do in his classroom. He also listed some new tools that he is hoping to try this upcoming school year. This survey showed that he wishes that Alcovia had more schoolwide objectives regarding technology use. Finally, his most beneficial way of learning about how to utilize new technologies comes from one-on-one assistance from the LSTC.

Both of Wayne's survey responses indicate a great attitude toward technology with just a few things that he would fix or tweak about how technology is used and discussed at Alcovia. He is a teacher who enjoys being one of the first to implement new things as long as he receives coaching and/or support along the way.

Interview

Next, the LSTC spoke with Wayne to follow up on the survey questions he answered. He stated that his perspective of technology in the classroom is that it is essential. It should not be considered the "end all, be all"; but instead, it should be a tool that is woven into what the teacher is doing every day. Students and teachers should be proficient in technology, and they should be able to discern when it's needed. He compared technology to a crayon. A student picks up a crayon when he/she knows that something needs to be colored. Technology should be the same way. Students should know when technology needs to be used for research, a final product, or a component of something bigger.

Wayne believes that he has had excellent access to technology this past school year. He had eleven devices in his room – a combination of both laptops and chromebooks. He had the opportunity to check out Nexus tablets for class activities, and he could also sign out computer labs in the school for his class to do whole-group projects. As a result, he stated that no teachers

at the school could say that they did not have enough devices to effectively integrate technology with students.

According to Wayne, his number one way to learn about technology is from his technology coach. He believes that coaches are very effective when they can introduce new ideas and new concepts to him. Coaching is most effective when a coach can come in and assist him when implementing brand new apps and programs with his students. A coach should be much more than someone who leads professional development – a coach should be someone in the trenches with the teachers.

When asked how Wayne can return the favor of coaching, he said that providing feedback would be great. Letting the coach know what he wants and needs and telling her his ideas for what he wants to do in the classroom would greatly help the coach and give her a direction in what he wants. In addition, he said that he can also return the favor by being willing to try new things that the coach suggests.

Needs Statement

Based on hearing Wayne's perspective, there are several training needs that he has that would also benefit the rest of the staff. According to Knight (2007), so many teachers are required to attend staff development meetings that they did not choose for their own professional development. A much better practice is to actually give staff members a voice in what they want to learn about and what they feel they need more training in. This gives the staff more ownership in what they are doing, and it provides more of an incentive for them to be fully present at these meetings. Wayne was able to walk away from these surveys and the interview feeling valued because his opinions were listened to, and he was made to feel equal with his LSTC.

Moving forward, Wayne as well as most of the staff feels empowered after working one-on-one or in a small group with the technology coach. There is something about those small group settings that really make teachers feel valued, and it also allows the technology coach to cater to those specific teachers' individual needs instead of working with a very large group of people and being unable to provide that constant one-on-one attention. Collaborative planning could be a great way to handle this type of coaching. Every Thursday, grade levels meet for collaborative planning, and it could be a great time and place for the LSTC to join those meetings and assist teachers as necessary.

As far as a coaching schedule, the LSTC has a monthly schedule that she posts on the school's eCLASS page. Teachers are able to go on her schedule and sign up for a time slot to work with her. These time slots can be for one-on-one assistance or for classroom assistance. The LSTC's schedule is broken down into thirty minute time slots. Teachers have the opportunity to sign up for two consecutive slots if they want an hour with her instead. The LSTC has modeled and co-taught many lessons with teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade, and the teachers have loved the extra support. This is something that will continue on for the 2016-2017 school year. The LSTC will also schedule when she will attend each grade level's collaborative meeting. This will probably happen at least once a month.

Wayne most definitely provided some great insight for the technology team for how they can improve and focus their coaching for the 2016-2017 school year. The hope is that because of his feedback, coaching and technical assistance can be tweaked to help teachers in the best possible way – by working in their classrooms with them and alongside them as they integrate new technologies with their students.

Appendix A

[LoTi Survey](#)

[LoTi Survey Results](#)

Appendix B

[Adopter Survey](#)

[Adopter Survey Results](#)

References

Fisher, M. (2016). LoTi Connection. Retrieved June 27, 2016, from

<http://www.loticonnection.com/#!loti-framework/ca2bo>.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*.

Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Orr, G. (2003, March 18). Diffusion of Innovations, by Everett Rogers. [Review of the book

Diffusion of Innovations, by E. Rogers]. Retrieved June 27, 2016, from

<http://web.stanford.edu/class/symbsys205/Diffusion%20of%20Innovations.htm>.