Capstone Report: Part B

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January 25, 2018

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Spring 2018

DESCRIPTION OF CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

My capstone project was to implement technology training for new teachers during this year’s “New Teacher Training” hosted by Brantley County Board of Education (BOE).

This training addressed technology-use to achieve three goals that support the vision and mission of Brantley County schools: enhancing student achievement, fostering parent communication, and maximizing teacher workflow. This “technology-use” training was only a portion of the New Teacher Training, so I only had a small block of time allotted. Knowing this ahead of time, I knew a flipped style would be an effective strategy. I gave my resources to our Curriculum Director a week ahead for our new teachers to review before the training. However, the majority of our new teachers did not have their emails set up by our IT department yet. I was scheduled for an hour portion of the New Teacher Training, but prior portions of their training went over schedule, giving me less time. Not only did I have less than my planned time for the training, but most of the teachers had not had a chance to review the material. Luckily, as a teacher, I know how to be flexible and go with what we have! I lessened the depth of the presentation, but I left all the teachers with resources and my contact information for further support. This presentation ended up being less of a “how-to” and more of an “exposure” type of training. I was able to use my experience to recognize this right away, and it flowed as if that is what I had planned all along.

For follow-up, I have been hosting technology professional learning for several of the schools in the district, which include some of our new teachers. Additionally, I have met recently with our new teachers to repeat some of the components of the previous training and to extend ideas for their upcoming cumulative review. I would like to have a more personalized follow-up with all the new teachers from the training. I am scheduled to speak with our curriculum director to propose meeting in small groups during post-planning with the new teachers to have a more intimate professional learning opportunity that will meet their specific needs.

REFLECTION

This capstone project was insightful for me as I am working my way towards an instructional technology leader. I had the opportunity to apply my knowledge about professional learning and program evaluation. A needs assessment was my starting point in this process. I needed to determine school-wide strengths and weaknesses to inform the delivery and content of my training session. Because these were new teachers, the previous year’s school members (teachers and administrators) took a survey that served as my needs assessment. In addition to applying my skills of developing and conducting a needs assessment, I had the opportunity to exhibit my skills of developing a professional learning. This professional learning used my skills to integrate technology to support face-to-face and online components through its flipped model, which, in turn, modeled principles of adult learning, and promoted best practices in teaching. To make this training successful, it was imperative that my disposition was approachable to new teachers. I needed to be sure that our new teachers did not feel embarrassed or intimidated if they were unfamiliar with the content. This is another reason I chose the flipped model. New teachers were able to preview the material before the training began.

To those who encounter a similar need of new teachers increasing his/her self-efficacy regarding technology integration, I would recommend scheduling a small group follow-up session about one month into the school year. As we all know, the start of a school year is incredibly overwhelming- especially for first-year teachers. I recommend a small-group setting so this follow-up can be more personal. Teachers tend to feel more comfortable letting their guard down about their true problems/concerns in a smaller group setting.

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