

Techno-Phobes No More

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The optimum use of educational technology is important. That's what our district decided and committed to last September. While it's true that we still have a long way to go in the acquisition of hardware and software to give our students and teachers the kind of access they need, **the Carroll I.S.D. administration decided that all of the teachers must be technologically competent** using what was currently available at each campus in order to fully integrate technology into their curriculum areas and to have the basis for more advanced technologies. In order to do this, the district technology committee (composed of campus technology personnel, librarians, and community members) drafted 10 basic "technology competencies" that they considered essential for being "technologically literate".

This list of objectives was then sent to the District Advisory Committee (composed entirely of teachers) who pared it down to seven competencies and added three to four evaluation options for each objective, allowing for variations in learning styles. For example, for the ethics' objective concerning copyrights it might be possible to read a short booklet written by the Software Publishers Association and take a written test, find three articles on ethics and write a one-page summary, or simply attend a one-hour campus-level seminar taught by the technology personnel and the librarians. Needless to say, most people took the last option. Classes were offered throughout the year at the district and campus level. Small group instruction and individual tutoring were available also.

While participation in the program was not required, it was *highly encouraged*. In order to help motivate the teachers, a one-time stipend of \$600 was awarded for any teacher or administrator who completed the seven competencies. Even though aides were not offered the stipend, several completed the requirements because they knew the importance of technology in education and the training was readily available. Overall participation was approximately 95% with several campuses hitting the 100% mark.

The general feeling for the program was very positive and the teachers are hoping that advanced offerings (as well as a stipend, of course), will be offered this year. It is currently in the plan and the competencies will be similar to last year but will stress advanced techniques, and the integration and regular use of technology in education rather than just the basic skills.

Since many teachers who had never used computers have become confirmed “techies” and many techno-phobics have become comfortable with the technologies, it is doubtful that specific competencies will have to be selected in the year after that. The biggest complaint we got from the program is that now EVERYBODY wants computers in their rooms. We’re working on that, too.

Below is the list of the seven basic competencies required last year and from now on of all incoming teachers. Admittedly, they are very basic, but we wanted to get all of our teachers to a certain level without scaring them off.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of equity, ethical, legal and human issues of computing and technology and model appropriate behavior. Ethical issues include copying software, vandalizing files, viruses, security integrity, etc.
2. Demonstrate the ability to operate a computer system in order to successfully utilize software. This includes, but is not limited to, turning the equipment ON and OFF, launching application programs, navigating through the program menus, loading and saving files, and having a working technology vocabulary. (This vocabulary was selected from the eighth grade computer literacy curriculum.)
3. Demonstrate the ability to use two of the three productivity tools, i.e. a word processor, spreadsheet, and database. Examples might include letters, memos, budgets or grade books, class rosters, stories or poems, problem-solving activities, visuals for overheads projectors, report research, etc. (Each teacher kept a portfolio of their work for evaluation purposes.)
4. Demonstrate the ability to use a graphics program, (e.g. PrintShop or Slide Shop). Use a program to generate banners, cards, fliers, bulletins, newsletter covers, presentations, etc. (These were also kept in the teachers’ portfolios.)
5. Demonstrate the ability to utilize emerging technologies, (e.g. CD-ROM and videodiscs). (These applications would vary by campus and department.)
6. Demonstrate the ability to access available networks, (e.g. TENET or STARTEXT) (the on-line version of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspaper).

- 7 Demonstrate the ability to perform minor trouble-shooting. This might include checking for loose cables, loading paper in the printer, etc.

Below is the unapproved rough draft for this year's competencies; it includes the three competencies that were cut from last year, plus a personal and site choice as requested by several teachers who had special interests.

1. Demonstrate the ability to use the third of the three productivity tools (the one not chosen last year).
2. Regular integration of technology (other than "going to the computer lab") into the curriculum (e.g. CD-ROM, video camera, videodisc, calculators, spreadsheets, etc.).
3. Regular utilization of technology for teacher productivity (e.g. using word processors for notes home, electronic gradebook, budget, etc.).
4. Intermediate techniques in word processing (e.g. cut & paste, using clip art, including a chart or spreadsheet, etc.).
5. Access TENET for possible lesson plans (ERIC, etc.). Utilize and share an exceptional one.
6. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate software from an educational standpoint.
7. Search out new educational uses of technology through reading of appropriate periodicals (available in school libraries) and sharing these with colleagues.
8. Site choice (something unique to your campus - e.g. robotics).
9. Personal choice (something YOU want to learn about - e.g. DOS, Windows, System 7, Hypercard, Linkway, etc.).

If you would like further information on our program, please e-mail me at lsdunn@tenet.edu (Note: the first letter is an "L" not a "1".)

