

Digital Learning Inventory

The following questions were presented by IREX's Teachers for Global Classrooms during its online course during the Fall of 2011.

1. What tools, software, operating systems, and equipment are available in your school and classroom? (including by not limited to: videoconferencing, streaming, photo sharing sites, video sharing sites, document sharing sites, podcasts, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, etc.)
 - a. Throughout the district, there is a computer in every classroom for the use of the teacher(s); per our network usage policy students are not supposed to use these computers.
 - b. Each teacher's computer is equipped with Internet Explorer and the Microsoft Office software package (Word, Excel, Publisher, Outlook, PowerPoint) and other traditional basic programs.
 - c. All computers have access to Infinite Campus via an internet link; IC is the program our district has contracted with for an online grade book and attendance program.
 - d. A large number teachers, due to packages provided with adopted textbooks, have access to ExamView (or other comparable program) as a test generator.
 - e. Additionally, our district has made a strong commitment to getting a SmartBoard installed into each classroom; this is not 100% yet.
 - f. An online video database software package, called Safari Montage was recently purchased by our district. Educational videos are available for instructional use. Some teachers have found great resources within this package, while others find it not to be user-friendly. One feature of this package, which has not had much use (due to insufficient training) is a video conferencing feature which could enable distance learning.
 - i. Safari Montage has probably lost some of its appeal and usage due to our district removing many of the restrictions on using YouTube.
 - ii. Other options for video conferencing, like Skype, have not yet been embraced by the district.
 - g. Each school has various computer usage opportunities available for students which include: a couple of additional computers within a classroom, a computer lab for a full class's use, additional computers within the media center, and actual computer education classes.
2. How does your school make use of school and/or teacher websites?
 - a. Our district has contracted with SchoolWires for the hosting of our district-wide, school sites, and individual teacher websites. SchoolWires is fairly intricate and yet a relatively easy to navigate (with a little practice) when attempting to create and update your website. The district makes use of the website especially for the posting of a wide range of document links for the general public and for employees. School board policy updates, the district's yearly calendar along with daily updates, the Parent Portal feature of our

online grade book (IC is noted above), lunch menus, curriculum objectives, links to individual school's websites, etc. are linked for the general public to have easy access. Behind a secure log-in, employees also have links to Infinite Campus, Electronic Registrar Online (for Professional Development resources), an automated Substitute System, payroll, etc.

- b. Each individual school has a webmaster who keeps the local site up to date. Links are provided for parents, students, and patrons to connect with individual teacher's sites and/or e-mail. Additionally, the public can link to a variety of resources (like the counseling center and media center), school clubs, athletic groups, etc. Examples of school sites:
 - i. Southmoore High School:
<http://www.mooreschools.com/Domain/2075>
 - ii. Moore West Junior High School:
<http://www.mooreschools.com/Domain/1563>
 - iii. Red Oak Elementary School:
<http://www.mooreschools.com/Domain/875>
 - c. Each teacher has her/his own website as well. The district requires that we each have a basic informational page with our daily teaching schedule and contact information (school e-mail and telephone). The teacher websites, however, do provide the ability to post a wide range of information which can be accessed by parents, students, and other patrons. Some of the available features are time consuming to initially learn and, thus, these features are being underused. Examples using some of these features:
 - i. My site (David Burton):
<http://www.mooreschools.com//Domain/2094>
 - ii. More developed site (Elise Robillard):
<http://www.mooreschools.com/page/18648>
 - iii. Well-developed site (Brandon Wilmarth):
<http://www.mooreschools.com//Domain/2200>
3. How are you currently utilizing technology for learning?
- a. I make use of my classroom's SMART Board for displaying images, videos, weblinks, PowerPoint slides, and other information relevant to the current topic(s) of discussion within my classes. While I have received training from our district with regard to how to use the SMART Board, I do believe that I am underutilizing it compared to what I believe to be its capabilities. I know many teachers end up using their SMART Boards as little more than a glorified projection screen. I have a set of remote "clickers" from eInstruction which I use for informal assessment of students' understanding of concepts by responding to multiple choice questions; this set up and process can provide immediate feedback and further discussion for topics which were answered incorrectly by a larger percentage of the students. I also have a DVD player with surround-sound connected to the LCD projector which displays on to the SMART Board; this allows DVD based video clips to be used to accentuate instruction. Additionally, I attempt to make use of one of my school's computer labs for project-based learning opportunities.

4. From the list of global e-learning sites, which are available and which sites are blocked by your firewall?
 - a. List of global e-learning sites provided by IREX's Teachers for Global Classrooms during its online course in the Fall of 2011:
 - i. **The Global SchoolNet** aims to improve academic performance through content driven collaboration. Links teachers and K-12 students in meaningful project learning exchanges worldwide. (<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/>)
 - ii. **Omprakash Foundation** facilitates communication, collaboration, and mutual learning within a diverse international network of social actors. (<http://www.omprakash.org/classroomportal>)
 - iii. **Primary Source** connects educators with other cultures and peoples to promote the incorporation of global content into schools and curriculum. Programs include seminars, institutes, and study tours for educators. Primary Source also produces resources and curricula available for use by educators. (www.primarysource.org)
 - b. It appears that each of these e-learning sites, as of the creation of this document, can be accessed by myself and other teachers from our computers within our district.
5. What sites and tools are colleagues in your building using?
 - a. With such a large faculty, it is difficult to compile a comprehensive list of all of the websites used. However, some of the sites that are used by myself and/or others include:
 - i. Websites which provide online student textbook and/or teacher resources (links are unique to differing textbook companies and/or curriculum area)
 - ii. Safari Montage (link is unique to each district which has contracted use of the program)
 - iii. www.youtube.com
 - iv. www.shelfari.com
 - v. www.inspiration.com
 - vi. www.turnitin.com
 - vii. www.apcentral.collegeboard.com
 - viii. www.history.com
 - ix. www.census.gov
 - x. www.cia.gov
 - xi. www.prb.org
6. Is there a system for evaluating student technology literacy in your school?
 - a. To my knowledge, there is not a system (tool, rubric, etc.) for evaluating the technology literacy of students within my school or district at large.
7. If so, how effective or helpful have you found the assessment?
 - a. In that I am not aware of such an assessment (from #6 above) I cannot comment as to its effectiveness. I would conclude that any system that might be put into place in the future would prove, even if only on a limited basis, to be valuable in addressing the technology literacy of students.

8. Gather suggestions from students on their ideas for integrating technology into their learning. What tools not presently available would help to achieve district objectives?
 - a. Suggestions from my students, based upon an informal survey, for integrating and/or improving technology into their learning include:
 - i. Most of the computers within the labs made available for our students are not actually “computers”, but rather “thin clients”. More often than not, the processing speed of these thin clients combined with the internet bandwidth usage for our district makes for a rather slow experience in the attempt to use computers (whether software on the computer or internet based technologies, like web 2.0 tools).
 - ii. Our district has an official ban on the usage of mobile phones, iPods, iPads, personal laptops, etc., within the classroom. My students understand the desire to insure they or their peers are not distracting the learning of themselves or classmates by using such devices for texting, tweeting, Facebook, etc. However, they also realize that the technological power of these devices to enhance their learning is strong.
 1. For example: there are iPhone/Smart Phone apps which allow the mobile phone to be used in place of the eInstruction “clickers” which I currently use. 1) This would allow hardware purchased by the student to be used rather than district monies spent on “clickers”. 2) This would allow a variety of short answer or otherwise “constructed responses” to be given to displayed questions which would be more meaningful to student learning than a multiple choice question/answer.
 - iii. Many other suggestions could/would be provided if the district were to conduct a formal survey from current students regarding what technological suggestions they have to enhance learning. Such a survey would have to be regularly repeated in that technologies are changing all the time.
9. Suggest an improvement or solution to technology and/or its use within your school or district.
 - a. My suggestions for improving technology include:
 - i. The district should continue to embrace its current spirit of openness toward technology. While iPads for administrator use is commendable, iPads (or other tablet devices) can also be a significant tool for enhancing the educational needs of our students. Due to the limited physical space within a building for hosting traditional computer labs, use of iPads can create “mobile labs” so that more classes can be engaged within the use of technologically based student learning than what can currently be accommodated within the “computer lab” model. To facilitate such a move, wireless internet connections must be developed campus wide at each school.
 - ii. Training of teachers on technology resources is important. While a cursory look through the offerings of technology based professional development courses shows a variety of topics being offered, the

district should be more aggressive in 1) advertising these offerings rather than just relying on teachers to discover them on their own, 2) provide increased opportunities for such training, and 3) provide legitimate opportunities for teachers to put such training into practice under some sort of guided supervision so that teachers can gain a comfort level in using a certain practice.

- iii. A district-wide committee of teachers and students should be created to help advise technology staff regarding what opportunities exist and would be beneficial in enhancing student learning. Coupled with this should be some form of method by which to discover the impact of specific technology resources on student learning. Having large quantities of hardware and software available does not always equate to enhanced student learning. We need to assess the quality of learning based upon the usage of such technology and an advisory committee can help in the assessment of such.