

## Activity 2.0: Assumptions in Action Research

### Student Motivation

It seems that as more and more teachers are implementing technology in their classrooms, students have become more complacent about technology. This has been further hindered as more and more students have access to the internet at all times right at their fingertips. It wasn't that long ago that students were excited to go to the computer lab to do research because the internet wasn't accessible at home. However, when technology is used not as a substitution, as the SAMR model indicates, but, instead as a redefinition of a learning task, student engagement is high and students are motivated to complete the task. When technology is used in a way that students have never experienced, they are more eager to get involved. For example, when my students were able to converse with students from France through Edmodo, they were highly motivated to use their language skills and learn about the culture because they had never been in a situation where they could converse with someone from the target language in such a way.

Student motivation is also high when the tech tool being used makes completing their task more efficient and effective. When given the choice to complete assignments online or on paper, most of my students would choose the online alternative because they could do the assignment on their phone at any time or at any place, and they were able to see their results immediately. Immediate feedback allowed students to come to a quick understanding of how well they were grasping the material and whether or not more help would be needed.

### Teacher Motivation

In my experience there is a line that splits teachers into two camps when it comes to using technology. Some teachers are highly motivated and are eager to integrate the next tech tool into their lesson planning. These teachers see that the use of technology provides students opportunities that weren't there before, and can allow for easy assessment in order to gain an understanding of whether or not students are grasping the material.

The second, and possibly larger group, are the teachers who are comfortable teaching the way that they have been teaching and do not see a need for change. These teachers often see technology as more of a hassle. Websites go down, computers may crash, the web causes students to get off track; teachers see these issues as too much of a hindrance. Taking the risk of a program not working properly is, for many teachers, not worth the time involved with learning how the program works, or the headache of problem-solving when something isn't working properly.

### Teaching effectiveness with the use of technology

Technology allows opportunities for students to learn in a deeper more meaningful way. In order for our students to be college and career ready, we acknowledge that students must be able to analyze and draw conclusions. No longer is the textbook or the teacher the sole provider of the knowledge, but instead, students can use 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills to investigate and draw conclusions in order to learn the information. For example, a first grade teacher can tell her students that a seal is a mammal, lives in a cold climate and eats fish, or students could go to National Geographic's Website, watch a video and learn for themselves by seeing the seal in action. The use of technology can make valuable classroom time more efficient and allow learning opportunities to be more effective. For the past three years, I have used videos that I recorded and posted on my website to teach learning

objectives to my students. By flipping our classroom, I can take the lecture out of our time together and engage my students in more authentic experiences where they are practicing in my presence, where I am immediately available to offer assistance.

#### Administrator practices in initiating and supporting tech

In my experience, administrators have not been the tech “leaders” in the school community. The principals in the schools are not usually the ones to roll out new ideas in regards to tech tools. Even in our district, the practices of administrators varies greatly. Some administrators harness technology and maximize its use with parent communication and support teachers at a high level, but other administrators do not place a high priority on using tech. Even in our building, our principals have vastly different knowledge levels of the tech tools that teachers are using, as well as the capabilities of these tech tools. This is a disadvantage when it comes to teacher evaluations because many evaluating administrators do not fully realize that teachers are actively assessing student understanding with collaboration tools such as Google Docs. I have been very fortunate to work in a building where the administrators, collectively, place a high priority on supporting 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and realize the need for high price tech items in order to support teachers. Our administrators have allocated funds specifically for the purchase of laptop carts, iPad carts and Netbooks so that more teachers have the opportunity to use technology with their students. Also, they see the need for professional development when it comes to tech tools and have supported our “Greek Squad” in allowing “Food Fridays” to take place. This gives teachers an opportunity to learn about new tech tools that can be integrated into their classrooms. I understand, however, that this is not necessarily the norm in schools across our district.