

Chapter 2

Planning and Implementation of a Small-Scale 1-to-1 Pilot Program for Using E-Readers in Elementary School Classrooms

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A P-12 school district implemented a pilot program providing e-readers to 45 students in a 4th and a 5th grade class. The school district administrators' goal was to determine whether it would be feasible for the district to provide technological devices to individual district students for use at school and home, beginning with a small pilot. If the pilot proved successful, the devices would be provided to additional students throughout the district. The first step was the selection of the devices. After conducting research, the Nook from Barnes & Noble was selected. Issues to be addressed included inappropriate use of Nooks by students and parents, teachers' and students' learning the nuances of the devices, dropped network connections, students' forgetting to bring Nooks to school, and unrealistic parent expectations for teacher use. This chapter informs readers of successes, problems, and lessons learned from the planning and implementation of the pilot program.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4237-9.ch002

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The pilot program was conducted in a Southeast school district that includes 16 schools serving 13,697 students in grades PK through 12. The ethnic makeup of the district is 60.64% White students, 24.35% Black, 6.37% Asian, 6.22% Hispanic, 11% Indian, 2.17% Multi-Race and .14% Pacific Islander. Approximately 24.84% of students receive free or reduced lunch (ALSDE, 2013). The pupil/teacher ratio is approximately 13/1. The district spends \$10,828 per pupil in current expenditures, 58% on instruction, 37% on support services, and 5% on other elementary and secondary expenditures (NCES, 2010). The school district views technology as a necessary component of education and has been actively integrating technology for approximately 23 years, beginning with computer labs being outfitted in all schools. Funds for technology come from a variety of sources, including e-rate funding, a school foundation, and local funding. The annual technology budget is 2.2 million dollars, which includes hardware, software, personnel, and professional development.

SETTING THE STAGE

During the 1992-1993 school year, the school district began placing at least one desktop computer and printer in each classroom. Within ten years, that number increased to three desktops per elementary classroom and two desktops per middle school classroom. Each high school classroom contained one desktop for teacher use as both high schools housed several computer labs for student access. Internet access was added to all schools and facilities in 1997.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the district piloted a new technology initiative in elementary and secondary schools. Based on a competitive application process, approximately twelve K-5th grade teachers and twelve 6th -12th grade teachers were provided with classroom technology tools and professional development. These two groups of pilot teachers represented all schools and all grade levels. The emphasis at the secondary level was the more efficient delivery of content, and each secondary pilot classroom contained three laptops, a mounted projector, a document camera, an Interwrite tablet, a set of student response clickers, and an amplified field system. The emphasis at the elementary level was the increase of student engagement with technology tools. Each elementary classroom contained three tablets with inking styluses, a document camera stand which could be outfitted with a video camera, a projector, an iPod, and a digital still camera. The pilot teachers at both levels met separately once a month to receive professional development from the instructional technology coaches and to share concerns, questions, and ideas. Pilot teachers were required to maintain an open door policy in which other teachers in their buildings

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