Chapter 14
Technology Integration in the Home?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If homework assignments that require the use of a computer are given to students, should they be penalized for what their family cannot afford? In this case study, Mrs. Lincoln, who developed her course using a web-based course management system named Moodle, spent time working on her Moodle pages and posting assignments. She then explained to students how the site worked. She also spent a week in the computer lab training her students to become proficient using the Moodle application. After a couple of weeks, Mrs. Lincoln noticed that a quarter of her students were not completing their Moodle based assignments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Learning how to use technology effectively can help prepare our students for the challenges they will face in the workplace. However, do all students have the ability and access to technology? Though it is great that many private schools allow students classroom-use of laptops on a daily basis, do all students have laptops to use? What kind of accommodations is made for those students who are not financially fortunate to have such technological devices? Many of the students in our schools do not have the means to technology.

School districts know that in order for students to become well-rounded they must know how to use computer applications. Differentiated instruction allows for students to show their intelligence through computer usage. Students cannot be expected to wait until college to learn how to effectively complete a research project. Because student papers should be typed, students take a semester of keyboarding. They are *required* to do research papers and present their work with a PowerPoint presentation. Districts are spending thousands of dollars on required computer software. One such software that more districts are buying into is called Moodle. Moodle is essentially a web-based platform of learning management systems such as Blackboard. Moodle allows teachers to create a web page with assignments and notes. Through the Moodle page, students can essentially learn at their own pace. Teachers can post helpful websites and links through which students can navigate. Students can complete assignments that are posted right on the Moodle page for the teacher to grade. Teachers can post student grades on the Moodle page for student access. Moodle provides a useful and interactive medium between student and teacher. However, while students are off-campus, all Teacher-Student communication is handled through Moodle.

THE CASE

Mrs. Lincoln is a teacher at Johnson High School. Her district is fairly small and is composed of many at-risk students. Most of the students at her school are economically disadvantaged. Due to tough economic times, the district has been trying to cut back on spending and looking at ways to save dollars. At a recent professional development meeting, the district explained that teachers must fully utilize the software that has already been purchased by the district. Because all of the teachers were trained on how to use Moodle, the district told teachers that they wanted to see immediate implementation in their classrooms. Thus, Mrs. Lincoln spent time working on her Moodle pages and posting assignments. Mrs. Lincoln explained to students how the Moodle site worked. She trained them on Moodle in the computer lab over the course of a week, until all students were proficient using the Moodle course platform. After a couple of weeks, Mrs. Lincoln noticed that a quarter of her students were not completing assignments on Moodle. Due to the missed assignments, their grade was dropping significantly. This puzzled Mrs. Lincoln because these students had always completed their in-class assignments and had performed well on these assignments. Mrs. Lincoln started conferencing with these students and discovered they all shared the same problem: None of these students had computers at home and thus they could not complete the assignments on Moodle.

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