MIT 522: Life 101 Technology Change Plan

Context

This project "Life 101" was completed as a requirement for the MIT 522 course, Organization and Management of Instructional Technology during the spring 2006 semester under the direction of Dr. Mahnaz Moallem. To complete the requirements for the project I worked as part of a three member team with Sheri Anderson and Tom Dorgan, fellow MIT students. The technology change plan required that we:

- Demonstrate knowledge and skills of leading and managing change.
- Demonstrate knowledge of laws and regulations that govern the selection. of media and emerging technologies
- Design and develop a technology plan.
- Design and develop professional development plans for change initiative.
- Identify and manage available technology- based and support resources.

Conditions

This technology change management plan was developed to aid in the diffusion of a technology innovation into the special needs department at Ashley High School in Wilmington, NC. This department has multiple courses serving 10-20 students with an IQ of 30-55. Prior to the initiation of this change plan, Ashley High School's life skills courses used basic software with limited to no interactivity. At the completion of this change plan's implementation, the classes will supplement instruction with simulation software that provides a high level of interactivity and problem based scenarios.

The project was begun at the request of the special needs department chair at Ashley High School. To decide on a plan for the technology change and what resources and development would be required we conducted a front end analysis to determine the optimals, actuals, feelings, causes, and solutions for their program. In planning for the technology change plan, we used Argyris' Double Looped Learning Theory based on social cognition model which focuses on building change within the current organization and adding to existing schema. This model also allows for a purposeful and linear approach to change which works well within the school setting.

Scope

The original analysis and planning was completed between January and April of 2006. Throughout the process our team was in constant communication with the staff at Ashley High School and the administration at the school. The department chair oversaw the process and initiated the implementation beginning August 2006 with some minor modifications to the initial timeline based on scheduling needs within the school and department. New Hanover County Schools has

signed on to fund the project fully and the plan is to fully integrate the program into Ashley High School's special needs department by December 2007 and then draft a plan to implement the change in other county school's based on the success at Ashley.

Role

This project was completed in a collaborative setting with my two other team members. I worked to research and identify standards, both national and state standards that we would need to consider in our change plan. Additionally, I identified Acceptable Use Policies for students and technology within New Hanover County schools. In addition, I researched and analyzed different software simulation packages to be used as the change program. After the proposal was developed I worked on revisions to the proposal and resource analysis. Our team worked collaboratively to develop the analysis tools such as surveys and to develop the vision and mission statements.

Reflection

I found this project interesting in that I got to use my knowledge of educational settings but at a different school setting. In addition, although I had written and been awarded grants in the past I was not aware of how much work went into a large scale technology change that would be submitted for funding to the county or to grant funding organizations. The intricacies of funding and the timeline development reminded me of project management principles and I was able to use knowledge and skills from my project management experience to bring more to the project. I also enjoyed the opportunity to see the innovation cycle in process and observe initial stages of change within an organization.