

Sample Grant Abstract for Multiage Classroom

PROJECT

Multiage Wired Classroom

This will be a classroom of fourth-grade and fifth-grade grade students selected through a process that will identify the students' abilities to work independently and in groups to use technology for project learning. The selection tool also will assess students' aptitude for technology, creative thinking, and work ethic.

The students will not only use the Internet to complete projects but will also access academically appropriate curriculum, complete assignments both at school and at home, demonstrate competencies, and use Internet-based tutorials for learning. The teacher will be a provider of direct instruction and a facilitator of the application of new learning to real situations.

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ABSTRACT

The Problem

Because of unusual enrollment numbers, Santa Clara Elementary will have a fourth-grade and fifth-grade multiage classroom with one teacher during the 2007–08 school year. There is a history of problems with split classes in Santa Clara, so I approach the situation with concern and a desire to change community perceptions.

I have also been toying with the idea of a technology-based learning classroom that would provide a tech-savvy teacher with interventions for struggling readers and extensions and an advanced curriculum for gifted learners. The multiage classroom has given me the opportunity to jump in for the 2007–08 school year.

The Solution

I envision a classroom of 28 multiage students led by a teacher with a strong desire and ability to use technology to enhance teaching and learning. The classroom will have 14 fourth graders and 14 fifth graders. The teacher will be responsible to teach both fourth-grade and fifth-grade curriculum.

I believe that differentiated instruction of literacy and writing will be manageable with direct instruction of all of the students together, provided they have the tools for writing and the software for editing without needing the individual teacher help for correcting all the writing. However, I don't believe that math, science, and social studies will be so easily solved.

I have found what I believe will be a really good software tool of curriculum, aligned with the Utah Core, that is accessible via the Web. It has remedial as well as advanced curriculum at both the fourth-grade and fifth-grade levels. It is accessible in the

classroom, in the lab, and at home. It is a mix of traditional assignments and assignments that are pair or group oriented, requiring research, study, and synthesis of information.

Students can work easily in pairs or could work individually on the Web-based projects while the teacher works on more traditional or hands-on instruction with larger groups of students. The teacher I have in mind is capable of integrating the Web-based curriculum and use of computers for teaching, student research, practice, and project learning.

I believe that this classroom will function as a model for Santa Clara and perhaps the school district. Because of the student access to technology at home and because of their experience with technology as a tool, I believe that Santa Clara is an ideal place to test this type of classroom.

Project Purposes

This project is designed to increase student learning through better instruction, wider curriculum options, immediate access to curriculum and the Web-based “teacher,” individual and group work, and products that look more like real products than hoops that must be negotiated to pass a class. The secondary purposes are to provide students with the instruction, training, and experience to use computers and other electronic tools for production, learning, and sharing of new knowledge and skills.

Special Strengths and Circumstances

I have a teacher, new to the district this year, who has used technology to enhance not only his own instruction but also that of his colleagues. He installed and connected his digital projector and has used it to teach almost every subject, accessing materials from the Internet, scanning in all of the Growing with Math overheads, and teaching current events and writing. In addition, he has provided CDs of the math materials for all the other teachers and taught them how to use their projectors and computers.

He is a model without being pushy and a mentor without offending the older teachers. He is registered for the UTAAH Project this summer (which does a lot with technology) and is in the process of getting his Gifted and Talented endorsement. He is respected and liked by the students and parents. I believe that he is an ideal teacher to take on this project and make it work for kids and parents. (He has also asked several times this year for a Smart Board.)

Another unique circumstance is the population of Santa Clara Elementary School and the City of Santa Clara in general. Most students here have access to technology at home, but they use it most often to play games or for entertainment.

I would like to capture the skills and familiarity they have developed with technology and capitalize on it for learning. I would like to see their assignments delivered via the Web. I would like to see “books” on their iPods in place of music videos. I would like them to learn to use the tools available to them to understand the diversity of the world through to prepare for the day when they leave their homogeneous environment and move into the real world.

Technology Department Obligations

I am not sure on everything in this area, but I know that we will need help in installing any new equipment. We would also need training, much of which can be accessed during the summer Washington County School District technology classes, from workshops at Rural Schools, or from the suppliers. The additional computers and other equipment will increase the load at Santa Clara Elementary School for our assigned tech, but with training, I believe that Mr. Bradbury will be able to maintain most everything.

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