

Project 3: Online Learning Implementation

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### **Institution Description**

The ABC School is a private school educating students aged 3-21 with multiple disabilities. It is located in Monroe Township, New Jersey and currently employs 16 classroom teachers, 14 therapists, seven specials teachers, three administrators and 33 support staff.

### **Current Status**

Historically, the ABC School has been known as one of the foremost schools for educating disabled students, however, over the past few years, they have lacked the innovation and resources needed to propel them into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Opportunities for collaboration, professional development, and eLearning by the administration, faculty, staff, and students need to be improved. Streamlining of student documentation, attendance, IEP's, progress reports, new student registrations and student blended learning opportunities is the focus of implementing Google Apps for Education (GAFE) and Google Classroom.

### **Desired Outcome**

The vision for implementing GAFE into ABC School is two-fold. First is to establish an online community of special education professionals who learn, share and collaborate on the varied aspects of educating students with disabilities. Having a portal to upload and share resources related to all aspects of educating students with disabilities will establish a community of practice within a school. Social learning and communities of practice are essential to our learning and are formed by people who engage in the process of collective learning and share a

collection of joint resources (Wenger, 2000). Through a school-based online portal, teachers, therapists, administrators, and staff will have the ability to share resources related to their specific field. For example, a physical therapist would upload resources on best practices, step-by-step instructions, and images or videos on the optimal seating and positioning for students within a classroom setting. School staff will have access to these resources on a constant basis as to aid in decision making or training of new staff when the physical therapist is unable to provide immediate feedback. Therapists will continually update the site and provide individual and group face-to-face training sessions as needed based on feedback from faculty and staff. Each department will continually upload and share resources they deem effective in the education of students with disabilities. Resources will be searchable to ensure ease of access.

Additionally, the use of the portal will streamline old and outdated practices within the school environment. The writing of IEP Goals and Objectives will be brought to the online environment. Teachers will have access to a database of goals and objectives specifically aligned to the school curriculum and common core standards. Online progress report forms will be accessible from home and will allow for teachers and therapists to collaborate simultaneously. Attendance records, class lists, and student records will be available to administration, faculty, and staff as needed and under strict guidelines as to protect student confidentiality.

The second vision of this plan is to assist teachers in implementing a blended learning model for their classrooms. In a blended learning environment, students learn partly through online delivery of content in which students have some control and partly in their supervised school environment (Staker & Horn, 2012). Often, many of our students are absent from school

due to illness associated with their disability. These students miss out on important content discussed during the school day. Having teachers create and publish content in an online environment will ensure that these students do not fall behind the other students in class. Furthermore, many of our students can benefit from the repetition and reinforcement that blended learning will provide as well as providing parents the opportunity to become more involved with their child's education.

### **Technology Requirements**

Chromebooks will be purchased for all administration, teachers, therapists and support staff. The school's wireless network will be upgraded to handle the increased volume of wireless devices. A Google Apps for Education account will be created and maintained by the school technology coordinator.

### **Training Requirements**

Initial training on Chromebook basics will be completed by each faculty member before distribution of the Chromebook. Members of the Blended Learning and Collaborative Portal committee have agreed to become certified Google educators, and the school technology coordinator will become a certified trainer. After completion of the training, the committee members will produce online Google learning modules as well as train all administration, faculty and staff on its use and implementation. Certified educators have also agreed to hold a few trainings for parents.

To implement the blended learning portion of the plan, professional development learning modules will be created in the online portal with specific lessons and best practices in creating a blended learning environment. Modules will include: the definition of a blended learning environment and how it will benefit students with disabilities; resources and lessons on creating and uploading videos; and content and solutions on how to include students who do not have a mobile device/ computer, internet access or appropriate parental support.

### **Potential issues & Solutions**

Potential issues include the reluctance of faculty members to embrace the new technology and begin implementation in a timely manner. To help facilitate buy-in from the administration, faculty, staff, and parents, the leader must not only ensure that effective training is being utilized but that the stakeholders understand the pedagogy behind the plan. The key stakeholders need to understand its value and see evidence of teacher satisfaction and student achievement.

Evaluation is a vital part of the instructional design process. The data collected aids in determining the success of the participants as well as the success of the plan as a whole (Brown & Green, 2016). The team will closely monitor usage of the portal by faculty and staff. Adjustments will be made based on feedback and observable issues to ensure optimal usage and benefits. The team will need to anticipate potential problems and provide continuing support. Successful implementation of this portal will provide the innovation and resources needed to propel ABC School into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## References

- Brown, A. H., & Green, T. D. (2016). *The essentials of instructional design: Connecting fundamental principles with process and practice* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Staker, H., & Horn, M. B. (2012). *Classifying k-12 blended learning*. Innosight Institute.
- Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, 7(2), 225-246. doi:10.1177/135050840072002