

Assignment 3 – Technology Implementation Plan

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University Academy Charter High School (UACHS) is a lottery-based, public charter school located in Jersey City, New Jersey. The school was established about 15 years ago and serves an urban population accepted randomly through lottery. The school population was 423 students for the 2018-19 academic year. The enrollment of special populations was 17% with disabilities and 80% economically disadvantaged with a negligible percentage of English language learners. Serving as its own district with an autonomous board, the charter school is funded as a calculation of 90% per pupil of the funding received by the Jersey City Department of Education. Although, because of the pandemic, there were no NJSLA scores for 2019-20, the most recent scores from 2018-19 indicate a need for additional support in English Language Arts. This implementation plan outlines the needs, costs, training, and utilization of IXL to increase achievement in English standardized test scores.

Needs

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for English Language Arts/Literacy (NJSLA-ELA) assesses which students are on track to being college or career ready in ELA. The test in English Language Arts/Literacy measures student proficiency in independently reading and comprehending a range of grade-appropriate material. It also measures a student's writing proficiency when using and analyzing sources (NJ Department of Education, n.d.-b). In order to support teachers and students, the NJDOE has published New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) with progress indicators for teachers to use for formative assessments and to guide instruction.

Though maintaining a progressive increase in performance, UACHS did not meet their annual target of 33.1% meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA for 2018-19 with only 27% of

grade 9 testers meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA and 23% of grade 10 testers meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA (NJ Department of Education, n.d.-a). It is essential for teachers to target level 1 (did not yet meet expectations) and level 2 (partially met expectations) skills for students individually.

Technology Recommendation

IXL

IXL is a personalized learning platform that utilizes adaptive technology and actionable analytics, and “Real-Time Diagnostic” to provide personalized, differentiated instruction aimed at student growth. IXL offers comprehensive coverage of pre-K through 12th-grade curriculum skills aligned to the NJSLS. This is an important consideration for ELL, students with special needs, and underperforming students who require growth in skills below a 9th-grade level. Skills are scaffolded to build reading comprehension and writing strategies, which include textual analysis, argumentation, and clear and concise writing. Each IXL skill adapts learning by questions generated based on students’ understanding of the material through their ongoing answers (IXL, n.d.)

As a support to both students and teachers, IXL uses student work in the curriculum and the “Real-Time Diagnostic” to create individualized action plans which direct students to the skills that will help them achieve growth. Additionally, the analytics help to inform mini-lessons and student grouping (IXL, n.d.). Differentiation is essential to supporting ELL and students with special needs. The gamified platform provides additional stimulation and motivation.

Costs

IXL is accessible through a web application or through free mobile apps. An Internet connection speed of at least 128Kbps is recommended. Mobile devices supported are iPhones

and iPads with iOS 11.0 or higher, Android tablets and phones with Android 5.0 or higher, Kindle Fire 7-inch screen or larger, Fire OS 5 or higher, and all models of Chromebooks. As the school has already issued Verizon android tablets to students requiring internet access (mobile hotspots) or iPads to students with reliable internet, there is no additional cost for devices. The subscription site license for the 2021-2022 school year is \$6975. At the cost of less than \$17 per student per year, the financial commitment is limited though necessary.

Implementation

Implementation will begin with the Educational Technology Coordinator, the Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Data Coaches. IXL offers online professional development free to schools who are onboarding with a site license. The Educational Technology Coordinator will be responsible for the professional development of the administration and English teachers, ensuring consistent and cohesive use. This is essential to preparing teachers, and subsequently, students, to use ixl as a seamless aspect of the curriculum (Frazier & Herrington, 2017). Once trained, the English Department will serve as its own learning community, reinforcing methodologies, and enhancing use. Administrators and Data Coaches will take part in live webinars on the use of analytics, diagnostics, and reporting. Subsequent training is the responsibility of the Educational Technology Coordinator.

Evaluation

According to Frazier and Herrington (2017), meaningful technology assessment yields many benefits, including progress checks, determination of worthwhile investments, or necessary adjustments to be made. Several methods will be used to measure the success of IXL implementation into the ELA courses. IXL offers analytics to measure log student usage,

including both the amount of time logged into the system and growth. Diagnostics will be used to assess skill-specific growth, both using IXL and NWEA benchmarks. The NJSLA-ELA scores for students from the previous and current year can indicate progress.

While the student scores serve as the ultimate assessment, there needs to be evaluation during the implementation in order to determine efficacy. The rubric shown in Figure 1 will be used during the first cycle of use by the teachers and compiled by the Educational Technology Coordinator.

Figure 1

IXL Evaluation Rubric

IXL Evaluation					
	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
Performance	IXL performs and loads quickly, without technical issues, and is very reliable.	IXL loads and performs quickly, with some minor technical issues.	IXL loads and performs slowly with unrelated content interfering with operation.	IXL crashes often, has many glitches, and has frequent interference from unrelated content.	IXL does not function.
Usability	IXL provides clear directions, and students can launch and operate it independently.	IXL provides clear directions, but the student needs to have the instructor show/model how to operate it.	Directions within IXL are limited, and students need to be cued each time IXL is used.	IXL is very complex to learn, and no directions are available.	IXL is difficult to operate.
Differentiation	IXL provides adaptive content and offers complete flexibility to meet student needs.	IXL allows instructors the complete flexibility to alter content and settings to meet student needs.	IXL offers some flexibility to alter content and settings to meet student needs.	IXL offers limited flexibility to alter content and settings to meet student needs.	IXL offers no flexibility to alter content and settings to meet student needs.
Curriculum Connection	Targeted NJSL strand is directly taught through IXL.	Targeted NJSL strand is reinforced through IXL.	Skill or concept is directly taught through IXL.	Skill or concept is reinforced through IXL.	Skill or concept is not clearly connected to targeted standard.
Feedback	IXL provides options for customized student and instructor feedback; comprehensive performance data is available for student and instructor.	IXL provides options for customized student and instructor feedback; basic performance data is available for student and instructor.	Basic performance data is available for student and instructor.	Only data about correctness of student responses is available.	IXL provides no feedback.
Engagement	Student is highly engaged and motivated to independently use IXL.	Student is engaged and motivated to use IXL.	Student uses IXL as directed by the instructor.	Student is not motivated and may be off-task when directed to use IXL.	Student avoids use of IXL.

Conclusion

The NJSLA-ELA assesses which students are on track to being college or career ready in ELA. UACHS did not meet their annual target of 33.1% meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA for 2018-19 with only 27% of grade 9 testers meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA and 23% of grade 10 testers meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA (NJ Department of Education, n.d.-a). It is essential for teachers to target level 1 (did not yet meet expectations) and level 2 (partially met expectations) skills for students individually. The use of IXL for targeted instruction and skills practice for students is key to development for all students, including ELL, students with special needs, and underperforming students. Skills are scaffolded to build reading comprehension and writing strategies, which include textual analysis, argumentation, and clear and concise writing (IXL, n.d.). Because of the gamified interface, IXL is engaging to all student populations. Finally, the cost is minimal per student per year.

The carefully structured implementation with Professional Development for leaders such as administration, the Educational Technology Coordinator, the Supervisor of Curriculum and Development, and the Data Coaches prior to the 2021 school year will afford a smooth transition for teachers as they begin their planning for the 2021 academic year.

References

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