

Chapter IV

Continuous Practice Improvement

There is no other social issue more critical to the future of this or any other company, the future of the global economy, and the future of our world society than how well we educate our children (Litow, 1999. p. i).

Since the early 1980s education had been challenged to improve student outcomes. It was during these years of debate on what would help schools help children achieve more that microcomputers were making inroads into schools. Apple Computer started the Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) project, described briefly in Chapter III. Microcomputer technology was developing and changing dramatically each year, with new opportunities available to support classroom teaching. Then the World Wide Web came into the mix in 1993, opening up new resources and opportunities for teachers and students. All of a sudden they were not limited to the resources available (or not) in the classrooms or school libraries. The world was opening up to schools in ways never imagined before. However, schools and teachers were still accountable for student learning. How could corporations step up to the challenge of supporting the nations' future workforce?

In 1994, IBM's corporate philanthropy in education announced a new initiative called Reinventing Education (RE). Supported at the highest levels by the Chairman and CEO of IBM, Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., this \$35 million grant program arose from the firm belief that business should, and must, contribute to major and long-lasting changes in education. Through RE, IBM brought technology and technology expertise to bear on this process to develop cutting-edge solutions to some of education's toughest problems. The belief was that technology could have the same dramatic influence in public education as it did in business, if the schools had the tools needed for innovative teaching and student achievement. However, the folks at IBM recognized that technology alone was not going to transform complex organizations like schools. "History had already demonstrated that simply donating computers to schools would not raise the level of student performance" (Spielvegel, 2001, p. 3). The process for engaging all stakeholders was emphasized.

Prior to RE, educational corporate philanthropy by technology companies consisted predominantly of donating equipment, funding short lived technology programs, or developing specific, stand-alone products. In all of these cases there was little to no follow-up to measure success or impact, or corporate involvement in the projects.¹ RE moved away from corporate attempts to influence education through one-time grants or awards of technology without support, to a sustained presence and commitment in the process created through long-term educational research and development partnerships between IBM and states or school districts. Rather than impose preconceived biases or solutions to perceived problems in schools, RE targeted locally identified impediments to changes in teaching and learning, and worked with the local educational units to develop interventions based on local needs, while keeping in mind the larger, nationally related issues. To that end, IBM has subsequently awarded Reinventing Education II grants in 1997 and Reinventing Education III grants in 2004.

Selection of initial RE sites was based on specific criteria. "To be selected for RE Grants, districts/applicants were required by IBM to have a comprehensive vision for district-wide restructuring and a track record for innovation and improvement that included a technology plan to help effect a fundamental reshaping of schools" (McLaughlin & Melley, 1999, p. 11). The focus was on creating a professional development reform model that could effect systemic change in the district, not just a single school, and be a national model. In addition, the backing of strong city mayors, personally committed to educational reform, was extremely important. Vital to the grant process was having a commitment from community leaders to ensure success.

At that time, Philadelphia's Superintendent of Schools, David Hornbeck, was implementing what he termed "Children Achieving." Hornbeck believed that all children could learn at high levels and that low achievement was the result of low expectations by those responsible for educating children. Children Achieving was based on 10 points:

27 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/continuous-practice-improvement/23770

Related Content

Fitness Revisited: Mobile Learning in Physical Education

Angelos Dimitropoulos (2016). *Revolutionizing K-12 Blended Learning through the i²Flex Classroom Model* (pp. 320-333).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/fitness-revisited/157595

Web 2.0 for Tele-Mentoring

Shari McCurdy Smith, Najmuddin Shaikand Emily Welch Boles (2011). *Telementoring in the K-12 Classroom: Online Communication Technologies for Learning* (pp. 215-253).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-tele-mentoring/46303

Integrated Experiences: Teaching Grade 9 Mathematics with iPad Tablets

Carol Carruthers, Dragana Martinovicand Kyle Pearce (2015). *Tablets in K-12 Education: Integrated Experiences and Implications* (pp. 278-295).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/integrated-experiences/113870

Responsible Technologies and Literacy: Ethical and Legal Issues

Elizabeth A. Buchananand Tomas A. Lipinski (2006). *Handbook of Research on Literacy in Technology at the K-12 Level* (pp. 137-157).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/responsible-technologies-literacy/20925

Tapping into Digital Literacy: Handheld Computers in the K-12 Classroom

Mark van 't Hooft (2006). *Handbook of Research on Literacy in Technology at the K-12 Level* (pp. 287-307).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/tapping-into-digital-literacy/20933