How a K-5 School and One Educational Technology Professor Integrate Technology and Service Learning Projects

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This paper describes how community service and technology skill development can be fully integrated through the development of a partnership between a K-5 school and a faculty member of Educational Technology. It describes the partnership development process, the grant-writing process, and the implementation process. Roadblocks that threatened the partnership are described as well as suggestions for overcoming these obstacles. Specifics about the integration process are discussed in depth.

This partnership between a university and a local elementary school serves a low socio-economic population with few home computers and little Internet access at home. This project uses existing facilities and technology to provide an after-school service learning center where students and EWU facilitators hired through the work-study program can have access to computers and software that supports and enables service learning projects to occur. Participation in the after-school program is free. The EWU work-study students will receive any needed support training on the use of existing technology by the university professor or the district technology coordinator. Training and support on the use of technology for the K-5 students during the service learning projects will be provided by the EWU work-study students.

This collaborative partnership is advantageous for all stakeholders; elementary school students, EWU work-study students and teachers will benefit from the work undertaken at the Service Learning Center during after school hours. School and district administrators will satisfy parents wishing greater access to technology for their children. The community will benefit from the service learning projects completed by the elementary students. EWU work-study students will benefit by earning a paycheck while gaining valuable work experience and building a strong resume. The university professor will conduct research on K-5 students and EWU work study students using technology in a service-learning center. This project, therefore, provides the university professor and the school district with a strategic way to integrate technology with service learning.