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| Change Process Mini-PaperComputer and Web 2.0 tools at Harper’s Choice Middle School Janet JohnstonFebruary 28, 2011ET680 |

Harper’s Choice Middle School is located an older section of Columbia in Howard County MD. Our student population is diverse and many students lack the motivation necessary for success in a “traditional” classroom setting. The teaching staff at Harper’s Choice ranges from 4-6 teachers who have been teaching for more than 30 years to 3 who have been teaching for less than 3 years. This paper will focus on the use of computers, and specifically the Internet, in the classrooms of HCMS.

Many of the teachers at Harper’s Choice are in the stage one Entry phase, according to the ACOT model. These teachers prefer to teach using traditional methods of lecture, textbooks, worksheets, and little technology. Maintaining a teacher website using TeacherWeb, an online grade book through TeacherEase, and attendance through Aspen is required by the principal this year. Although these teachers use these programs, they needed extra assistance setting them up in the fall, and use only the most basic features of the applications. Their students do not use the computer labs in the school other than the occasional typed written assignment. Looking at Ely’s Conditions of Change (1999), these teachers are not ready to adopt any innovations; they are not dissatisfied with what they are doing nor do they have the skills to change their techniques. At my school, both the media specialist and technology teacher possess few advanced skills in integrating Web 2.0 applications into the classroom, and there is no one easily accessible or with extra time available to help with training other teachers. Therefore, Ely’s first 4 conditions necessary for change are unmet for much of the staff at HCMS.

The majority of teachers at Harper’s Choice are in the Adoption stage of the ACOT model when it comes to Internet application use in the classroom. Although many of the teachers are young and focused on using computers, cell phones, E-readers, and their latest applications, they are reluctant to use newer technologies in their classrooms*.* The reading and social studies teachers at this level use the online databases for research, as the media specialist has shown them. However, they have difficulty helping their students find other appropriate information sources if students need the reading level modified or their topic is more difficult to research. The math teachers in our school use specific online math programs for their students. These programs review skills learned in class and have both a time and score component, but the basis of these programs are drill and practice. Two of the math teachers use inquiry based instruction techniques, having students figure out for themselves how to solve problems on a regular basis, but this has not carried over into their use of technology. With training, these math teachers would be excellent leaders to take staff members to the next level with Web 2.0 in their classrooms.Many of these teachers will create a lesson from a specific website, but do not know how to use the server storage to provide the web address; students are often frustrated (and lose valuable class time) when they type in a web address in error. Many of the teachers at this level at our school are comfortable taking the students to the computer lab to type a paper using Microsoft Word, but are limited in helping students edit in PowerPoint or Excel. For fear of encountering problems, they limit their use of the internet to occasional. Surprisingly, I would include the Technology Education teacher with this group. He instructs the students how to use Inspiration and Microsoft Office but has not significantly changed the way he teaches or the programs he uses. Unlike the Entry phase teachers, these teachers may be dissatisfied with their teaching, but they lack the skills and resources of Ely’s conditions to move forward to the next level. These teachers do not want to commit to the extra time needed to learn the necessary skills to incorporate Web 2.0, and so far there are no rewards or incentives in place to encourage the teachers to learn. I believe that with extra planning time and incentives, many of these teachers would like to learn the skills they are lacking.

Both of the eighth grade English teachers are young, enthusiastic, and beginning to use various tools available to them. They regularly use laptops in their classes for writing and peer editing. They have begun to include lessons which use tools such as Wordle in their teaching, as well as electronic vocabulary cards. They are comfortable with Prezi as a teaching tool, but I believe their students are still transitioning from PowerPoint to Prezi. These teachers are beginning to change the way they teach and are enthusiastic to continue. One of the sixth grade English teachers is beginning to follow them in their use of online tools. This teacher is very comfortable using the ComicLife program in her classroom and is beginning to expand into the Web 2.0 tools. As identified in the adaptation stage of the ACOT model, these teachers are beginning to change the way they teach as well as incorporate the tools to help them teach. They are also willing to share what they have done with other teachers in the school and help them in their learning process. These teachers are through the first 5 of Ely’s conditions for change, and they have the commitment to use their time to strengthen their skills.

Very few teachers at Harper’s Choice use Web 2.0 tools regularly in their classroom. One English teacher, Patrick, recently finished an online program in Educational Technology. He is beginning to use video in his class for instructional purposes; he has used the document camera to capture his class in action, and he regularly uses the mobile laptop lab in his classroom. His students have created skits and recorded them, his students use online vocabulary tools such as Wordle, and he has begun to share these skills with the other English teachers. Patrick’s passion is the morning televised announcements, and the students who work with him on this program have learned a multitude of skills for video production and presentation. He is changing his approach to teaching English; however, he has 3 different courses he is teaching this year and thus the progress is slower than he would like. As a science teacher, I became a believer in using inquiry processes and student-centered learning during the 2007-2008 school year through programs at UMBC and HCC. My teaching methods have changed so that about 80% of my lessons have student discussions as the basis for their learning. I am now in the process of incorporating Web 2.0 tools into my teaching. I am comfortable designing and incorporating the lessons into my curriculum and have tried podcasts, internet games, student-choice research, electronic flash cards, and independent completion of lessons in my classes. I regularly share what I have done with the other science teachers at my school but they are not interested in learning at this point; they are in the adoption phase and not ready. As far as I know, there are no other teachers at Harper’s Choice integrating Web 2.0 tools and allowing students to create their own learning in their classes. The 2 of us have been through the first 5 of Ely’s conditions, although the rewards are intrinsic; we like what we are doing and what it does for our students. Patrick has been included in some decision making for the TV studio equipment. Teachers often referred to him for technology help and the administration supports both of us in our efforts to improve our teaching.

Teachers at our school may be eventually led into the Invention phase of the ACOT model by Patrick or me, but there is no one at our school who has integrated technology completely into their students’ learning. Without enough computers for a classroom to have one for each student every day, I think this phase will be difficult to attain. I believe that both Patrick and I will be moving in this direction over the next few years, and hopefully bringing others along with us.

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