Integrating Technology Into Workforce & Agricultural Education In Selected Schools In The Miami-Dade Public Schools: Issues & Implication For The 21st Century Workforce Development

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INTRODUCTION

In the highly competitive globalized knowledge-economy of the 21st century, a nation’s stock of technologically proficient workforce will constitute a major competitive edge. Hence, educating this workforce has become the overarching concern of many a national educational system. As a result, technology infusion into the educational process has become a multi-billion dollar venture cutting across all levels of the US educational enterprise.

However, the challenge of technology infusion goes beyond the associated huge financial outlay, to include technical, social, human resource development, and accountability concerns. Using data from the author’s experience with a multi-million technology infusion project in Homestead Middle School, a school within the Miami-Dade Public Schools System and from another school within the system, JFK Middle School, participants in the carousel presentation will come face-to-face with real life challenges of technology infusion.

METHOD

The presentation will adopt a participatory methodology including scenario and role-playing. Each set of participants will role-play a strategic planning/evaluation team. Each role-playing strategic team will rely on both qualitative and quantitative data collected from both schools as the planning/evaluation document. Using the data as benchmarks, the audience will be guided through a brief SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, & Threats) of the two technology infusion projects

MAJOR POINTS TO SHARE

1. Pre technology acquisition issues: Needs awareness, consensus building, and sourcing for fund.
2. Technology Acquisition Issues: technology compatibility, relevance and adaptability
5. The limit of technological determinism: Issues in technology-human interaction

LESSON LEARNED

1. The failure or success of technology infusion program is often determined at the pre-technology acquisition/planning stage
2. Contrary to the technology diffusion model, most teachers are receptive to technology infusion given an environment that encourages democratic participatory decision-making.
3. Technical support and staff development are critical factors in successful technology infusion.
4. Rapid technology obsolescence is a major challenge to technology infusion
5. Technology is not a cure-all solution for the complex problems that confront the educational enterprise
EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

As the educational enterprise faces the new challenge of greater accountability, pressure from the business community, and performance-based evaluation, nation wide, the issue of technology infusion into the education process in general, and workforce development education in particular will continue to attract great attention. The carousel sessions will provide the audience with a close-up look into the challenges of implementing a major technology infusion program. The hope is that the audience will leave the presentation better informed and prepared for technology-driven instruction.