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Website for all Classrooms in Mankessim.

**Settings/Context**

The Capstone will be completed online in collaboration with the teachers and district education coordinators of the Mankessim Circuit of the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly, Ghana. A discussion has been held with a coordinator of the school district and he is helping to get the approval from the director of education. Teachers will be notified of their role in the project. There are 21 public and 26 private basic schools in Mankessim Circuit but the project will start with the public schools, and the private schools drafted in later.

**Problem and Rationale**

Technology has changed education and lesson delivery in the 21st century. However, the digital divide has made certain groups of people inaccessible to the necessary education that will make them play active role in the 21st century society. Pre-university students in Ghana are way behind using technology to achieve their learning goals. If technology is used in the schools, it is usually for teacher productivity or student learning basic skills in productivity software like word-processing. Technology in classrooms is at the very infant stage, and virtually non-existent. Meanwhile, Speak Up 2012 research shows that over 1 in 3 parents would recommend online classes to improve student performance (Project Tomorrow, 2012). In 2000, seven institutions in the University System of Georgia provided instructional technology training for the faculty and staff of the University of Cape Coast and the University College of Education of Winneba, the two main universities at the forefront of preparing teachers for Ghanaian schools, as supertrainers to better prepare teachers for the schools. The University of Education, Winneba, has an ICT course for Basic Education students to help prepare teachers for technology integration at the basic schools. In spite of the efforts, basic schools in Ghana do not have websites that aid communication between the schools and their immediate communities, or host learning resources for students.

This capstone is intended to bridge the gap between the technology integration practices in Mankessim schools and that of other communities around the world where technology integration has taken root. With a single website for all the schools in the community, students in the Mankessim Circuit will have access to online resources and engage in online activities that will be organized by teachers to ensure that the students have multiple means of learning the same content, through such media as slideshows, audio and video that students can review after the regular classroom lessons. The teachers will have the opportunity to integrate digital media and Web 2.0 tools in their lessons– an opportunity that is hindered by the absence of projectors, television and audio sets in the classrooms.

**Objectives**

* Design a website that has pages for all the classrooms in the 21 public basic schools in the Mankessim Circuit.
* Offer professional learning program for teachers to manage the pages in ways to suit their classroom needs.
* Offer professional training on the use of wikis, blogging and multimedia to improve student learning.
* Suggest open-source and cloud-based educational applications that will aid teaching, learning and assessment.
* Encourage teachers to use the website as one of the tools in engaging students.

**Deliverables**

* Create an elevator video to be delivered to teachers.
* Use Weebly to create a website that has the following:
  + a home page with student and teacher logins
  + 9 pages for each of the 21 schools, a home page
  + teacher forum
  + news and announcements
* Offer online training for Mankessim Circuit IT coordinator and representatives from each of the schools on how to edit a page on Weebly.
* Offer online training for teachers on the use of wikis, blogging and multimedia to engage students.
* Collaborate with teachers to identify teaching and learning resources for their classrooms.
* Evaluate effectiveness of the website.
* Hand over the website management to the school district.

**Georgia PSC Standards**

* 1. Shared Vision

1.4 Diffusion of Innovations & Change

2.6 Instructional Design

3.1 Classroom Management & Collaborative Learning

3.2 Managing Digital Tools and Resources

3.3 Online & Blended Learning

3.6 Selecting and Evaluating Digital Tools & Resources

3.7 Communication & Collaboration

4.1 Digital Equity

4.2 Safe, Healthy, Legal & Ethical Use

5.1 Needs Assessment

5.2 Professional Learning

5.3 Program Evaluation

**Project Description**

The project will involve creating a website that hosts pages for all the classrooms in the 21 public schools in the district to aid the integration of online teaching and learning activities, and to usher the schools into the use of digital technology in their classrooms. With this in mind, teachers in the district will have to be capable of maintaining the pages and use them to engage the students.

After creating the website, teachers will be given professional training on editing classroom pages, integrating Web 2.0 platforms, and creating and embedding instructional resources. The resource identification will involve collaborating with the teachers so as to make sure that the needs of the teachers and the students are met. The collaborating teachers will be made up of representatives from the schools, and the IT coordinator from the district. Teachers will be sent an elevator speech and invitations to online workshops. Feedback from the teachers will be gathered from the teachers and the activities of the website monitored in order to aid adjustment decisions and overall project evaluation.

Timeline:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Description** |
| Early September (3 hours) | Elevator speech | A 5-10 minutes video speech highlighting the importance of integrating online learning and its practicality in Ghanaian schools will be made and shared to teachers. |
| September (95 hours) | Designing website | A website will be created using Weebly. Pages will be assigned to every classroom in the 21 schools (21 x 9). |
| October (30 minutes) | Invitation to Weebly workshop. | A Google Form requesting schools to nominate participants to an online workshop on editing Weebly pages will be sent. There will be six different dates to help accommodate participants from all the schools. |
| October – November (12 hours) | Online workshop on Weebly | Handouts will be created and given to participants. The 2-hour workshop will involve watching video tutorials, demonstrations, answering participants’ questions and taking feedback. There will be six sessions to accommodate anticipated large number of teachers from the schools (at least two teachers from each of the 21 schools). |
| November (30 minutes) | Invitation to Web 2.0 workshop. | A Google Form requesting teachers to participate in an online workshop on using Web 2.0 tools will be sent. There will be six different dates to help accommodate participants from all the schools. |
| December (12 hours) | Online workshop on Web 2.0 | Handouts will be created and given to participants. The 2-hour workshop will involve a discussion on the use of Web 2.0 to engage students. There will be six sessions to accommodate anticipated large number of teachers from the schools (at least two teachers from each of the 21 schools). |
| December (9 hours) | Identifying resources | Teaching and learning resources will be compiled based on grade levels and content areas, and sent to teachers to decide which ones they would like to embedded on their classroom pages. |
| February-April 2015 | Evaluation | A survey on ease of use of the technology and student engagement will be taken to aid adjustments. |
| Total 129 hours |  |  |

Resources:

The resources will include camera and computer to create the elevation speech, Internet access to share the video, Internet and devices to communicate with the teachers, and time to participate in the workshops. A district administrator will be needed to indicate the appropriate educators to receive the elevator speech and the invitation to the workshops.

The camera for the video is already available. There is also Internet access to share the video as a link or file on mobile applications like WhatApp and Facebook. File size will be reduced so that teachers can view the video on their mobile devices. The online workshops will have different schedules so that teachers will have the option to choose when they will be able to participate. After the workshops, teachers who could not attend will be sent the video tutorials made for the workshops. Head-teachers, through a district education leader, will be contacted to help in video sharing and nominating workshop participants.

**Evaluation Plan**

The existence of the website and its use by teachers and students in teaching and learning will be the proof of meeting the objectives of the project. The use of the website will be evaluated by observing how frequent the pages are updated by the activities of both teachers and students. Surveys will be used to determine the impact it has on teaching and learning.

Observations will be carried out weekly. There will be separate surveys for teachers and students.

Sample survey for teachers:

* How comfortable are you in blending online resources with the traditional learning activities in your classroom?
* How suitable is this website to the way you want your students engaged with online activities?
* Which Web 2.0 tool have you engaged your students with in the past month?
* What challenges have you faced in using this website with your student?
* What recommendations do you have for improving this websites to suit the needs of your students?

Sample survey for students:

* How often do you visit your classroom page?
* Have you ever submitted an assignment through this website?
* Before this website, did you ever do anything on the Internet? If so, what did you do?
* Which of these sources do you prefer using do get the information you need for your schoolwork?
  + The Internet
  + Textbooks
  + Both
* Sate one thing you have learned about from the Internet that cannot be found in your textbooks.
* Do your friends in other schools in Mankessim also know about this website?
* What challenges do you have using this website?

References

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