Group 1 would like to thank the class for an excellent week of case discussion. Our goal this week was to inspire you all to question and reflect on: **How do we, as IDers, remove personal biases when creating evaluations for stakeholders?** As you participated in Part 1 and Part 2 of this week's discussion, the objectives were that 1) you would be able to identify effective evaluation metrics and methodology in a 1:1 initiative, 2) defend and validate evaluation decisions to stakeholders; and 3) identify which factors could influence the effectiveness of laptops on student learning. You met these objectives with ease and provided great insight and reflection of Tina's case. Carrie said, “The sweet spot is finding a blended environment where laptops enhance the learning of students but there (are) also avenues to encourage critical thinking. Not sure the laptop alone can do that and sometimes we think they can… collaboration, consensus and teamwork (of the ID). That eliminates the biases of individuals because they have to work and listen to others.”

After her first failed attempt at convincing Mr. Cook of the value of the technology initiative, Tina brings in consultants, but still wants to contribute her expertise by offering new approaches to the equation. Yatska suggested that Tina “Divide the 8 fifth grade classrooms into 2 groups, the experimental group and the control group.  Under the same conditions, administer a formative test per unit and core subject.  The comparison of the two groups will demonstrate the students' improvement in every core subject determining the outcome of the laptop program.” Elizabeth concurs, suggesting that in the new evaluation the team “works with instructors and principals to determine two- three subjects on which to focus the evaluation, and to create pre- and post-tests for particular learning activities under those subjects. I will then divide the fifth-grade classes into two groups, a control group and an experiment group.” Alissa also agrees that “It's important to take a baseline measure of a problem before implementing new efforts to address that problem.” This of course, would be the Level 2 pre-test. Tina, as facilitator, concisely agrees with this approach, that “the formative assessment may help determine what areas the students need to focus on to increase the ITBS scores… yet… In our 577 class, Kirkpatrick discussed pros and cons to using control groups when evaluating programs.  Would you anticipate push back from using control groups in this case? ” Jill thinks “most parents (in the control group) will not be comfortable, and it will create drama among students.”

Gracia so graciously stated, “In the initial evaluation, Tina gathered a lot of subjective data, such as survey and focus group results, along with videos that showed students enjoying the laptops in their classrooms. However, she did not expand these subjective testimonials into objective data that clearly indicated how they relate to improvement of learning.” Jonathan dropped a few hints and James brightly picked up on them. When it came to dealing with subjective, yet emotionally convincing platforms such a video, James suggested Tina should “have the students in the laptop program edit and produce the videos for the upcoming evaluation plan.” Sherrie, amongst her wealth of valuable insightful contributions as facilitator, pointed to narrowing the focus of the video to a single subject, such as science.

Katie suggests to Dr. Cook “that the curriculum is optimized so that (the laptops) are used to the maximum benefit of the students. In doing so, we will be better prepared to pinpoint areas of student improvement for which the laptops are responsible.” Melissa (sharp shooting facilitator) asks, “Is there any concern about not having Mr. Cook involved in the development of student objectives and student-based program goals? As a stakeholder, should he be involved throughout?” Ladd suggests that more specific measurements are taken, such as “Student and teacher interviews, direct observation of activities, measurements of student laptop use, student and teacher surveys.”

Mr. Cook, as most businessmen are, is most often persuaded by cold hard facts, Ladd suggests that “Tina should (never) have included the ITBS scores in the first place. By doing this it gave Mr. Cook something specific to look at as the defining results.” However, as few recognized, if these scores were broken down to include the outside factor of the new ESL learners, which data mining can precisely accomplish, then the results may have highlighted the technology integration’s beneficial factors, and the second evaluation need not have taken place. Using technology to prove technology.

There were many other suggestions, even bringing Mr. Cook in to the classroom for a week to observe the activities first hand. This may have been wishful thinking as a businessman has little time, lives by the reports of hires; but creative thinking nonetheless. Perhaps getting Mr. Tok more involved as ammunition in the presentation might be a wise idea, since he is the financial benefactor, and seems to have Mr. Cook’s ear. Thanks for the lively conversation!

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