Comparing Approaches to Technology Integration

by Susan Martin

Description: Ms. Jennifer Farthing, Director of Curriculum at Twinsburg City Schools allowed me to shadow her and three technology resource assistants in individual schools. At the high school, I observed a session in which Ms. Farthing introduced the PARCC Assessments, both Performance-Based Assessments scheduled for February and End-of-Year Assessments scheduled for May, to ninth graders. Ms. Farthing allowed me to interview her about technology integration in her district, which provided me with an overview of the district’s technology vision and plan. She also gave me a tour of the new computer lab in the high school. On subsequent dates, I observed the technology resource assistants in three other schools: Ms. Linda Garner at Dodge Intermediate School, Ms. Patty Mold at Bissell Elementary School and Mrs. Marcie Stone at Wilcox Primary School. My work schedule limited me to spending 1 hour 45 minutes in each of these technology integration specialists’ classrooms. I observed a specific lesson in each school. These lessons either related to the online PARCC assessments or to the grade-level content provided by the primary teachers.

Impact: Coming from a restricted, private school to shadow in a public school with more technology allowed me to learn how schools make decisions based on available funding and student need. I was surprised that the public school employed classified staff to cover their computer labs in the K-6 schools. These employees were amazing in their capacity to teach skills, manage students, and aid the teachers. Their other duties included trouble-shooting both hardware and software, as well as helping teachers with technology in their classroom.

Intent: In any future position that I may have as a technology leader, I intend to make sure that teachers have what they need to integrate technology as easily as possible. The support that the technology resource assistants provided to the teachers allowed those teachers to make sure that those students learned the necessary skills they would need not only for future high-stakes testing but also for life-long learning in a technology-filled world. I am interested in finding similar ways to increase teachers’ comfort level with instructional technology.