

Third Year Evaluation
November 2002



CARA
Hoffman Center for Assessment & Research Alliances
Mars Hill College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Focus Groups: Methods & Findings	3
Site Visits of Program Graduates	7
Classroom Observations & Applications	9
Lesson Plan Assessments	10
List of Appendices	
Appendix A: Focus Group: Mars Hill	19
Appendix B: Focus Group: Montreat College	25
Appendix C: Focus Group: Furman University	30
Appendix D: Site Visit Interviews	35
Appendix E: Lesson Plan Assessments	44
Appendix F: Focus Group: South Mountain Community College	51
Appendix G: Site Visits: South Mountain Community College	57

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
EVALUATION OF THIRD YEAR PROJECT: PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES
NOVEMBER 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the third year evaluation of the Adventure of the American Mind (AAM) program was to ascertain the effectiveness of the training at four program sites and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms.

Believing that the basic strengths and challenges of the AAM program had been discovered in surveys of program graduates in previous years, the AAM project director asked that qualitative evaluation methods be employed to "dig deeper" into the feelings and opinions of program participants. Consequently the evaluation included focus groups, visits to school sites where AAM graduates were teaching in primary or secondary schools, and the scoring and ranking of 40 randomly selected lesson plans produced by program graduates.

Four AAM training sites were targeted for this evaluation: Furman University, Mars Hill College, Montreat College, and Western Carolina University. After the low attendance at Montreat's focus group and the cancellation of Western Carolina's focus group, the project director and evaluation team used site visits to enhance and guarantee the number of participants interviewed. An additional evaluation was conducted in April 2002 for the Arizona cluster, and is reported separately in Appendices F and G.

Four Sources of Data Collection

1. Twenty-seven focus group participants.
2. Twelve teachers during site visits in their classrooms.
3. Observations of teaching in four classrooms.
4. Assessment of 40 randomly selected lesson plans.

Evaluation Findings

Overall, this program has enabled 139 teachers in 77 schools to develop and sharpen their understanding of technology integrated instruction and access to electronic resources, especially those provided by the Library of Congress.

1. Laptop computers were the central motivation for becoming involved in the AAM program.
2. The ability to connect to the Internet varied among the schools. The schools with T1 lines appeared to have the least amount of difficulty. Filters and incompatible systems and software between school districts and AAM were problematic.
3. The combination of classroom instruction and online coursework is effective, but classroom instruction must continue to be the primary method of instruction.
4. Online coursework needs to be refined based on feedback from graduates.

5. Participants felt supported and respected by the AAM faculty and staff.
6. Participants often feel they have inadequate technical support in their schools. Personnel are viewed as ineffective, and financial resources are limited for LCD projectors and televisions.
7. Participants' computer skills vary widely from the novice to comfortable experts. Instruction has not adequately provided for such variance.
8. Participants entering the program with strong computer skills are able to learn more about instructional design techniques and consequently create better lesson plans.
9. Program participants have difficulty learning the technology and instructional design at the same time.

Recommendations

1. Continue to provide participants with laptops or another comparable technological tool as incentive, if the program is to continue in its present form.
2. Continue working on connectivity for the schools in western North Carolina, especially problematic areas such as restrictive filters and compatible systems and software.
3. Continue to screen program participants' computer skills and divide the classes accordingly. If classes cannot be divided because of budget constraints and availability of instructors, then the number of technical support per cluster needs to be increased.
4. Continue to support AAM participants by giving them instructional models that encourage student led inquiry.
5. Continue to provide participants with the time needed to construct sound instructional design.
6. Continue to develop and require appropriate formal and informal assessment tools with lesson plan designs.
7. Require program graduates to participate in the evaluation process. This requirement needs to be inserted in their contracts to ensure more participation in future focus groups.

Dr. Chris Dennen, Project Director of Education Research Consortium of Western North Carolina (ERCWNC), selected the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) at Mars Hill College to conduct this evaluation. Under the CARA Director Dr. Thomas Plaut, Dr. Deborah Morris conducted the focus groups and site visits. James Brown, M.Ed., Professor of Education at Mars Hill College, designed and conducted the lesson plan assessments.

**ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
EVALUATION OF THIRD YEAR PROJECT: PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES
NOVEMBER 2002**

The purpose of the third year evaluation of the Adventure of the American Mind (AAM) program was to ascertain the effectiveness of the training at four program sites and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms.

Believing that the basic strengths and challenges of the AAM program had been discovered in surveys of program graduates in previous years, the AAM project director asked that qualitative evaluation methods be employed to "dig deeper" into the feelings and opinions of program participants. Consequently the evaluation included focus groups, visits to school sites where AAM graduates were teaching in primary or secondary schools, and the scoring and ranking of 40 randomly selected lesson plans produced by program graduates.

Four AAM training sites were targeted for this evaluation: Furman University, Mars Hill College, Montreat College, and Western Carolina University. After the low attendance at Montreat's focus group and the cancellation of Western Carolina's focus group, the project director and evaluation team decided to use site visits to enhance and guarantee the number of participants interviewed.

Four sources for Data Collection

1. Twenty-seven focus group participants
2. Fourteen teachers during site visits in their classrooms
3. Observations of teaching in four classrooms
4. Assessment of 40 randomly selected lesson plans

FOCUS GROUPS: METHODS AND FINDINGS

Four focus groups were scheduled, three were conducted, and one was cancelled because of low response. The clusters and dates for the focus groups are listed below:

Date	Location	Response
July 9, 2002	Mars Hill College	Conducted
August 22, 2002	Montreat College	Conducted
September 14, 2002	Western Carolina University	Cancelled
October 16, 2002	Furman University	Conducted

Recruiting Focus Group Participants

Random selection was used for the Mars Hill College, Montreat College, and Western Carolina University focus groups. Given the problem of attendance, the Furman University participants were chosen based on the proximity to focus group location.

The cluster directors provided Morris with a list of participants. Invitations from Morris were emailed by the cluster directors to their respective participants. Lunch or dinner was offered at each focus group. A \$50 gift certificate was given as a door prize/incentive for participation.

A consistent set of questions was used across the groups. They are as follows:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
8. Describe any concerns or issues you have had using the Internet.
9. What do you think of your instructors?
10. What do you think of the program's technical support staff?
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

Participants

Twenty-seven AAM graduates participated in the three focus groups. The following chart represents the number of participants invited and the number of attendees.

Cluster	# of participants invited	# of attendees
Mars Hill	12	12
Montreat	18	3
Furman	18	12

Characteristics of Participants

A variety of schools and disciplines were represented at the three focus groups. The following chart represents a composite of the schools. Because some teachers were from the same school and some teachers represented more than one school, the total number of schools is not consistent with the total number of participants.

Elementary	Middle	High	Private	Charter
12	5	3	2	1

The following disciplines were represented at the three focus groups. The majority of the elementary teachers taught all subjects while some only taught social studies, science, and language arts. Other disciplines included chemistry, physics, US History, economics, learning disabilities, and chorus. Support staff included a guidance counselor, family school specialist, and a K-5 instructional coach.

Focus Group Findings

The findings are based on information provided by focus group and site visit participants. The data suggest that the following factors are strengths of the AAM course: receiving the laptop; the course itself; the instructors; and the technical support staff.

Motivation:

1. The primary motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM course was receiving the laptop. The following chart represents the responses:

Focus Group Participants N=27		Site Visit Participants N=12
Laptop	26	6
Other	1 – Graduate credit for MA degree	2 – Increase technology skills
		1 – use technology in classroom 2 – principal encouragement 1 – equal motivation of laptop and receiving technology credits

Secondary motivations for the focus group participants included receiving graduate credit, becoming efficient with technology, and looking positive for the national boards.

2. All of the participants stated that the AAM course was a very positive experience for them.

Responses ranged from:

- “I would do it all over again.”
 - “I have never been treated as professionally.”
 - “I can do things technologically that I never thought was possible.”
 - “The course was first rate.”
3. All of the participants described the instructors as “excellent”, “wonderful”, “great”, and “overall good.”
 4. All of the participants described the technical support staff as excellent. Positive responses included the following:
 - “I wanted to quit but they would not let me.”
 - “They always checked to make sure we were not frustrated.”
 - “We needed more of them.”
 - “The dream of every school.”

Other Findings:

1. The majority of the participants agreed that the classroom instruction was preferred over the online coursework. Opinions differed on the effectiveness of the online coursework. Some participants found it too time consuming; others thought that the quantity diminished the quality; additionally, some did not understand the significance. The positives included opportunities to create online discussions and list serves, and to learn how to post assignments.
2. The respondents offered several changes to the program. These included:
 - Some of the Furman respondents suggested that the AAM software needs to be consistent with the software approved by their respective districts (e.g., Front Page, used by AAM, versus Angel Fire).

- Unique to the Mars Hill cluster were numerous suggestions that less time be spent teaching educational theory and more time spent on learning the technology and classroom applications.
 - Other suggestions were to reduce noise levels, to create more handouts, to include focused presentations from graduates of the program, to increase lab time, and to improve efficiency of LOC search engine.
3. All participants stated that the goals and objectives were clear to them at the outset of the course except for the Mars Hill participants. The feedback ranged from the expectations were unclear, the deadlines changed, and the goals for the final project were unclear.

Program Weaknesses:

Weaknesses of the program include the varying computer skill levels of the participants and the lack of technological infrastructure and resources in the schools.

1. The participants varying computer skill levels were problematic. Levels are represented in the following table.

How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?			
N=27			
Adequate	Middle	Inadequate	Thought they were, but found out differently
18	3	1	2
Other categories cited were beginner level, computer illiterate, very comfortable			

- Two participants acknowledged that they were scared and did not even know how to turn a computer on. Another participant stated that she struggled to do the technology activities.
 - Several participants suggested scheduling two classes, one for those more technologically advanced and one for beginners. When Western Carolina University tried this approach, there was still significant variations in competency levels among the advanced participants.
2. The majority of the participants indicated the lack of technological infrastructure and resources as a weakness of the program. The biggest complaint was the lack of LCD projectors in the schools. On the average, there is one LCD projector per school. This negatively affects the use of American Memory in the classrooms and the ability to use PowerPoint presentations. Teachers must sign up in advance for the LCD projectors; without this resource, PowerPoint presentations by the students and the teachers are limited to the computer or television monitor. As one participant stated, “On a day-to-day basis, I can’t project information. If we had more LCD projectors, it would make all the difference.”
- Other resources lacking are technical support personnel in the schools and lack of funds for wide-screen televisions.
3. Responses varied on how the AAM course impacted the preparation and implementation of lesson plans. The majority of the participants use information from the AAM course in their lesson plans. One reason for not using information from the AAM course was the lack of information on American Memory is limited in some subject areas, especially math, and the lack of technical support in the school.

Focus Group Recommendations:

1. Continue to provide the laptops or another comparable technological motivator.
2. Continue with a combination of classroom instruction and online coursework with the classroom instruction being the primary method of instruction. Online coursework needs to be refined based on feedback from graduates.
3. Work to ensure the AAM and school districts' software packages are compatible and connectivity is more widespread in western North Carolina.
4. Continue to screen the participants' computer skills and divide the classes accordingly. If classes cannot be divided because of budget constraints and availability of instructors, then increase the number of technical support personnel per cluster.
5. Work to improve technical support in the schools and increase the number of LCD projectors. These two factors will increase program graduates' opportunities to use technology in the classrooms.

SITE VISITS TO SCHOOLS OF AAM PROGRAM GRADUATES

The purpose of the site visits was to observe the teachers using the Library of Congress resources and to interview the teachers who had not participated in a focus group. The clusters targeted were Mars Hill College (1 site visit), Montreat University (4 site visits), and Western Carolina University (3 site visits).

Schools Visited

- North Buncombe High School: A rural high school in Weaverville (Buncombe County).
- Thickety Christian School: A private, rural, one-room school for grades K-12, located in Clyde (Haywood County).
- Swain West Elementary: Located in Bryson City (Swain County).
- South Macon Elementary: An elementary (K-5) school located in Franklin (Macon County).
- Chase High School: A county school located in Forest City (Rutherford County).
- Chase Middle School: A county school located in Henrietta (Rutherford County).
- East Rutherfordton High School: Located in Forest City (Rutherford County).
- East Rutherfordton Middle School: A county school located in Bostic (Rutherford County)

Recruiting Site Visit Participants

The cluster directors provided the evaluator with a list of participants and their locations. The schools were selected based on reaching the highest number of teachers within a geographic area. The evaluator contacted, via email, selected participants. To ensure participation, a follow-up note from cluster directors/assistants was also sent.

A total of eight site visits were conducted involving 12 teachers. The following chart represents a composite of the types of schools visited and the numbers of teachers interviewed.

	Elementary	Middle	High	Private
Number of Schools	2	2	3	1
Number of Teachers	4	2	4	2

Characteristics of the Participants

The teachers interviewed represented the following disciplines and grade levels:

- High School - American literature, math, chemistry and physics, cabinetry and woodworking, pre-algebra, advanced math, honors geometry
- Middle School – science, social studies
- Elementary – all subjects including math, reading, and language
- Private – all subjects

Site Visit Interviews

The evaluator met individually with the teachers during their planning periods for the interviews. The interviews, which lasted between 20-30 minutes, consisted of the same questions used in the focus groups. They are as follows:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
8. Describe any concerns or issues you have had using the Internet.
9. What do you think of your instructors?
10. What do you think of the program's technical support staff?
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

Site Visit Interview Findings

The responses to the site visit interviews were consistent with the focus group interviews and are reported in the focus group findings section.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Four classroom observations were conducted at the following schools: North Buncombe High School, South Macon Elementary, and Chase High School. In addition, two classroom applications were shown to the evaluator. The site visits coincided with the site visit interviews.

Classroom Observations

- At North Buncombe High School, a junior American literature class was observed as they conducted research on authors. The students, having chosen novels they wanted to research (e.g., *Red Badge of Courage*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *My Antonia*), were divided into teams. Each team was provided a laptop. Using American Memory, the students were to write journal entries about the novels and the authors and present their findings to the entire class. The students appeared to be interested and excited in the learning exercise. One student noted that he and his team had selected *Huckleberry Finn* and wanted to research Mark Twain. They wanted more information on Twain because they had read *Tom Sawyer* in the 6th grade.
- Also, at the same high school, North Buncombe, students were observed while engaged in an assignment on chemistry elements. Having researched the different elements, students had to make up their own elements consistent with the element chart. One student's PowerPoint presentation was on "Randomium" and another one was on "Allium." The presentations listed the properties of the elements, side effects, and the electron configurations. Students added sound and pictures to their presentations. One student stated, "This assignment helped me to learn the elements and PowerPoint at the same time."
- At South Macon Elementary, a kindergarten class was observed viewing a PowerPoint presentation on the alphabet. Words such as "mat," "hat," and "bat" were displayed with pictures. The students, who were called on individually to sound out the letters and words, appeared to be very focused on the assignment.
- At Chase High School, cabinetry and woodworking students individually viewed a tutorial, Furniture Styles – Colonial to Modern Furniture – 1750s –1950s, which the teacher had developed on his laptop. The tutorial included an overview, pictures of the furniture, information on the designers (i.e., Chippendale, Shakers), and a bibliography. Students were assigned research papers on their selected furniture style.

Classroom Applications

- At North Buncombe High School, a chemistry teacher had designed a web site as part of the AAM coursework. The web site included a mission statement for the class along with homework assignments, frequently asked questions, calendar of events, and grades. The students using assigned identification numbers can access their grades even on weekends.
- In addition, at North Buncombe High School, an integrated math teacher had developed a web site. She updates it weekly so that if students miss a class, they can access the web site and stay current with the assignments. Parents also access the web site and email the teacher if they have questions. In addition, this teacher uses American Memory to teach geometry. The students select a quilt, calculate the measurements and areas, and assign numerical values.

Site Visit Observation Findings

The site visit observations indicate that the four program graduates observed are using the technology to enhance their students' classroom learning experiences. In addition, the two program graduates' websites are connecting students and parents to the classroom.

LESSON PLAN ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the lesson plan evaluation was to determine the degree to which teachers became familiar with and used computer technology to design and deliver sound instruction in the schools.

Selection of Lesson Plans

Ten lesson plans were randomly selected from the four clusters totaling 40 lesson plans. The evaluator selected the lesson plans by randomly drawing 10 names from each cohort. Cluster directors submitted compact disks containing the work samples of an entire cohort of teachers.

Characteristics of the Authors

Instructional Level of Participants Sampled	
Elementary	22
Middle	11
High	07
Total Participants	40

Content Areas of Lesson Plans Addressed		
Social Studies	22	
Science	07	
Math	01	
Language Arts	04	
<i>Specialty Areas</i>	Music	01
	Home Arts	01
	Drafting	01
	Media	02
	Cabinet Making	01
Total Participants	40	

Assessment Tool

A rubric was used to assess the lesson plans. The rubric consisted of 19 questions and was divided into three sections. The first section assessed instructional practice and focused on content knowledge and pedagogical skills addressed in the lesson plans. The second section of the rubric evaluated the specific technological applications. This section attended to the necessity and application of the technology and accompanying artifacts. The third section assessed the technical applications of the lesson plans. This section provided a holistic view of the lesson plan and its accompanying electronic resources.

Scoring

A numerical value was assigned to each question. This enabled the evaluator to compare items within and between cohorts. A value of four (4) was assigned if there was clear, concise, and convincing evidence to support the item in question. This was labeled as the Target Value. A value of three (3) was assigned if there was clear evidence but not to the degree of a four. This was labeled as the Acceptable value. A value of two (2) was assigned if there was some evidence implied in the lesson. A value of one or zero (1-0) was assigned if there was little to no evidence provided.

Lesson Plan Assessment Findings

Overall Program Strengths:

The strengths found across each cohort were similar. These strengths were (1) accurate content, (2) presentation of the content in a creative electronic format, and (3) creating grade appropriate instruction. Although these lesson plans varied in terms of skill, grade level, and content, they contained similar strengths.

Most of the lesson plans contained accurate content. Only a few lessons contained poorly worded sentences that negated the accuracy of the content. Only one lesson contained a wrong date and name. For the most part, the content presented in the lessons was correct according to reliable sources. The content of the lesson plans and electronic presentations were checked using the Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th edition; the Biography Resource Center, an online database maintained by the Gale Group; and the AAM Library of Congress website. Even though many of the teachers were gaining an emergent understanding of the uses of the technology, they continued to uphold a high level of professionalism with the content of their lessons.

Although teachers were at varying degrees of understanding, they were able to create presentations that demonstrated their emerging, developing or proficient understanding of computer aided instruction. All teachers were able to create classroom presentations to enhance understanding, which may motivate student to become engaged in learning process. These teachers experimented with software options like PowerPoint. They were able to present electronic materials that supplemented the class textbook, the required reading or a text set.

Most of the teachers created grade appropriate lesson plans. Many of these lessons required students to think in sophisticated ways. For example, a kindergarten teacher from Western Carolina University created an interdisciplinary lesson plan on the health of teeth and the history of dentistry in western North Carolina. She integrated the care of teeth today with practices in the past. She used local resources, a field experience to a museum, and included primary resources on Dr. Daisy Zachary McGuire, the first female dentist in western North Carolina. A middle school teacher from Montreat College integrated Karen Hesse's book Out of the Dust with AAM Dust Bowl images, recorded interviews, and video. These electronic resources allowed her to create interactive learning centers her students could complete individually or in groups. Lastly, a high school English teacher at Furman University created a lesson plan on slave narratives. Students were required to research the literary contributions of slaves and use slave narratives to compose original personal narratives. These examples illustrate how teachers took a complex unit and constructed it into instruction that was appropriate for students at their specific instructional levels.

Strengths at Each Site:

Montreat College: The teachers in the Montreat College cohort were well representative of the emergent stage of computer technology and instructional design. The data suggested that teachers were able to present the content in an electronic format. Lesson plans were organized. Many of the lesson plans reflected a unique or creative approach to the content. These lesson plans contained content that was accurate and appropriate for the intended grade level. These teachers demonstrated an emerging level of computer technology.

Mars Hill College: The lesson plans from the Mars Hill College cohort were also representative of the emergent stages, but also displayed an understanding in the developing stages of computer technology and instructional design. Because this cohort used 4MAT as an instructional framework, teachers were able to organize their lessons in a clear, systematic manner. 4MAT provided a structure that allowed teachers to take into account various learning styles. The teachers in this cohort were able to create unique presentations that reflected an emerging or developing understanding of the technology. The teachers were able to create grade appropriate instruction that enhanced the range of instructional opportunities.

Western Carolina University: The teachers who participated in the Western Carolina University cohort represented a group who were less in the developing stages and more in the proficient stages of understanding. Whether it was the quality of the instruction presented to the teachers, the level of technical support, the time afforded to the lesson plan development, or a combination of all three, this cohort stood out in relationship to the other cohorts evaluated.

These teachers were able to package real, relevant, and rigorous instruction that demonstrated methods of inquiry central to the discipline. By “real,” the evaluator meant instruction that was meaningful to the students. It reflects a connection to real world settings and situations. By “relevant,” the evaluator meant relevant to the lives of children allowing the content to connect to the students in meaningful ways. By “rigorous,” the evaluator meant instruction that maintained close attention to the discipline and methods of inquiry central to the discipline. All of the lessons evaluated from this cohort demonstrated real and relevant instruction, which made numerous connections to the children and their various learning styles.

The teachers linked the state content standards with local rural history. They utilized interdisciplinary methods to teaching and learning and used a variety of technological tools to enrich learning opportunities. They coupled the AAM site to local ecology, history, and culture. This AAM course provided the cohort with the vehicle to design meaningful instruction that “added value” to their lessons.

Because these teachers had a stronger command of the technology, they were able to design lesson plans that encouraged a full range of thinking processes. Students were engaged in analyzing, evaluating, and creating content knowledge. This kind of instructional design provides students with a more meaningful learning experience, which is needed for successful problem solving. They were able to pay more attention to the student activities allowing the instructional presentations to go beyond the teaching of factual knowledge. Assessment tasks must be designed to require more of students than simply recalling facts.

Again, when teachers have a clear command of the computer skills, they are able to design effective instruction that uses appropriate electronic artifacts and web links. This moves beyond the emergent understanding of using primary content as clip art to one that integrates the primary visuals and sound clips into meaningful or problem-solving based inquiry. Teachers in this cohort were less likely to use the AAM web site for clip art and more apt to use it in “hands –on, minds – on” ways. In this situation, children were asked to analyze, evaluate, or create knowledge specific to the content being taught.

Furman University: The Furman University cohort was well representative of the developing stage. These teachers were able to create lesson plans that demonstrated their understanding of the technology and all its features. They were more familiar with how to use the computer to insert images, use manufactured templates. Like the other cohorts, the Furman cohort designed lessons that contained accurate content that was grade level appropriate. Teachers organized instruction in a clear accessible format. The appearance of the lessons demonstrated a developing attention to visual appearance and presentation. The skills needed to design effective and appropriate instruction appear to be more automatic, freeing the teacher to concentrate more on pedagogy and less on the basic rudiments of the technology.

One particular point worth mentioning was the Web Quests teachers designed. As part of their instructional package, these teachers designed interactive sites for their students to use. The “quests” asked students to assume roles and to interact with various websites, including the AAM site. This enabled students to reflect on their learning, work in groups, complete assignments, build an understanding of key vocabulary, and complete research activities.

This provided students with more meaningful learning than indicated in the lesson plans. The data suggests that teachers were able to use this tool effectively and were better able to display their understanding of instructional design. This level of understanding was lacking in their lesson plans. Therefore, Web Quest provided them with the right model for using a full range of thinking skills appropriate for the intended grade level.

Program Weaknesses

Overall weaknesses of the AAM project:

Since most of the lesson plans evaluated demonstrated that teachers were at an emerging or developing skill level, hence, learning the rudiments of the technology, the lesson plans they submitted were more teacher-driven and less student oriented. Lacking in most of the lesson plans were opportunities for students to engage in and actively apply learning in meaningful ways. The lesson plans tended to be more geared toward imparting factual knowledge, understanding and applying this factual knowledge to the concepts introduced by the teacher. Teachers created PowerPoint presentations that were to be shown to the students as a supplement. Missing from many of the lesson plans were relevant interactions between the AAM content and the student.

Many of the lesson plans used the AAM site solely as a source for clip art. PowerPoint slides were designed using the images and files from the AAM site to visually enhance the content. For example, one lesson plan focused on landforms. Collections of images from the AAM site

were presented as examples of varying landforms. Little or no information about the historical significance of these images was included. This was a prime example of how teachers with an emerging understanding of the technology might display their limited skills and knowledge about using technology for instructional design. As previously stated, until the skills are intuitive, the lesson plans and electronic resources will remain focused on displaying or “over” displaying their limited skills.

Once teachers have the computer skills firmly established, they could then concentrate their efforts on designing more student interactive instruction. This requires a pedagogical shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered instruction. Once the teachers were willing to “let go” of the technology, they began to design instruction that allows for more student led interaction. For example, the Furman cohort, well in the developing stages of understanding, designed one student led experience that proved beneficial. Web Quests were designed for students to interact with the AAM site and information. Role-playing a task by assuming a role and then using the Internet to go on a “quest” provided teachers and students with a number of resources unavailable in conventional textbooks or lessons. This kind of instructional development could only be made possible when teachers understand the technology.

A weakness of the program was the lack of student engagement. Even with the development of such instructional tools as Web Quests, the amount of time students spent on problem solving and authentic learning experiences was considerably less than the time used to teach facts and apply selected procedures. Lessons rarely asked students to think like real historians, writers, or explorers. The majority of lessons evaluated did not provide students with learning opportunities that asked them to analyze visual evidence, make comparisons, or draw conclusions. Authentic experiences such as role-playing, compose an authentic piece of writing, or make connections between the images and the students’ personal lives were missing. The lesson plans indicate that teachers were more concerned with developing their computer technology skills and less concerned with integrating the AAM collection into student-guided work.

Providing accompanying assessment tools with the lesson plans was an overall weakness. For many teachers, creating appropriate assessments of student learning and understanding was an afterthought. Some of the lesson plans contained rubrics. Some teachers hinted at the kind(s) of assessments needed during and after implementing the lessons. For the most part, assessment was neither mentioned nor accounted for. It appears that teachers were more concerned with presenting the information and less concerned with what this understanding might look like or how teachers would know that students understood the information?

Weaknesses at Montreat College

As noted as a Program strength, the teachers in this cohort designed lessons that displayed their emerging understanding of computer technology. The lessons evaluated from the Montreat College cohort were more focused on learning the basics of computer technology and less on designing sound instruction. How do we know this? The teachers in this cohort concentrated most of their efforts on PowerPoint presentations and less on designing inquiry based instruction that used the primary resources and analytical tools appropriately. All the “bells and whistles” PowerPoint provides were used, and over used. Because all of their efforts were focused on

learning the basic rudiments of computers, less of their attention was placed on using technology to enrich learning opportunities.

The lesson plans and electronic resources resembled an “informational kiosk” where students were required to passively watch the presentations and learn the imparted information. This kind of instruction limited the amount of student interaction and questioning. Students were rarely asked to “wonder and wander” with the information. They were simply asked to watch and learn the information. For example, one teacher created a presentation on Native American Indians, which contained multiple slides with as many as forty facts. The accompanying lesson plans did not address how students would use the information. This brings up the notion of active learning. What activities are children actively participating in and how are they using this factual knowledge?

Another lesson plan used PowerPoint to introduce book awards. An elementary media specialist created a presentation to inform the students about the selection of the North Carolina Book Awards. Nominated books were presented along with a review of the book. Clip art of old book covers from the AAM site were used. Students were asked to look at the presentation, write reviews, listen to the books read by the teacher, and complete an author/illustrator study. This lesson plan was totally teacher driven and provided little to no opportunities for student inquiry.

The lessons evaluated rarely integrated critical thinking skills and problem solving. Seldom did this cohort design lesson plans that warranted the accompanying artifacts. These emerging teachers used the AAM site primarily as a source of clip art to enhance their visual presentations. From the students’ point of view, direct instruction of facts, ideas, and concepts was primary. The lessons lacked activities that asked students to assume responsibilities for their own learning. The students were rarely asked to assume the role of a historian or reporter, evaluate evidence, create group or individual projects, or draw conclusions about the imparted information.

Weaknesses at Mars Hill College

Just like the Montreat cohort, the Mars Hill College cohort displayed an understanding of the emerging and developing stages. Teachers created PowerPoint presentations to serve as “informational kiosks” presented either by the teacher or possibly as a center in the classroom. Most of the lessons rarely asked students to assume the roles of an authentic learner.

Because the instructional models were more teacher-driven and less student devised, students were rarely asked to formulate questions of their own, nor were they asked to become personally interested in their own learning. The data suggests that students were to be only receptors of information and not to critically inquire about the information being taught.

Assessment tools used to evaluate students’ knowledge, both formal and informal, were lacking. The data suggested that teachers used the 4MAT model without fully committing to its philosophical foundation. Committing to the 4MAT model required teachers not only to design instruction for various learning styles but also to assess understanding in a variety of ways. The lesson plans selected revealed that teachers appeared unconcerned with assessment.

Weaknesses at Western Carolina University

The degree of computer technology skills to design instruction was high and more intuitive. The teachers in this cohort designed well thought out lessons that utilized a full range of thinking processes, hinted at more student led inquiry, and authentic learning situations. Only one weakness was noted. While some of the lessons contained well-reasoned assessment tools, many did not. In order for teachers to appropriately assess student progress, a series of assessment tools, both formal and informal, are needed. Teachers in this group should be asked to take a backward design approach to their lesson plans. They should ask the assessment question, “what does understanding look like, and how will I (the teacher) know it when I see it”? Aligning the curricular standards with the instruction, and then asking the assessment questions established a one-to-one correspondence between the content standard, the instruction, and the assessment tool.

For example, if the content standard directed students to analyze historical photographs, then the instruction would include (1) teaching students how to analyze primary sources and (2) providing the students with guided and independent practice in the form of a handout. This handout would be completed while viewing the photographs. This illustrates a one-to-one correspondence between the objective and the instruction. During the independent practice phase of the lesson and upon completion of the assignment, the teacher would look for evidence, both formally and informally, indicating the students’ levels of understanding. Informally, the teacher might anecdotally note those students who are having (or not having) difficulty with the assignment. Formally, s/he would grade the handout and provide the student with feedback on his/her comprehension of the task. A backwards design approach was taken because the teacher knew up-front the kinds of evidence s/he was looking for during the implementation of this lesson. A backwards design approach to assessment was lacking in the lesson plans evaluated.

Weaknesses at Furman University

Like the Western Carolina University cohort, the Furman cohort reflected a stronger command of the technology, making their lesson plans richer in detail. A weakness of the works sampled was the lack of attention to assessment. As mentioned before, many of the lesson plans hinted or contained assessment tools, many did not. In order for teachers to appropriately assess student progress, a series of both formal and informal assessment tools are needed.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendations for AAM Project

The lesson plans evaluated suggested that teachers were across the board in terms of their computer skills. This being the case, the following recommendations are noted.

- Focus on technology or instructional design but not both at the same time
- Create lesson plans that provide meaningful learning for students
- Maintain a realistic perspective on the world of classroom teaching
- Allow for time to learn technology integrated with instructional design

The daily routines of teachers are very scattered and frenetic. By the time a teacher finishes teaching five or six classes, serves on a committee, calls parents, assists with bus duty, cleans up their classrooms, and prepares for the next day, s/he is exhausted. One recommendation is that the AAM courses focus on either learning the technology or using the technology to design

appropriate instruction. The course cannot do both. As the old saying goes, “Less is more.” Since teachers enter the program at various levels of computer proficiency, the courses should begin at their level of understanding and proceed forward. This process would model the most basic principle of instructional design: take the student from where they are not where they should be.

Once the teachers have a strong understanding of the technology, they can then move into designing instruction that provides meaningful learning for students. Schools are now more focused on meeting the State standards and passing the accountability tests than on student inquiry. Teachers have one priority, passing the required tests. For many teachers, this translates into an instructional model that is more teacher-driven and less student oriented. The problem with this model is that there are no guarantees that students learn more from a teacher-centered pedagogy than a child centered one. The availability of technology in the schools provides a richer opportunity for our students to explore, question, and inquire about topics they are interested in learning more about. Not one lesson plan evaluated asked students to develop a list of ideas or questions they were interested in about the information being taught. Never were the students asked to consider or “wonder and wander” the ideas and concepts that interest them personally. We recommend that teachers be given instructional models to encourage student led inquiry and how to integrate technology into this curricular model.

These models must be explicit and well articulated. The 4MAT model used by the Mars Hill Cohort is an excellent model. More effort must be made to clarify what this kind of instruction looks like in a classroom so teachers will be able to understand it and use it. Teacher need time to learn and use their new skills. We recommend that teachers be given the time need to learn the skills and to make these skills more intuitive so that instructional designs can make better use of them.

Recommendations for Montreat College

- Refine using primary source materials in sound instructional design
- Further develop an instructional framework that encourages teachers to design meaningful quality instruction
- Further develop alignment of lesson plans with curricular goals and objectives to instructional activities, and assessments both formal and informal

Recommendations for Mars Hill College

- Continue to emphasize the significance of primary source material and documentation
- Continue to refine instructional design aligning standards with instruction and assessment
- Further develop appropriate assessments to include both formal and informal evaluations
- Continue to refine the 4MAT model of instructional design
- Refine the content of the lessons to include local history as primary sources

Recommendations for Western Carolina University

- Continue to integrate local history and culture into lesson plan development
- Continue to link local primary sources with LOC content
- Continue to develop electronic frameworks for presenting lesson plans
- Further develop instructional practices that utilize student-led inquiry

Recommendations for Furman

- Continue to refine the quality of teacher created activities to include student led inquiry such as Web Quests
- Further refine an instructional framework for presenting teacher created lessons
- Further develop instructional activities to include student led inquiry.

APPENDICES

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
FOCUS GROUP FOR MARS HILL COLLEGE COHORT

JULY 9, 2002

Dr. Deborah Morris, from the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) at Mars Hill College, conducted a focus group for the Mars Hill College cohort at Mars Hill College on July 9, 2002, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm. The purpose of the focus group was to ascertain the effectiveness of the AAM training and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms. Amy Haynes, a senior at Mars Hill College, assisted with the focus group.

The twelve participants who attended the focus group were part of a workshop, Updating Your Classroom Website, which was held on the campus on July 9. The participants were selected from a weeklong schedule of daily workshops based on the number of participants and school representation. Some workshops had fewer than 12 participants enrolled. The focus group followed lunch. A \$50.00 gift certificate from Barnes and Noble was offered as a door prize as incentive to participate in the focus group.

The twelve teachers represented the following schools: Candler Elementary, Weaverville Primary, Madison High, North Buncombe High, Bethel Elementary, Enka High, Cane River Middle, Harris Middle, and Pisgah Elementary. One charter school, Artspace, and one private school, Arthur Morgan, were also represented. The elementary teachers taught all subjects, while the middle and high school teachers' subjects ranged from science, language arts, math, chemistry and physics.

The focus group was structured around the following questions:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.
9. What do you think of your instructors?
10. What do you think of the program's technical support staff?
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

The responses to these questions are as follows:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?

All twelve participants stated that the biggest motivator was receiving the laptop. Other secondary motivators included:

- “Being a participant looks good for the national boards.”
- “Internet access is now possible at my private school.”
- “I get a chance to learn more about the computer and use the Library of Congress resources.”

2. What do you think about the AAM course?

- There was consensus among the respondents that the AAM program was a positive experience. One respondent said, “I’d do it again without any hesitation.”
- Other positive aspects about the program included the opportunity to increase computer skills, to engage students with the Internet, and to design interactive lesson plans.
- One respondent felt the coursework was very beneficial especially the information on multiple intelligences.

3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?

Respondents offered several insightful comments in response to the classroom instruction. Two participants stated that they felt much of the work they were doing was busy work.

Comments included:

- “I didn’t understand the significance of using magazine articles. It seemed like busy work.”
- “It was hard to get the busy work done, since we work regular jobs.”

Dissatisfaction was expressed over the use of class time. Respondents said they felt the time spent on theme units and other exercises could have been better spent working with the computer programs. They also felt that some of the class work was redundant in relation to the work that they had had in their undergraduate courses. Respondent comments included:

- “ Why can’t someone teach me how to use PowerPoint instead of making a hat?” (The “hat” activity was used to show how a teacher could assess different learning styles.)
- I was bored to death. The hat thing drove me crazy.”
- “Hopefully most of us already know how to do that (theme units). That’s what we’ve already learned in college.”
- “I felt like I was going back to undergraduate school. I’ve been through four years of undergraduate school. Give me the computer stuff.”

4. In your view, what needs to be changed with the AAM course?

Respondents felt that the course needed to be more focused, making expectations clearer from the beginning of the program. The majority of participants said that they were unclear about the expectations for their final project.

- “It would have been good to show a finished product on the first day to set goals and make expectations clear from the start.”
- “If you see the end product first you’d see how little bits and pieces fit together.”
- One respondent who teaches science said that she had difficulty with some assignments (e.g., finding three pictures to use in the classroom), since the LOC did not offer much information on many of her classroom topics. She said, “I felt like I’d spent a lot of time on requirements that weren’t applicable to my field.”
- A need was expressed for increased peer tutoring and exchange, feedback from instructors, and computer work. One respondent said, “We could have shared more with each other, like a class website to post questions and findings (a bulletin board format).”
- Respondents said they had been assured that they would receive feedback from their instructors throughout the course. Participants, however, made the following comment: “I did not get feedback from some of my work. I didn’t know if I was doing it correctly all along.”
- “We needed the opportunity to ask questions.”
- Participants reiterated their desire to have more work with the computers. One said, “I’d like to see more of actually working with a web page.”
- One respondent’s opinion, affirmed by other participants, was that the class should have been divided into two or more different sections, based on computer efficiency level. One respondent said that instructors should offer a checklist questionnaire that can gauge a student’s skill levels, and then group students accordingly. Having all students grouped together proved to be problematic because the more inexperienced students dominated the instructors’ attention.

5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?

- Seven respondents said they felt they were “adequately prepared” for the computer requirements before the class began. Other self-rankings ranged from “computer illiterate” to “very comfortable” with computers. However, one respondent said that she had misjudged her skill level prior to the course, and found herself lacking after the course began.
- Several participants mentioned that the pace of the class did not match their computer skill level. One said, “Stuff went too fast. I was so frustrated. There was no instruction before assignments were expected.”
- One respondent classified herself as having “beginner level” computer skills and said that she very quickly got behind “when it’s just here it is ‘click...click...click...’”

6. Were the course goals and objectives clear to you at the beginning of your program?

The majority of participants felt that expectations were unclear from the beginning of the program and that the deadlines were not followed throughout. Comments included:

- “I got real frustrated because I never really knew what to do.”
- “The goals and objectives need to be clarified at the beginning. The syllabus and deadlines changed as we went through the coursework. The syllabus needs to be a work in progress.”
- “I felt like I was always behind.”
- When asked if the class was penalized for not having assignments completed on time, this respondent said, “The guilt for not having the work completed was penalty enough.”

7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans? How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?

Participants were enthusiastic about the impact of the coursework on their lesson plans.

- “It made it a whole lot easier. I am pretty experienced with computers, but I’ve stayed away from the web page design. Now I am using it as a means of developing lesson plans and communicating them to my students. This saves me 1-2 hours a day. Now I update my web page instead of ‘reinventing the wheel’ through rehashing old lesson plans. It is easy to modify the plans.”
- We have mobile (computer) labs at school and now I can do interactive lesson plans and all the students get individual computers.”

Other uses for the LOC resources included:

- Viewing letters from past presidents
- Viewing pictures that compare the old vs. the new White House
- Viewing the “Learning Page” with elementary school students
- Viewing Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture models
- Locating, on the LOC, a former Asheville slave from the Underground Railroad & comparing past presidents’ views on slavery.
- Reading primary source documents

8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.

The majority of respondents reported no problems with Internet access. The charter school that was represented is working towards gaining access; currently one phone line serves the school.

9. What do you think about your instructors?

- Participants’ responses to this question were generally positive. They labeled the instructors as “pretty laid back.” A second said that they were “helpful, but there was not enough time for them to go around.”
- Others named specific lessons or instructors as helpful. One participant mentioned that the lectures, which focused solely on computer applications, were very beneficial.
- One respondent felt that the instructors did not teach to individual student learning styles, but she attributed this to the difficulties that arose from having respondents with varying computer skill levels in the same class. She said, “I don’t think teachers taught to the students’ (AAM participants) individual strengths, since there was such a variation of skill levels.”

10. What do you think about the program’s technical support staff?

- All respondents gave positive reviews about the technical support staff. One participant said, “Eddie was willing to come to my house if I couldn’t figure out my problem. I always emailed him with questions.”
- A second respondent said, “We need more Eddies.”

11. How is this course impacting your teaching?

- A recurring theme that surfaced in response to this question was that participants’ comfort levels with computers increased, and they felt that this had a direct impact on their teaching. There was consensus that this course allowed them to “bring more to the table” as teachers.
- Participants mentioned that they would have a new well of resources to draw from when teaching. One participant said that all of his students now have their own web pages, and as a result of heightened student interest, he will have to put a limit on enrollment for his fall class.
- One respondent mentioned the impact this course had on his or her school as a whole. One participant’s school (Laurel) is 20 minutes from the closest library. She said, “My school has

no resources, so now it (AAM) has opened the door. Before their (students') frustration mounted (when asked to do research), but now it has opened the door to a whole new world and they are feeling more satisfied."

- Two participants said that they were going to donate their laptops to their respective schools when they completed all requirements for the AAM program. One said, "Being a private school we usually don't get the chance to be a part of things like this, so we are giving the laptops to the school, since the school doesn't have any."

12. How is this course impacting your relationship with students?

- Participants felt that completing the AAM course improved their relationships with their students because it made them more versatile as educators.

13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?

- Most participants have not begun an official mentoring process, but some have become "de facto" mentors. One participant said that he has become the Webmaster for his high school and local vocational program.
- One respondent said that she requested a sheet of paper with expectations or requirements for new recruits, protégés, but she hasn't gotten it yet.

14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?

This question was not addressed in focus group because of lack of time.

15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

- Participants made requests for information about how to know if they are getting graduate credit. They also said they wished they had had more opportunities to ask questions, and more lab time for instructor-aided hands-on work.

Several respondents added the following comments:

- "The program was really great and I would participate again."
- "I am glad that I did not quit."

Summary:

All twelve respondents agreed that the laptop was their primary motivation for participating in the AAM program. There was consensus among the respondents that the AAM course was a positive experience and it has had a positive impact on their teaching. Unique to this focus group, were the suggestions that too much time was spent on theories of learning and pedagogy when more time needed to be spent on learning about technology and working on required projects. Numerous suggestions were made on how to improve the course including making the goals and objectives clearer at the beginning. There was much frustration with respondents' entry computer skill levels.

Technology issues were minimal. The majority of the respondents reported no problems with Internet access. The charter school that was represented is working towards gaining access.

The majority of the respondents have not begun the mentoring requirements.

**ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
FOCUS GROUP FOR MONTREAT COLLEGE
COHORT
SEPTEMBER 11, 2002**

Dr. Deborah Morris, from the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) at Mars Hill College, conducted a focus group for the Montreat College cohort on August 22, 2002. The meeting was held at the Little Venice Restaurant in Asheville from 5:30pm – 7:00pm. The discussion took place during dinner. Amy Haynes, a senior at Mars Hill College, assisted with the focus group.

The purpose of the focus group was to ascertain the effectiveness of the AAM training and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms. Eighteen participants were randomly selected from the cohort list. Every third participant was selected from a list of forty participants. An invitation was emailed and despite five confirmations, only three participants attended. A \$50.00 gift certificate from Barnes and Noble was offered as a door prize as incentive to participate in the focus group.

Two of the participants represented the following elementary schools: Fairview, Glen Arden, Bell and Jones; one participant was from Valley Springs

Middle School. The following positions represented: chorus teacher, guidance counselor, and family school specialist.

The focus group was structured around the following questions.

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.
9. What do you think of your instructors?
10. What do you think of the program's technical support staff?
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

The responses to these questions are as follows:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?

- Respondents agreed that the free laptop was the primary motivation for participating in the AAM program.
- Increasing individual knowledge was the second most popular reason for completing the AAM program, technological proficiency was also a motivating factor. One respondent said, “My goal was to be self-sufficient in technology and not have to ask anyone for help.”

2. What do you think about the AAM course?

All respondents felt that participating in the AAM course was a very positive experience. Phrases used to describe the AAM program included:

- “It was a real confidence builder.”
- “I have never been treated as professionally.”
- “I don’t know if I can put a quantitative value on it; it was so enriching.”
- “I can do things technologically that I never thought were possible.”
- One respondent felt the Summer Institute at Montreat in July 2001 was positive, including the facilities, wireless hookups, and the overall ambience.

3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?

- The general response of participants centered on the idea that the online coursework was too intense for the format of the course. One respondent said that the online coursework was much more time consuming than classroom work. A second participant said, “It was a lot of reading to dig through. There were many articles with detail. It was arduous, if it was not in your particular niche; it was particularly grueling.” Other comments included: “It evolved into more than they (instructors) thought it was going to be.” “It was a good experience, but quantity diminished the quality.”
- A second concern about the online coursework was whether instructors actually received emailed assignments. She said, “ You weren’t sure that it got there.”
- Respondents had very positive comments about the online discussions. One said, “It was fun reading what others had to say. Writing was more logical, because we knew others would be reading it.” Other comments included, “It is an intellectual and professional way to talk about something,” and, “It was one of the most enjoyable parts of online activities.”
- A comment on the coursework (both online and face-to-face) was, “It was wonderful, but some was very fast paced.”

4. In your view, what needs to be changed with the AAM course?

- A major complaint with the program was noise level in the classrooms. Comments included, “I missed the whole file management thing because I couldn’t hear over 50 voices,” and, “Sometimes I’d veg out because I couldn’t hear.” Suggestions to remedy the problem included giving the speakers microphones, or having the participants who knew the least sit in the front of the classroom.

- One respondent felt that handouts given after classes would be helpful because sometimes the coursework went too fast. A second respondent called the course “very fast paced and not on target with objectives.”
 - **Part of the AAM program included having former graduates return to the class to share their experiences since completion of the program. Two respondents commented on the irrelevancy of the speakers’ topics and the course objectives. One said that she felt like speakers were “showing off without matching the content of the lesson that night,” and a second said, “The guy on the maps was very thorough and interesting, but not applicable to certain disciplines.” She also said that she stopped listening to the speaker in order to “get to work.”**
 - The inadequate amount of lab time was an issue for some respondents. They also added that this had already been adjusted to allow for more time.
 - One respondent said that the online calendar was not utilized enough and the search engine for the American Memory LOC site was not an efficient search engine.
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
- **All three respondents felt that receiving their laptops before the coursework began in August gave them an opportunity to become comfortable with their laptops.**
 - All three respondents felt that they were “in the middle” in relation to other students’ computer skill level. They stated there was a “good variety” of skill levels, and the younger participants were generally more proficient than the older ones.
 - One also said, “If you couldn’t do something (on the computer), then someone else could.”
6. **Were the course goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of your program?**
- All respondents agreed that the goals and objectives were very clear.
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans? How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
- Two respondents stated they do not use the AAM resources to format their lesson plans. One is a guidance counselor and does not use lesson plans, but now she does save time doing monthly paperwork on the computer. The second teacher is a music teacher who cannot access much information about music from the AAM website because of filters. She said, “I wish they had more art stuff on that site, instead of history.”
 - The respondent who does use lesson plans regularly makes use of the AAM resources to help her format her lesson plans. She said that it saves time by allowing her to update lesson plans quickly from year to year.
8. Describe any issues or concerns you have with using the Internet.
- All respondents agreed that the LOC search engines were difficult to use, and could be improved. They also said that the LOC website cannot be accessed at their schools because of restrictive filters. “I have to work from home in order to access the American Memory website.” One respondent noted that one of her colleagues dropped out of the AAM program because she could not access the Internet at her school.
 - Two respondents also expressed concern about technical support at their respective schools. One said that the computer knowledge she gained while participating in the

AAM program was greater than that of the technical support staff at her school. A second said, “What we have at school (technical support) is worthless.”

9. What do you think about your instructors?

- Respondents had many positive comments about their instructors. Some included, “great,” “excellent,” “no complaints,” and, “I don’t know how they did it.”

10. What do you think about the program’s technical support staff?

- Respondents said that the technical support staff was “great” and “physically accessible.” One also called them “the dream of every public school.”

11. How is this course impacting your teaching?

- Respondents offered a variety of ways in which the AAM program has improved their time management and teaching. Two respondents said that they were more efficient concerning time because they were able to spend less time on paperwork. Another respondent measured effectiveness in different terms; she said that the AAM program enabled her to “think outside of the box,” and this made her a more effective teacher. She also said that she now has a “wealth of info that others can’t get their hands on.”
- One respondent offered heavy praise for the increased capability to use visual aids in the classroom. Visual aids are very effective tools in classroom learning because they get the students’ attention quickly. One said, “You see a lot about slavery in books, but to see a picture of a slave is a whole different story.”

12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?

- **Respondents gave very meaningful ways in which the AAM courses impacted their relationships with their students. Concrete improvements were made in their technical abilities and in their abilities to help their students more.**
- Respondents also said that they “earned cool points with students because we taught them how to use PowerPoint.” One respondent felt this type of learning could be done along with their students, humanizing them in their students’ eyes.

13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
- All respondents have completed the mentoring requirements of their program by mentoring at least one other teacher. One respondent even hosted a mini workshop. Their protégés were other teachers or school faculty who were both available and willing to learn. One respondent chose the school nurse as her protégé. Mentor/protégé pairs usually met twice a week on average.
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
- The two respondents to whom this applied (excluding the guidance counselor) devised individual student projects that integrated the technology they used with a certain theme. One respondent used individual projects with sources from the Internet and the second used slide shows.
- 15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?**
- One respondent requested that her school system guarantee access to the American Memory website by removing the filters.

Summary:

All three respondents agreed that the laptop was their primary motivation for participating in the AAM program. They were all pleased with the AAM course and felt the instruction and technical support staff were excellent. Goals and objectives, all agreed, were clear at the beginning of the program even though the online coursework was too time consuming and difficult.

Technology issues were numerous. Respondents felt the American Memory LOC site to be an inefficient search engine because of the difficulty to access the LOC website at their schools as a result of restrictive filters. The technical support staff at their respective schools is inefficient.

All three respondents have completed the mentoring requirements.

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
FOCUS GROUP FOR FURMAN UNIVERSITY
COHORT

OCTOBER 16, 2002

Dr. Deborah Morris, from the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) at Mars Hill College, conducted a focus group for the Furman University cohort on October 16, 2002. The meeting was held at Stax's Grill in Greenville, S.C., from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Discussion took place during dinner. A \$50.00 gift certificate from Barnes and Noble was offered as a door prize as incentive to participate in the focus group.

The purpose of the focus group was to ascertain the effectiveness of the AAM training and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms. Eighteen participants were selected from the cohort list based on geographical proximity to the focus group location. Twelve of the eighteen attended. Two groups with six participants each were represented at this focus group. One group consisted of students who had completed their coursework in December 2001, and the other group consisted of students who had completed their coursework in May 2002.

The twelve participants represented the following schools:

- Spearman, Crestview, Summit Drive, Pickens, and Forest Acres Elementary schools
- Gettys and Palmetto Middle schools
- Bob Jones Academy.

The teaching areas ranged from:

- Social studies
- US History
- Economics
- Language arts
- LDSC
- The majority of the elementary teachers taught all subjects, and one participant was a K-5 instructional coach.

The focus group was structured around the following questions:

1. How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
2. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.
3. What do you think of your instructors?
4. What do you think of the program's technical support staff?
5. How is this course impacting your teaching?
6. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
7. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
8. What do you think of the AAM course?
9. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
10. In your view, what needs to be changed?
11. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?
12. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?

13. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans? Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

The responses to these questions are as follows:

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?

- Eleven of the twelve participants agreed that the laptop was the primary motivation for participating in the AAM program. One participant's motivation was completing a master's degree, and the AAM graduate course was accepted as a course requirement.

2. What do you think of the AAM course?

All respondents felt the course was a very positive experience. Phrases used to describe the course included:

- "I learned a lot."
- "The course was hard work but well worth it."
- "The course was very intense."
- "The assignments were usable in the classroom (i.e., PowerPoint presentations and Web Quest)."
- "The course was well paced."

3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?

- The majority of the participants preferred the face-to-face instruction. One participant noted that it was easier to ask for help.
- The online work enabled the participants to learn how to use chat rooms, list serves, and how to post assignments. One participant noted that uploading and downloading pictures was time consuming.

4. In your view, what needs to be changed?

- One participant noted that Front Page should be used instead of Angel Fire. Angel Fire, used in the AAM program because it is free of charge, contains some inappropriate advertising such as Hot Babes.
- Another participant suggested that the software should be consistent with the school district's server. "The web page I prepared in the AAM course I could not use at school. As a result, I had to do double work."
- Another participant suggested that two different classes need to be scheduled – one for those more advanced technologically and one for those less advanced.
- One participant noted that the textbook on technology was not very helpful. It was too theoretical while what was needed was more information on how to integrate the theory with classroom application.

5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the course?

- Eleven respondents stated that their computer skills were adequate.
- One participant emphasized that she thought that her skills were adequate until she got into the course. “I came up to speed with tutorials that I would complete on weekends. I needed some one-on-one instruction at the beginning.”

6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of the program?

- All respondents agreed that the goals and objectives were clear at the beginning of the course.

7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans? How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?

Responses ranged concerning lesson plans:

- “I use the Library of Congress for research purposes – it helps to meet the Research and Technology Standards.”
- “I am using the lesson plans I created in this course in my classroom.”
- “I am using the computer skills I learned in the AAM course more than I am using the American Memory. I don’t have time to do more Web Quests.”
- “I can’t use my Web Quest because my students are too young. They are first graders and don’t have the skills yet.”

8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.

- Several of the respondents could not use their laptops at their schools until technology specialists loaded the AAM contents on to school’s server. The systems were not compatible.
- One respondent noted that logging on to her laptop was slow.
- One respondent noted that her school would not buy a cord to connect the television monitor to the laptop. “I had to buy this out of my pocket.”
- One respondent stated, “The administrators who promised support when we began the AAM program need to understand what they are agreeing to. They need to give us the equipment to support us and have a full understanding of what our technology needs are going to be.”
- Several participants mentioned the lack of LCD projectors. One respondent noted that there is one projector for 1500 students. “I would use the American Memory more if I could project the material on the screen. It is difficult getting students around a small television.

9. What do you think of your instructors?

- Respondents had many positive comments about their instructors. Some included, “great,” “wonderful,” “entertaining,” and, “energetic.” “The instructors had the personalities to get us through the course.”

10. What do you think of the program’s technical support staff?

- Respondents agreed that the technical support staff was excellent and available at all times, even on weekends.

11. How is this course affecting your teaching?

Respondents offered a variety of ways in which the AAM program has improved their teaching. Responses included the following:

- “I use PowerPoint at least once a week in my classes.”
- “I am the school editor and I can take graphics from the American Memory and copy them into the newspaper. In addition, I list websites the students can access for more information.”
- “One of my students read ‘Out of the Dust’ and researched the letters and pictures of the families in Nebraska. She copied the letters and handed them out to the class. As a result of this resource, she became very interested in the dustbowl and with this entire assignment.”
- One teacher noted that her students are older and take the initiative to use the computer on their own.

12. How is this course impacting your relationships with your students?

All respondents agreed that the AAM course is impacting their relationship with their students in a positive manner. Responses included the following:

- “My students love to see me use the technology.”
- “In my classroom, if the information comes from the Library of Congress, my students are highly motivated, interested, and tuned in to the subject matter.”
- One respondent noted that one of her students, while he was out of school on break, accessed her website and read some of the links.

13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process for mentoring and time commitments? If not, why?

- The six participants who completed their coursework in December 2001 have completed their mentoring requirements. Responses varied on their processes and time commitments from meeting sporadically to once a week. Regardless of the differences in time commitments, the mentoring process went on for a few months. One of the respondents said that her media specialist expressed an interest in learning about the American Memory and she was excited about being a protégé.
- The six participants who completed their coursework in May 2002 have not begun the mentoring process. Several noted that the instructors needed to be more specific about the mentoring deadlines.

14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of this program on your students?

- There were limited responses to this question. One respondent noted that the Web Quests have evaluations built into the search process. Another respondent stated, "I am going to ask my students to fill out an evaluation on the learning process they experience when they are using the computer and the Library of Congress resources."

15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

- One respondent suggested that future participants need to know from the beginning how many hours the AAM course requires.
- One respondent said, "All that treasure (American Memory) is out there and now we know about it. We are spreading the word about the resources through our protégés and our students."
- Several respondents felt there needs to be an incentive for the protégés. "We get to attend the AAM course and get a laptop but the protégés do not get anything."

Summary:

Eleven of the twelve participants agreed that the laptop was their primary motivation for participating in the AAM program. Unique to this focus group was the suggestion that mentees/protégés receive a laptop too.

All the respondents said they were pleased with the AAM course and its impact on their teaching. Additionally, all respondents gave high praise for the instructors and the technical support staff. The majority preferred the face-to-face instruction to the online coursework. They all felt the goals and objectives were clear at the beginning of the course.

Technology issues were mentioned. Common to the information received from the other focus groups and site visit interviews was the need for more LCD projectors in the schools. Several mentioned the need for more compatibility between the school districts' systems and software and AAM's.

The mentoring process is complete for the six participants who completed their coursework in December 2001. The six participants who completed their coursework in May 2002 have not begun the mentoring process.

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND

SITE VISIT INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the site visit interviews was to ascertain the effectiveness of the AAM training and the consequent impact in the program graduates' classrooms. Twelve graduates were interviewed using the same set of focus group questions. Dr. Deborah Morris conducted the interviews.

Mars Hill College

Two teachers were interviewed at North Buncombe High School. One teacher taught American literature and the other one taught math.

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
 - One of the teachers noted that her motivation was to increase her technological skills. "I was the first teacher to apply for the program at my school."
 - The other teacher stated that it was the laptop followed by receiving graduate credit.
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
 - "Everything was great, but I was struggling to do the technology activities. If I had not had technical support, I would not have survived the course."
 - "The course was effective."
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
 - "We did not have much online coursework, just articles to access."
 - "There was an appropriate balance, but I got more out of the classroom instruction."
4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
 - "It would be helpful to have more assistance and for the pace of the class to be slower. There was not enough time to accomplish what I needed to accomplish in class. The professors talked too much about educational issues and I wanted more on American Memory."
 - "I needed more direction on what our final project was going to be. Instructors needed to say, 'Here is what you need to do'. If they had done that, it would have alleviated a lot of anxiety on my part. They needed to show us samples of final projects."
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the program?
 - One teacher stated, "I had to struggle because my skills were not adequate."
 - The other teacher stated, "My skills were adequate, but I still needed some help and I got it from a classmate and from Anne Marie."
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the onset of the program?
 - Both teachers agreed that the goals and objectives were clear, but one teacher noted that the goals and objectives were not clear for the final project.

7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
 - “This course is impacting my lesson plans greatly. I do PowerPoint presentations on different authors. I found letters written from Emerson to Walt Whitman and read these to the class. American Memory is making my lessons more interesting and more connected. I have students synthesize information. I use American Memory weekly.”
 - “On a daily basis, the AAM course does not impact my lesson plans. There is not much on math in American Memory.”
8. Describe any concerns or issues you have had using the Internet.
 - “The tech people at my school are not very helpful. NBHS has a lot of connectivity problems; usually one-half of the building is down, and the county sometimes takes down the server, but they don’t tell us ahead of time.”
 - “I use my laptop at home because of connectivity problems. My connection at home is much better.”
9. What do you think of your instructors?
 - One teacher noted that overall they are good.
 - The other teacher stated, “I sometimes questioned if what the instructors were teaching us was related to the AAM course.”
10. What did you think of the program’s technical support staff?
 - Both teachers agreed the technical support staff was great. “I wanted to quit one time, but Anne Marie would not let me. They always checked to make sure we were not frustrated.”
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
 - “This course has helped me to get away from just using textbooks, and it has made my teaching so much better.”
 - “The AAM course has broadened my knowledge and resources.”
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with your students?
 - “When my students do PowerPoint, they look to me as their student.”
 - “I haven’t seen any changes.”
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process and time commitments? If not, why not?
 - “I have a protégé and we will meet at least weekly. We have worked together a lot in the past.”
 - The other teacher stated that she has not started mentoring, but has tentatively chosen a protégé.
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?

- “I have not done anything formally, only through observations. My students’ PowerPoint presentations are becoming more professional. I am seeing more information on their presentations as a result of their research skills improving.”
- “I have not designed any measures.”

15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?

- “Keep up the good work.”
- “I could not have afforded the laptop on my own.”

Montreat College

Four teachers were interviewed. Two were high school teachers, and two were middle school teachers. The subjects taught included woodworking and cabinetry, science and social studies, math and science, accelerated math, advanced math, and honors geometry.

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?

- Two of the teachers stated that it was the laptop that was their motivation.
- “To learn to use technology in the classroom was my primary motivation, followed by receiving the laptop.”
- “My motivation was about equal – the laptop and I needed the technology credits for my renewal cycle.”

2. What do you think of the AAM course?

- “It was first rate.”
- “I liked it and I enjoyed it. I have found things on the LOC I never thought were possible.”
- “I liked having time to work on my project. I would like to have seen and had more information on more math activities. I had trouble finding math on American Memory.”
- “I thought the AAM course was easy. I already knew how to do PowerPoint, but I did learn about American Memory.”

3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?

- “We had to do some assignments online which gave us additional resources for the classroom instruction. I preferred the classroom instruction because the instructors were so good.”
- “I liked the face-to-face time better; however, I enjoyed doing some online instruction because of the travel to the training site.”
- “The threaded discussions were helpful. I liked the face-to-face interaction best.”
- “I liked the online course work.”

4. In your view, what needs to be changed?

- “I would change the fact that the same school cannot participate two years in a row. Not that I have the other teachers indoctrinated; they want to participate, but will have to wait.”
- “I would like to see more ideas on how to use the American Memory and projects that other AAM classes have done. Sometimes it is difficult to find resources on European Social Studies.”

- “I would like to have had more class time to work on my project, and more math and science applications.”
 - “There was too much repetition on how to do some things such as how to insert a sound clip. I would have typed up the steps and given them out as a handout.”
5. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the program?
- “I was okay, but there was room for improvement. I could function fine, but it was still a step forward for me. Less competent participants were coached by some of us more advanced participants.”
 - “I felt mine were adequate; however, I learned so much more. Learning PowerPoint was a huge addition for me.”
 - “I knew almost everything before I began the course.”
 - “I had a high degree of competency.”
6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the onset of the program?
- All four teachers agreed the goals and objectives were clear.
7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans? How often are Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
- “My biggest problem is a lack of financial and technical assistance. I would like a wide screen television so I could do PowerPoint presentations, but there is no money available. We have a technical person here at the school who is of no assistance.”
 - I use the Library of Congress three times a semester. The LOC is limited for my subject matter. If I were a history teacher, the LOC would be a gold mine.”
 - “I am currently not using American Memory for lesson planning because of the time required. I plan to use it in the future.”
 - “My students are doing PowerPoint presentations within the next six weeks. They will use PowerPoint to teach about the planets. A limitation to doing more with American Memory is the lack of LCD projectors at our school. We only have one. I can use the television, but it is not clear.”
 - “I have incorporated more technology in my lesson plans. I do presentations on geometry and teach inductive and deductive reasoning. There are limited math resources; most of what I do find is historical development. It is difficult to do an entire lesson plan.”
8. Describe any concerns or issues you have had using the Internet.
- “We have a blocking system, but I can access anything I want. One of my computers was upgraded and now it is nonfunctional.”
 - “In my classroom, I only have two computers so I have to work one-on-one with the students. If we had more computers, I could do total classroom instruction. Also, we have a limited number of LCD projectors.”
 - “Our main problem is getting things from the Internet because of the filters. Access is denied sometimes because the word count is too high. At home I can download anything.”

- “The filters block such things as ‘Western Carolina’ because there is a link to sex education.”
9. What do you think of your instructors?
 - All four teachers felt the instructors were good. Responses included, “Super,” “Kind and patient,” and “I loved them.”
 10. What did you think of the program’s technical support staff?
 - All teachers agreed the program’s technical support staff were excellent.
 11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
 - “Not as much as I would like it to because of the school’s financial difficulties.”
 - “PowerPoint has helped me to prepare for my classes. One the American Memory site, I found the first telegram the Queen of England sent. I read this telegram to my class even though I could not show it, and there was some information on a map that was interesting but I could not project it.”
 - “The AAM course makes me want to teach my students more. If I had an LCD projector, I would use technology to teach math and science concepts.”
 - “I have learned more of the importance of using technology. My students love technology and have grown up with technology.”
 - Another teacher stated, “I have to sign up weeks in advance for an LCD projector; this limits what I can do sometimes.”
 12. How is this course impacting your relationships with your students?
 - “Because of what I teach, I already have a personal relationship with my students. The technology has not helped me that much.”
 - “I don’t know that it has. I have developed a little more patience with them. My students have low computer skills.”
 - “The students love my class. Some students come in at 7:30 a.m. or stay until 3:30 p.m. to work on their projects.”
 - “The students know they can come in to my classroom and ask me questions about how to use the computer.”
 13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process and time commitments? If not, why not?
 - “I did a workshop for five teachers and I formally mentor two other teachers. Part of our AAM course requirement was to either do a workshop or mentor. We meet once a month and I am showing them LOC resources and how to do PowerPoint presentations.”
 - “I did mentor the math teacher next door. He was looking for pictures to enhance word problems. For one particular assignment, he needed pictures of trees for word problems on the growth of trees. I helped him find the pictures.”

- Three of us teachers conducted a workshop here at the school. Five teachers attended and we taught them American Memory. They were required to select a topic and put together five slides using American Memory. We met for five afternoons for two hours per session. I am also mentoring a teacher I work with. We meet every day for 15-30 minutes.”
 - “I mentored a teacher last year and we met on weekends. We did a presentation on Jackie Robinson and used American Memory.”
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
- “I have some written work on tutorials and these are graded.”
 - Two teachers stated that they had not developed any measures.
 - “There are some measures with the projects we do in class.”
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?
- “I just wish it was available to more teachers. So far, I am the only one from this school to attend.”
 - “Keep up the good work.”
 - “I like the program and I hope it will continue.”
 - “It is a good program; I wish it could be open to more teachers. Thirteen applied from this school, but only two of us could attend.”

Western Carolina University

Six teachers from the Western Carolina University cluster were interviewed. One of the six teachers was observed using technology in the classroom. The following schools were visited: Thickety Christian, Swain West Elementary, and South Macon Elementary. Subjects taught ranged from all subjects, language arts, social studies, math, reading, and language.

1. What was your motivation for agreeing to be a participant in the AAM program?
- Two teachers noted that their principal had encouraged them to attend.
 - Three teachers said it was receiving the laptop that was their motivation.
 - “I wanted to learn to use technology with five-year olds.”
2. What do you think of the AAM course?
- Two of the teachers stated, “We enjoyed the course but we were scared. Beth always reassured us and we learned so much.”
 - Two teachers noted that the AAM course was excellent. “Even now we can attend advanced classes such as Advanced Dreamweaver and WCU will install the software on our laptop. We could not afford this on our own.”
 - “Initially I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew, but the way the instructors led us through the class was exceptional. Surfing American Memory was like being in a great library.”
 - “I enjoyed it; it was very intense and I enjoyed learning technology skills.”
3. How do you compare the online coursework with the classroom instruction?
- All six teachers stated that they preferred the classroom instruction to the online coursework.

4. In your view, what needs to be changed?
 - Two of the teachers noted that they were advanced technologically. The class was divided into beginners and advanced, but they felt there was still a difference among skill levels in the advanced group. The two felt they could have spent more time on their projects instead of learning about digital cameras, which they already knew about.
 - Two of the teachers did not see a need for any changes to be made but stated that the cluster directors need “to be sure participants want the laptops for their classes and not their kids at home.”
 - “Nothing.”
 - One teacher noted that at the end of this course, “We had to change our websites and I would preferred not to have done this in class.”

5. How many felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of the program?
 - Two teachers noted that their skills were inadequate. “We did not even know how to turn on the computer. We were scared to death of the computer. We did go to our local library before the course began and tried to get on the Internet. It was very intimidating and we knew we were in over our heads.”
 - Two teachers noted that their skills were above average.
 - One teacher stated that she knew how to turn the computer on and navigate.

6. Were the goals and objectives clear to you at the onset of the program?
 - All six teachers agreed that the goals and objectives were clear.

7. How is this course impacting the preparation and implementation of your lesson plans?
How often are the Library of Congress resources used in lesson planning?
 - Two of the teachers from the private Christian school said that with the curriculum they use, it is hard to do lesson plans. “Our students use the Pace text and they work individually all day. They have two flags they raise if the need us – one for checking their work and one if they need help.”
 - One teacher noted that she uses other participants’ posted lesson plans as a resource. She stated that, “One of my lesson plans is on the Cherokees. We are downloading images of the Cherokee and looking at maps in this region. In addition, the class is studying Appalachian Religious Traditions. She stated, “We are studying circuit rider preachers and learning how to write word problems about the preachers’ lives.”
 - “My AAM project was on Pioneering Communities. I had pictures of what the pioneers ate, wore, and their means of entertainment. My kindergarten kids loved it – it was like a mini-museum in the classroom.”

8. Describe any concerns or issues you have had using the Internet.
 - Two teachers noted that they do not have Internet service at their school because it was cancelled. The local provided turned the service off and they do not have Internet access at home either.

- Two teachers noted that they have a T1 line so there are not any problems. They did state, “We are trying to get a grant so we can buy more projectors. On a day-to-day basis, I can’t project information. If we had more, it would make a difference.”
 - “My school is well connected, but the filters block me on some sites. We only have one projector in this school which is limiting.”
 - “I do not have any problems with connectivity and I take my class to the computer lab at least once a week for two hours. When we are in the classroom, the students sit on the floor and view information off the computer screen.”
9. What do you think of your instructors?
- All respondents felt their instructors were excellent.
10. What did you think of the program’s technical support staff?
- All respondents responded positively to the technical support staff.
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
- Two teachers noted that the project they did for the AAM course helped their students so much. “Our project was on ‘Career Choices for Youth in Haywood County.’ In addition, we invited the career counselor from Haywood Community College. As a result, some of our students had already made career choices, but realized they had other choices.”
 - One teacher noted that when the students are on the computer, it reinforces that they can point and click and it isn’t just the teacher that has this ability.
 - “This course made me aware of ways I can use technology.”
 - “This course really excited me about social studies. For North Carolina history, there are lots of resources. My AAM project was on the Cherokee Indian Heritage in Cowee Valley. I am personally interested in this and this interest has radiated to my students.”
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with your students?
- All teachers responded favorably to this question. One teacher stated, “The AAM course decreases the barrier between the teacher and the students. They realize that I am not the only source of information and they can access the same information source.”
 - Another teacher noted that her students enjoy the fact that she is going to school, too.
 - “My students love it when I use the computer. This week I showed them the hurricane, Isadore, and we discussed how the hurricane is going to impact our weather.”
 - “My students can feel my excitement. We studied the Trail of Tears and explored why some of the Indians got to stay while others had to leave this area. My great-great-great grandmother was one of those who got to stay.”
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? If so, what is your process and time commitments? If not, why not?

- Two teachers noted that they brought in 6-7 parents, and a home-school teacher and her daughter, and mentored them. “We shared with them everything we knew and spent a whole day with them.”
 - Two other teachers said that they conducted a session for every teacher in their school and taught them how to access lesson plans.
 - Two teachers conducted a mentoring class during a school day and 15 teachers participated. “The assistants took over our classes for us. In the workshop, we taught them how to do searches on the web and we had them do a scavenger hunt.”
14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact of the program on your students?
- One teacher noted that she assessed her students informally everyday. “I am starting to measure if the topic we are currently studying on circuit-rider preachers is helping them to conceptualize word problems better.”
 - “I have not designed any measures, but I do observe their attention and interest levels, and listen to their oral responses.”
 - “I have measures on my website and the students have to review the information, conduct research, and retain their answers.”
15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program?
- “It was a very good experience for me and it built my self-confidence to keep learning.”
 - “This course helps me to stay current.”
 - “Keep it up; sorry they have to spread it so thin.”
 - “I am glad I made the effort to keep up.”

Summary:

The responses to the site visit interviews were consistent with the focus group interviews.

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND LESSON PLAN ASSESSMENTS

Lesson Plan Evaluation

The purpose of the lesson plan evaluation was to determine the degree to which teachers participating in the four selected AAM cohorts became familiar with and used computer technology to design and deliver sound instruction in the schools. Ten (10) lesson plans were randomly sampled from four (4) cohorts totaling 40 lesson plans. The four cohorts were from Montreat College, Mars Hill College, Western Carolina University, and Furman University.

The evaluator selected the lesson plans by randomly drawing 10 names from each cohort. Site directors submitted compact discs containing the work samples of an entire cohort of teachers. Authors were randomly selected. The process was repeated each time a new cohort was submitted until all 40 were selected.

Introduction

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) have designed advanced standards and well established criteria by which teachers at all points in the profession are evaluated. These standards reflect the professional consensus of what excellent teachers should know and be able to do. Collectively these standards provide a framework whereby evaluators can identify and recognize teachers who enhance student learning and demonstrate high levels of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional dispositions. The rubric for this evaluation was created using these professional standards. Many of the evaluation questions used language taken directly from these standards; many were redirected to focus solely on instructional technology.

Description of the rubric items utilized for the comparison of plans

The rubric consisted of 19 questions and was divided into three sections. The first section assessed instructional practice. This section focused on the content knowledge and pedagogical skills addressed in the lesson plan. Several essential questions guided the development of this section. The essential questions are: *What is worth knowing? What does understanding look like? What methods, techniques, and pedagogical skills will teachers use to teach content knowledge and selected skills? Is the instruction real, relevant, and rigorous? To what degree was computer technology used to deliver content?*

An additional assessment tool was used to clarify the instructional objectives and standards in relationship to the curricular decisions made by the teachers. The Taxonomy Table (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) served as a translation tool and assisted in gaining a clearer perceptiveness of the instructional design created throughout the lesson plans. The table also served as a visual matrix to locate the relationship between the content knowledge and the thinking skill(s) students were being asked to apply. By locating the objectives, instructional activities, and assessments

on the grid, a clearer representation of the instructional design emerged. It allowed the evaluator to see if teachers were able to move out of the traditional objectives of remembering facts, understanding concepts, and applying procedures and were able to include higher order thinking skills, such as analyze, evaluate, and create knowledge. It also aided the evaluator to locate if teachers included instruction and assessment tools that asked students to use self-knowledge, strategic knowledge, and contextual or conditional knowledge i.e. metacognition.

The Taxonomy Table also allowed the evaluator to see the lesson plan from the students' point of view. Evaluating the lesson plan from the students' point of view assisted in gaining a well-rounded perspective of the instructional design. The Taxonomy Table measuring the students' level of involvement and determining if the lesson plan maintained an acceptable level of real, relevant, and rigorous instruction.

The second section of the rubric evaluated the specific technological aspects of the lesson plan. This section attended to the necessity and application of the technology and accompanying artifacts. The key questions were:

- Is the technology (e.g. web links, internet searches, software applications) appropriate for the lesson?
- Does the lesson plan warrant the accompanying artifacts and web links?

The evaluator was looking to see if teachers were able to use the technology and to what degree were they integrating it into the lesson plan. Lesson plans were evaluated to see if teachers were using the Library of Congress, Adventure of the American Memory website as a source of primary content knowledge for student-led inquiry or were teachers using the site as a source of clip art to enhance teacher directed presentations, websites, and other documents. The evaluator assessed the appropriateness of the technology and artifacts when coupled with sound pedagogical practice.

Lastly, the technical aspects of the entire product were assessed. This provided a holistic view of the lesson plan and its accompanying electronic resources. Since most of the lesson plans were integrated with PowerPoint presentations and teacher designed web pages, the lesson plans were viewed as a "package" and not discrete educational materials. The evaluator assessed the technical aspects of the "package" by looking at spelling and grammar, appropriate documentation, organization, overall appearance, and creativity. (See Evaluation Rubric)

In summary, the evaluation rubric provided a clear framework whereby teachers, at different levels and in varying disciplines could be fairly assessed. The INTASC, NCATE, and NBPTS standards reflect the professional consensus of what excellent teachers should know and be able to do. The Taxonomy Table (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) was used to analyze instructional activities and assessment tools, as related to their intended objective(s). Using both of these, the evaluator was able to assess the degree to which instructional activities and assessments are "on-target" with professional standards.

Scoring

A numerical value was assigned to each question. This enabled the evaluator to compare items within and between the cohorts. A value of four (4) was assigned if there was clear, concise, and

convincing evidence to support the item in question. This was labeled as the *Target* value. A value of three (3) was assigned if there was clear evidence but not to the degree of a 4. This was labeled as the *Acceptable* value. A value of two (2) was assigned if there was some evidence implied in the lesson. A value of one or zero (1-0) was assigned if there was little to no evidence provided. The following example serves to clarify the numerical values assigned.

Example: Item 12

Does the lesson plan indicate a use of multiple assessment tools, both formal and informal to determine student progress?

A four (4) was assigned if the lesson plan was aligned with both formal and informal assessments, such as teacher designed rubrics, reflective journals, tests, observations, or interactive websites.

A three (3) was assigned if the lesson plan contained a clear description of or examples of formal and informal assessments.

A two (2) was assigned if the author of the lesson plan indicated or implied that some form of assessment would take place during the implementation of the lesson.

A one or zero (1-0) was assigned if little to no evidence was provided or implied.

Findings

Program Strengths

Introduction

The purpose of the AAM courses was to acquaint teachers with computer technology and to assist teachers with integrating new technology into sound instructional design. Throughout the course, teachers learned how to develop presentations, complete Internet searches, design web pages, and integrate technology into their daily lesson plans. They learned how to distinguish primary source materials and ways to use these materials in their classrooms. These teachers attended sessions that taught them a wide range skills and knowledge. For many, the opportunity to integrate computers into their professional lives and the possibilities to enhance the instructional potential within their classrooms was new.

Having the capability to enhance instruction with computer technology provides teachers with an “added value” in their classrooms. Teachers are now able to bring new images and primary source materials to their students. This new technology increases the possibility for meaningful instruction, whereby students might be actively engaged and motivated to participate in the learning process. New images and ideas not accessible from textbooks or commercially purchased educational materials became more available for teachers and students to use. It enriched not only the students’ understanding of the material, but also the teachers’ knowledge and instructional potential.

In order to accomplish this kind of instructional design, teachers must be well acquainted with the technical essentials of computer software. When teachers are unfamiliar with computers, they are less able to design effective instruction. Teachers must spend quality time learning how to do simple, basic tasks. Once the basics are firmly established, teachers are better prepared to present meaningful instruction and to integrate computer technology fully into lesson planning. They are more confident with their skills and are able to display a stronger command of the technology. Thus, their lesson plans reflect their confidence with the technology, freeing the teachers to attend to the pedagogical details of the plans.

Teachers participating in the AAM project entered the course with varying degrees of computer skill. Some of the teachers barely knew how to turn on the computer and were fearful of damaging it. Others appeared to possess more sophisticated skill levels. Through the guidance and leadership of their instructors, all teachers were able to create a product at the end of the course demonstrating a level of performance.

The data suggests that in order for teachers to design fully developed electronic lesson plans, they must move through a step-wise process. This stepwise process appears to follow three levels: emergent, developing, and proficient understanding. This was evinced by the varying discrepancies of computer technology and pedagogy skills within a single cohort, as well as, between the four cohorts evaluated. A description of each stage is as follows:

- Emergent

The individual is becoming acquainted with the technology and all its features. S/he is learning how to use the computer to search the Internet, download images, use clip art, save images, create files, use manufactured templates, and send or receive email. S/he is learning which programs are best suited for certain applications. S/he is gaining knowledge of terminology, specific details and elements of computer software. S/he is also beginning to learn about certain skills and procedures specific to the technology. The emergent individual appears to be successful at designing simple PowerPoint presentations or basic FrontPage web sites. The instruction tends to be more teacher-driven with the computer technology being use as an “informational kiosk” for classroom presentations. For the emergent learner, the products they create appear to be “over the top” in that the learner is more focused on over using all the special features of the technology. Over learning something appears to help the technological skills become more automatic, thus freeing the teacher to attend to other details of the lesson design.

- Developing

The individual is developing his or her understanding with the technology and all its features. S/he is familiar with how to use the computer to search the Internet, download images, use clip art, save images, create files, use manufactured templates, and send or receive email. S/he knows which programs are best suited for certain applications. S/he is continuing to gain knowledge of terminology, specific details and elements of computer software. S/he is developing certain skills and procedures specific to the technology. For this individual, the skills needed to design effective and appropriate instruction are becoming more automatic, freeing the individual to concentrate more on pedagogy and less on the basic rudiments of the technology.

- Proficient

The individual is proficient with the technology and all its features. S/he clearly understands how to use the computer to search the Internet, download images, use clip art, save images, create files, use manufactured templates, and send or receive email. S/he knows how to integrate a number of software applications to accomplish a given task. S/he has strategic knowledge about specific details and elements of computer software. S/he has a command of the skills and procedures specific to the technology and utilizes it for his/her means. Peers often turn to the proficient individual for assistance. S/he designs instruction that demonstrates proficient command of the technology. Teachers who are proficient in their understanding of the technology were able to design more detailed lesson plans. In other words, teachers who attended to the instructional details had more powerful lesson plans. When the computer skills are automatic, the teacher is freer to attend to the details of the lesson plan.

This step-wise process is both a program strength as well as a program weakness. The AAM project provided these teachers with the means to learn and use computers in their classrooms. They were able to utilize the technology in such a way to “add value” to classroom instruction. Because teachers are at various stages in their understanding of computer technology and instructional design, their work appears to be more focused one of these three areas:

- learning to use the computer to impart factual knowledge through PowerPoint presentations or web pages, thus “over-learning” the skills.
- developing further lesson plans and unit designs that utilize a variety of computer technology skills
- fully integrating the computer into classroom instruction through student –led and teacher-led inquiry.

Bibliography

Anderson, L. W. and Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.) (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Longman.

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND FOCUS GROUP FOR SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE COHORT APRIL 13, 2002

South Mountain Community College (SMCC) in Phoenix, Arizona is one of seven of the Adventure of the American Mind (AAM) projects throughout the United States. SMCC's first cohort began in the summer of 2001 by attending the North Carolina Institute at Montreat. Isabel LeRoy is the Coordinator of the AAM Project and Michael Summerfield is the Technical Advisor. Twelve teachers enrolled in the program, representing the following elementary schools: Kenilworth, Rose Linda, Jack Kuban, Conchos, Esperanza, M.L. King, Jr., Wilson, Jorgensen, and Isaac Middle School. The teachers teach kindergarten through eighth grade.

The cohort began their AAM course work in January of 2002, and they meet monthly for roundtable sessions to introduce information for their online course, Electronic Research Retrieval Methods. After returning from the North Carolina Institute at Montreat in the summer of 2001, the cohort met on a monthly basis and developed a mission statement and operating agreements.

Dr. Deborah R. Morris, from the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA) at Mars Hill College, conducted a focus group for the SMCC cohort, at South Mountain Community College, on April 13, 2002, from 9:30am – 11:00am. John Hunter, Executive Director of the Education Research Consortium (ERC), asked CARA to conduct a site visit as part of an ongoing evaluation process. The purpose of the focus group was to gather more detail about the effectiveness of the AAM course work that the teachers are currently taking, the impact of the use of technology in the classroom, and opportunities for improving the program. Jennie Pressley, Grants Manager for the ERC, assisted Morris.

The focus group was part of the teachers' monthly roundtable sessions. All twelve teachers participated. The focus group was structured around the following questions:

1. What do you think about the AAM course?
2. How do you compare the online course work with the face-to-face time?
3. In your view, what needs to be changed with the AAM course?
4. How many of you felt your computer skills were adequate at the start of this course to undertake the work required?
5. How many of you felt the course initially demanded more computer skills than you had?
6. Were the course goals and objectives clear to you at the onset of your program?
7. How are the course materials preparing you for the demands of online, distance learning?
8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.
9. What do you think about your instructors?
10. What do you think about the program's technical support staff?
11. How is this course impacting your teaching?
12. How is this course impacting your relationships with students?
13. Are you mentoring other teachers? What are you doing with them? What are the expectations for mentoring in this program?

14. What measures have you designed to evaluate the impact on your students of the skills provided you by this course?
15. What other comments and recommendations do you have for the program?

The responses to these questions were as follows:

1. What do you think about the AAM course?

All of the responses were favorable, for example:

- “This program is very innovative.”
- “We get to come together and share ideas across the districts.”
- “We have learned to help each other, which bridges the isolation.”
- “We get great support from Bill (the instructor) and Michael (technical support).”

2. How do you compare the online course work with the face-to-face time?

Again, responses were uniformly favorable:

- “I like the hybrid approach of face-to-face combined with online instruction.”
- “Our online course is just getting starting. It is well organized.”
- “If I miss a class (monthly roundtable session), I can go online.”
- “The face-to-face time is great. We get a chance to share ideas.”
- “We have gone to two conferences and we knew that we could discuss what we learned at the roundtable sessions.”

3. In your view, what needs to be changed with the AAM course?

Although all of the teachers attended the North Carolina Institute hosted by Montreat College in the summer of 2001, several stated they did not know the expectations and objectives of the Institute until they returned to Arizona. Many felt they needed more exposure to the Library of Congress resources and more computer skills other than PowerPoint. Three of the teachers were selected for the AAM program only a few days before leaving for the Institute (most of these problems were related to the selection and decision process at the district levels). As a result, some teachers missed the orientation program.

4. How many of you felt, at the beginning of the course, your computer skills were adequate to undertake the work required?

5. How many of you felt the course initially demanded more computer skills than you had?

In answer to questions 4 & 5, 41.7% of the teachers said they felt their skills were inadequate.

Skills	N	Percentages
Comfortable/Adequate	7	58.3
Uncomfortable/Inadequate	5	41.7
Total	12	100

6. Were the course goals and objectives clear to you at the outset of your program?

The teachers referred to the experience of attending the North Carolina Institute at Montreat where they felt the objectives and expectations were not clearly outlined. After returning from Montreat, the teachers felt the goals and objectives were clear.

7. How are the course materials preparing you for the demands of online, distance learning?

There was a consensus among the teachers in agreeing that the course was well organized.

Among the comments were:

- “I like the hybrid approach versus 100% online. This gives me a choice of communicating online or face-to-face.”
- “I am very comfortable with this approach. I don’t feel that I am dealing with a blank person.”
- “I am comfortable working online and I like being able to do my course work anywhere – even on vacation.”

8. Describe any issues or concerns you have had using the Internet.

The responses indicated a number of problems with connectivity and liability.

- One school experienced problems with connectivity last year. As one teacher stated, “It took us 1- 1/2 years to get everything installed. We needed a blue cable from the manufacturer. We had to sit and wait and wait. Finally, we got Internet connection during Christmas vacation of 2001. In the meantime, I had to use my computer at home.”
- There were some connectivity problems related to warranty issues. One teacher said, “If we touch the television it invalidates the warranty. My school is the stepchild.”
- One teacher expressed concern with liability: “I feel that I am liable for using the Internet in the classroom. Our students are very knowledgeable and computer savvy. We do have firewalls and ground rules for using the Internet, but I still feel liable.” Another teacher at the same school has installed a Library of Congress icon on the computers thus restricting access to the browser.
- Another issue discussed was the lack of LCD projectors. One teacher stated that because her school did not have a LCD projector, she could not accomplish as much. The response she gets at her school is, “If you need one, fill out the paperwork for a grant.”
- Another teacher stated that her school has one LCD projector for forty teachers. “It is a chore to get it. We can only have students look at the laptop screen.”

9. What do you think about your instructor?

The teachers are very pleased with Bill Mathis, the instructor. As one teacher stated, “We have Bill right here; we’re not out on our own.”

10. What do you think about the program’s technical support staff?

- Michael Summerfield is the technical support staff. All of the teachers noted Michael's support, encouragement, and availability. As one teacher said, "Michael is like my personal technical person. He has even come to my home to help me. I was very fearful of technology, but this program has taken away my fear of technology."
- The teachers stated that they were pleased with the organization and support from the AAM staff. One teacher stated, "The support staff went step-by-step and nurtured us". The teachers were given the opportunity to work on their computer skills individually and to use some of the American Memory resources on their own.

11. How is this course impacting your teaching?

All of the teachers felt the course was impacting their teaching in a positive manner. Listed are some of the responses:

- "I am doing things now I have never done before – all my grades are on the computer, I am doing presentations and bookmarks for assignments. I have gotten excited about teaching again."
- "I am eligible for retirement in two years and I was considering retiring. Now I feel challenged and excited about teaching and I am not going to retire. Before the AAM program, I used the traditional methods of teaching – visual aids, chalkboards, and textbooks, and now I have numerous resources."
- "Even though I have only taught for five years, I was feeling burned out. Not anymore."
- One special education teacher stated, "The use of the computer is so beneficial to my students' self-esteem. They feel that they can use the computer and can learn this along with the others. The computer seems to be something they can use even with a learning disability."
- "After 26 years, I have found something to enjoy."

12. How is this course impacting your relationship with students?

All of the teachers felt the course was impacting their relationships in a positive manner.

- One art teacher uses the computer for teaching reasoning skills and to practice writing. He uses examples that his students can relate to such as pictures with corn. A large number of his students are the children of farmers and have first hand knowledge about growing corn. He stated, "If the students can see things, they will learn them quicker." He also stated that the parents love to see their kids working on the computer when they visit the school.
- One teacher noted that her students were not impressed with her computer skills before her involvement in the AAM course. She said her students are computer savvy and are on the computer all day. When she presented the history of the Library of Congress, her students were impressed. When asked to find the number of books in the Library of Congress, the students went on a search and found the answer. It took the students longer than they thought it would to find the answer. Because of this, her students have more respect for her. They go home, come back to school, and tell her where they have searched and what they have learned.

- Other teachers noted that the students are proud of the projects they create on the computer. This raises their self-esteem.

13. Are you mentoring other teachers? What are you doing with them? What are the expectations for mentoring in this program?

- The formal mentoring program will begin in the fall of 2002.
- Some informal mentoring is currently taking place. Teachers not enrolled in the AAM program are coming to the AAM teachers to ask questions. Some of the teachers are presenting information on AAM at faculty and staff meetings.

14. What measure have you designed to evaluate the impact on your students of the skills provided you by this course?

- The teachers said they have not designed any specific measures at this point.
- Even though there are no specific measures in place, one teacher noted that her students have become much more computer literate because of her involvement in the AAM program. Another teacher noted that her classroom now has technology standards.

15. What other comments or recommendations do you have for the program? The responses were uniformly favorable:

- “Keep it up.”
- “If this had been a traditional program, I would not have participated.”
- “During our roundtable session, it would be helpful if we had more hands on time with the computer and to share what we are doing in our classrooms. We could spend half of the roundtable time doing this.”

Summary:

The response to the AAM program appeared to be very positive. The teachers said the program has been extremely beneficial to them as educators, improving their teaching skills and enhancing their student relationships

Technology problems and barriers to the Internet are isolated problems for a few of the schools represented. A most pressing need is for more LCD projectors.

The cohort met monthly during the fall of 2001 and established a mission statement and operating agreements. This work enabled the cohort to develop as a team and deal with relationship issues before beginning their course work in January 2002. In addition, there was much less anxiety associated with the use of technology given the indicated upfront and continued relationship support from Isabel LeRoy, Michael Summerfield, and Bill Mathis.

ADVENTURE OF THE AMERICAN MIND
SITE VISITS FOR
SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE COHORT
APRIL 11-12, 2002

Dr. Deborah R. Morris, from the Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (CARA), conducted two site visits with four of the twelve teachers who are currently enrolled in the Adventure of the American Mind (AAM) program in Phoenix, Arizona. Jennie Pressley, Grants Manager for the ERC; Isabel Leroy, Coordinator of Instructional Programs; and Michael Summerfield, Technical Advisor for the AAM program, accompanied Dr. Morris. The primary purpose of the site visits was to observe the teachers using the Library of Congress resources.

On April 11, 2002, the team visited Kuban Elementary School, and on April 12, the team visited Wilson Elementary School. Both schools are K-8 and were selected by Isabel Leroy from nine schools participating in the program.

At Kuban Elementary School, the team observed a first grade class, taught by Art Carrillo. Mr. Carrillo gave a presentation on George Washington by using a PowerPoint presentation and showing a video from the Library of Congress. Mr. Carrillo invited another first grade teacher, who is not currently enrolled in the AAM program, to join his class. The students read the presentation on George Washington from the television monitor with Mr. Carrillo's guidance. After the presentation, students were given a quiz and were allowed to check their answers. The students appeared to be very engaged in the learning process. Mr. Carrillo stated that before the AAM program, he would have taught about George Washington using textbooks and visual aids. He noted that he had to shorten the length of the George Washington passages from the Library of Congress materials for the first graders.

The team also visited Eva Vasquez, a computer lab teacher at Kuban, to observe seventh and eighth graders designing PowerPoint presentations. Students chose their subjects based on their interests, and Morris and Pressley had the opportunity to ask the students questions about the subjects they chose and their skills with using PowerPoint. According to Ms. Vasquez, the AAM program has provided her with Library of Congress resources and enabled her to use and have access to a laptop. These are two resources that she did not have before enrolling in the program.

On April 12, the team visited Wilson Elementary School, where every student has access to a computer. The principal of the school noted that because the two teachers, Ms. Hernandez and Ms. Lumpkin, were enrolled in the AAM program, he was able to speed up the installation of the LCD projectors in their classrooms.

Morris and Pressley observed Kathleen Hernandez, an eighth grade language arts teacher. Ms. Hernandez demonstrated for her students how to search the Library of Congress site. She stated that she had assigned research papers for her students for which students were to use Encarta and the Library of Congress resources. She noted that one of her students had chosen to write his paper on Leonardo Da Vinci and discovered through the searches that Da Vinci wrote backwards. She stated that her students are excited about learning and researching information. Before enrolling in the AAM program, she used only Encarta, which is limited.

Morris and Pressley also observed Dell Lumpkin, a seventh grade language arts teacher. The students were using a computer software program to enhance their language arts skills and knowledge. All appeared actively engaged in the course content.

Summary:

The four teachers at the two schools said they were very pleased with the AAM program and its impact on their teaching. Because the AAM teachers have more resources available to them, the students are responding in a positive manner. Wilson Elementary provides a wide variety of technological resources, and the students demonstrated a high degree of sophistication with technology.