Running head: PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY SWOT ANALYSIS

# Personal Technology SWOT Analysis, Goals, and Plan

# Kimberly Ward

# University of West Georgia

# Personal Technology SWOT Analysis, Goals, and Plan

I currently serve as a support teacher in a Title I Elementary School Computer Lab. Title I schools have a large number of low-income students and receive additional federal funding. The Coweta County School System (CCSS) has four Early Childhood Education certified teachers, including myself, in elementary computer labs. All of the elementary computer lab teaching positions are provided through Title I funding. Primarily, I am responsible for teaching every class in the school once a week in kindergarten through fifth grade. My teaching supports instruction of the regular classroom teacher, the Georgia Performance Standards, and the International Society of Technology in Education standards. With the recent reduction of the Education Technology Support Specialist (ETSS) staff of the Coweta County School System, I have been asked to be the webmaster of the school website. In evaluating my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, I have developed a plan for achieving my personal technology goal.

Strengths

One of my greatest strengths is my willingness to try and learn new things. When I began teaching in 1992, my school principal worked to obtain at least one computer in each classroom. At that time, we were the only elementary school in the CCSS with an abundance of technology resources. Due to my willingness to try new things, I was selected to attend training and staff development outside our system to obtain knowledge in some of the most current educational technology uses. I presented the information I gained to our faculty on several occasions. In trying to create a support system for technology teachers and personnel in the CCSS, I initiated and scheduled monthly technology meetings to share ideas and solve problems. I have completed only one class in the Instructional Technology (IT) program at University of West Georgia, but I found myself trying a new media for each project required. Learning new forms of project based learning and new modes of communication have become very exciting while participating in the IT program just as throughout my teaching career.

Another strength I possess is my varied teaching and educational experience. I hold a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Education, a Certificate in Educational Leadership, and an endorsement as a Teacher Support Specialist. I have taught kindergarten and first grade for five years each. This experience with young students gives me the ability to communicate with children, parents, and colleagues at the lowest level of technology knowledge. Due to Title I funding, my school participates in many staff development programs for new teaching methods including technology innovations. I served as an Instruction Support Specialist for my school and Parent Liaison for several years. Serving in these positions provided me with additional courses in new methods of teaching, instruction, communication, and problem solving. In addition to the staff development, our school has acquired many technology resources including several computers per classroom, two computer labs, document projectors, and interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. Access to these resources and training provides me with experiences many other educators have not had the opportunity to experience.

Weaknesses

My first weakness is my lack of knowledge in non-instructional technology tasks. I have little knowledge of how networks are set up as well as hardware and software repair. Even though this lack of knowledge is a weakness, my ability to learn new things and solve problems has given me the opportunity to find answers to technology issues within my classroom and within my school. My school had a full time ETSS on site; hence I did not have to deal with any of those issues due to her expertise. Now due to reduction in staff, we have one ETSS handling approximately three schools each. The lack of ETSS staffing will compel me to learn more about hardware and software issues in order to help the students, teachers, and administrators in my school.

My second weakness is my over commitment to projects and programs within my school outside my regular teaching responsibilities. I coach our Academic Bowl Team, manage the school store, chair the Parent Involvement Committee, chair the Social Committee, and produce the school email newsletter. This over commitment leaves me little time for research in effective technology use and new technology innovations. I enrolled in the Instructional Technology (IT) program to force myself to continue striving for excellence in technology education. I feel I need new ideas and enrolling in the IT program has encouraged me to look at new ways of thinking about technology in the schools.

Opportunities

Many opportunities are available as new technologies and new technology uses are created each day. Due to Title I funding, my school and I have the ability to continue to purchase and remain current with new hardware and software for our teachers and students. I will be a leader in my school in evaluating these new technologies and determining the validity of each technology.

Even though the reduction in our ETSS staff is detrimental, it will provide more opportunities for me to learn about hardware and software issues. I will no longer be able to depend upon the ETSS to make decisions but find answers on my own. When purchasing new hardware and software, I will have to formulate questions about the validity of a particular technology innovation. I will encourage the teachers and administrators in my school and in my school system to integrate current technology to better serve students, parents, and teachers.

Threats

The largest threat to technology integration is state and local funding. School system budgets have been reduced due to local and state budget reductions. The CCSS has worked diligently implementing technology. The ETSS staff of the CCSS trains teachers and staff in addition to maintaining all hardware and software within a school building. It is my fear with the reduction of our ETSS staff this technology will fall by the wayside and affect the students and families of the CCSS. Students use online programs for reading, test preparation, research, and library information. The school websites that communicate with parents and students must be maintained and updated. Each day our teachers use an extensive amount of technology to enter grades, record attendance, and instruct students. Technology use can be challenging for many teachers due to the many glitches that can occur as the teachers do not have the time to research why certain glitches happen. With the reduction of ETSS staff, technology may go unused and millions of dollars wasted due to the wait time in having an ETSS attend to the issue. In this age of technology, it will become increasingly difficult for teachers to teach the students of the CCSS with the lack of support and training. The reduction in ETSS staff will prove to be a trickledown effect and adversely affect the students of the CCSS.

Goals and Plan

My technology goals are to increase my understanding of the validity of the hardware and software needs of my school. Due to my new responsibilities, I would also like to increase my knowledge of webpage design. I will become a trailblazer in the area of technology for my colleagues using free technology and technology currently in our possession to individualize student learning and enhance teaching.

My plan for achieving these goals is relatively simple. I am currently enrolled in a Web Design class at the University of West Georgia. Since I will be using these skills immediately after completion of the course, I will continue learning in the area of webpage design through enrolling in the Internet, Tools, and Resources Class. In the area of becoming a technology leader, I will provide my colleagues with a weekly technology tip and meet with them monthly regarding technology integration into their lesson planning. During this time, I will also continue to participate in many valuable courses at the University of West Georgia. In the future, I hope to attend technology conferences that will support my desire to be a lifelong learner.