

Media Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom

And

Smart Board

Professional Development Workshops

Evaluation Results

Dent Middle School

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Introduction

In July 2005, teachers at Dent Middle School participated in two professional development workshops: *Media Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom*, July 11-13, 2005, and *Smart Board* training, July 14, 2005. As a component of the project ImPACT's evaluation, the South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina provided a professional development evaluation survey to Dent Middle School. The purpose of this survey was to offer participants the opportunity to provide feedback about various aspects of the workshops in an effort to improve quality assurance. Eleven participants in the *Media Literacy* workshop and 6 in the *Smart Board* workshop completed the Project ImPACT Professional Development Survey (see Appendix) about the effectiveness of these two workshops. These surveys contained items about five areas: demographic information (questions 1 – 4), logistical information (questions 5 – 8), practical application of the workshop (questions 9 – 18), information about the presenter and presentation (questions 19 – 26), and finally, open-ended responses (questions 27 – 29). Prior to discussing the results from the closed-ended responses, an explanation of the methodology used in analyzing the data from the surveys is given. The demographic make-up of the workshop's participants is also described.

Methodology

Apart from the demographic information, the closed-ended responses (logistics, practical application, and presenter/presentation information) are Likert-scaled items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). For each closed-ended item, we determined the means for each item based on participants' aggregate responses. Possible means for each item range from 1 to 6. The standard deviations were also calculated for each survey item to note variability.

A domain analysis was conducted on the open-ended responses. Domain analysis seeks out semantic relationships between terms for inclusion into a cultural category (Spradley,

1980). For example, concepts phrased as “knowledge,” “learning,” and “understanding new information” all have similarities so they can be collectively grouped (e.g., into a domain titled “in-depth study/learning”).

Demographic Information

Eleven participants completed the Project ImPACT Professional Development Workshop Survey for *Media Literacy* training. Five participants reported they teach 6th grade and five reported they teach 7th grade. One individual indicated she/he teaches 8th grade. All participants completing this survey indicated they were classroom teachers.

Six participants completed surveys for the *Smart Board* training. Three participants indicated they teach 7th grade; two reported teaching 6th grade, and one person did not indicate the grade she or he teaches. As with the *Media Literacy* workshop, all participants completing the *Smart Board* training indicated they were classroom teachers.

Closed-Ended Items

Following is a discussion of the results from the closed-ended items. The first section of questions on the survey sought feedback on the logistics of the training (i.e., time, location, and atmosphere). As shown in Table 1, *Media Literacy* workshop participants' responses on items 5 through 8 were positive with means ranging from 5.45 to 5.82. The statement with the highest mean (5.82) was, “The workshop location was convenient and accessible.” The two statements with the lowest means (5.45) were, “The food and beverages provided were adequate,” and “the facilities were adequate (room temperature, size, space, cleanliness).”

Table 1

Media Literacy Results of Logistical Information Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|--|------|--------------------|
| 5 | The workshop location was convenient and accessible. | 5.82 | 0.40 |
| 8 | The meeting schedule (i.e., beginning and ending times, breaks, time for lunch) was appropriate. | 5.73 | 0.47 |
| 6 | The facilities were adequate (room temperature, size, space, cleanliness). | 5.45 | 0.69 |
| 7 | The food and beverages provided were adequate. | 5.45 | 0.82 |

Table 2 illustrates the results from answers *Smart Board* participants provided about logistical questions from the ImpACT survey. Questions 5 and 8 were equally endorsed, with an average rating of 5.83. Questions 6 and 7 were also equal in terms of their means; however there was greater variability for question 7, with a standard deviation of 1.33.

Table 2

Smart Board Results of Logistical Information Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|--|------|--------------------|
| 5 | The workshop location was convenient and accessible. | 5.83 | 0.41 |
| 8 | The meeting schedule (i.e., beginning and ending times, breaks, time for lunch) was appropriate. | 5.83 | 0.41 |
| 6 | The facilities were adequate (room temperature, size, space, cleanliness). | 5.45 | 0.52 |
| 7 | The food and beverages provided were adequate. | 5.45 | 1.33 |

The second set of questions sought responses about practical application of the workshop (i.e., strategies discussed and ideas presented). As shown in Table 3, *Media Literacy* workshop participants' responses on items 9 through 18 were positive with means ranging from 4.00 to 5.90. The statement with the highest mean (5.90) was, "The content of this workshop will be useful to me." The statement with the lowest mean (4.00) was, "I already use most of the strategies presented today." One participant did not provide answers to questions 9 through 18.

Table 3

Media Literacy Results of Practical Information Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|---|------|--------------------|
| 9 | The content of this workshop will be useful to me. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 18 | I plan to use the instructional strategies presented today in my classroom. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 11 | I have learned new instructional strategies in this workshop. | 5.80 | 0.42 |
| 12 | The instructional strategies acquired in this workshop will help me improve student learning. | 5.80 | 0.42 |
| 10 | My understanding of the topic presented has increased. | 5.70 | 0.48 |
| 13 | The demonstrations of strategies were useful. | 5.70 | 0.48 |
| 14 | The handouts were clear and complete. | 5.70 | 0.48 |
| 17 | The workshop has deepened my understanding of the instructional strategies presented today. | 5.50 | 0.71 |
| 15 | The visual aids were easy to read. | 5.44 | 1.85 |
| 16 | I already use most of the strategies presented today. | 4.00 | 1.49 |

Smart Board participants also provided responses to questions related to the practical application of the workshop. Table 4 reports their evaluation of this component of the workshop. Average ratings for these questions ranged from 4.00 to 5.60. The statement with the highest mean (5.60) from these surveys was, "The content of this workshop will be useful to me." The statement with the lowest mean (4.00) was, "The workshop has deepened my understanding of the instructional strategies presented today." One participant did not answer questions 9 through 18, and another did not answer questions 14 and 15.

Table 4

Smart Board Results of Practical Information Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|---|------|--------------------|
| 9 | The content of this workshop will be useful to me. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 18 | I plan to use the instructional strategies presented today in my classroom. | 5.40 | 0.48 |
| 16 | I already use most of the strategies presented today. | 5.25 | 2.16 |
| 10 | My understanding of the topic presented has increased. | 5.20 | 0.45 |
| 11 | I have learned new instructional strategies in this workshop. | 5.20 | 0.45 |
| 12 | The instructional strategies acquired in this workshop will help me improve student learning. | 5.20 | 0.45 |
| 13 | The demonstrations of strategies were useful. | 5.20 | 0.45 |
| 14 | The handouts were clear and complete. | 5.20 | 1.00 |
| 15 | The visual aids were easy to read. | 5.00 | 0.50 |
| 17 | The workshop has deepened my understanding of the instructional strategies presented today. | 4.00 | 0.55 |

The third section of questions sought information about the presenter and the presentation (i.e., how the workshop was facilitated). As shown in Table 5, workshop participants' responses on items 19 through 26(b) were very positive with means ranging from 5.67 to 6.00. Three statements had ratings of 6.00 on a 6-point scale. These include, "The presenter(s) encouraged participation," "The presenter(s) were able to answer questions from the participants," and "The presenter(s) provided sufficient opportunities for the participants to share and discuss information." The statement, "Overall, this was a good workshop," had the lowest mean. One participant did not answer questions 19 through 26(b), and another participant did not answer question 21.

Table 5

Media Literacy Results of Presenter and Presentation Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|---|------|--------------------|
| 21 | The presenter(s) encouraged participation. | 6.00 | 0.00 |
| 23 | The presenter(s) were able to answer questions from the participants. | 6.00 | 0.00 |
| 24 | The presenter(s) provided sufficient opportunities for the participants to share and discuss information. | 6.00 | 0.00 |
| 19 | The presenter(s) were knowledgeable. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 22 | The presenter(s) were well prepared. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 25 | The presenter(s) provided sufficient examples of application in the classroom. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 26b | The presenter(s) connected the workshop ideas and strategies to the magnet theme. | 5.90 | 0.32 |
| 20 | The presenter(s) kept the discussion focused. | 5.80 | 0.42 |
| 26a | Overall, this was a good workshop. | 5.67 | 1.91 |

Results from *Smart Board* participants' evaluation of the presenter(s) and the presentation were quite similar. Table 6 shows results for questions 19 through 26(b). As shown in Table 8, average ratings were mostly 5.60. Only question 26(b) had a different rating of 5.40. One participant did not provide answers to questions 19 through 26(b).

Table 6

Smart Board Results of Presenter and Presentation Questions

| Question Number | Statement | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|---|------|--------------------|
| 19 | The presenter(s) were knowledgeable. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 20 | The presenter(s) kept the discussion focused. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 21 | The presenter(s) encouraged participation. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 22 | The presenter(s) were well prepared. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 23 | The presenter(s) were able to answer questions from the participants. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 24 | The presenter(s) provided sufficient opportunities for the participants to share and discuss information. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 25 | The presenter(s) provided sufficient examples of application in the classroom. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 26a | Overall, this was a good workshop. | 5.60 | 0.55 |
| 26b | The presenter(s) connected the workshop ideas and strategies to the magnet theme. | 5.40 | 0.55 |

Open-Ended Items

Participants were asked to respond to three open-ended questions about the workshop.

These included:

27. List ONE strength of this workshop.

28. List ONE improvement you would suggest for this workshop.

29. From this workshop, what is ONE thing you want to know more about?

Although there were only 11 teachers who completed the *Media Literacy* survey, commonalities across participant responses for question 27 were noted. When asked to name one strength of the *Media Literacy* training, 7 of the 11 participants mentioned some aspect of time, particularly time to explore the resources and practice the skills learned. Two participants mentioned the resources afforded by the training. Additionally, two participants mentioned the skills of and assistance from the presenter. Examples of these statements can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Media Literacy Training Strengths as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|----------------------|-----------|---|
| Time | 7 | "[We were] Given time to examine what resources are available. Also time to collaborate with each other." "We had plenty of time to explore on our own." |
| Valuable information | 2 | "We were given a wealth of information that applies to our classroom." |
| Presenter attributes | 2 | "Knowledgeable instructor who managed time well." |

NOTE: Wording in brackets added for semantic clarification.

In the *Smart Board* training, three participants noted that the training gave them information and/or preparation. Two participants did not provide answers to item 27. One participant noted that it gave, "time for hands on experience." Table 8 below summarizes these responses.

Table 8

Smart Board Training Strengths as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|-------------------------|-----------|---|
| Information/preparation | 3 | “Becoming familiar with the SMART board.” “[The training] helped [me] get ready before the first day of school.” |
| No response | 2 | |
| Time | 1 | “Time for hands on experience.” |

NOTE: Wording in brackets added for semantic clarification.

Question 28 asked participants to suggest an improvement for the workshop. Table 9 below highlights the responses from the participants in the *Media Literacy* training. Nearly half of participants (n=5) mentioned some presentation issue. Exemplars of these are found in Table 9. Three participants mentioned supplies (i.e., laptops, lesson plans, equipment for the classroom). Two teachers said they had no suggestions for improvement, and one participant did not provide an answer for this item.

Table 9

Media Literacy Suggested Improvements as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|--------------------|-----------|--|
| Presentation issue | 5 | “Discuss the article that was assigned.” “Provide remote center for presentation.” “Day 1 was kind of slow.” |
| Materials | 3 | “Laptops & upgrades for all.” “Equipment to better utilize the skills in our classroom.” |
| None | 2 | “Can't think of any” |
| No response | 1 | |

In their responses to question 28, half (n=3) of the participants in the *Smart Board* workshop indicated they would prefer more hands on activities (with 2 noting computer/internet problems). One suggested having a teacher present the material to a class, one suggested no improvement, and one teacher did not answer question 28. These data are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Smart Board Suggested Improvements as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|--|-----------|---|
| Application of activities due to computer problems | 3 | <p>“Spending time actually doing some of the activities. We were not able to get on the internet to find info.”</p> <p>“More hands on”</p> <p>“Computers were not connected, so difficult to follow the presenter and practice the skills.”</p> |
| Presentation issue | 1 | Have a teacher present a class using the Smartboard |
| None | 1 | Can't think of any |
| No Response | 1 | |

Question 29 asked participants to name one thing about which they would like to know more. Three of the 11 *Media Literacy* participants indicated that they wanted to know more about how to obtain and/or implement videos and resources in the classroom. An additional 3 participants mentioned that they wanted to know more about video production.

Table 11

Media Literacy Future Learning as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Obtaining/implementing Videos | 3 | <p>“I would like to know more about how to find resources to use in the classroom.”</p> <p>“How to obtain the videos we viewed.”</p> |
| Video production | 3 | <p>“Video production”</p> <p>“Inserting video clips into student presentations.”</p> |
| United streaming | 2 | “United Streaming!” |
| Internet logistics | 2 | <p>“Online texts”</p> <p>“How to link up all the sites - I still feel out of the loop.”</p> |
| No response | 1 | |

Two mentioned united streaming; two others had internet logistics issues (i.e., asking for online texts and linking up the sites), and one participant did not provide an answer for question 29. These responses are summarized in Table 11.

Responses from participants in the *Smart Board* workshop centered around 2 themes. First, three participants mentioned needing help with using Smart Board (particularly after they begin using it). Two asked for more information on capturing images from the internet. One participant did not respond to question 29. Data from these participants are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Smart Board Future Learning as Reported by Participants

| Theme | Frequency | Exemplar Statements |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Further Smart Board Assistance | 3 | “I will need additional help in actually using the board but I am excited to have one!” “Once I start using the Smart Board, I will need additional help.” |
| Internet images | 2 | “Capturing pictures from the internet.” |
| No response | 1 | |

Commendations and Recommendations

For the closed-ended questions, all of the means were 4.00 or higher on a 6-point Likert scale. Specifically, participants in both sessions (*Media Literacy* and *Smart Board* workshops) indicated overall a) satisfaction with the logistics of the workshop, b) satisfaction with the practical application of the workshop (i.e., feeling they benefited from the content of the workshop), and finally c) satisfaction with the presentation and the presenter(s). Additionally, feedback from the teachers at Dent Middle School indicates that the workshops provided valuable ideas for use in their classrooms.

With the *Media Literacy* workshop, teachers reported high satisfaction with the content of the workshop. In addition, they evaluated the presenter with the highest ratings (mean = 6.00). In addition to this, participants, noting the strengths of the workshop, also mentioned

some issue relating to the presenter and/or presentation. For example, most of the participants reported that they had enough time to explore the resources and information presented in the workshop, and some noted the skills of the presenter. The statement with the lowest mean from the *Media Literacy* workshop had a mean of 4.00, which was item 16, "I already use most of the strategies presented today." This is worth noting because it seems that participants came to the workshop with less exposure and understanding of media literacy than when they left. Given the very high ratings on the presenter and presentation (in both open-ended and closed-ended items), using the same presenter(s) or presentation style might be beneficial for future workshops. Also, teachers seemed interested in obtaining resources from/mentioned in the workshop and learning more about video production and/or united streaming. This could give information for future training opportunities.

With the *Smart Board* training, teachers reported satisfaction with the presenter and presentation, with average ratings of 5.60. The lowest endorsed statement was item 17, "The workshop has deepened my understanding of the instructional strategies presented today." It seems, however, that most participants generally felt satisfied with the content they learned, giving open-ended responses about being prepared before school starts. It also seems that there were some computer/technical problems, as half of the participants noted that the computers were not connected or they could not access the internet. It seems that teachers already knew something about Smart Board, however, some observed that they would need help when they actually begin to implement the training.

The South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina, hope these data provide staff at Dent Middle School and project ImPACT with useful information about the *Media Literacy* and *Smart Board* workshops as well as information for future professional development.

Sources

Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Hartcourt College Publishers: Fort Worth.