



Parents' Perceptions of Their Child's Computer Use at Home As A Result of Technology Use in the School

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Abstract

This article focuses on the three-year findings of a parent survey designed to gauge their student's technology interest while receiving instruction from student teachers in a federal educational technology grant. A major objective of the grant was to engage pre-service teachers in a computer technology training program designed to equip them with skills for use in the classroom, beginning with their internship semester. As part of the 21st Century Classroom, each pre-service teacher created an educational website.

The survey and cover letter were provided to parents in both English and Spanish.

The findings of this project indicate that by enhancing the skills of pre-service teachers to use advanced technology in the classroom, the children taught by these interning students, increased their interest in school and their use of technology at home.

Keywords: Intern, Pre-service teacher, Educational technology, Educational website, Parents

1. Introduction

A major objective of the Educational Technology Grant was to engage pre-service teachers in a computer technology training program designed to equip them with skills for use in the classroom, beginning with their internship semester.

Pre-service teachers worked in a state-of-the-art lab where they were instructed how to: 1) create learning environments where advanced technology is used to teach content standards; 2) use a variety of classroom management techniques necessary for successful technology integration; 3) create technology connected lessons that include new designs for learning and enhanced pedagogy; 4) analyze student achievement/assessment data to make decisions for structuring technology connected lessons; and 5) create an educational website, accessible at home, to enhance classroom learning.

As part of the 21st Century Classroom, each pre-service teacher created an educational website. Each site contained two technology-connected lesson plans, online activities developed by the pre-service teacher, or linked to the wealth of sites in cyberspace, teacher resources, student resources, student work samples, parent resources, and information about themselves, such as their resume and philosophy of education.

Pre-service teachers began working in the lab the semester before their actual student teaching experience. They continued the technology training until the end of the student teaching semester. As the interning students began to use their websites in the classroom, they made changes based on students' needs. Additionally, pre-service teachers were able to share with their cooperating teachers educational websites rich in resources and activities.

Not only were cooperating teachers enriched by the pre-service teachers' technology sharing, but the students and their parents profited as well. The power of sharing the website with parents created a link between home and school. From their homes, students could access educational Internet sites to practice skills and test their knowledge. Parents could see what their children were doing in school, check homework, and read about upcoming events.

Qualitative and quantitative assessment data were gathered through a variety of means from K-6 pre-service teachers, university professors, cooperating teachers, K-6 students, parents of K-6 students, and outside evaluators. This article focuses on the parent survey designed to gauge their student's technology interest while receiving instruction from the student teacher.

2. Research

This article reports the three-year findings of the parent survey. A cover letter and survey were provided to the university supervisor to distribute to pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers gave the cover letter and survey to each student who was then told to return the parent survey the very next day. The university supervisor collected the returned surveys from the pre-service teachers and passed them along to the grant evaluators. The cover letter and survey, printed in both English and Spanish, follow.

To: Parents

Date: March 30, 2006

Since the beginning of January, your child's student teacher has been using technology to enhance classroom instruction. We are trying to determine if the additional use of technology in the classroom has made a difference in your child's use of technology at home.

We are asking that you answer the survey that is attached and return it to your child's teacher. We are only identifying the name of the student teacher. **YOUR CHILD'S NAME IS NOT REQUIRED ON THE SURVEY.**

The information contained in the surveys will be used to report the use of technology in your home. The names of the school and the students *WILL NOT* appear in the report.

Thank you for your support in answering this survey.

3. Parent Survey

Directions: Please circle the choice that best answers the question.

- (1) My child, since January, seems (more, the same, or less) interested in school.
- (2) My child, since January, talks (more, the same, or less) about computers?
- (3) Does your child have access to a computer at home? Yes No (note 1, note 2)
- (4) Since January, have you purchased or upgraded your home computer? Yes No
- (5) My child, since January, uses the computer at home (more, the same, or less).
- (6) Since January, as a parent, I have spent (more, the same, or less) time on the computer with my child.
- (7) Since January, my child has spent (more, the same, or less) time on the computer with friends and/or siblings.
- (8) Does your child have access to the internet at home? Yes No (note 3)

(9) My child, since January, uses the internet at home (more, the same, or less).

(10) Did you look at your child's student teachers website? Yes No If yes, do you have any comments about the website?

4. Additional comments

Thank you! Please return the survey.

Para: Padres de Familia/Representante legal

Fecha: 31 de Marzo, 2004

Desde el principio del mes de enero, el asistente de professor de su hijo/a ha estado ocupando la tecnologia para ayudar a dar la clase. Estamos tratando de determinar si el uso adicional de tecnologia en el aula ha causado un cambio en el uso de tecnologia de su hijo/a en el hogar.

Le pedimos que por favor conteste el siguiente cuestionario y lo regrese al professor de su hijo/a. Solo estamos pidiendo el nombre del asistente. **NO ES NECESARIO INCLUIR EL NOMBRE DE SU HIJO.**

La informacion proporcionada en el cuestionario sera utilizada para analizar y luego reporter el uso de la tecnologia en su hogar. Los nombres de la escuela y los estudiantes NO aparecern en el reporte.

Le agradecemos de antemano su apoyo al contestar el cuestionario.

Cuestionario de Padre de Familia / Representante Legal

Nombre del profesor de "Pre-Service": _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre del profesor: _____

Escuela: _____ Grado/Curso: _____

Por favor circule la respuesta de las siguientes preguntas y regrese el cuestionario al profesor. Gracias.

(1) Desde enero del 2004, mi hijo/a parece estar

mas igual de menos interesado en la escuela.

(2) Desde enero del 2004, mi hijo/a habla

mas igual menos acerca de computadoras.

(3) Tiene su hijo acceso a una computadora en casa?

SI NO

NOTA: Si respondió "SI" a la pregunta 3, por favor continúe respondiendo el resto de las preguntas.

Si respondió "NO", ha terminado el cuestionario. Gracias por su tiempo. No olvide por favor regresarlo al profesor de su hijo. (note 4)

(4) Desde enero 2004, ha comprado o actualizado una computadora en su hogar?

SI NO

(5) Desde enero 2004, su hijo ocupa la computadora en casa

mas igual menos

(6) Desde enero 2004, como padre, he dedicado

mas igual menos tiempo en la computadora con mi hijo/a.

(7) Desde enero 2004, mi hijo ha dedicado

mas igual menos tiempo en la computadora con sus amigos y/o hermanos

(8) Tiene su hijo acceso a Internet en el hogar?

SI NO

NOTA: Si contesto "SI" a la pregunta ocho, continúe respondiendo el resto de las preguntas. Si contesto "NO", ha terminado el cuestionario. Gracias por su tiempo. No olvide por favor regresarlo al profesor de su hijo.

(9) Desde enero 2004, mi hijo usa

mas igual menos el Internet en casa.

(10) Ha visto la pagina en Internet del profesor de "preservice" de si hijo?

SI NO

Si si la ha visto, tiene usted algún comentario acerca de ella?

5. Comentarios adicionales

Gracias! No olvide por favor regresar este cuestionario.

In April, 2004, 45 pre-service teachers distributed parent survey forms to the 842 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. Only 10 pre-service teachers submitted completed parent survey forms to their university supervisors in 2004. A total of 88 completed forms, a mere 10% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. Six of the 88 returned forms were from Spanish speaking parents. Table One below summarizes the year one total responses to the parent survey questions.

Question (1) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child seemed “more” or “less” interested in school. As the table shows, 42 (48%) said “more” and 46 (52%) said the “same.”

Question (2) asked parents to indicate whether their child talks “more” or “less” about computers since January. Of the 83 respondents, 30 (36%) said “more” and 53(64%) said “same.”

Question (3) asked parents to state whether their child had access to computers at home. Of the 87 respondents, 66(76%) said “yes” and 21 (24%) said “no.”

After question 3, a note on the survey form stated that if the answer to question 3 was “yes,” the respondent should continue answering the rest of the questions. If the respondent answered “no,” the survey form was completed. Questions (4) through 10 were to be answered based on the child’s use of the computer at home.

Question (4) asked whether, since January, parents had purchased or upgraded a home computer. As the table shows, 21(31%) answered “yes” and 46(69%) answered “no.”

Question (5) asked if since January the parents’ child used the computer “more,” the “same,” or “less.” Eighteen (27%) indicated “more,” 41(61%) indicated “same,” and 8 (12%) said “less.”

Question (6) asked if since January the parent had spent “more,” the “same,” or “less” time on the computer with the child. Of the 66 respondents, 19(29%) said “more,” 37(56%) said “same,” and 10(15%) said “less.”

Question (7) asked parents to consider whether since January their child had spent “more,” the “same,” or “less” time on the computer with friends and/or siblings. Of the 66 respondents, 23(35%) said “more,” 37(56%) indicated “same,” and 6(9%) claimed “less.”

Question (8) asked whether the parents’ child had access to the Internet at home. Of the 66 respondents, 49(74%) said “yes” and 17(26%) stated “no.”

Question (9) asked the parents if their child used the Internet at home “more,” the “same,” or “less” since January. Of the 45 respondents 17(38%) indicated “more,” 26(58%) indicated “same,” and 2(6%) claimed “less.”

Question (10) asked parents whether they had examined their child’s pre-service teacher’s website. Just 3(6%) said “yes,” while 46(94%) indicated “no.”

Only two comments were written by parents on the 88 returned survey forms. Both comments stated that the parents had wished they had known of the existence of their child’s pre-service teacher’s website so they could have reviewed it.

In April, 2005, 38 pre-service teachers distributed parent survey forms to the 760 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. Only 17 pre-service teachers submitted completed parent survey forms to their university supervisors. A total of 156 completed forms, a 20.5% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. The return is double that from year one. Table Two below summarizes the parents’ survey responses.

Question (1) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child seemed “more” or “less” interested in school. Year one/two year was 48/58% said “more” and 52/58% said the “same.” An increase of 10% of the students reported “more” interest.

Question (2) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child talks “more” or “less” about computers. Year one/two year was 36/43% said “more” and 64/53% said “same.”

Question (3) asked parents to report whether or not their child had access to computers at home. Year one/two year was 76/66%) said “yes” and 24/34%) said “no.” There is a decrease of 10% of students who have access to home computers.

After question (3), a note on the survey form stated that if the answer to question 3 was “yes,” the respondent should continue answering the rest of the questions. If the respondent answered “no,” the survey form was completed. Questions (4) through 10 were to be answered based on the child’s use of the computer at home.

Question (4) asked whether, since January, parents had purchased or upgraded a home computer recently. Year one/two year was 31/34% answered “yes” and 69/66% answered “no.”

Question (5) asked whether, since January, the parents' child used the computer "more," the "same," or "less." Year one/two year was 27/51% indicated "more," 61/39% indicated "same," and 8 (12%) said "less." There is an increase of 12% of more students who use the computer at home.

Question (6) asked whether, since January, the parents had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with the child. Year one/two year was 29/22% said "more," 56/62% said "same," and 15/16% said "less."

Question (7) asked parents to consider whether, since January, their child had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with friends and/or siblings. Year one/two year 35/33% said "more," 56/55% indicated "same," and 9/12% claimed "less."

Question (8) asked whether the parents' child had access to the Internet at home. Year one/two year was 74/83% said "yes" and 26/17% stated "no."

Question (9) asked whether, since January, the child use the Internet at home "more," the "same," or "less." Year one/two year was 38/52% indicated "more," 58/43% indicated "same," and 65% claimed "less." There is a 14% increase in the number of students who used the Internet at home.

Question (10) asked parents if they had examined their child's pre-service teacher's website. In year one just 3(6%) said "yes," and 46 (94%) indicated "no"; whereas, in year two 38% said "yes" and 63% said "no."

There were no comments written by parents on the returned 2004-2005 survey forms.

In year 2, there were enough survey returns (eight in year one and 32 in year 2) to examine survey responses of Spanish speaking parents. Table Three and Table Four report responses of English speaking respondents and Spanish speaking respondents for year two (2005) of the study.

In March, 2006, 58 pre-service teachers were provided parent survey forms to give to the 842 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. A total of 187 completed forms, a 22% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. Seventy five of the 187 returned forms were from Spanish speaking parents. Table Five, Table Six, and Table Seven summarize the responses to the parent survey questions for year three (2006).

Comments from parents during the three-year study ranged from ten parents who wrote a comment that they did not know about the pre-service teacher website to one parent reporting that the child would rather read than use computer. Three parents commented that their children liked the pre-service teacher. One parent wrote that although Internet access is available at home, the child is not allowed to use it. One parent saw the website but was disappointed that the pre-service teacher never posted student work as promised. Another parent stated her child had been using the computer and educational software since the age of three and is very closely supervised when using Internet.

6. Findings

A summary of the 2004-2006 parent survey responses follow.

Total Respondents

In terms of total respondents for year one (2004), year two (2005) and year three (2006), the highest percentages for each question on the survey, reveal the following.

- (1) More interest in school: higher in 2005
- (2) More talk about computers: higher in 2006
- (3) Computer access at home: steady decline from 2004-2006
- (4) Purchase computer or upgrade since January: increased gradually each year
- (5) Child use computer at home: more in 2005
- (6) Parents spent time with child on computer: more in 2004, but basically about the same
- (7) Child on computer with friends and siblings: more in 2004, but basically about the same
- (8) Access to Internet: higher in 2005
- (9) Uses Internet at home: much higher in 2005
- (10) Parents look at child's website: higher in 2005

English Responses vs. Spanish Responses between 2005 and 2006

- (1) Interest: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish same in 2005 and 2006
- (2) Talk: English about the same between 2005 and 2006

- Spanish was higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (3) Access: English higher in 2006
Spanish about the same in 2005 and 2006
- (4) Purchase: English about the same
Spanish was higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (5) Child Use: English more in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish made a big jump in 2006
- (6) Parent/Child: English stayed about the same
Spanish showed a little gain
- (7) Friends/Siblings: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (8) Access to Internet: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish stayed about the same
- (9) Uses Internet: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (10) Parents look at website: English (missing 2005 %)
Spanish said none in 2005 but 13% in 2006

Overall, gains were shown by Spanish families in seven out of 10 survey categories as compared with English families during the 2005-2006 time frame.

- Spanish speaking children talked more about computers at home than English speaking children
- More Spanish families purchased or upgraded home computers than English speaking families did.
- Many more Spanish speaking children used home computers in 2006 than they did in 2005. Fewer English speaking students used computers at home in 2006 than in 2005.
- Number 6 on the survey asks parents about time they spend on the computer with their children. English speaking children's parents indicated no real gain. Spanish speaking parents showed a slight gain.
- English speaking children spent more time on the computer with friends and siblings in 2005 than in 2006. Spanish speaking children spent more time on the computer with friends and siblings in 2006 than in 2005.
- English speaking students used the Internet at home more in 2005 than in 2006. Spanish speaking children used the computer at home more in 2006 than in 2005.
- No Spanish speaking parents looked at their child's website in 2005; whereas, 13% of the Spanish speaking parents looked at the website in 2006.

Overall gains were shown by English speaking families in three out of the ten survey questions.

- Interest in computers was higher among English speaking children in 2005 than in 2006; whereas, interest among Spanish speaking children remained about the same between 2005 and 2006.
- Access to computers at home was higher for English speaking children in 2006 than in 2005; whereas, Spanish speaking children's access remained about the same between 2005 and 2006.
- Access to the Internet jumped for English speaking children in 2006; whereas, access to the Internet at home remained about the same for Spanish speaking children between 2005 and 2006.

7. Conclusions

Analysis of the 2004-2006 parent survey responses reveals the following results of the Educational Technology Grant with participating pre-service teachers: K-6 students, who were taught by the pre-service teachers, enhanced their interest and use of technology. According to parental survey responses, both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking K-6 students increased their interest in school as well as interest and access to computer use. Parents spent more time on the computer with their children. Children spent more time on the computer with siblings and friends. Some parents purchased or updated their computer equipment, and some added Internet access during the period of the study.

The findings of this project indicate that by enhancing the skills of pre-service teachers to use advanced technology in the classroom, the children taught by these interning students, increased their interest in school and their use of technology at home.

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Notes

NOTE 1. If you answered yes to question 3 continue answering the rest of the questions. If you answered No, you have completed the survey. Thank you. Please return the survey.

NOTE 2. Questions 4 through 10 are to be answered based on your child's use of a computer at home.

NOTE 3. If you answered yes to question 8 continue answering the rest of the questions. If you answered No, you have completed the survey. Thank you. Please return the survey.

NOTA 4. Las preguntas 4 –10 deben ser contestadas basadas en el uso de la computadora en el hogar de su hijo/a.

Table 1. Year One (2004) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	88	42 (48)	46 (52)	0 (00)
2	83	30 (36)	53 (64)	0 (00)
3	87	Yes 66 (76)	No 21 (24)	
4	67	Yes 21 (31)	No 46 (69)	
5	67	18 (27)	41 (61)	08 (12)
6	66	19 (29)	37 (56)	10 (15)
7	66	23 (35)	37 (56)	06 (09)
8	66	Yes 49 (74)	No 17 (26)	
9	45	17 (38)	26 (58)	02 (06)
10	49	Yes 03 (06)	No 46 (94)	

Table 2. Year 2 (2005) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	114	66 (58)	43 (38)	05 (04)
2	113	49 (43)	60 (53)	04 (04)
3	116	Yes 76 (66)	No 40 (34)	
4	76	Yes 26 (34)	No 50 (66)	
5	75	38 (51)	29 (39)	08 (10)
6	76	17 (22)	47 (62)	12 (16)
7	74	24 (33)	41 (55)	09 (12)
8	76	Yes 63 (83)	No 13 (17)	
9	63	33 (52)	27 (43)	03 (05)
10	63	Yes 24 (38)	No 39 (62)	

Table 3. Year 2 (2005) English Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	80	43 (53)	36 (44)	03 (03)
2	82	29 (36)	52 (63)	01 (01)
3	82	Yes 65 (79)	No 17 (21)	
4	65	Yes 19 (29)	No 46 (71)	
5	64	36 (56)	23 (36)	05 (08)
6	65	15 (23)	41 (63)	09 (14)
7	63	20 (32)	37 (59)	06 (09)
8	65	Yes 58 (89)	No 07 (11)	
9	60	31 (52)	25 (42)	02 (06)
10	58	Yes 24 (41)	No 34 (59)	

Table 4. Year 2 (2005) Spanish Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	32	23 (72)	07 (23)	02 (05)
2	31	20 (65)	08 (26)	03 (09)
3	34	Yes 11 (32)	No 23 (68)	
4	11	Yes 07	No 04	
5	11	02 (18)	06 (54)	03 (28)
6	11	02 (18)	06 (54)	03 (28)
7	11	04 (36)	04 (36)	03 (28)
8	11	Yes 05 (45)	No 06 (55)	
9	05	02 (40)	02 (40)	01 (20)
10	05	Yes 00 (00)	No 05 (100)	

Table 5. Year 3 (2006) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	187	97 (52)	85 (45)	05 (03)
2	198	94 (47)	94 (47)	10 (06)
3	185	Yes 109 (59)	No 76 (41)	
4	118	Yes 41 (35)	No 76 (65)	
5	113	42 (37)	64 (57)	07 (06)
6	112	24 (21)	75 (67)	13 (12)
7	106	33 (31)	62 (58)	11 (11)
8	108	Yes 87 (81)	No 21 (19)	
9	87	31 (36)	51 (59)	05 (05)
10	86	Yes 21 (24)	No 65 (76)	

Table 6. Year 3 (2006) English Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	112	43 (39)	64 (57)	05 (04)
2	112	35 (31)	71 (64)	06 (05)
3	109	Yes 88 (81)	No 21 (29)	
4	94	Yes 23 (24)	No 71 (76)	
5	91	32 (35)	55 (61)	04 (04)
6	90	18 (20)	65 (72)	07 (08)
7	87	25 (29)	54 (62)	08 (09)
8	90	Yes 79 (88)	No 11 (12)	
9	79	27 (34)	48 (61)	04 (05)
10	78	Yes 20 (26)	No 58 (74)	

Table 7. Year 3 (2006) Spanish Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	75	54 (72)	21 (28)	00 (00)
2	86	59 (69)	23 (27)	04 (04)
3	76	Yes 21 (28)	No 55 (72)	
4	23	Yes 18 (78)	No 05 (22)	
5	22	10 (45)	09 (41)	03 (04)
6	22	06 (27)	10 (46)	06 (27)
7	19	08 (43)	08 (43)	03 (14)
8	18	Yes 08 (44)	No 10 (56)	
9	8	04 (50)	03 (38)	01 (12)
10	8	Yes 01 (13)	No 07 (87)	