I originally wanted to do a school wide assessment on the need/desire of more technology (specifically Smart Boards) in the regular classroom. It has been a dream of mine to do this and I have been slowly pressing for it over the year. I could not think of a better area in which to discuss my needs assessment than this topic. Discussing this with some of my colleagues over several ‘stress reducing’ beverages, they suggested that I focus my idea on the higher elementary grades (4th and 5th) due to the need for these more ‘technology oriented’ grades to access larger areas of information that they would otherwise might not get if left to individual computers in a semi-supervised setting.

I decided then to do a ‘needs assessment survey’ which would not only address the question of whether the Smart Boards would be a popular idea, but also to see if there were other areas in which technology could be brought into the classroom (i.e., more computers, more training, more programs, more support, etc.). The results I could either use to bolster my plans to attempt to get Smart Boards in the upper elementary classrooms, or to share with the tech rep for our site to see if we could address some areas that were seen as not fully accounted for.

The resulting assessment was preliminarily tested on a fellow 4th grade teacher as well as a 5th grade teacher, then handed out to the entire 4th and 5th grade staff as well as a modified questionnaire to my 4th grade class (I had originally intended to include responses from a 5th grade class of students but as of Sunday, October 17, 2004 they had not responded and I am in need of finishing this paper. I had also wished to get the input of our administrators on this concept but unfortunately the principal’s wife had a baby and has been gone and the vice principal has yet to respond (I had a chuckle when a co-teacher implied this was a little like “the dog ate my homework” but ce la vie).

**Goals of assessment:**

1- To determine the needs (or lack thereof) of more technology the wing in which I work.
2- To determine if the training of our staff is up to date to maximize the effectiveness of the technology already in place.
3- To see if the inclusion of Smart Boards into the classroom is a viable option in the opinions of my peers as well as my students.
4- To see what my students feel about the amount of technology in the classroom.
5- To find out what the students what subjects they would like to learn more about via technology.
6- To see how students feel about how much they know about the technology available to them.

Group(s) Assessed-

4th grade teachers- 5  
5th grade teachers- 4  
Other teachers in wing- 2  
4th grade students- 16  
5th grade students- survey not received.  
Vice principal- survey not received
Needs Assessment Survey
(teachers/staff)

Thank you for taking a moment to complete this survey. I am hoping to get some idea to the wants and needs of technology and training in the 4th and 5th grades. This could translate into some benefits in these grades over the next few years if all goes well. Please fill this out and get it back to me as soon as possible.

Thanks!
Kevin Marsh

Check the number that best fits with your opinion about technology in our wing and in your classroom. The scale is 1-5 with one being I agree and 5 being I disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1- Strongly Agree</th>
<th>2- Agree</th>
<th>3- Neutral</th>
<th>4- Disagree</th>
<th>5- Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>I know enough about the technology in my classroom to use it effectively in teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not need technology in my classroom to teach my students.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>I am in need of regular training in the technology we are using in class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

What do you see as things you would like to have in your classroom or in our wing (in regards to technology)?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What would you like to have training for in regards to the technology that we already have?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What areas do your students need the most work in (math, reading, science, etc.)?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What is your opinion on Smart Boards in the classroom (the same computer technology that was installed in the Computer Lab this Summer)? Why do you think that way?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

That’s it! Get this to me before Friday, October 17, 2004 so I can include it in my report. Thanks again!
Needs Assessment for students

Circle the face that describes how you feel about the sentence. If you don’t know, or not sure, circle the question mark in the middle. Please be honest!

1- This is how I feel about using computers in class.

2- This is how I feel about more computers in the class.

3- This is how I feel about how much I know about the computers in class.

4- I would like to learn more about things on the computer.

5- This is how I feel about getting a Smart Board in our class.

Circle the 3 subject(s) you would like to learn more about using computers and other technology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Inupiaq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Assessment results
Teacher/Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1- Strongly Agree</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Open Ended Questions

What do you see as things you would like to have in your classroom or in our wing (in regards to technology)?

There were several responses including a printer available in each classroom, an extra mobile laboratory devoted exclusively to the 4th and 5th grade, SMART Boards, upgrades to computers including CD/DVD burners, and updated Digital cameras. These were the most mentioned recommendations. I omitted two references to equipment we already had but these teachers did not know about them (video camera and Accelerated Math scanners).
What would you like to have training for in regards to the technology that we already have?

Training included – PLATO, SMART Board usage, Perfect Copy, Accelerated Math, digital media, and editing programs.

What areas do your students need the most work in (math, reading, science, etc.)?

81 percent chose Reading - Our main concern for the past few years since it is consistently the area we fail AYP on.
9.5 percent Math - Scores are low across the board in this area. Many commented that if reading improved so would the Math due to the story problems these students are experiencing. I tend to agree.
9.5 percent Science - This was mentioned as a concern due to it is going to be tested in AYP matters in the near future.

What is your opinion on Smart Boards in the classroom (the same computer technology that was installed in the Computer Lab this Summer)? Why do you think that way?

81 percent strongly supported this idea and mentioned that primarily the students will respond to the ability of this technology in accessing information that they would otherwise have to get from a desktop computer. One mentioned “I like it because we can just open up a document and have notes and an assignment ready to go without having to actually write them on the board.”

The remaining 19 percent were hesitant to have this technology in their own classes due to their concerns over the equipment being damaged due to overzealous students and the lack of know-how when it comes to using this equipment as an incorporated part of their curriculums.
Needs Assessment Results
Student survey

Needs Assessment table (results rounded)

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<th>😞</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is how I feel about using</td>
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<td>computers in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is how I feel about more</td>
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<td>know about the computers in class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subjects that were chosen (students could pick just 3) as the ones they would most like to learn more about with the help of technology. They are listed from the subject that got the most votes to the least:

1- Art
2- Science
3- Math
4- Social Studies
5- Writing
6- Reading
7- Music

The rest (Spelling, Grammar, and Inupiaq) did not receive votes
Results of surveys (conclusion)

Most of the survey and information that I received was of little or no surprise. Students love technology, some teachers don’t know enough about the technology to use it effectively, Smart Boards are desired but hesitantly. I would not for one sit here and say that the information is definitive in its findings for the needs of the entire school, or even for those staff members and students in our wing, however it does point in a direction where the upper elementary grades would like if possible. As the saying goes “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” and I believe this might have been the first step in a journey that could see more technology and training used to educate the staff and students.

Goals of assessment:

1- To determine the needs (or lack thereof) of more technology the wing in which I work.

I have determined that we are indeed well supplied for the most part however there are some areas in which staff members have expressed a desire or need to have more equipment provided. Items desired and deemed as important are:

a- a printer available in each classroom
b- an extra mobile laboratory devoted exclusively to the 4th and 5th grade
c- SMART Boards
d- upgrades to computers including CD/DVD burners
updated Digital cameras

2- To determine if the training of our staff is up to date to maximize the effectiveness of the technology already in place.

Staff members have expressed a desire for more training to use the technology already present in the classroom, wing, and school. Training suggestions include:

a- PLATO
b- SMART Board usage
c- Perfect Copy
d- Accelerated Math
e- digital media
f- media editing programs

3- To see if the inclusion of Smart Boards into the classroom is a viable option in the opinions of my peers as well as my students.

Smart Boards are definitely a ‘hot ticket’ item recently in our school as many have contemplated the possible uses of this equipment. Some however expressed concerns regarding the equipment being in such close proximity to student could cause the units to be broken more frequently.
4- To see what my students feel about the amount of technology in the classroom.

Students have expressed a desire to see more computer usage in the classroom. Upon hindsight, I would like to get the ‘novelty’ issue regarding computer usage to be omitted from this part of the survey as I feel it would add more validity. Kids’ biases will always make them want to use the ‘cool’ things, however to actually want to use something to actually educate them might be a concept that these students would typically overlook.

5- To find out what the students what subjects they would like to learn more about via technology.

I was a little surprised to see Reading and Writing in the top 5 since they are two of the least favorite subjects we delve into in our classroom. Art was not a surprise due to the fact that most of the students would rather draw and paint than learn about the three ‘R’s’. Perhaps I could find ways to get the lesser favorite subjects more intriguing to the students using some of the technology available or at least attempt to get them more involved in the material.

6- To see how students feel about how much they know about the technology available to them.

The students are satisfied with the technology available to them but they do still get intrigued when some new equipment is shown to them. I would like to think that the ‘novelty’ issue has the potential to create in them a desire to learn more about the technology. There is so much available out in the world it would be difficult to actually run out of items that students would find interesting enough to pay attention to through a class lesson.
Action Plan

After reviewing the results of this needs assessment, I am intending to do the following:

1 - Submit a copy of this to our site tech and see if we can’t come up with a training program for the staff in regards to the programs available on our network. My goal would be to have at least training provided for PLATO, Accelerated Math program, and digital media editing and usage offered prior to the end of this year and part of the schedule for in-service training by next year.

2- To carry through with my goals of submitting a grant proposal to get Smart Boards and training in their usage. My deadline for submission will be before the Christmas break (December, 19, 2004)

3- To involve more technology into the learning of all subject material and offering up materials to do so to others in the grade level and the wing. This also includes accepting material as well. This is to begin immediately and will continue until I am told to do otherwise by administration or others.

4- Students will show an overall improvement by the end of the year in regards to their abilities to use technology in addressing subject material. This includes, but is not limited to:

   a- using standard word processing with 80 percent proficiency
   b- accessing and using all Accelerated programs in Reading and Math.
   c- Able to use digital media and download it onto a computer to be edited.
   d- Edit and reproduce digital media that has been downloaded.
   e- Know where to access help for technological problems when the teacher is busy (the Help command, typically).