



The West Virginia Special Education Technology Integration Specialist (SETIS) Program

2011-2012 Evaluation Report

The Special Education Technology Integration Specialist (SETIS) program provides professional development for special education teachers to assist them in achieving proficiency with 21st Century Technology Tools. In 2011–2012, its 7th year, the program trained 16 special educators as models, coaches, and mentors of technology integration at schools and within classrooms. This study examines SETIS program implementation, use, and impact across three key stakeholder groups: SETIS, teacher colleagues, and school administrators.

Method of study. SETIS candidates were surveyed once, using a retrospective pre-post survey administered at the conclusion of the school year. Teacher colleagues and school administrators, identified and invited by SETIS due to their close working relationships, participated in pre-post surveys administered at the beginning and ending of the school year.

Findings. The program is successfully equipping SETIS with the capacity needed to implement technology integration in schools and classrooms, as evidenced by significant differences in mean scores and large to very large effect sizes in the SETIS retrospective pre- and postprogram self-ratings. Teachers indicated SETIS activities led to increases in coteaching among teachers and SETIS, improved technology integration in classrooms, raised technology knowledge among teachers, and enhanced student experiences. School administrators reported greater student engagement as a result of integrating technology into their classwork. Teacher colleagues and school administrators reported leveraging SETISs' skills and resources in the ways they anticipated. SETISs named administrative support as the most common factor in facilitating meaningful collaboration with teachers. Program barriers were perceived by SETISs and school administrators as moderate. SETISs reported a lack of time as their largest barrier; computer access for students, and internet speed were also primary concerns. Survey results revealed 25% of the participating administrators were not aware a SETIS would be present in their schools at the beginning of the school year.

Limitations of study. Relying upon self-reported information carries the risk of response bias. Among teachers and administrators small sample sizes and the inability to track response rates or match pre- and post-survey results were also limitations.

Recommendations. With the capacity to train 25 SETISs per year and increasing technological demands in classrooms, program staff are urged to recruit more SETIS candidates. Other recommendations include encouraging SETIS candidates to conduct more staff development at their schools; providing SETISs expanded opportunities to work together in face-to-face settings, to help them more effectively implement technology integration within the specialized content of special education; improving communication at all program levels to ensure greater awareness of SETISs' presence in schools and the optimal use of their skills and resources; promote scheduling that allows teachers and SETISs time to cocreate technology-integrated lesson plans; and incorporate mechanisms in future evaluations that will allow for tracking and matching of teacher and administrator responses in pre- and postprogram surveys.

For more information, contact Amber Stohr, Office of Research (astohr@access.k12.wv.us), or download the full report from the WVDE Office of Research website at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/reports2013.html>.

Teachers reported increases in coteaching experience with SETISs, improved technology integration in classrooms, increased technology knowledge, and enhanced student experiences.

School administrators observed increased student engagement as a result of integrating technology into their classwork.