

March 16, 2005

Dear Mr. Boliek,

The staff at Williford Elementary School is excited about the professional staff development they have received at ExplorNet during the past two years. *The Guided Practice Approach* has **changed** teacher attitudes significantly and has **equipped** staff members with effective teaching strategies, infused with technology, that have facilitated student learning at a degree that would not have been possible had they not been exposed to your material and human resources.

The “teaching-learning” environment at Williford School has undergone a wonderful **transformation**. No one would have dreamed of the changes that are now taking place...all do to a “change in attitude” because of the excellent learning opportunity afforded my teachers at ExplorNet.

**I asked the staff to reflect upon their training and here are some of their reflections:**

Our staff and students have been fortunate enough to receive the IMPACT Grant for the past 2 years. This grant and the QTL staff have enabled us to implement programs and educational activities that go beyond enhancing student learning. In today’s world we need Highly Qualified Teachers. We now have them. The staff members of Williford Elementary have been given wonderful opportunities to go to a relaxed atmosphere and learn. The QTL staff and center afford our teachers ample opportunities to find out what is going on in the world of technology now and in the immediate future. Our teachers are able to have hands on experience and training from highly qualified personnel that not only show them how to use the technology itself, but to implement that technology in the classroom.

The quality of student learning has risen along with the implementation of this grant. Students are eager to learn. My co-worker told me that as soon as his activboard goes on, the students are raising their hands wanting the chance to participate. A student eager and excited about learning is one of the biggest challenges we can face today. Having highly qualified teachers and the technology we have been afforded with this grant has greatly improved student performance. With the advent of the use of so much technology, students are better served. Teachers are able to individualize student lessons and every child’s needs are addressed. Students can learn in a variety of ways using programs that address their specific needs. With the No Child Left Behind legislation, it is important to realize that technology in the classroom is as essential as the air the students breathe.

Some of our teachers recently attended statewide conferences. They came back so proud of our school and what we are accomplishing. Every grade level in our school is actively using technology. These students are our future and we are giving them what they need

to survive in a world filled with technology. Thanks to the staff at ExplorNet for showing us the way...

Jerry Lasley, Second Grade Teacher  
Williford Elementary School

I really enjoyed participating in the Quality Teaching and Learning experience. The instructors were wonderful and exposed us to many things that I brought back to use in my classroom. There were many pieces of technology equipment that I had never seen before and I was so excited about them that I came back to my school and talked about them and we purchased some of them. This experience also gave me to opportunity to bond with other teachers who also had great ideas to share. I recommend this workshop to any teacher, new or veteran, who wants some new fresh ideas to use in their classroom.

Kenya L. Brown  
4th Grade Teacher  
Williford Elementary School  
Hunting for Wildcat Excellence

I thought our ExplorNet training was an excellent experience. I got a chance to learn about and bond with other teachers in the school that I normally don't even see during the course of a school day. I got to learn about them through various activities that we completed in groups. I was also able to incorporate many of these same activities into my teaching. I thought that the activity most useful in my teaching was using more direction and focus with the students on a "Field Discovery" rather than just watching and listening. I learned how to use different kinds of equipment, such as a document camera, in a learning environment that I had never even seen before. Our school ended up purchasing some equipment and software based on the experiences that we had with them. I would definitely go again if I could.

"ExplorNet's Quality Teaching and Learning program was a wonderful experience. The program helped the staff at Williford Elementary School, an IMPACT Model School of Technology to better understand educational theory and research-based teaching strategies. Most importantly, the staff demonstrated how to us use the technology and to reach every child in the classroom. The staff at Williford enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and friendly staff of the ExplorNet QTL trainers. We have used many of the ideas in our classrooms and have also incorporated them into our school wide thematic units. The QTL program is a wonderful professional opportunity that should be experienced by all teachers in North Carolina.

Pluses:

- instructors made everyone feel comfortable and knowledgeable
- working with other schools was informative
- technology was integrated with all subjects
- we were introduced to all programs that we have available to us
- we worked in groups with most of the projects
- the field trip was neat it showed us different ways to take a trip
- hands on workshop

- it was rewarding to travel and work with other people at our school
- it was nice to have a lunch break
- we were fortunate to have excellent instructors

Amanda and Joyce

Joyce M. Riley, Kindergarten  
Williford Elementary