



Lesson Accelerators as a Staff Development Tool

What is a Lesson Accelerator?

Lesson Accelerators (LA's) are project-based lesson plans that contain everything a student needs to create a technology product: the tutorial movies, an example of the finished project and any images or other media needed to recreate the example project exactly as it is demonstrated in the movies. As such, they are easy projects for classroom implementation and can be used as a way to bring a technology component into the curriculum.

What does this have to do with staff development?

"Student" doesn't have to mean just the children or teenagers in a K-12 classroom! Teachers and staff can also use the Lesson Accelerators to increase their own technology skills. And, since the tutorial movies progress step-by-step through the process of creating a fun and interesting project, a person who completes every step demonstrated in the movies will have a tangible end-product that shows off their newly acquired skills. The movies are easy to follow and can be viewed over and over again at the viewer's discretion. Best of all, these resources are available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

How would I use LA's for staff development?

1. Identify a Lesson Accelerator to use:

What type of software skills would you like your staff to learn or enhance? Working with a database or spreadsheet? Using a presentation or multimedia application? Lesson Accelerators are categorized by type (i.e., database, spreadsheet, word processing, etc.), by specific application (i.e., FileMaker Pro, Excel, Word, etc.), and by platform (Mac or PC). You can sort and filter the list of available LA's by any of these criteria and then watch the Preview movie to find the one that best meets your needs and interests.

2. Prepare to follow the tutorial movies:

Once you have chosen a Lesson Accelerator, download the resource packet that contains the materials needed to complete the project as demonstrated in the tutorial movies. This packet includes a Project Activity Guide as well as any images, text documents, or other files that are used in creating the example project. Read through the Project Activity Guide so that you have an understanding of the goals and objectives for the project. Save copies of all the resource files to the computers your staff will be working on.

3. Recreate the example project:

Introduce the example project to your staff as a way to become familiar with the basic tools used in the software application. Lesson Accelerator projects are relatively short and easy projects to complete. An individual should be able to watch all the movies and recreate the example project within just a couple of hours. The content or subject matter presented in the example project may

or may not be directly related to the subject matter the staff person currently teaches, but they'll find these exercises effective and valuable no matter what the topic. The example project gives the participant a context in which he/she can practice and acquire new skills working with a particular software application.

4. Go beyond the example project:

The example project is structured so that it can be easily adapted for other subject/content areas. For example, the Lesson Accelerator entitled "Painting Light and Shadow" uses information about three great French Impressionist painters as the subject of a PowerPoint presentation. The same skills and procedures that participants will learn by creating the example project could also be used to create a presentation about writers, music composers, scientists, or any other subject the participant would like to research. Have your staff demonstrate that they have learned the skills taught in the Lesson Accelerator tutorials by choosing another subject that is relevant to their area of expertise, finding images and information that fit that subject, and creating a project similar to the example project, but using their own material!

5. Assess the work that has been done:

Your school or district may require some type of assessment to document that a staff member has met certain technology competency standards. A set of technology standards on which many districts are basing their own requirements are those published by the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) as the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for Teachers. You will find more information about NETS for Teachers, and also NETS for Students on which the NETS for Teachers is based, on the ISTE website at:

<http://cnets.iste.org/>

What about assessment rubrics?

Rubrics are useful tools to assess demonstrated competency in achieving specific, measurable objectives. The Project Activity Guide found in the downloadable resource packet for each Lesson Accelerator includes objectives and task list for creating the example project. Many of the Project Activity Guides also include a rubric that the teacher can use to assess student work, or that the student can use for self-assessment. The LA rubric could be used "as is" or modified to provide an assessment tool for staff development, regardless of whether the project being assessed uses the sample subject matter provided with the LA or uses custom material.

Two sample rubrics are given on the following pages. The first example is similar to the rubrics provided with the Lesson Accelerators. It utilizes a very simple 1-4 scale that assesses whether the user is able to complete the tasks with or without guidance. The second example assesses project elements and would require identifying the specific criteria against which each element of the completed staff development project would be assessed.

Example 1: Sample Rubric for the Painting Light & Shadow Lesson Accelerator

Using the “Painting Light and Shadow” Lesson Accelerator as our example, and taking into account the objectives stated in the Project Activity Guide for that LA, an assessment rubric for the final project might look something like the following:

Rating:	Poor Is unable to complete this task without guidance	Fair Is able to complete this task with some guidance	Good Is able to complete this task without any guidance	Excellent Is able to complete this task without any guidance and can apply the same process to other projects without help	
Objective or Task:					Row Score:
Create a new presentation document	1	2	3	4	
Choose a unifying slide design	1	2	3	4	
Add new slides	1	2	3	4	
Edit slide layout, as needed	1	2	3	4	
Add & edit slide text	1	2	3	4	
Add appropriate graphics from the Internet or clipart library	1	2	3	4	
Add animation to text or graphics	1	2	3	4	
Add hyperlinks on the reference slide	1	2	3	4	
Play slideshow	1	2	3	4	
				Total Score:	

Example 2: Sample Rubric for the Painting Light & Shadow Lesson Accelerator

Using the “Painting Light and Shadow” Lesson Accelerator as our example once again, and taking into account the objectives stated in the Project Activity Guide for that LA, an assessment rubric for the final project might look something like the following:

Criteria	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Excellent 4	Score
Unifying Design	Slides in the presentation have no unifying design elements	Slides in the presentation have some design elements in common, such as background or font style, but these are not used consistently throughout the presentation	Slides in the presentation use common design elements consistently throughout the presentation	Slides in the presentation use common design elements consistently and the slide master has been modified, as needed, to ensure this	
Text Elements	Text is hard to read due to font size or style; there are numerous misspellings and/or inaccuracies in the information presented in the text	Text may be hard to read on some slides; there are some misspellings and/or inaccuracies	Text is readable; there are no misspellings or inaccuracies in the information presented in the text	Text is readable succinct; there are no misspellings or inaccuracies; and text elements are well-balanced visually on the slide	
Images Elements	Image elements are not used in the presentation	Image elements are used, but may not really be related to the presentation content	Image elements are used and are appropriate for the presentation content	Image elements are used, are appropriate for the content, and convey additional meaning	

Criteria	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Excellent 4	Score
Links to Websites/ Other Slides	Links to websites or other slides in the presentation would be appropriate, but are not used	Some links within the presentation don't work or bring the viewer to an unrelated location	Links are used as navigational devices within the presentation; all links work properly	Links meet all the criteria for a rating of "3," as well as provide access to additional information the viewer might be interested in exploring	
Effects/ Other Elements	Slide transitions, sound effects, animations and/or interactive devices are not used at all in the presentation	Slide transitions, sound effects, animations, and/or interactive devices are used, but some are inappropriate or over used	Slide transitions, sound effects, animations, and/or interactive devices are used and seem appropriate for the content	Slide transitions, sound effects, animations, and/or interactive devices are used appropriately and enhance the overall effectiveness of the presentation	
References	References are not provided for the information used in the presentation	References are provided, but the source is improperly cited (i.e. not APA style citations)	References are provided; sources are properly cited	References are provided; sources are properly cited; includes links to online reference material and/or additional information about the subject matter	

Additional sample rubrics for assessing NETS for Teachers, NETS for Students, technology competency and technology integration in the classroom curriculum can be found at:

<http://www.ncrel.org/tech/nets/>