Preparing Tomorrow's Teacher to use the Information Technology: From InTech to PalmTech

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A curriculum based on handheld and mobile technology called PalmTech is under development to prepare preservice teachers as well as inservice teachers to use handheld technology in the classroom. Currently all preservice teachers at Albany State University must complete a technology curriculum called InTech before graduation to master their technology skills. This new PalmTech curriculum is being developed to complement and extend InTech in areas not being covered by InTech. PalmTech, despite its limitations, has the advantage of short training time, easy to use, low cost, and taping into the emerging technology. PalmTech is mainly designed to explore areas of teaching strategies not easily implemented by the traditional desktop technology.

One of the major missions of the SOWEGA PT3 Project at Albany State University, besides technology infusion in the classroom and faculty development, is to train student teachers how to integrate technology into curriculum that they are using during the student teaching period and in the future classroom. The SOWEGA PT3 project partners with the Education Technology Training Center (ETTC) of Georgia State Data and Research Center on campus to provide every student teacher on campus intensive technology training through a vigorous program called **In**tegrating **Tech**nology (InTech). InTech is a 50-hour course originally designed for Georgia K-12 Teachers by Georgia Department of Education to retrain inservice teachers in technology skills. The SOWEGA PT3-ETTC partnership helps modify the InTech curriculum to suit the needs of student teachers in the region. In the program, student teachers apply basic technology skills into K-5, Middle, or High-School curriculum according to their specializations.

To demonstrate their competence, each student at the end of the training must produce a CD-ROM and a Website that features everything that they have done for the InTech course. Practically, the student produces an electronic portfolio that can either be carried in his/her own pocket as a business card (actually a cd-rom in the size of a business card) or can be distributed as Web pages. The e-portfolio is not part of the requirement of the original InTech curriculum; but it is becoming a standard for the pre-service students because of the collaboration. In fact, it has become a requirement for all student teachers to complete InTech training before they are eligible for graduation since the partnership started two years ago.

InTech at Albany State University was launched in 1997, since then the technology has changed rapidly; inevitably the InTech curriculum has to be modified on yearly basis to reflect the change. But the

change is still largely surrounding the desktop and its peripheral technology. The recent rapid growth in handheld technology that demonstrates tremendous potential in preparing tomorrow's teachers to use the technology effectively has largely been ignored. The SOWEGA PT3 project and the ETTC Center have decided to launch a new initiative to expand the InTech curriculum to include handheld technology for training preservice teachers. Since then a curriculum called PalmTech has been developed as an attachment unit to the InTech program.   Now students not only are capable of producing an e-portfolio on the Web and on cd-rom; they are also capable utilizing the information technology via handheld computing devices such as Palms and other Pocket-PCs in the classroom to enhance their teaching.

In the presentation, both InTech and PalmTech curriculum will be shared interactively. A model e-portfolio and the power of PalmTech will be showcased by one of the student teachers who has participated in one of the InTech-PalmTech courses. The potential of PalmTech will be discussed and demonstrated through interactive activities. An assessment of the student's performance and reactions to new the PalmTech curriculum will be presented.