Implementing a Guiding Partner Approach for Technology Infusion in a Teacher Preparation Program: Faculty and Student Perspectives

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Abstract
The Thinkquest Technology for Teachers catalyst grant (T3) implemented a “guiding partner approach” and instruction in multimedia technology for faculty and students in preservice teacher education. This poster/demonstration will present results of focused interviews with students and education faculty at one partner university. Also, examples of students’ multimedia projects will be displayed. Qualitative research design was used in order to discover themes and relationships in students’ and faculty members’ perceptions of their efficacy and creativity in using technology.

The Thinkquest Technology for Preparing Teachers (T3) catalyst grant, funded by USDOE, is concluding three years of implementation of a “guiding partner approach” (GPA) (Eskridge, Harris & Sibley, 2000) and instruction in multimedia technology for faculty and students in preservice teacher preparation programs. The GPA is rooted in a constructivist model of interactive learning. Additionally, there are two complementary notions that students and teachers work “elbow to elbow” as junior/senior colleagues in the learning process and that students are enabled in the use of flexible frameworks for instructional design.

Additionally, students are familiarized with activity structures (“wetware”) in the design of telecollaborative educational activities that increase the probability of long-term innovation and adoption of technology in K-12 classrooms (Harris, 1997; Harris, 1998). Activity structures and multimedia web sites for enhancing curriculum and instruction are also emphasized in preservice teacher education and on-going professional development.

This poster/demonstration session will present results of reflective essays and focused interviews with a sample of preservice students and education faculty members at one of the partner universities in the T3 grant. Qualitative research design was used for this study in order to discover themes and relationships in students’ and faculty members’ perceptions of their efficacy and creativity in using technology and content-based material in the development of two web sites (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). These students and faculty participated in using the “guiding partner approach” as they learned about and developed multi-media web sites. The focal questions of the reflective essays and interviews were such questions as: How has the “GPA” helped them to understand their learning about using technology and state required academic content knowledge or teacher preparation knowledge, skills and dispositions; and how has the development of the T3 project improved their sense of efficacy and creativity in using multimedia technology and in developing educational web sites? A third source for the study was a selection of web sites developed by students in teacher preparation courses. Examples of student and faculty members’ responses to questions as well as examples of their web sites will be displayed.

Findings revealed that as students became more comfortable with the technology they became more creative in their organization and presentation of their web sites. Also, they were willing to try new software such as Macromedia’s “Flash” to enhance their work with Macromedia’s “Dreamweaver.” Students appreciated the opportunity to use digital movies to present curriculum and teacher education topics, such as classroom management and student teaching. Implications for instruction of preservice students and for teacher educators will be presented.


