Toys or Tools?  PDA Pals Engaging with Technology

Summary

This session shares artifacts, results and lessons learned of a PT3 year-long study of integrating PDA’s by teachers and teacher candidates in 5\textsuperscript{th} grade classrooms.

Keywords: handhelds, PDA’s, elementary classrooms, teacher education

Overview & Objectives

This demonstration will provide visitors with insights into ways that PDA’s have been incorporated into the curriculum of three 5\textsuperscript{th} grade classrooms of an elementary school. Examples of data gathering instruments along with teacher and student products will be shared.

The PT3 partnership of Eastern Washington University and Cheney School District is conducting a year-long research study to address the following questions: What are students able to do with handhelds that they are not able to do otherwise? How does the use of personal desktop assistants enhance learning opportunities?

Outline: This session will provide information about data gathering and results of our study.
1. Description of participants, setting, and how the study was organized.
2. Providing for equity: “Palm Pals” formed for sharing PDA’s (2:1 ratio) so all 5\textsuperscript{th} grade students in the selected elementary school would have equal access.
3. Artifacts: Teacher assignments, student work (text & visuals), interview and survey instruments.
4. Results of observations, surveys, and interviews with students, parents, and teachers.
5. Matrix displaying how NETS were addressed in student learning activities with PDA’s.
6. Problems, solutions, lessons learned during the study.
7. Insights, recommendations as a result of this research study.

NETS: NETS for Students: A matrix will be prepared to show how the handheld learning activities address the 6 NETS areas.

Supporting Research

In a recent presentation at the IEEE International Workshop 29-30 August 2002, Växjö, Sweden, 2002, Hoppe stated that PDA’s have the potential of becoming a routine use in the classroom to a greater degree than computers. Curtis \textit{et al} (2002) also made this observation. At the same workshop Chen \textit{et al} (2002) reported they had found that PDA’s could provide scaffolding for learning and “information on demand” This study will observe the degree to which PDA’s become routine, assist scaffolding and provide access to information on demand.
**Presenter Background:** Both are university professors involved in teacher education and are PT3 Project Directors.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Format of Presentation:** Conversation

**References**

