Teacher Interview
7377 – Introduction to Technology in Schools, Fall, 2008
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What are the different types of technology you use in your classroom? Why do you use those items?

Connie—
My classroom is furnished with one teacher computer with internet access and a color printer and one very old computer without internet access. I use these computers for the following:

Search engines - In deaf education there are multiple times a day in which topics arise that students are unfamiliar with due to language issues. Search engines and the internet are invaluable tools for bringing the world into my classroom. Before the internet I attempted to keep picture files of anything and everything. Unfortunately there was not an efficient method of retrieving the exact picture needed quickly nor was there the possibility of having something for every topic that arose. Since internet access has been available in our classroom we can get almost instant answers to our problems. The students are learning to use the search tool and I feel this will be an invaluable life skill for them.

Educational Software --
Drill and practice – Reader Rabbit, Math Blaster, Jump Start series --
In special education daily drill and practice is necessary in order to master academic skills. These software programs provide that practice in an interesting manner that holds the student's attention. These programs are also useful for making the best use of a student’s time while providing me with one-on-one time with another student. Many of my special education primary grade students really cannot work independently. If my schedule is such that I have to have several students at once that are working on different subjects or levels, these programs are a beneficial and productive use of a child’s time while I am with another student.

Keyboarding—
• In my job as a teacher of deaf students, it is important for my students to learn keyboarding. In addition to the usual reasons for teaching keyboarding, deaf students need keyboarding skills to make use of the telephone relay service less tedious and more efficient.
• I also have a visually impaired student with multiple motor involvement who needs to learn keyboarding as a life skill since her handwriting will most likely never be functional.
• Accelerated Reader – A school-wide reading program designed to encourage students to independently read books on their level. They read books and take computerized quizzes to earn points.

Digital Camera (my personal one) – My students and I use the digital camera to take pictures during field trips, cooking activities and other learning activities. We use the pictures to make class books, practice writing skills, and to teach sequencing and vocabulary. Our pictures are also invaluable in prompting discussion of our class activities. Teaching language is the main
goal in deaf education at the primary level. Having pictures from our field trips and other activities to serve as springboards for eliciting conversation from students is a very effective and meaningful strategy.

**Productivity and Application Software (Microsoft Office) – Teacher paperwork** –
- Individualized Education Plans (IEP’s) are done on the computer through a state mandated program.
- I use Microsoft Word to do my lesson plans. I also use the computer for creating teaching materials and tests.

**Drawing and Illustration Programs (Kid Pix for students, Adobe Photoshop CS3 for me) –**
- I use Kid Pix in my lessons for a variety of reasons. In math, we use it to create patterns. In language arts, we use it to create journal pages. The students enjoy Kid Pix and thus apply themselves to their tasks with more enthusiasm. They are also learning basic computer skills while using the program.
- I have used Adobe Photoshop CS3 for creating posters and teaching aids for use in my classroom. I do this because sometimes I can create materials targeted to a specific need in my classroom and usually to fill a specific child’s need.

**Membership in Reading A-Z.com** – Reading A-Z is a great website that has downloadable and printable books on many levels and covering various reading skills. It also has lesson plans to accompany the books. I love this site because it allows me to select books on my students’ levels to supplement our reading text series.

**Wireless mouse with zoom capabilities** – I have a student with low vision. I purchased a mouse that has a button on the side of it that when pressed places a rectangular magnifying glass on the screen. Magnification can be adjusted to varying degrees. The use of this feature makes it possible for my low vision student to complete computer assignments and quizzes that must be taken on the computer.

**Cell Phone** – I use my cell phone to communicate with a deaf parent through text messaging. It seems to be more effective and simpler than trying to communicate with her through the relay service.

**FM Systems** – Our school district provides our deaf students with FM systems to give them better access to spoken language. Through the use of a microphone, the teacher’s voice is sent directly to the student’s behind the ear FM/hearing aid.

**David--**
- Laptop: I use a laptop linked to the district server. The laptop is available to transport off site. Any files created off site will automatically transfer upon logon to the district server. The laptop connects to an overhead presenter for classroom lessons, projects, and bell work activities.
- Wireless Mouse: The laptop utilizes a 5 button multiple task wireless mouse. The wireless mouse allows mobility throughout the classroom.
• Presenter: The presenter has a pointer mouse, zoom, audio mute and a freeze function.
• Pioneer Receiver: The presentation system is linked with a Pioneer surround sound system.
• Software: (PowerPoint, Word, Access, Excel) Lesson presentations, theme objective sheets, spread sheets, and databases are all created with Microsoft software.
• Satellite Signal: A direct link to cable/satellite allows educational TV formats to be utilized.
• DVD Player/Recorder: Provides a means of showing DVD’s and serves as copying device of student classroom presentation projects.
• VHS Player: Used to show educational film presentations.
• Mobile Laptop Cart: Allows all students in a classroom to utilize an individual computer for classroom projects and lessons.
• Digital Camera: Provides students with visual models in classroom lessons.
• 8mm Camcorder: Used to record student presentations.
• Internet: Provides classroom interaction for students in “real time.”

Katie—
This classroom has one teacher computer, one student computer, one printer (used by several different teachers) and a Smart Board.

Smart Board: I use the Smart Board for various activities throughout the day. Can demonstrate concepts, show videos, do web searches as a class, displays worksheets to work on together, anything! I use my Smart Board frequently throughout the day.

Word Processing (Microsoft Office):
• Use Word to create student worksheets, tests, quizzes, notes home to parents, make labels, etc.
• Use Excel to create various spreadsheets
• Use Publisher to create weekly Newsletter home to parents

Digital Camera: I use my camera to take pictures of worksheets or charts to display on the Smart Board, pictures of students to display and pictures of student work to display as well.

Internet:
• I use the internet as a resource to supplement curriculum, I may do it on my own or do it with the class together on the Smart Board
• Educational Resources: Reading A-Z, A-Z Teacher Stuff (used for leveling Guided Reading books), other various teacher websites

Educational Software (used on the “student computer”):
• AR Tests: (Accelerated Reader tests) students take computer quizzes over books they have read
• Various Learning Games: Franklin Goes to School. Reader Rabbit, Math Rabbit, JumpStart

Video Stream: I use United Streaming and Chalkwaves to find educational videos to supplement my curriculum.
**Classroom Website:** I use this to communicate with parents about what we are doing in the classroom. It also has educational links my students can access from home.

**iCampus:** Our district’s form of keeping grades (gradebook), student information, recording communication with parents, etc. Each teacher has access to their class information.

**WebQuests**

**Bookmarks**

**Search Engines**

**What are other pieces of technology you would like to use?**

**Connie**
Smart Board or Promethean Board
Bookmarking
Video Streaming

**David**
Student classroom clickers, to allow instant student responses, such as flash quizzes.
Utilizing cell phones for student quizzes, or class projects -- A quiz could be sent in text format, and then answers sent back in text format. It would be fun for the kids, plus it fits directly to the technology they are using in their daily lives.

**Katie**
Electronic Portfolios for students
Create more WebQuests
I would love to have the type of projector that you can put a piece of paper (worksheet, article, etc.) under and the students can see what you are doing up on the screen. (Can’t think of the name for it!)

**What types of training did you receive on using these technologies?**

**Connie**
I have never received any training on most of the technology items that I use. Most of what I know has been self taught. Our system has provided training on use of the program for completing IEP’s. Our school audiologist provides training on the use of FM systems.

**David**
Pretty much self taught, supported by reading technology information bulletins on the web.

**Katie**
I have received in-district training and have my Masters and Specialist degrees in Educational Technology.
How do you feel these impact the student’s learning? Explain how you see student learning impacted with the use of technology.

Connie--
I feel my students’ learning is enhanced by the use of technology. I think perhaps, since I teach mainly deaf students, the power of technology to make things visual has truly had a huge impact on student learning. The digital camera and internet use bring learning opportunities to my students daily. They gain language, vocabulary, and general knowledge that hearing children take for granted.

The FM systems are essential in order to provide students with the best possible auditory signal. FM systems provide students with access to the spoken word and environmental sounds. Any level of improved auditory input is unquestionably the most beneficial technology we can provide for our deaf students.

David—
Students have a strong appeal to learning in a technology enhanced environment. Creative lessons used with technology applications allow students to learn in a more hands on environment, plus linking education to real time.

Katie—
Teaching in a culturally diverse setting as I do, integrating technology allows my students to experience things they may not otherwise. I also think it makes things fun for them and it teaches them about technology. They will be using technology throughout their schooling and I want to give them as much knowledge about it as I can at this level (1st grade). I believe integrating technology creates higher levels of thinking, which hits on the Depth of Knowledge chart.

How have the methods of presentation changed throughout your teaching career?

Connie—
When I began teaching 24 years ago, I had access to an Apple IIE. Traditional lecture and chalkboards were used. The Apple IIEs were used for drill and practice. The printer that we used with the Apple was a dot matrix with black ink. During my career, we have moved to personal computers with flat screens, much more sophisticated software, internet access, and great color printers.

David—
The use of more advanced technology in presentation. I call it keeping up with the kids. I believe we are using more “bells & whistles” in our classroom presentations.

Katie—
As I have learned more through my training, I have used more technology in my classroom. I am fortunate to be in a district that has many different resources I can use.
How do you feel about sharing your classroom technology?

Connie--
I enjoy sharing what I learn and know with my colleagues. I also enjoy learning from my colleagues. There is so much available in the field that no one person can be aware of it all. I think sharing and learning from each other is an absolute must.

David—
I think it is great. The more staff members we can train to utilize technology in the classroom, the stronger our students will become in meeting/exceeding grade level expectations.

Katie—
I often teach classes in my building on technology, so I have no problem sharing! I also help teachers with any troubleshooting-I am kind of the “go-to-gal” in my building!

What is the most important factor of technology in the classroom?

Connie—
Technology in the classroom provides current, effective, and modern instruction methods that enhance our students’ learning experiences.

David—
Plain and simple……….”Enhancing Student Success.”

Katie—
As I said earlier, it touches the Depth of Knowledge chart, it creates higher levels of thinking, more ways to learn (visual, audio), thus creating more successful learners.

Compare/Contrast:

Our team interviews all listed student achievement as the most important factor while utilizing technology in the classroom. From the teacher perspective our team linked the importance of utilizing technology in the classroom to overall classroom success. All three agreed the use of technology has a positive impact on the student learning process. Although each of the interviews state the fact all three student groups are very diverse, the use of technology provides a means of providing a common classroom environment for all students. All interviews highlighted how technology has enhanced the presentation of classroom curriculum. It was consistently indicated technology is used more in today’s classroom setting compared to previous years.

All of the interviews stated additional technology would help students in the classroom, thus supporting the concept of increasing student achievement. However, the needs stated were very different in how those results would be achieved. The needs covered a very wide range of technological tools, from software applications, online web links to classroom hardware.
Training on classroom technology indicated mixed results from the interviews. Two of the instructors are utilizing technology in the classroom after being self-taught. The other instructor is supported with an in-district training program, plus has prior educational experience gained from advanced degrees in Educational Technology.

In regards to sharing technology, all interviews supported the importance of expanding the knowledge of colleagues through peer training. Sharing technology was noted as an important factor to strengthen staff abilities. Once again, the concept supports the goal of reaching higher student achievement in the classroom from increased abilities of the teachers.

The classroom instructional diversity in each interview created a vast difference in the types of computer software utilized in the given classrooms. In each interview the teacher provided a strong reason for computerized technology in the classroom, yet each teacher would utilize the technology to best fit the needs of their students. The students in the given classroom may have special needs which could change the method of instruction, but not the overall goal of student achievement.

Each interview listed an extensive list of the technology used in their classroom. Once again, the list was very diverse from interview to interview. The list contained software packages, even different types of hardware to meet the needs of their students. The difference in technology used could be reflective of the subjects taught by each teacher, or possibly from the difference in teaching styles of each teacher. However, in all cases the technology used in the classrooms supported the fact of the teacher striving to provide an educational environment which would help lead to a higher level of learning.

From these interviews I believe these teachers are trying to create a learning environment that can provide students with a means of achieving higher levels of learning and enhancing overall success each and every day they step into their classroom.