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The Big Three

Teri McGraw

University of West Georgia

My county is currently purchasing the INTERWRITE MOBI system for all classrooms in order to meet the Georgia Technology Plan goal of “incorporating 21st Century technology and thinking skills into the curriculum” (Georgia Technology Plan, 2007). The MOBI web site advertises its company as “the industry's first multi-user interface designed specifically to support student-centered, collaborative learning” (EInstruction, 2009). The MOBI is superior to other technological options because it is portable and allows teachers to create interactive lessons where teachers and students can interact with digital content at the same time.

Using the system, the teacher and students can simultaneously interact with the same digital content, and the teacher is constantly aware of the status of the class. While the teacher is using the MOBI, he/she can easily identify students who require re-teaching because the technology shows students’ answers in real time. This approach also allows the teacher to evaluate and adjust his/her teaching immediately.

The INTERWRITE MOBI has a software package that contains images and resources that teachers may use to create interactive lessons. Using the software, the teachers and students can use the pen to write, draw, add graphics, highlight, and makes notes over any computer program onto any surface. Teachers can save or print. Teachers can even email their lessons to students who were absent. Students can use the interactive pen just like a computer mouse. There are several different modes of use for the INTERWRITE MOBI. Using the “sandbox” mode, the entire class can work on a project (EInstruction, 2009). Another mode is the split screen mode which would allow several students to work on the same project and show their progress on the MOBI screen. The final mode is when the teacher uses the MOBI as an interactive tablet. Numerous interactive lessons can be taught using the MOBI’s software.

Since multiple students can participate at the same time in their own workspace, the MOBI has advantages over systems such as interactive whiteboards where only one or two students can work at a time. The MOBI learning system comes with one teacher tablet, two student tablets, a recharging station and software. Additional student tablets are available to complete the package. Costing $1,150, this system is less than the SMART Board SBD00 which, according to Tom from Multi Media Services Inc. costs $1299.

Many school districts have purchased SMART Boards instead of MOBIs. There are some vast differences between the SMART Board and the MOBI. The MOBI is portable while most SMART Boards are stationary and the students must gather near them. Another difference is that multiple students can provide information to the MOBI at the same time. This is different than the SMART Board which only allows one to two users to pick up one or two digital pens at a time. Classroom management may be improved using the MOBI since the teacher can move around the classroom more than when using a traditional white board or SMART Board. The MOBI has some distinct advantages over the SMART Board.

Another alternative to the MOBI is the H-ITT which stands for Hyper-Interactive Teaching Technology. This is another electronic response system and includes the following: student transmitters, a classroom receiver, computer software, and either Infrared or Radio Frequency equipment. Costing $795, this system is a less-expensive alternative to the MOBI, but it mainly includes electronic response systems. The students do not have the opportunity to manipulate digital text and graphics. Both the MOBI and the H-ITT actively engage students in the lessons and give immediate feedback to the teachers to get a status of the class update. The main difference between the MOBI and the H-ITT is the ability of MOBI users to manipulate digital text and graphics. Using the MOBI, teachers would be increasing students’ proficiency in technology literacy and 21st Century skills.

Many schools all across the United States have chosen the MOBI system to meet their technological demands. After an extensive search for the right interactive clickers for their campus, The University of Delaware decided that The Interwrite PRS clickers “stimulate classroom discussion and peer instruction, measure student attitudes, and make assessment much easier for educators” (Standardizing, 2009). When Principal Stillions of White Water High School in Fayetteville, Georgia was creating the vision for his school in 2002, he realized that the MOBI would be the perfect tool for achieving his technology dreams. Stallions (2009) states “If a teacher is in the middle of a lesson and a student asks a question that the teacher was not originally prepared for, the teacher can look it up instantly on the Internet and attain pictures and information that describes the answer to the student’s question” (p.2). MOBI allows the teacher to facilitate learning and easily answer students’ questions using 21st Century technology.

School districts have very limited funds and must make difficult decisions regarding what technology to purchase. With new technology being introduced annually, county technology committees are given the challenging task to choose technology that meets the needs of the students and teachers. Using the MOBI would be a pivotal step towards achieving the goal of adding more 21st Century technology skills into the classrooms

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