



Florida Digital Educator Program

A statewide integration initiative

Special points of interest:

- What are the teachers saying in Polk County?
- What are the teachers saying in Osceola County?
- **Best Of eXample**

Linda Robinson

What are the teachers saying?

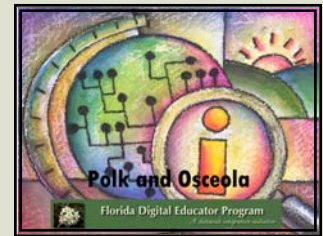
The Florida Digital Educators in Polk and Osceola understand the impact that technology makes on the classroom learning environment. These are excerpts from the interviews that can be heard on the FDE podcast, "Tales from the Teachers in the Trenches." (Directions for finding the Polk/Osceola podcast are on the back page.)

Jessica Davis, 6th grade Language Arts teacher at Southwest Middle School explains, "Technology has tremendously impacted my classroom. I would like to say that I've gone digital and my kids have definitely noticed the difference, starting with the way we read our novels. I pre-record all the novels we read at home in my own fake audio studio and I have my classroom wired in surround sound. I started this because I had a student with a major hearing loss. She was in the back and I was in the front and she just couldn't hear that well. Now the kids sitting anywhere can hear as well as the ones in the front. I use my projector a ton which you don't realize how you can draw a kid in as opposed to putting things on the board. Anything with an electrical cord - they are sucked right in - it doesn't matter what you are doing.

I have the computers in my room which has been awesome for my poetry unit. We did a research project with 10 poet authors. There are these really great interactive websites especially for Edgar Allen Poe and Emily Dickinson. You can interact with the house she lived. You can click on her attic. To be able to show that and let them explore it really draws them in. It's one thing to say she was a bit of a recluse and a hermit, but to see that is priceless.

Brook Peabody, network specialist at Palmetto Elementary School sees the difference technology has made on his campus. "We have a software program called Soliloquy. It is a software program where students are given a story. The computer reads it to them slowly, then a little faster and then again at a fluent level. The child then reads the story on their first attempt and then they can hear, as they make two or three more attempts at it, how much better their fluency levels are rising. They are listening to themselves read which promotes fluency and are getting feedback from themselves. It even helps them put inflection into the passage. For my

Karen C. Seddon



collaborating teacher's project, we are using Photostory. She is having the children illustrate a different scene to a story and recording their portion at a fluent rate. They are putting it altogether on a CD and sharing the stories in a center on the classroom computers. If a child wrote it, they can read it at a fluent rate. All the children can see and hear what their classmates have written."

Linda Sanders, media specialist at Lake Gibson High Schools noticed a big difference in technology impact this year. "At Lake Gibson we have instituted a year long training series for our teachers trying to get them involved and excited and more knowledgeable about technology. We've done Picasa, Movie Maker and it's so exciting to hear them come back and tell us how they are using it in their classrooms and how excited the students are. Our kids are such digital natives. We see them on a daily basis with their cell phones, iPods and mp3 players and we really want to engage those students. We think our teachers are making great strides trying to engage our



Jessica Davis, Southwest Middle School



Brook Peabody, Palmetto Elementary School



Linda Sanders, Lake Gibson Senior High School



Linda Robinson, Winter Haven High School, Polk County

Linda teaches Computer Applications and Web Design and has been highly impacted by technology in a most unique way. These are Linda's own words. *"My students have been participating in an exchange program with a school in the Netherlands. We probably would have never gotten into this except that I was exposed to podcasting through the Master Digital Educator program and brought those skills back to my classroom and taught them how to podcast. We were able to post video podcasts about life in Winter Haven, life in Florida and Polk County as a whole for the students in the Netherlands so they could get an understanding of what it was like to go to an American school. As a result of that, their teacher was awarded a grant to come visit us and she spent five days living with me in my home and attending Winter Haven High School. She did this because her students will be coming to visit us in October of '08. They will live with our Winter Haven students for five days and go to school with us. We hope to do the same exchange program. We've asked permission to go in March of '09 on our spring break and spend five days going to school in the Netherlands. All year this year and last year, we have been exchanging information through emails, podcasts, and videos. My students were extremely excited that Miss Kirk was able to come. They are hoping they will get to go and do the same thing next year. We are starting an Academy of Hospitality and Tourism next year so we think that will tie in real well with the travel for the students. We just hope the District will approve the trip because that will be an even greater impact on these students if they get to meet the students that have been interacting with."*



Natalie Roberts, American History teacher at Celebration High School

says, "Overall, technology has been very successful. I've seen a totally different side of my students this year. Some have shown leadership ability and maturity in areas that they don't have in the normal classroom. It has helped keep my students organized. I've had a lot more online project-based activities. They are able to get caught up on work when they are absent by going online to get their assignments. I now feel comfortable give students options. Before this training, I would have been nervous about letting students do technology projects because I didn't know the programs. Now, if a student wants to do a video, let them do a video. They take it and run with. Then they teach us. It has created a more well-rounded relationship for me with my students this year. Because they have been able to teach me a lot this year instead of just listening to me.

What are the teachers saying?

Barbara Ortiz, 5th grade teacher at Chestnut Elementary School

has built on of the most comprehensive classroom websites that she loves to share with teachers. Seeing is believing. Take a look at: <http://cne.osceola.k12.fl.us/staff/ortizb> "Technology has been a blessing in my classroom. I love technology, my students love technology and we just won 1st place in the district web design contest! We use the projector and laptop everyday to show educational videos and Quia. For instance, we are reading Charlotte's Web and I created a Rags to Riches game for them and they get so excited about the content. It builds reading comprehension. We just enjoy everything with technology!"



Frankie Franceschi, 7th grade Social Studies teacher at Horizon Middle School

uses technology all the time. He reports that, "Technology has allowed me to make my lessons more accessible to students. My collaborating teacher and I have made a website where every single one of our lessons are available to them. We have a calendar there also so if they are even absent they can simply go to the site and see what they missed by looking at our PowerPoints. A lot of students that don't finish their assignments in class go to the website and look for what they missed. There is a nifty little translator function in the new Office 2007 that we experimented with this year. Everything we create, we translate into Spanish for our ESOL students. I have students that speak no English at all and they have done very well with all our materials translated into their native language.



Natalie Roberts, American History, Celebration High School



Barbara Ortiz, 5th grade, Chestnut Elementary School



Frankie Franceschi, 7th grade Social Studies, Horizon Middle School



Visit our website at www.imc.osceola.k12.fl.us/EETT

Tales from the Teachers in the Trenches, the Polk/Osceola FDEP podcast is now available. To subscribe, follow the directions in the podcast article on the front page or in our PO Box wiki. When you arrive at the site, click Weblog. Look on the list for the Florida Digital Educator Podcast!

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School District of Osceola County

