Grant for Technology

Brad DePoint and his fifth grade students at Lura M. Sharp Elementary have been busy trying to keep up with all of the new technology that there is to offer in the world today… and worldly they have become. Through a grant funded by Entergy and Project Smart, students have had the opportunity to do something that few students can say they have done… They visited Bangkok from the seat of their classroom. How? iPod touches. These fourth generation iPods, released in October by Apple Inc., have some amazing features that not only motivate the students to want to learn, but enrich the depth and understanding of their learning. Finding ways to make learning fun and engaging is always a goal of Mr. DePoint. Students have responded very well to this adaptation. Creating movies to recreate their take on the struggle for independence, having an app tell them where the most recent earthquakes have happened in the world, playing a math game that reviews multiplication, division, area, perimeter, and fractions, the opportunities are endless. They have applied this technology into every subject area already!

New York State standards are still being closely followed, but instead of the traditional approaches that have been used in the past, the horizons have opened a whole new level of creativity and thoughtfulness from a teacher and student perspective. The end product that is being observed of students who were often distracted or frustrated, are that they are now focused and on task. It’s truly amazing. Mr. DePoint reports that, “I think that I enjoy the iPod touches just as much as they do! It has not only enhanced the students’ true love of learning, but has done the same for my teaching.”

As part of the research associated with the grant, students were asked in the beginning of the year to write a poem about their feelings about math. All but three poems were very negative. Recently, they were asked to do the same task. The results were significantly more positive, seeing only six with negative feelings about mathematics, several of which mentioned the iPods in their poem. Here are a few quotes from their writing…, “Some people say that they hate math, but what they don’t know is they use math every day. Math is Life.”, “I feel like I have achieved something when I finish a difficult problem.”, “The iPods make learning math fun!”

Thanks to the technology department at Pulaski Academy and Central Schools this has been an outstanding undertaking. The staff has been more than supportive in finding new applications, researching ways to be more effective, and listening to suggestions or ideas we have. This project has been an amazing example of collaboration for everyone involved. A special thanks goes to Entergy’s Charitable Foundation as well for making this opportunity possible.