

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the observed and reported experiences of a social studies teacher and his eighth grade students when using laptop computers in a public school in an urban area. The author documents his summer training experiences preparing technology lesson plans and serving as an eighth grade technology mentor. The author examines the issues surrounding laptop storage, security and movement. The study suggests that laptop technology be employed as a teaching tool to enhance curriculum, not replace it. The 49 student participants were from four separate eighth grade classes of all abilities including English as Second Language Learners, gifted, and learning support students. All student participants in the study used a laptop computer to research information from the internet, create graphic organizers, produce presentation projects, and write various types of essays. The study suggests that most students of all ability levels enjoy using laptops, find them interesting, and are capable of using a variety of complex programs. The study examines the student's ongoing level of proficiency using laptop technology. The author plans on pursuing the development of student projects involving video and audio laptop technology. He questions how best to expand the use of technology to enhance student learning.