

Interactive Products Division Numonics Corporation **Case Studies**



Mobilepresenter BT Creates Greater Classroom Interactivity

By Susan Brooks Young

Grandview Middle School is located in Grandview, WA, not far from Yakima. This Title I school serves approximately 780 students in grades 6-8. Although the statewide Hispanic student population is just under 14%, Grandview's Hispanic population is 85%. About three-quarters of the students qualify for the free and reduced price lunch program. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding academic standards has increased over the last four years, but the school did not meet AYP in 2005-06. Despite the many challenges they face, the Grandview staff is proactive in seeking solutions. For example, the school's budget for technology expenditures is low, but the teachers have not let this stand in their way. Instead, they regularly pursue local, regional, and statewide grant opportunities to bring instructional technologies into their classrooms.

Jeff Miller joined the Grandview Middle School staff 31 years ago. Originally hired to teach band, Miller began teaching 7th grade math and science in 1994. A long-time champion of technology-supported instruction, Miller has been an active participant in a variety of initiatives from small grants offered through the Grandview School District to a Washington State Education Technology Competitive Grant, which provided teacher workstations in every classroom. Thanks to a Gates-funded Teacher Leadership program grant, Miller's classroom currently boasts seven student computers, a projector, and a printer along with the teaching station. While attending the Northwest Council for Computers in Education (NCCE) conference in February 2006, Miller was introduced to the Mobilepresenter BT Bluetooth tablet.

Manufactured by Numonics Corporation, the Mobilepresenter BT communicates with the computer through a wireless Bluetooth interface that plugs into a USB port. Because the device is cable free, teachers can navigate their computers from anywhere in the classroom. The lightweight cordless pen provides all necessary mouse functions and can be used to annotate over presentations, programs, documents, and web pages. Softkeys that are located across the top of the

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tablet allow instant access to Presentation Tools such as Annotation Pens, Spotlight, and Reveal. Using a data projector, images may be projected onto an interactive whiteboard, a screen, or even a wall. The accompanying software includes a clipart library with more than 2000 images developed for K-12.

Miller knew about interactive whiteboards, but his crowded classroom simply didn't have room for one additional piece of large equipment. "I'd love to have a rear projection whiteboard, but the space required makes it impractical. Also, I like to move around the room during class and don't want to be tethered to a teaching station. I immediately saw that the Mobilepresenter BT would allow me to capitalize on the capabilities of an interactive whiteboard *and* enable me to teach from anywhere in the classroom." Shortly after the NCCE conference, Miller purchased a Mobilepresenter BT.

Regular use of visuals and manipulatives helps students grasp complex math and science concepts. Miller uses the Mobilepresenter BT daily to project maps, graphs, diagrams, and other graphics he finds on the Internet or in supplemental textbook software. The Zoom feature enables him to enlarge images for easy viewing, and he uses the cordless pen to make and save explanatory annotations. Miller and his students work with web-based virtual manipulatives and lab simulations during class demonstrations and discussion. Utah State University's National Library of Virtual Manipulatives and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' Illuminations web sites are classroom favorites.

Preparing students to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning exam (WASL) is also an important part of the curriculum. The entire class is able to work through sample items and practice tests that Miller projects on the screen. "As I walk around the room, I can hand the Mobilepresenter BT to individual students and ask them to solve a problem or add a notation. This means they can make contributions to the lesson without having to leave their seats!"



Miller also uses the Mobilepresenter BT in workshops he offers for fellow educators. He reports that teachers are eager to use this wireless technology. "It takes them just 10-15 minutes to get the hang of using the hardware. Then, without fail, they begin brainstorming ways they could use it in their own classrooms to expand and enhance instruction."

Impact on teaching:

- Increased organization through use of electronic files.

- More effective use of visuals and manipulatives during lessons.
- Fewer disruptions due to ability to control projected images from anywhere in the classroom.

Impact on students:

- More time spent on-task.
- Increased interest in class activities.
- Opportunities to share problem-solving strategies verbally and visually.