

Squeak Workshop Experiences in Kyoto

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Abstract

This poster presentation introduces our first Squeak workshops offered in the context of the ALAN-K (Advanced Learning Network in Kyoto) project (Konomi and Karuno, 2003), which is part of a major effort to create new learning environments for elementary, junior high and high school students in Kyoto, Japan.

1 Overview of the Workshops

Our first Squeak workshops were offered at two elementary schools in Kyoto on the 21st and the 22nd of November in 2002. We cooperated with a cognitive scientist in the United States, expert Squeak developers and others to prepare for the workshops and invited them to Japan to conduct these very first workshops in Kyoto. We served as assistants during the workshops, interacting with individual students.

	11/21 Takakura	11/22 Gosho Minami	Total
5 th graders	0 (0%)	9 (47%)	9 (23%)
6 th graders	20 (100%)	10 (53%)	30 (77%)
Male	16 (80%)	11 (55%)	27 (67%)
Female	4 (20%)	9 (45%)	13 (33%)
Year using PC			
< 1	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	5 (13%)
1—2	4 (20%)	10 (50%)	14 (35%)
3—5	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	13 (32%)
> 5	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	8 (20%)
Frequency using PC			
Almost never	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	8 (20%)
Once a month	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	3 (8%)
Once a week	7 (35%)	6 (30%)	13 (32%)
A few times/week	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	7 (18%)
Daily	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	9 (22%)

Table 1. Statistical data of students at the first workshops

Participants of the workshops included 5th and 6th graders and teachers from the two local elementary schools (Gosho Minami and Takakura elementary schools). Table 1 shows statistical data of the student participants. Figure 1 shows students working on their Squeak projects at one of the Squeak workshops.

2 Feedback from Students

The student participants and the teacher participants answered our questionnaires after the workshops. The followings are some of the responses from students:



Figure 1. Students working on their Squeak projects

- It was great that I could paint pictures and move them around.
 - It was fun to think while using Squeak
 - Squeak projects made by foreign students were interesting
 - I would like to create something more difficult
- It seems that the students had good impressions about Squeak and Squeak workshops.

3 Feedback from School Teachers

In the questionnaires, the school teachers were asked how they might be able to use Squeak in their classes. The followings are some of the mixed responses from the teachers:

- It may be possible to make children interested and expand their imagination by moving/animating pictures made by the children and by creating stories.
- Use Squeak for presentations, experiments, record-keeping, etc.
- Use Squeak to summarize research
- Use Squeak to enrich students' creativity in art classes

- We would need to spend much time aiming at mastering Squeak before using Squeak as a means of teaching in classes.
- I am still not sure in what educational settings Squeak is usable.

The teachers were also asked what subjects Squeak would be good for. Figure 2 shows the result.

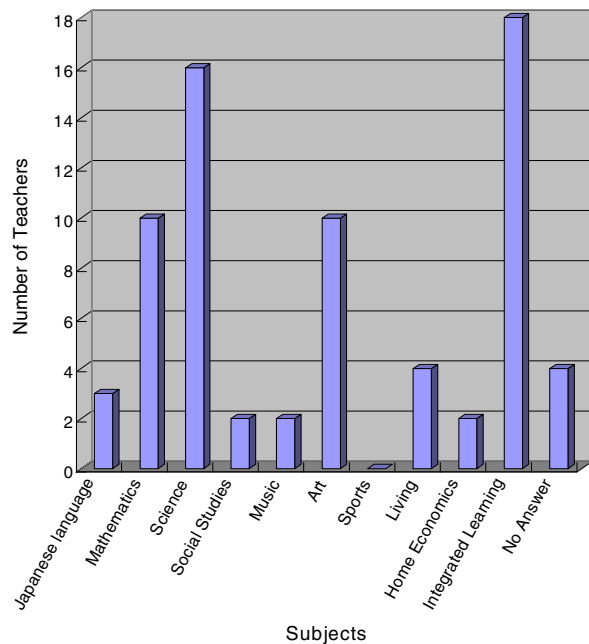


Figure 2. Teachers' opinions about the subjects that Squeak would be good for

4 Summary

The students' responses to our questionnaires were very positive. The teachers' responses were mostly positive but some seemed to have felt that they needed to know more about Squeak-based teaching/learning before introducing the technology into their classrooms. The responses from each school were different, which we think is also relevant to the fact that the teachers and the students were given only limited amount of time experiencing Squeak. We would see different responses as we offer further opportunities of Squeak-based teaching/learning.

References

[1] Konomi, S. and Karuno, H. (2003) Initial Experiences of ALAN-K: An Advanced LeArning Network in Kyoto. In: *Proceedings of the Conference on Creating, Connecting and Collaborating through Computing (C³)* (this volume).