

Comments from ALDI 2013 Presentation on ELM

Comments concerning ELM itself:

1. One table of people felt that the horizontal line in the “Counter” might not be clear enough that a 6 year old child would realize that it was dividing the 10 cells into 1 to 5 and 6 to 10. They initially suggested that we should have started with two horizontal blocks of 5 cells, one on top of the other, because this is what they use in class. I explained that this might be difficult to implement in terms of screen space, they were then accepting of the idea that we should thicken the horizontal dividing line to help emphasize it. We could also explain and focus more on it in the teacher materials for the initial activities that introduce the children to the “Counter”. Also, it could be beneficial to the students to become used to multiple representations of 10.
2. A number of people were concerned that the “ticks” were not bold enough and suggested thickening/brightening the ticks. There was also concern that many things happened too quickly, which I assured them we would be testing and adjusting, but it is important that eventually the amount of time such information (ticks, circles, braces/numbers, etc.) are displayed is placed under teacher control from the teacher manager page, so that the teacher could adjust it for students/groups of students who take longer to notice such things.
3. Three teachers complained about the fact that in ABRA, students would come back repeatedly to the same activity, one that they liked, and would not explore others. So they wanted to make sure that in ELM, students couldn't go back to do the same completed activity unless the teacher decided to let them. In other words, when an activity is achieved it should be blocked for students. The students should only have access to those activities once again if the teacher re-activates it for them. I have checked, and this is already how it will be.
4. They asked about the login, they wanted to make sure that the same info used for the LTK is used for ELM and we reassured them that the login will be the same.

Comments concerning Teacher Activity Template:

1. It was suggested that we have very explicit links to the QEP (and perhaps NCTM Standards, Common Core Curriculum) right at the top of the Teacher Activity Template. We will do this.
2. It was pointed out that there was not a clear explanation of what the pictures in the appendix were for so we need at least a sentence at the top of the appendix explaining how the pictures can be used.
3. It was strongly suggested that a main thing that we were missing was what was called “Interventions”. What was meant by this was that we need to: a) anticipate each kind of difficulty that a child may have (either with the software, or even more, with the ideas that the software is presenting); b) linked to each difficulty in a) above we need to explain to teachers “interventions” that they may use to help the student past the difficulty. The teacher who spoke for the group was basically suggesting that teachers know how to make lesson plans, warm-ups, etc., and integrate digital technology in their practice, but are weakest at predicting what will be a stumbling block for students, and even when confronted with a struggling student, may not understand what the problem is, nor how to overcome the problem. Fundamentally what this teacher was saying would seem to be the old idea that once one understands something, it can be difficult to understand why someone else does not understand. It takes a much deeper understanding to understand the difficulties inherent in a topic, and then to make a plan to diagnose and assist students who have problems. We must add this type of help because it is something that teachers truly need.

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If you attended the session and have additional comments please feel free to send them to me, either directly in the body of an e-mail or by adding them to this document and attaching your new version to an e-mail.

If you did not attend the session, but have now viewed the materials that we have posted and have comments, again please do send them to me.