SECONDARY SCHOOL UPDATE

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Since there are many areas of interest in technology for those of us in secondary education, the material for consideration in this issue's column is diverse. First, there is a report on a recent technology workshop I attended; second, a description of an inexpensive multimedia project for high school students; and, third, a summary description of some software that seems appropriate for those of you who would like to have your students become involved in portfolio assessment, the accumulation of samples of a student's production throughout a course or project as an alternate means of evaluation.

"ISSUES IN TECHNOLOGY AND EVALUATION", NORTH COOK COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

As more and more schools become involved with the use of technology for presentation and instruction, it is becoming apparent that the process is one which must be periodically reviewed. Many teachers have pioneered the use of technology in pockets within their individual districts with little overall guidance for the whole process. One of the critical issues which educators must keep in mind as they adopt technology is that the technology should support the curriculum, not drive the curriculum.

At a June workshop for administrators called "Issues in Technology and Evaluation", presented by Glenn Magle and Bob Marckese and sponsored by the North Cook County Educational Service Center, I heard this issue addressed. Even though the list below is intended to guide evaluation of a teacher using technology, the checklist also provides guidelines for the adoption of technology into the instructional process.

Evaluation of Teachers Using Technology

When using technology, the teacher has:
* identified the goals and objectives for the lesson(s),
* incorporated the use of pre and post activities,
* insured that the use of technology is better than other methods for teaching the concepts of the lesson,

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- involved the entire class if appropriate, and
- accounted for students' various learning modalities.

The teacher uses technology:

- to serve as problem-solving tools,
- to improve communication skills,
- to explore creative abilities,
- to demonstrate and model learning strategies,
- to simulate real world situations and access real data,
- to access, organize, and display data,
- to work across all subject areas utilizing current learning strategies, and
- to introduce or reinforce skills or concepts.

As Magle and Marckese point out, the introduction of technology needs to be part of a comprehensive plan which incorporates the principles of curricular scope and sequence with sound instructional practices. A paraphrase of one of the statements presented at the workshop is that technology will never make a poor teacher better; it will broaden the spectrum of a good teacher.

INEXPENSIVE MULTIMEDIA PROJECT FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

During this past school year one of the teachers in the Foreign Language Department at Glenbrook South developed a multimedia project that all of his students took part in to develop learning in both Spanish and the use of technology. The following is a report on the project by the project's originator.

Multimedia on a Shoestring

by Jerry Cronin
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Multimedia is the buzzword of the '90s. Simply stated, multimedia consists of the integration of text, graphics, animation, sound, and video. How can this concept be applied to the field of education? Multimedia can be an expensive proposition if you factor in software such as Macromind Director 3.1 at a cost of $900, a video digitizer to make still frames and QuickTime movies, a sound digitizer, and a computer with an abundance of RAM and a high-capacity hard drive.

One alternative to these expenses is to choose an inexpensive software program that can be used in any classroom from K – 12 through higher education; namely, Kid Pix and Kid Pix Companion, available in both Macintosh and DOS versions. Each program costs around $25. These programs, designed for children, can be used to promote foreign language acquisition through the multimedia components of text, sound, graphics, animation, and video.

The population exposed to this project was several classes of Spanish I and II students at Glenbrook South High School with an age grouping of 13 – 16. Prior to the experiment, pictures were taken from Scott Foresman's new CD-ROM product called "Encuentros a Lo Vivo". The company's first product was in Spanish, with a French equivalent expected for release this fall. The CD-ROM contains over 275 authentic pictures on a variety of themes taken in Spanish-speaking countries throughout the world. The pictures were transferred to a hard drive and compressed with Pict Compressor, available on the QuickTime Starter Kit. A Macintosh IIvx with a built-in

CD-ROM drive was used as the development machine. The program works best with System 7.1 and QuickTime 1.5. The compressed pictures were named according to the theme they represented such as food, school, soccer, fiestas, etc. Other pictures were taken from Canon Xapshot Still Video images which were then digitized using a Digital Vision's Computer Eyes RT frame grabber.

A folder with the pictures was then placed on the hard drives of the Macintosh LC computers located in the Language Lab and on the file server in the Writing Lab. Students were required to design a title screen using the Kid Pix program. This exercise taught them to use the paint tools which are used in typical graphics software. Once they had experimented with the graphics and text features, they then proceeded to the language features.

This process involved opening up the program called "Slide Show" that comes with Kid Pix Companion. The interface is intuitive; the metaphor is that of a light table for viewing slides. This light table allows for the inclusion of 99 slides. The assignment was to use about a dozen pictures. The students selected the pictures and easily manipulated them into the order desired. The students then went to the next feature which was sound. Students clicked on the "sound" button to record their own voice describing the pictures or telling a story. They could also re-record their voices after playback if they were not happy with their pronunciation. The next step was to select a transition from one slide to the next. The last step was to save their work to a high-density diskette as a "StandAlone Program", which means that the diskette could be put into any Mac color computer and played without the application.

Students were evaluated both on their creativity and pronunciation. They enjoyed the project and were actively engaged in a collaborative manner, assisting each other with the computer and the pronunciation. The end result was a multimedia project involving text, culturally authentic images, and speech, which are the components of a communicative foreign language curriculum.

Here is more information about the products mentioned in this article. The Kid Pix and Kid Pix Companion are produced by Brøderbund. At Scott Foresman contact Mark Sweetnam at (708) 729-3000. The Xapshot camera should be available at your local Canon dealer. Digital Vision's address and phone number are: 270 Bridge St., Dedham, MA 02026; (617) 329-5400. Ask for Vivian Russell.

SOFTWARE PROGRAM FOR PRESENTATION OR ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

While reading through some literature from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), I became aware of the fact that the association has opened a Curriculum/Technology Resource Center. The Center is developing a series of computer-based information products which are designed to be easy to use, inexpensive, and multi-purpose. The first product in the series is Electronic Chalkboard. EC is a multimedia tool which allows a teacher to create presentations and lessons, or to provide a vehicle for students' assessment portfolios. The chalkboard, or individual module, that is created can include text, graphics in PICT format, sound, QuickTime movies, barcodes for controlling laserdiscs, and hypermedia links to other modules.

EC requires the use of a Mac system of 7.0 or above. The program will run on the LC, Classic, or Mac II's with at least 2 megabytes of RAM. The software is shipped on

two floppy disks, but the user is encouraged to install the program on the hard drive. The use of the various resource tools depends on the equipment, such as CD-ROM drives and laserdisc players, that the user has available.

The program is straightforward in its approach. The chalkboard consists of a series of horizontal dialogue boxes—called resource tools—each of which is dedicated to text, sound, graphics, movies, barcodes, nested chalkboards, editing, or presentation. The author decides the order of the boxes and what should appear in each. It was fairly easy to construct a simple chalkboard including several different types of media. The barcode resource tool in particular was easy to use, both in the production and printing of a barcode. The documentation is clear and contains a step-by-step tutorial to familiarize the author with the tools. Students who are familiar with the Mac interface would easily be able to produce a portfolio for assessment. For example, various modules of EC could be used by the student to produce writing and speaking samples in the target language describing an authentic video segment.

EC is available from the Curriculum/ Technology Resource Center, ASCD, 1250 N.

Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 at a cost of $89. The Center plans to make sample chalkboards available for downloading from its conference within the Learning and Reference Department on America Online (AOL). Among the other services provided with the ASCD area on AOL is an area for mail messages for the EC support team who will answer with a quick turnaround. In fact, there is a lengthy description of EC and its capabilities in the ASCD section of AOL which someone interested in purchasing EC can check. You might well find the software worth checking if you are looking for a relatively uncomplicated presentation tool for curriculum materials development.

If you know of any products which readers of this column might benefit from knowing about, please send information to me at the address below. I would welcome either referrals or descriptions with byline for publication in this column.

Contributions/suggestions for the "Secondary Update" column may be sent directly to Sue Salay at Glenbrook South High School, 4000 W. Lake, Glenview, IL 60025, FAX (708) 729-0310 or email: gbsfl@class.org