



TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY USING MULTIMEDIA

Using Multimedia

Most of us grew up in a world where instruction was generally delivered by a lecture and a textbook. Perhaps a workbook based on behaviorist principles was used as well. When another medium was used it was generally strictly under the control of the instructor, such as a filmstrip or a video. Today, with multimedia technology we can make the classroom a far more interesting place.

With multimedia you can liven up your instruction with student-centered techniques that take full advantage of modern technology. Students can use tools such as digital cameras, scanners, video cameras, audio recorders and presentation tools such as PowerPoint to create portfolios, presentations and websites that can tools for collaboration and authentic assessment.

Digital Photos: Inexpensive digital cameras have a great deal of value as a tool for education. You can use them to document your classroom activities and events or use as an icebreaker for class introductions and the like. They can also be powerful tools to collect data in visual form. When you look at how visual information is used in so many diverse disciplines such as anthropology, journalism and engineering you can see how you can develop a means to introduce low-cost digital photography in your class as well. You'll find that digital cameras have many more applications than you've imagined once you start using them.

Scanners

Scanners allow you to take images or text and put them in digital form so you can manipulate, store and distribute them using a computer. You can scan in text using OCR software that will allow you to save it for use in a word processor and images can be saved for editing in graphics software.

A scanner allows you to use the power of digital technology to share physical artifacts such as images and text that currently are only available in a fixed form such as a book or print. You'll find this is particularly useful in sharing materials with students that might normally not be available to them. Students can use scanners themselves to include various sources in their presentations as well.

Digital Audio

Audio is one of the things that people tend not to think about when they first use

multimedia, but you should consider it as one of the best tools available to you. With simple audio recording equipment you can record a narration for a presentation that you can make available on-line. You can also introduce methodologies such as the oral history to your classes or creative uses such as student performances of poetry and the like. It can also be a useful tool for taking notes in the field and recording debates and interactions that take place in the lab or classroom. Audio can also be a great tool to introduce multiple perspectives and counter-narratives to a given course of investigation.

Digital Video

Digital video is a technology that allows you to shoot, edit and distribute audiovisual materials. While the digital camcorder is perhaps familiar to you it is not the end point of digital video, just the start. Editing digital video, a task more often than not done on a computer, allows you to take the raw materials that you've shot and gathered by other means and give them meaning through montage and add graphics, sounds and effects. Editing isn't just taking out the materials you don't want; it is also about combining and contrasting audiovisual materials to enhance their effectiveness and meaning.

One of the more exciting aspects of digital video is the flexibility in distribution. While shooting with a digital camcorder is very similar to shooting with an analog one digital video as a means for distribution allows for far more flexibility and broader use than earlier analog methods. Digital video can be put on a server to be distributed via the Internet, burned onto a CD or DVD, used as an element in PowerPoint and can even now be delivered to a cell phone. It can even be delivered live for remote monitoring, such as is the case with a web cam or a teleconference. Digital video can be an excellent tool for nearly every discipline.

Presentation Tools

Most of us are familiar with presentation tools such as PowerPoint, but we often aren't aware of the full capabilities of this particular tool as well as related tools that can also be quite effective.

PowerPoint can be extended to include image files, graphics, video and audio clips. It can also be made into a stand-alone application that can be distributed for people to use outside of a class or lecture. With Impatica you can put your PowerPoint presentations on the Internet and make them small enough to be shared easily with your students even if they are using a dial-up connection.

Presentation tools are particularly effective if you allow students to use them to build project presentations, portfolios and the like. One of the particularly powerful features of presentation tools is that they can serve as the "envelope" for other digital media