

The Annotated Field Trip: A Multimedia Project For The Primary Grades

Introduction

Teaching primary students how to create multimedia projects is a formidable but far from impossible task that proves challenging and stimulating to students and teachers. Some teachers introduce their students to the paint tools first. By focusing on one of the many skills necessary for multimedia, students are less likely to be overwhelmed. As students become ready and intrigued, teachers can assign projects that require additional skills. An alternative to starting with the paint tool skills is to use template stacks. Again, students focus on a limited number of skills and need not concern themselves with the entire process of multimedia stack creation. The Annotated Field Trip is an example of how templates can be used.

Project Plan

Objectives:

- Students will experience a field trip (or any similar event related to the curriculum).
- Students will be informally introduced to the concepts of cards, buttons, and text fields.
- Students will have a writing experience based in multimedia.
- Students will informally work on writing and discussion skills as they interact with their partners.
- Students will appreciate the potential of multimedia for other projects.

Materials:

- Multimedia authoring software (*HyperStudio*).
- Annotated field trip template stack created by the teacher.

Optional:

- Computer connected to a VCR and monitor.
- Device for recording students voice onto videotape.

Procedure:

- Photograph scenes during a class field trip-it is better if students take the pictures.
- Scan photographs (or have them developed on a photo CD).
- Template creation by the teacher (See sample card below).

Lesson

- Demonstrate opening the template stack.
- Browse through the template stack with the class.
- Explain the procedures for selecting pictures (delete unwanted cards) and annotating.

- Pairs of students move to a computer and work together on one stack.
- Share student-generated text to give others alternative ideas.
- Pairs present their completed stacks.
- Optional - Videotape students' stacks while recording them read-ing the text. These can be taken home and shared.

Results

This Annotated Field Trip, simple in design, proves complex in effect. It is an excellent and motivational starting point for second and third graders. The students feel highly successful in annotating their template stacks. Because the students experience the event, writing ideas seems to come easily and provoke highly animated discussions. The student pairs jointly construct their text after discussing ideas and taking turns at the keyboard. The student not typing helps compose or offers editing suggestions. Ideas, grammar, and spelling are revised as they work. Many pairs reread their work countless times, and have yet to tire of seeing themselves on the computer screen or videotape.

Other Ideas

This simple project stimulates new ideas. The third graders have moved on to creating stacks from scratch; the second graders are beginning to as well. One student's project seems to be an outgrowth of his experience with the Annotated Field Trip. He is working on a multimedia welcome center for the classroom that combines photographs and annotations of the school and classroom. Other teachers in the building are now working on similar projects, too. One first grade teacher is creating on a classroom "yearbook." Her class is annotating photographs from throughout the year. Another class has just begun a school history which will combine the fourth graders' research with old and new photographs.

Cautions & Advice

- Photo CDs take one to two weeks to develop. A digital camera would have been faster for development. .
- Fewer pictures are better. Many pairs of students' text became repetitive on later cards.
- These students used invented spelling easily. For those classrooms where students get bogged down with spelling, typing, etc., an alternative would be to construct the text as a whole class. This suggestion also works well for those with access to only one ma-chine.

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