

# **Designing Effective Instructional Resources for a Multimedia World**

by Ted McCain

## **The nature of education**

- Education is a communication business
- Professional imperative to keep up on developments in communication media and techniques

## **A new multimedia world**

- First we had desktop publishing
- Text & graphics
- New dynamic interactive media
- CD ROMs & Laserdisks
- Computer animations
- Full motion video
- Now web pages on the Internet

## **New possibilities**

- Adding zest to educational resources
- Show not tell
- Shift to discovery learning

## **New tasks for teachers**

- Evaluate new multimedia resources
- Want to create new materials
- Desktop publishing
- Dealing with type
- Selecting clipart
- Photography
- Page Layout

## **New tasks for teachers**

- Multimedia resources
- Desktop video
- Choose video files  
from CD or Internet

- Shoot & digitize  
your own video
- Screen design for presentations or web

## **A context for today**

- Not how to run a camera, operate a program, etc.
- A foundational set of skills for any medium
- How to think when you create any multi-media resource

## **Seven things you must keep in mind when creating any multimedia resource**

### **#1 They aren't like us**

- We were paper trained
- We have been to university
- But what about our clientele?
- Consider the impact of TV, VCRs, and computers on kids...
- More than ever before, our students are visual learners
- We aren't like us, either

### **Publishers responded**

- Consider the material at the checkout line
- Photos/graphics
- Color
- TV and video
- Now the Internet
- All flash and no substance

### **And teachers?**

- All substance and  
no flash

### **The problem is...**

- They get people to view material that has little real content
- We have trouble getting students to view material that can have a lasting, positive impact on their lives
- Why?

## The problem is...

- Teachers have generally not put a priority on the appearance of what they produce
- Teachers tend to embrace the Listerene approach to reading
- That's the way we were trained
- So what do we need to do?

## Our new goals

- Appearance is not a substitute for content
- Flash and substance
- Multi-media content guided by a basic understanding of graphic design
- Two major roles of design...

## Design & learning

- Graphic design stimulates the viewer's curiosity - visual titillation
- Graphic design provides visual organization of material to facilitate access to content

## Design & learning

- Used by teachers but also...
- Taught as part of the writing process
- Presentation is a critical part of the communication process
- Empowers our students

## #2 Scan Skim Scour

### How modern readers read

- How many of you sort your mail over the trash can?
- How can you make decision to discard material you haven't read?
- The material never made it past the first step of reading

### How modern readers read

- Scan
- Skim
- Scour

## #3 Dead center is just that

- We are sales people
- Promote ideas - sell concepts
- Then goal to hook kids on content
- Stimulate curiosity
- But you can give mixed messages
- We all want balance
- Centering is easy
- But totally predictable
- To generate visual interest - don't center
- Use the visual center of the page
- What ever the medium - use the golden mean
- Divide by 1.618
- Measure from the bottom
- Measure from the right
- Works in portrait or landscape

## #4 Decide, decide, decide

- Hard to do
- Visual organization demands a clear hierarchy of information
- Key is a single dominant item
- If you don't decide what is important
- Then the viewers will pick up your indecision
- Good design is a "no brainer"

## #5 The "eyes" have it

- In all media good designers are aware of directing viewers to the content they want seen
- Let's look at two of the most powerful
- Be careful of apparent motion
- What is the most powerful directional item you can put on a page, screen, etc.?
- Notice that graphic design has been used to manipulate the viewer

- Understanding this is a fundamental part of modern literacy
- Eyes always have great power to direct
- Beware of short-circuited designs...

## **#6 Variety is the spice of life**

- Minimum of 3 telescoping proportions
- Gives life
- Supports Scan, Skim, Scour

## **#7 Less is more**

**It's better to have someone get half of what you wanted to say...  
Than none of all it!**

## **It's a graphical world**

- The modern world has created an expectation of graphical presentation
- Either meet it or risk being shut out

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