

IN THE MIDDLE

MOUSE CLICKS



On Tuesday, March 11, fifteen Middle School students went to the Palisades Center to participate in *School Night at the Apple Store*. The boys and girls, representing all three grades, showcased work in projects from six departments that used some of our most used software applications: Adobe Photoshop and PageMaker, FileMaker Pro, iMovie, Keynote, AppleWorks, Inspiration, and PowerPoint.

The evening allowed parents, teachers, and other students to see what we get to see every day – the amazing work students are doing with computers and related technology at Scarsdale Middle School. We were struck by the fact that the folks at Apple were as awed by our students work as anyone at the store on the 11th.

Thanks to Matt Aks, Amanda Baranick, Shannon Berkeley, Amanda Blumstein, Davey Dietz, Jason Fiedler, Elizabeth Ingriselli, Sarah Myers, Kyle Morton, Ben Newman, Michaela Pavia, Brad Polsky, Dan Winston, Hannah Zornow, and Matt Zucker- man... their parents and their teachers.



One of the activities featured above has also been showcased on Apple's new *iLife. For the Classroom* page (www.apple.com/education/ilife/). The project, *Newspapers: A Link To Our Past*, the work of Aks, Ingriselli, Zuckerman and Zornow (with help from Holvig, Eric Bitterman, Andy Verboys and Emma Wixted), can be found with the Social Studies projects.



Recently, Steve Goodman asked us for help creating a *WebQuest* for his class's study of the Constitution, and Executive and Legislative branches of government. He encouraged us to develop a templated solution that would allow him – and, of course, others – to quickly create an online learning activity, needing to focus only on the activity's content...

QuestMaker is a FileMaker Pro database that a teacher uses to generate a list of questions for students, and identify any Internet resources that must (might?) be accessed as a part of the activity. *QuestTaker* is a companion database that provides links to teacher-chosen Internet sites and an environment for responding to teacher-designed questions. Stop by and take a look.



be able to access the site from within our District network by clicking on a link off the Middle School's home page. (For now, type 172.16.37.22 as the URL.) While these pages will not be available from outside our network, an internal site allows us to feature content that might not be appropriate for a wider Internet audience (students' pictures and work, school issues, etc.).

The site has been designed to provide the SMS community with access to a wide variety of instructional technology resources available both from the Computer Center and on the Internet.



as well as a resource to help teachers select software for a project.

The Intranet can also be a resource for teachers designing activities by highlighting what we refer to on the site as Lighthouse Projects through links to our *ActivityLog*, the Computer Center's standards-based catalog of exemplary work, as well as gallery of selected activities from the database. We also link to the FileMaker Calendar that Vicky Beardsley uses to schedule classes into the Computer Center.

There are times when keeping up with changes in educational technology seems to take on mythic dimensions. We have included a resource on our Intranet to help you keep track of this ever-changing world. Modelled on a terminal arrival and departures board, this page is a quick place to go to find out what's hot (and what's not).

The site was created primarily using Macromedia products Flash and Dreamweaver (with a generous helping of Adobe Photoshop thrown in).

Marching to the Beat of...

Virtual Drummer is the basis of an exciting music composition activity developed by Connie Shelengian for her Exploring Music students. The seventh graders have, in fact, prepared for this activity by studying and composing African-inspired drum ensembles in the classroom. Connie explains that the software allows students to create and share original pieces through which students continue their exploration of rhythm, the layering of patterns and complimentary sound, and the use of rests to create space.

Drumming activities have their roots in Connie's using an earlier version of the software with fifth graders and her experiences in Jerry Crisci and Ken Holvig's STI class *Do You Hear What I Hear: Making Digital Music* (taught again this past weekend). Ken also introduced Connie's students to Mixman Studio Pro, the mixing software which they will use as a part of their study of popular musical genres. The students will prepare for their next activity through the analysis in cooperative learning groups of the characteristics of rap, hip hop, jazz and blues styles.

Intranet Rollout Site Seen As Professional Development Resource

We have rolled out a new Middle School Computer Center Intranet Site within the next week or so. The site expands and redesigns an Intranet first created by Ken Holvig in 1997. Teachers and students will soon

Our *Information Page* links to past issues of *In the Middle* as well as external Internet sites organized by Software Application, Professional Development, Assessment, Internet Applications, Policy and Issues, Subject Links, and Portals and Directories.

The Site allows teachers to easily find *professional development resources* at the Scarsdale Teachers Institute, our own Early Bird Technology Workshops, and on the Internet. We also provide information on solutions developed by the Computer Center (Student Progress Reports, Report Card Enclosures),

Professional Development

You can find information about the following STI technology courses, as well as other programs, at the Institute's web site. Online registration is available.

Scarsdale Teachers Institute
<http://www.scarsdaleschools.org/sti>

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| 3/28 | <i>Adobe Illustrator and CAM</i>
Steve Rambone
STI #2752 |
| 4/1 | <i>OS X Swap and Share</i>
Early Bird Tech. Workshop
7:15 a.m. |
| 4/1 | <i>Research in Educational Tech: FileMaker Pro</i>
Doug Rose
STI #2771 |
| 4/4 | <i>Tools 2003</i>
Ken Holvig, Andy Verboys
STI #2760 |
| 4/4 | <i>Digital Design Studio</i>
Linda Fisher, Doug Rose
STI #2777 |
| 4/10 | <i>Using Technology as a Teaching Tool</i>
Jerry Crisci
STI #2750 |
| 4/29 | <i>Keynote: PowerPoint's Newest Rival</i>
Early Bird Tech. Workshop
7:15 a.m. |
| 4/29 | <i>Using the Internet as an Instructional Tool</i>
Mona Huff
STI #2764 |
| 5/2 | <i>Computers and the Secondary Language Arts Curriculum</i>
Janie Fitzgerald, Doug Rose
STI #2774 |
| 5/13 | <i>eZedia QTI: QuickTime Interactivity Before Breakfast</i>
Early Bird Tech. Workshop
7:15 a.m. |

Summer Preview

FileMaker Pro 7/8-9, 7/22-23
Introductory and Advanced Database Development Classes

TLC 7/14-15
Teacher, Library, Computer Collaboration

Assessment 7/16-17
Project and Program Assessment

iWeek 8/11-14
Curriculum applications of iPhoto, iTunes, iMovie and iDVD



Our Computer Center Catalog Gets a Makeover

In our last issue we wrote, *At the heart of Grant Wiggins' Understanding by Design work is his recommendation that teachers contribute to a peer-reviewed database of exemplary units of instruction. We believe that the Middle School's Computer Center Catalog has the potential to be just such a*

tool. Those who have supported the project through their thoughtful contributions of activity goals, summaries, and standards understand how the database can reinforce reflective planning of technology-based work. Colleagues have spoken about how the Catalog can be a source of ideas that help with designing activities; and here in the Computer Center, we have found the database to be invaluable as part of our assessment of the Middle School's instructional technology program.

The benefit we realize from this important project grows along with the number of teachers who participate through their response to our survey. Obviously, we want to be sure that the instrument and process we are using to collect data is one that encourages the participation we are looking for. To this end, the project is evolving in the following ways.

To begin with, the forms we send to teachers will be a little *leaner*. We will continue to seek information about goals and a summary of each activity, but we have consolidated all information about standards on a single page. More importantly, in an effort to cut through some of the thick standards-based language to reach more directly the important understandings about the core goals that underlie the exemplary work teachers are designing, we will no longer ask teachers to identify the applicable middle-level performance indicators. In addition to checking off subject-area standards and departmental goals, teachers will be asked to identify the applicable Foundation Standards:

- Basic Operations and Concepts
- Social, Ethical, and Human Issues
- Technology Productivity Tools
- Technology Communications Tools
- Technology Research Tools
- Technology Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Tools

The second change to our procedure involves timing. We will give teachers the new packet when they begin their work in the Computer Center. We believe this simplified survey can be completed in most cases while teachers are actually in the Center, greatly increasing the response rate and, therefore, quantity of data in our Catalog. This will, in turn, ultimately provide all of us with a more comprehensive resource on instructional technology.

BiblioBytes

The library continues to provide quality Project Links for research projects... that's the first step. The hard part remains teaching students how to locate the same kind of quality resources and to help them differentiate between worthwhile sites and those which are of little value... or worse. Let's work on this together in the library.

While Google is the Internet's most widely used search engine – with good reason, we can show you and your students how to get



more from Google. We can also show you and your students alternatives to Google. *Really!* Come in and take a look.

And how about the research questions which we believe are best explored without first opening a search engine? The Library Web Site allows students to access a number of reference sources and subscription databases that are searchable and filled with outstanding information. We can show your students why they need to know about ABC CLIO, EBSCO, INFOTRAC, Grolier Online, the AP Photo Archive, and (in this Speech Contest season) the World's Best Poetry.

For example, the article on Iraq in the Encyclopedia Americana (available in school through the Library's link to Grolier Online) not only provides students with information that is as comprehensive as that which is found on many web sites, it includes a bibliography and external links to the Web sites of over two dozen highly regarded institutions, organizations and agencies. Schedule library time now!