

Flashes

The Official Newsletter of Inspiration Software®, Inc.

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Inspiration
SOFTWARE, INC.
The Leader in
Visual Thinking and Learning™

Come see Inspiration and Kidspiration in action! We're on the road this fall at conferences across the nation. See page 2 for a complete list of conferences.

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Students present projects on Kidspiration™

What's the connection between beavers, lizards, and pine trees? Kidspiration, of course! At least for kids at Copenhagen Central School in Copenhagen, New York. Last spring, elementary students attended their school's annual Plant & Animal Expo where they had the chance to show off their latest Kidspiration projects.

A K-12 school located about 30 miles from the Canadian border, Copenhagen Central has made Kidspiration a key component of their K-3 curriculum. Technology Integration Specialist Margaret Nevills has been busy working with teachers to create a portfolio of lesson plans ranging from fun matching activities for the kindergarten and first grade classes to story maps for the second and third grade.

To prepare for the Expo, students created projects about specific plants and animals from their assigned state. After researching, they each built a graphical organizer detailing the facts they discovered. As they worked, their teacher helped the youngest students scan in the pictures and maps they found that gave more detail on its selected plants and animals. Using Kidspiration's import graphic feature, the students then saved the scanned pictures into their diagrams.

During the lessons with Kidspiration, the computer lab remained almost silent, except for the students' mouse clicks. The students used headphones to hear Kidspiration's Listen tool read the words on their screens. According to Ms. Nevills, "Kidspiration's use of audio allows the



First graders Haley Moser (right) and Harley Montalvo listen to recorded instructions that help them complete an activity in Kidspiration.



Margaret Nevills (shown here assisting first grader Zachary Graham) says her students love working with Kidspiration.

students to understand what they have written. They can use it to check their phonetics and then fine tune a word, so that it says what they want it to say."

Eager to share their

newfound knowledge, the kids then put one of Kidspiration's unique audio features — the Record command — to work. With the click of a button, the students recorded information about each of their symbols to describe the facts they learned. This information was then attached to the symbols so the students could share their work with teachers and parents.

With all the preparation, the classes had been doing to learn Kidspiration, the students were eager to use it for the school's upcoming Plant & Animal Expo. A community event, the Expo drew the local news media, parents, and other visitors to the school to see the students' projects. The school also worked with a local zoo and conservation center to have live animals and plants brought in for the event.

When the big day arrived the school's gymnasium was transformed into a high-tech wireless lab. To show off their work to the local media and other community visitors, students had wireless laptops set up at their stations with their Kidspiration graphical organizers on display. As Expo visitors stopped by, the students demonstrated their projects, showing visitors how to click on the symbols to hear the facts the student recorded.

According to Ms. Nevills, the students' Kidspiration projects were the hit of the show! "The Expo was a great chance to show off Kidspiration and our new wireless lab to the

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Inspiration® scores with students

Students achieve higher test results after learning to organize and take notes with Inspiration

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Questions? Comments? Story ideas?

Email us at:
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Fall conferences

OCTOBER

- Miami-Dade Instructional Technology Conference
- South Carolina Educational Technology Conference
- Closing the Gap
- Tennessee Education Technology Conference

NOVEMBER

- NSBA Technology + Learning
- Massachusetts Computer Using Educators
- Minnesota Technology and Education Informational Services
- New York Association for Computers and Technology in Education
- North Carolina Educational Technology Conference

DECEMBER

- Virginia Technology Leadership Conference

Visit our website at
www.inspiration.com for
more details.

Students at Skyview High School in Billings, Montana used to feel overwhelmed in their science classes. They took notes and studied for tests, but struggled with the difficult process of organizing the information. Many of the students couldn't determine what information was important, so they took notes on everything. Later, when they went back to review their notes, all the insignificant facts they had written made studying time consuming and often ineffective.

Organizing a research study

Tom Stahley, a science teacher at Skyview and a 2001 Inspired Teacher Scholarship winner, was concerned about the problems the students in his science classes were experiencing. He wanted to find a way to help them improve their skills in note taking and organization. An adventurous user of Inspiration, he thought the students would benefit from learning visual techniques of studying and organizing for tests. Together with teachers from two other city high schools, Mr. Stahley organized a state-funded research project with ninth and tenth grade students to determine if using graphical organizers, such as those created in Inspiration, as study tools could be the key to helping students organize their notes in a logical, effective way.

For the first part of the research project, the students studied a challenging passage of text. Mr. Stahley evaluated their notes and found that only 18 percent of the students were able to organize their work effectively. The students then took a quiz on the material from the text. The students' test scores reflected their weak study skills and lack of organization. It was time to bring in the remedy — graphical organizing with Inspiration!

Students were taught how to use Inspiration to record important information and prepare for tests. They used the computer to practice constructing concept maps and mind maps, illustrating their key points in Inspiration with colors and symbols.

The students also learned important steps to keep in mind when collecting and organizing information. (See inset "How to use Inspiration to collect and organize information.") By following these basic guidelines when working in Inspiration, the students could determine what information was essential and what was not as significant. "Many students enjoyed the visual organization strategies," commented Mr. Stahley.

"They took time to seek out pertinent information and paid more attention to how they were organizing content."

Inspiration to the test

After spending several weeks learning about Inspiration and graphical organizers, the students were ready to be tested on the skills they were practicing. They read a second science passage and used the new organization techniques they had learned to take notes in Inspiration. Then they took a test over the material. Mr. Stahley found that an astounding 81 percent of the students organized information effectively after learning to use Inspiration to create graphical organizers, and 36 percent of the students showed improvement on their test scores!

Following the study, many of the students were so excited about Inspiration they began using it in their other classes to help them organize. Some of the students shared with their other teachers how much Inspiration had helped them. Because of the students' and teachers' enthusiasm, Inspiration training is now being offered throughout the district. According to the teachers involved in the study, "We want to get the word out about the powerful effect Inspiration has on the motivation and learning of students!"★

How to use Inspiration to collect and organize information

by Tom Stahley

1. List topics and subtopics
2. Arrange topics logically
3. Use key words
4. Support subtopics with details
5. Eliminate non-key words
6. Use graphics for support
7. Make it usable



Inspiration Software, Inc. awards inspired educators

Inspiration Software is proud to announce this year's winners of the Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning! Out of more than 200 entries received, we chose 20 educators who champion visual learning and the integration of technology in the classroom. Each educator was awarded a \$500 scholarship to help cover the costs associated with attendance at a workshop, graduate level course, or conference that focuses on visual learning and technology in education.

After careful consideration, the inspired educators listed below were selected to receive an Inspired Teacher Scholarship for Visual Learning.

- ★ **Laura L. Bentler**
pre K-5 technology teacher, Avondale East Elementary, Topeka, Kans.
- ★ **Gayle Berthiaume**
kindergarten teacher, Becker Elementary School, Becker, Minn.
- ★ **Sigrid Kim Bomba**
reading resource specialist, Bethel High School, Hampton, Va.
- ★ **Betty K. Brackin**
K-12 media specialist, Leroy High School, Leroy, Ala.
- ★ **Vicki L. Coats**
kindergarten teacher, Lake Orienta Elementary, Altamonte, Fla.
- ★ **Jill D. Esquivel**
fifth-grade teacher, Jesse Owens Elementary, Gueydan, La.
- ★ **Tammie Guidry**
fifth-grade teacher, Iota Elementary, Iota, La.
- ★ **Peggy Harrington**
K-6 testing coordinator, Francis Scott Key Elementary School, District Heights, Md.
- ★ **Julie Ladzinski**
fifth-grade teacher, Falconer Elementary, Chicago, Ill.
- ★ **Elizabeth Langer**
campus instructional technologist, Galm Elementary, San Antonio, Tex.
- ★ **Donna LeBretton**
instructional technology specialist, Plymouth School District, Plymouth, Mass.
- ★ **Gail A. Lindquist**
first and second-grade teacher, Westside Elementary School, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- ★ **Joyce Meador**
English teacher, Westwood High School, Memphis, Tenn.
- ★ **Joann Newberry**
K-8 technology resource teacher, Second Street School, Frankfort, Ky.
- ★ **Deedy Payne**
sixth-grade teacher, Mountainside Middle School, Scottsdale, Ariz.
- ★ **Lea Seigny**
seventh-grade social studies and eighth-grade language arts teacher, Forest Hills Central Middle School, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- ★ **Tom Stahley**
science teacher, Skyview High School, Billings, Mont. (see story "Inspiration scores with students" on page 2)
- ★ **Jan Swisher**
English teacher, Franklin-Simpson High School, Franklin, Ky.
- ★ **Donna Taylor**
second through sixth-grade gifted coordinator, Manteno Elementary School, Manteno, Ill.
- ★ **Lee Ann Wall**
sixth through eighth-grade language arts teacher, Egan Elementary, Egan, La. ★

For more information on the 2001 scholarship winners check out our website at www.inspiration.com and follow the links to the Inspired Teacher Scholarships.

Announcing Inspiration Software's fourth annual Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning

Calling all inspired teachers!

Are you a passionate advocate of visual learning in your classroom, school, or district? At Inspiration Software, we're proud to support educators who recognize the importance of helping students develop critical thinking and learning skills and make an effort to integrate visual learning and technology into their curricula.

Inspiration Software's fourth annual Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual

Learning are designed to encourage educators in their on-going professional development. In March 2002, Inspiration Software will grant 20 scholarships in the amount of \$500 each to educators who champion visual learning and the meaningful use of technology in the classroom. The scholarships are to be applied towards the cost of a conference, graduate course, or training event where visual learning is highlighted.

Feeling inspired?

Visit the Inspiration Software website at www.inspiration.com and follow the links to the Inspired Teacher Scholarships. You can apply online, preview last year's winners, and learn more about visual learning in the classroom.

Scholarship applications are due on or before March 1, 2002. Award recipients will be notified by March 29, 2002. ★

Tips & Tricks:

Using the SuperGrouper™ tool

Kidspiration provides an easy and fun way to teach students basic categorizing and organizing skills – the SuperGrouper tool. Unique to Kidspiration, the SuperGrouper tool has an interactive “drag and drop” function that lets you create a category or container for related ideas.



USE THE SUPERGROUPER TOOL:

1. In the Kidspiration starter screen under Activities, click on “More.”
2. Select the “Inside Out” activity and click OK. In this project, students decide whether actions are best done inside, outside, or if both are OK.
3. Drag and drop the symbols into the appropriate SuperGrouper category. Notice that the SuperGrouper shape highlights in green when you drag a symbol over it. This is how you know where to drop the symbol so that it is inside the category.

CREATE A SUPERGROUPER CATEGORY:

1. Click on the screen where you want the SuperGrouper shape to appear.
2. From the toolbar, select the SuperGrouper button and click on the desired shape.
3. Now you’re ready to drag and drop symbols into the SuperGrouper category.

MODIFY THE SUPERGROUPER SHAPE TO FIT YOUR LESSON PLANS:

1. Add a title by clicking and typing within the dotted rectangle at the top of the shape.
2. Resize by dragging any of the corner handles, choosing the lower right corner to maintain the original proportions of the shape.
3. Change the colors of the SuperGrouper shape. Select the shape and use the multicolor tool on the formatting toolbar to change each individual color. ★



Inspiration Software, Inc. offers district-wide cumulative pricing for Kidspiration. Volume licenses include Teacher Take Home Privileges, which allow teachers to take home a copy of Kidspiration for use in lesson planning and training. All Kidspiration volume licenses of 20 or more also include a complimentary copy of the *Kidspiration Activity Book* and the Exploring Kidspiration Training CD.

To learn more about Kidspiration volume licenses, call our volume licensing department at 800.877.4292 or contact your favorite education dealer. For a list of Inspiration Software Certified Dealers in your area, visit our website at www.inspiration.com. ★

Kidspiration, cont.

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public. The students really enjoyed using Kidspiration’s audio and graphic features to demonstrate their projects to all the visitors.”

Copenhagen Central School plans to incorporate Kidspiration into more lessons and learning activities like the Plant & Animal Expo for its K-3 students. After lizards and pine trees, whatever Copenhagen Central School pairs up with Kidspiration next is bound to be a hit with the students, and a great learning experience! ★