

# F L A S H E S

## of Inspiration®

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### *Inspiration* fever heats up NHEEEP expo

Students coming in early to work on projects? Entering and winning competitions, and training other students to use software? No, it isn't a scene from a science fiction movie, just a normal day at Queensbury Union Free School District in Queensbury, New York.

*Inspiration*® fever is spreading fast here, fueled by the enthusiasm of Kyle Gannon's sixth grade language arts class. The students recently competed in the Student Technology Expo 2000 supported by Columbia University's North Hudson Electronic Education Empowerment Project (NHEEEP) where they won top honors for their age group by presenting story webs created with *Inspiration*.

Before this year, Mr. Gannon did semantic mapping with his students on a dry erase board. But the process was often cumbersome and frustrating. Students each had to read the same



*Kyle Gannon credits the support and backing of his educational technologist, Douglas Silvernell, and his principal Arthur Gottlieb (pictured here discussing an Inspiration story web with a student) as major factors in his students' success.*

book and it was difficult to keep their attention. Even so, Mr. Gannon felt that mapping was necessary. "Writing is so important. You have to become a dominant writer to become a dominant student, but every teacher hears 'I don't know what to write' all the time. Mapping helps students get their ideas out so they can begin the writing process."

Today, mapping and writing is easier for Mr. Gannon's students. Now they are free to each pick their own books and then do their own maps using *Inspiration*. "This allows students to have some choice in what they are doing. It really helps them feel like the project is their own," says Mr. Gannon. "As they read their books, they are thinking about their maps. Oftentimes, they can tell me which symbols will be used for each topic before they sit down at a computer!"

After finishing their reading, the students set off to the computer lab. Here they begin to web out their stories using *Inspiration*. According to their teacher, "they like to type so getting them to put their ideas down is easy. And they love to use RapidFire™ ... it's a chance to see how much they can get out as quickly as possible."

For most students, the first step in developing their maps is to search the

Internet to find a photo of the book cover. After dragging and dropping this image into their diagram, it becomes their new main idea. Before using the Internet though, students discuss plagiarism. "We have to be very careful about plagiarism. Students don't even think about it until we talk about it.



*Kyle Gannon's sixth grade students voluntarily (and excitedly) came in each morning to learn more about Inspiration.*

But I tell them that they must try to get permission for everything they bring into *Inspiration* from the Internet."

Then it's time to flesh out their work with research. Mr. Gannon

sends his students on an Internet search to find out more about the story and its author. For each site they discover, the students place a hyperlink into their diagrams. "They love to hyperlink to web pages. To click on a link and actually have it open a page with information that pertains to their topic is great." After they have enough information on their books, students turn their diagrams into outlines and export them to a word processing program to begin their writing.

To compete in the NHEEEP expo, several of Mr. Gannon's students took

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## Personalized concept maps improve learning!

Concept maps help students organize ideas and enhance and encourage understanding. To further improve memory and retention, students can customize their concept maps by:

- **Using symbols and images**

You've heard it before ... a single picture is worth a thousand words. Images really do help people remember information. *Inspiration 6* ships with over 1,250 symbols, and if none of these convey just the right meaning, you can easily import symbols from the Internet or other programs.

- **Utilizing color**

Differing colors help organize concept maps by separating ideas. Color also assists with recall. Students can change the line and fill colors of symbols to group ideas, and they can change the colors of any multicolor symbol in the symbol libraries. This gives students the power to personalize their diagrams and make ideas their own.

- **Explaining ideas with single words or simple phrases**

Finally, strong words and phrases convey the same meaning as long sentences. Explain to students that excess words simply clutter a concept map. As they work to develop their maps, students will make connections as they search out the perfect words to describe their ideas.

## Where can I find those chattering teeth?

As you probably already know, *Inspiration 6* ships with over 1,300 symbols. That's a lot of images to remember! If you're having problems locating specific symbols, we've got a solution. We've recently developed a PDF Symbol Guide. This printable reference is indexed and in full color. It's available to everyone on our web site at [www.inspiration.com/new\\_in\\_six.html](http://www.inspiration.com/new_in_six.html). And, once you've located the symbols you use frequently, you can create a new, custom symbol library so they'll be right at your fingertips for your next diagram! Visit the Tips & Tricks section below to find out how.



## Tips & Tricks: Creating a new symbol library

You can create your own symbol libraries for graphics you import or create using the draw tools. You can also copy the symbols you use frequently into a custom symbol library.

### Creating a custom symbol library

1. On the Utility menu, choose New Symbol Library. The Add New Library dialog box appears.
2. On the Category drop-down menu, choose the category you want the new library to appear under.

Note... You can place a symbol library under any category on the symbol palette. If you do not choose a category, *Inspiration* places a new symbol library under the Custom category.

3. Enter the name for the new library.
4. Click OK to create the library.

### Installing a graphic into a symbol library

1. Select the graphic on the diagram that you want to install.
2. On the Symbol palette, display the library to which you want to add the graphic.
3. On the Utility menu, choose Install User Symbol.

The Symbol Size dialog box appears.

4. Select Standard Symbol Size or Actual Size, and then click OK.

Choose Standard Symbol Size to size the symbol equivalent to the other *Inspiration* symbols or click Actual Size to retain the original size of the graphic.

Note... *Inspiration* installs new graphics into the User 1 library under the Custom category. When no slots are available in User 1, *Inspiration* creates a new User 2 library and so on.

When your symbol is installed, it appears at the bottom of the Symbol palette entries. It's now ready for your use!

## FLASHES STAFF

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# Inspiration Software, Inc. supports educators

## Inspired Teacher Scholarships for Visual Learning awarded

Inspiration Software, Inc. is excited to announce 10 winners of the Inspired Teacher Scholarship for Visual Learning. The \$500 awards support on-going professional development in visual learning and educational technology by teachers.

After much consideration, the following champions of visual learning and educational technology have been selected:

\*Rhea Diamantis and Dorothy Sheldon are both educators at Audubon Park Elementary School in Orlando, Florida. Together they plan to attend the National Association of Gifted Children convention held in Atlanta in November. They hope to integrate the ideas gathered at the conference into their School Improvement Plan and into their continued work in meeting the Orange County Public School benchmarks.

\*Gail Doherty plans to attend the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC) in Atlanta to participate in two workshops on visual learning and the use of *Inspiration* in the classroom. As technology coordinator for

Salem (Massachusetts) High School, Doherty continually seeks to empower teachers in the use of technology in the everyday teaching and learning in their classrooms.

\*Janet A. Erickson wrote a capstone project professional paper entitled "The Use of Concept Mapping in Assessment of Student Learning in the Middle School Classroom" as part of her master's program at Montana State University. Erickson, a seventh grade teacher in Helena, Montana, plans to attend the Northwest Council for Computer Education conference held in Portland, Oregon.

\*Tamar M. Fox is a library media specialist with the Plymouth Canton Community School District in Michigan. Fox finds that students tend to be more engaged with learning when visual resources and technology are used. She plans to attend the SchoolTech Exposition and Conference 2000 in New York City.

\*Andrew HaLevi, a high school English teacher in Charleston, South Carolina, has developed a model vocabulary program in which semantic

mapping and other visual learning techniques are used to help students understand the concepts underlying complicated SAT vocabulary words. HaLevi will attend NECC in June.

\*Christine Monroe, a deaf and hard of hearing teacher for grades six through eight,

plans to attend two educational conferences: "Weekend with the Experts" through the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) organization and the FEHI, the Florida Education of the Hearing Impaired Conference.

\*Mary M. Sippel works to integrate visual learning techniques into her third grade classroom at Newfane Elementary in Newfane, New York. She plans to attend the SchoolTech Expo in New York City.

\*Kathie Stewart teaches instructional technology for grades five through eight at White Brook Elementary School in Easthampton, Massachusetts. A longtime champion of visual learning in the classroom, Stewart is also involved in a mentoring program with Smith College students through the Hampshire Educational Collaborative. She plans to attend NECC in June.

\*Gail Treanor is an elementary instructional technology specialist for Arlington (Massachusetts) Public Schools. She plans to attend the SchoolTech Expo in New York City. Treanor will also prepare a professional development workshop for teachers on integrating visual learning tools into a project-based learning curriculum.

\*Lori Whitman, technology staff developer in the Bronx's Community School District 11, plans to use her award to attend NECC. In her work with over 250 teachers in eight schools, Whitman is always seeking out new and innovative ways to help teachers integrate visual learning.

We look forward to hearing more about how these educators continue to champion visual learning and the use of technology in education. Stay tuned to [www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com) for updates and information about future scholarship opportunities.

### Third party materials give you more ways to use Inspiration

Are you looking for more great ways to use *Inspiration* in your classroom? Or do you need help training your teachers how to use *Inspiration*?

Today, many companies are recognizing the impact of *Inspiration* and visual learning in schools, and several have recently developed materials to support and enhance the use of *Inspiration* and visual learning in the classroom. To tell you more about these great resources, we've added a Third Party Products page to our web site. Please visit [www.inspiration.com/third\\_party.html](http://www.inspiration.com/third_party.html) to learn more. We will be updating this page whenever a new product is introduced, so check back often.

## Fever continued

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their writing projects a step further. Mr. Gannon opened the computer lab before school for several days and students voluntarily (and excitedly) came in each morning to work on their diagrams. They learned how to change the colors of symbols, make different types of links and personalize their outlines by changing topic fonts and colors. They also expanded their web research and added hyperlinks to online author chats.

As his students' knowledge grew, so did their confidence. "Anytime there was a computer free, students were begging to use *Inspiration*. Many of them have now advanced beyond my capabilities with the program," says Mr. Gannon.

Finally, it was show time for the tech expo crew. Mr. Gannon loaded up the laptops, a monitor and seven of his most inspired students and off they went. As the students began showing their projects to a group of judges, the 'oohs' and 'aahs' they heard when they changed a diagram into an outline fueled their excitement.

Many of the other school districts at the expo were not familiar with *Inspiration*, but thanks to Mr. Gannon's students everyone knew about the program by the time the day was over. Throughout the show, his students displayed diagrams on *Harry Potter*, *Julie of the Wolves* and *Treasure Island* to teachers and students from about 30 other NHEEEP schools. Enthusiasm generated by the presentation caught the attention of a local television crew at the show, and the students got to present their projects on TV!

When the day ended, the group was awarded top honors for their age division and received a digital camera for their prize. According to their teacher, the students immediately saw an inspiring use for this new toy. "Now they can't wait to take pictures to include in their diagrams!"

## Where to look for more *Inspiration*...



We've found a great site for inspired educators. The California Technology Assistance Project Region 10 has posted a terrific lesson plan on teaching *Inspiration*. Called "*Inspiration in the Classroom*," it includes examples, explores classroom applications and touts the benefits of visual learning and graphic organizers. The site also contains a list of resources available on the web. To learn more, visit <http://rims.k12.ca.us/ctap/resources/inspiration/>.

## Value Upgrade Program

**Are you adding 100 licenses or more?**

If you're purchasing 100 or more additional licenses, *Inspiration* Software will upgrade all your existing licenses to Version 6 at no charge! To learn more about the *Inspiration* Value Upgrade Program, contact your favorite *Inspiration* reseller or call us toll free at 800-877-4292.

FORWARDING SERVICES REQUESTED

[www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com)

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