Interactive PowerPoint Lesson

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INTRODUCTION

The foundation for much of the technology being used in today's classroom is the Microsoft Office suite. It is fast becoming the integrated software package of choice for many schools and school districts. Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access are the staples for many students and teachers. Complimenting these capabilities, Internet Explorer and Netscape Communicator are the tools of choice for accessing the World Wide Web. Why not help teachers utilize these same tools to develop text, visual, and Web-based materials for the classroom, and leave the more complex and costly packages to multimedia designers and commercial artists? The success of this philosophy has been borne out by a blistering growth in applications from K-12 classroom teachers, technology coordinators, and corporate trainers.

THE INTERACTIVE LESSON DEFINED

More and more teachers are using Microsoft Word to create text-based class handouts, lesson study guides, and student workbooks based on their own classroom learning objectives. They use Microsoft's Front Page and Netscape's Composer to produce online Web-based Virtual Tours. And, they use Microsoft's PowerPoint to create an "Interactive Lesson." Interactive lessons take the form of a self-paced, student-controlled, individualized learning opportunities embedded with assessment events along the way. In practice, these lessons are offered to students who need individualized instruction; corrective instruction, additional practice, or topical enrichment activities. Special education teachers are also utilizing these programs to help them individualize lessons, assess IEP goals and objectives, and teach their students at each individual ability level.

Specifically, an interactive lesson:

* Is a visual-based, behavioral-oriented teaching strategy appropriate for kindergarten through adult learners who benefit from concrete learning experiences that graphic presentations offer.
* Contains self-paced instructional content appropriate for students who learn best when instructed at their own pace, or who need the benefits provided by remedial instruction outside the classroom.
* Offers specific, logical, systematic lessons that foster individualized instruction and sequential learning.
* Is student-initiated and student -controlled learning that places a good deal of the responsibility for mastering the material directly in the hands of the learner.
* Embraces all phases of the Mastery Learning instructional technique. It suggests alternatives for presenting the initial mastery objectives, corrective instruction, and enrichment activities.

CREATING AN INTERACTIVE LESSON

The instructional system design model offered by Jerrold Kemp is a common tool for creating the interactive lesson. For each of Kemp's Nine Elements, a practical, hands-on task is completed as evidence that the skill has been mastered. Here's how it goes:

1. Identify instructional problems, and specify goals for designing an instructional program. *Task:* Select a topic for an interactive lesson
2. Examine learner characteristics that should receive attention during planning. *Task:* Identify target learners for the lesson
3. Identify subject content, and analyze task components related to stated goals and purposes. *Task:* Identify the specific behavioral-based elements that students must master during this lesson
4. State instructional objectives for the learner. *Task:* Prepare the behavioral learning objectives providing the specific behavior, condition, and criteria for success

Figure 1. Power point presentation opening slide
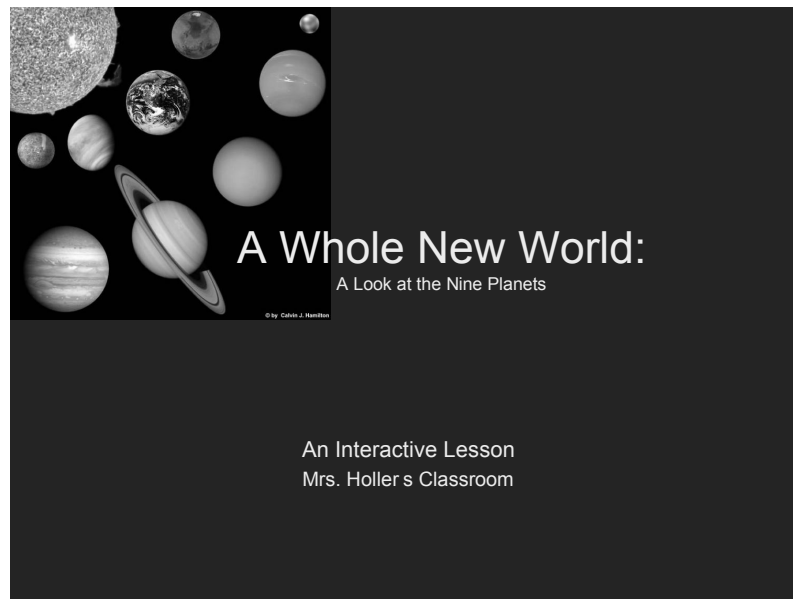
5. Sequence content within each instructional unit for logical learning. *Task:* Lay out the instructional progression of your proposed lesson
6. Design instructional strategies so that each learner can master the objectives. *Task:* Create your assessment tools
7. Plan the instructional message and delivery. *Task:* Create and prototype your PowerPoint interactive lesson
8. Develop evaluation instruments to assess objectives. *Task:* Conduct the assessment for your lesson
9. Select resources to support instruction and learning activities. *Task:* Locate additional resources for the lesson

Lesson design by the numbers…seems fairly simple, right? The best way to grasp the fundamental power of the interactive lesson and to understand the component that make up successful visual instruction is to investigate an actual presentation that exhibits the best the interactive lesson has to offer. Special education teachers, in particular, are keenly aware of the difficulties that lie in preparing a lesson. Taking into account the myriad of student interests and academic capabilities is of particular importance to those teaching special needs children. Therefore, the lesson, "***A Whole New World: A Look at the Nine Planets,***" is a natural for examining how to construct an effective interactive lesson (See Figure 1).

How to Create an Interactive Lesson Using PowerPoint

A menu of options and features make PowerPoint a powerful graphics development and presentation package. Four features in particular make the interactive lesson possible:

*   Action buttons
*   Hidden slides
*   Kiosk browser
*   Assessment slide

Action Buttons. PowerPoint comes with several built-in responses that are easily inserted into a presentation. There are Action Buttons that go to the next slide, indicate an available movie or sound clip, or request help or information. The Slide Show pop-down menu accesses the Action Button option (Figure 2). However, any element in a PowerPoint slide can serve as an Action Button: text, images, even Clip Art.

Slides. A more important use of the Action Button is to assess student understanding. By creating a simple question with several possible responses, PowerPoint transfers students either to new information (if correct),

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