

PREFACE

The potential uses of the computer to enhance learning have been at the forefront of the planning and design of instruction in education and in industry for the past decade. Much progress has been made in hardware, software, and computer-based or computer-integrated curriculum. For the Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) teacher and teacher educator who are busy with students, keeping current with the technology and the emerging instructional packages is a challenge. This issue of the Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education (JFCSE) is dedicated to providing assistance with this challenge.

In this issue you will find an article that documents FACS teacher's computer use in three states and recommends numerous resources available to assist the FACS teacher interested in more and better computer integrated FACS curriculum. In this article the websites and other Internet addresses are hyper-linked.

An article that features the latest information in foods and nutrition is filled with websites, also hyper-linked in the article. This article is a FCS teacher's dream come true. Read it and treasure it!

Another article offers both the rationale and the procedure for introducing a family history study in a family relations class. This is done by exploring with their grandparents such things as what it was like when they were young, dating, marrying, and/or moving into their first residence. This article suggests that an investigation of trends in clothing and its design when grandparents were young, can further enhance the bond between the student and their grandparent(s). The article also suggests that teachers have students use the computer to record and enhance the information they gather, by such means as scanning and including photos of their grandparents when they were young. Also, websites for pursuing family genealogy and other study in family relations are provided.

Use of technology to enhance instruction in a family relations class should not be monopolized by the computer. Visualization of concepts in family relations can be effectively accomplished by using snippets from videos, TV, and movies. Students will have more agreement on the meanings in family relations when such concepts as anger, negotiation, and commitment are presenting via a visual image than they will from a verbal definition. Many suggestions are made to help you initiate the use of visual technology in the family relations classroom.

The article on consumer education taught through a simulation process recommends computer programs and websites to help the consumer respond to questions about their rights and responsibilities when they occur. Decision making, maximizing resources, buying store brands, and how to be fashionably dressed on a budget are topics included in this article

To inspire you to explore this issue thoroughly, you are reminded of several additional technological advances that are coming down the proverbial "educational pike," even as this is written. Instructional designers and educational researchers are teaming to explore such new ideas as the effects of visualization on cognitive development, the effects of learning structure on summarization during computer-based learning, the impact of navigational models on task completion in Web-based information, and reading comprehension in generative hypertext processing. They are also evaluating narrative simulation for potential to impact bias, studying the effects of various web and electronic technology-based teaching models on students with disabilities, and simultaneously assessing the effects of faculty incentives and faculty motivators on adoption of new technology in their teaching.

As you investigate the new technology you may explore such concepts as navigational structure and computer-mediated communications. One example of the first is our Internet provider and the other is email. What is the potential of the dual-structure instructional systems approach or instructional grouping on navigation and student learning in a web-based environment? Why and when would you use CD tutorials? Who will be designing instruction for the technology-supported K-12 FACS classroom, and what models for Web-based instruction will be most popular, most common, and/or most effective in the FACS classroom? Will you enter the debate between the effectiveness of Web-based collaborative learning environments and traditional classroom instruction?

Can you design a decision-making model for problem selection in project-based learning for your web-based instruction? When you anticipate designing instruction to encourage critical thinking? Will you use the interactive strategy model for mental learning and disposition? Will you study the effects of goal intentions on critical thinking, problem selection, and problem solving?

Who will want to design, evaluate, or use multiple instructional models? How can FACS teachers and teacher educators include motivational strategies for learner involvement in what otherwise is likely to be a relatively isolated learning environment?

How will this change in teaching-learning architecture and design affect the relationship between teachers and their students? What will it mean for FACS instructional designers. And the bottom line is, "Will web-assisted learning enable our next generation to have a better quality of life?"

Using the computer to replace the typewriter is not a question today. The computer must be included to enhance the speed and accuracy with which students learn. The computer is also used to increase motivation, to stimulate, and to encourage persistence in studying and learning.

The articles in this issue are designed to encourage you to move beyond your current level of computer use in classroom instruction. The authors have shared with you some of their best teaching strategies. You are encouraged to use, revise, modify, and share the ideas with FACS teachers and teacher educators nationwide. We do ask that you give credit to the authors in this issue who have made the effort to stimulate you to enhance your skills and increase your use of contemporary technology in your teaching.

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