

MOVING VOICES, AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER

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http://archive.citizen.com/2004/may2004/may_10/laconia_05.10.04d.asp

http://archive.citizen.com/2004/july2004/07.15.04/news/laconia_07.15.04c.asp

http://archive.citizen.com/2004/july2004/07.16.04/news/laconia_07.16.04f.asp



How It Began.

"It was an awesome way to meet new friends and use computers to learn about ourselves our school, and our community at the same time," said Teagan Morin, an eighth grader participating in the Integrated Arts program at Memorial Middle School. She is one of over six hundred students who have participated in Cultural projects at local, regional, state, national, and international levels thanks to the inclusion of technology in their classroom.

Her school is located in Laconia, New Hampshire, USA on the shores of Lake Opechee. Memorial Middle School serves over six hundred students in grades six, seven and eight in a City of 15,000 people.

It all began in the Art Department with an iMac six years ago and has grown into a 6 eMac , three camcorder, video conferencing , student centered studio space that supports the school's core and exploratory curricular areas, produces it's own weekly cable television show, documents school wide activities, and fosters global understanding as a project participating member school of the International Education and Resource Network.

The school's faculty and students have participated in Creative Arts Courses, Learning Circles, and Face to Face Exchanges, but none of these has motivated our student community more than the **Moving Voices Project**.

In March, we were informed that MMS had been selected to participate in this innovative iEARN project along with four USA schools and sixteen schools from around the world. The goal of the project was to foster global understanding through the production of a video piece that answered the question...

"What do I want the world to know about my school?"

This was more than chance! What more could a video related class ask for from a project? This was the real world offering us an opportunity to apply what we were learning. It was a chance to organize what we had been experimenting with over the years: the elevator story, the script, the storyboard, the taping, the editing, the viewing and the reviewing.



How We Did It.

Organizing our participation centered on our State and District frameworks. The Moving Voices Project met the objectives of fostering global understanding through the Arts, developing a cultural identity, demonstrating the ability to apply skills learned in the integrated classroom, participating in projects that foster career awareness, and utilizing skills learned in core curricular subjects in the arts classroom i.e. Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science.

Having identified the frameworks allowed us to develop a working handbook to be used by the students along with a rubric checklist to be used over the nine weeks of the project. Here is the working document.

Moving Voices
(An iEARN Project)

MY SCHOOL - MY COMMUNITY

A Project Based- Collaborative

Video Production Unit

Integrated Arts - Computer Science - Media Resources

Memorial Middle School
Laconia, New Hampshire USA

STUDENT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Student Name: _____

Grade Level: _____ Team: _____ Date: _____

SCALE: 4= Exemplary 3= Accomplished 2= Developing 1= Beginning
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(Moving Voices)

Student Name: _____ Team: _____

CATEGORY: APPEARANCE

Responsibilities:

- Text areas and graphic areas are balanced.

- The words are spelled correctly.
- The graphics in the video are easy to see.
- The background does not compete with the text or graphics.
- The colors and patterns in the video look good together.
- The video seems to go together when you move from one to the next.
- Titles and headings are easy to distinguish from other text.
- Sounds and music are easy to hear.
- There is enough time to hear and see everything in the video.
- The transitions do not distract or bore the user.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 2004-Rubistar
(Moving Voices)

Student Name:_____ Team:_____

CATEGORY: MEDIA USE

Responsibilities:

- I used video clips in my presentation.
- I used photographs in my presentation.
- I used original art and effects in my presentation.
- I used other's art, animations, or effects in my presentation.
- I used voice-overs or sounds to enhance the presentation.

- I used media in accordance with copyright.
- I cited media in the required format.
- My media does not distract the user.
- Media is balanced appropriately.
- My video is original.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 2004-Rubistar
(Moving Voices)

Student Name: _____ Team: _____

CATEGORY: PREPARATION

Responsibilities:

- I planned my time wisely to assure access to needed materials.
- I prepared a clear topic and sub-topics to cover.
- I thought about questions I needed to answer in my presentation.
- I thought about things I wanted to find for my presentation.
- I used feedback from others to refine my topic, subtopic, and details.
- I thought about what materials and equipment I would need for the presentation.
- I made a timeline of when major parts of the presentation would be done.
- I contributed to the group project.

- I was a positive member of the group.
- I supported other members of the group.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 2004-Rubistar

(Moving Voices)

Student Name:_____ Team:_____

CATEGORY: ORGANIZATION

Responsibilities:

- I made an outline or story board to organize my thoughts and ideas.
- My presentation was a clear explanation of a topic.
- My presentation was persuasive in presenting a point of view.
- I organized my thoughts and ideas in a meaningful way.
- My organization was easy for others to follow.
- I developed a meaningful logo for the video.
- I included a credits segment.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 2004-Rubistar

(Moving Voices)

Student Name:_____ Team:_____

CATEGORY: RESOURCES

Responsibilities:

- I used a variety of resources.
- I used resources that showed different perspectives.
- I used resources that were reliable and credible.
- I used up-to-date resources.
- I used electronic resources (Internet, CD-ROM).
- I used print resources (textbooks, books, magazines, newspapers).
- I used reference material (dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia).
- I used documentaries or news interviews.
- I used portions of films or television shows.
- I used materials in accordance with copyright.
- I cited my resources.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 2004-Rubistar

(Moving Voices)

Student Name:_____ Team:_____

CATEGORY: NAVIGATION

Responsibilities:

- Users can find their way easily through my project.

- ❑ Users can backtrack or stop the presentation if they desire.
- ❑ The navigation tools are easy to see and click on.
- ❑ The navigation tools are labeled when necessary.
- ❑ The navigation tools lead to logical (expected) destinations.
- ❑ The navigation tools work.
- ❑ Users can turn off sound or music if they desire.

COMMENTS

Frates/ 004-Rubistar

Video Production Handbook

Compiled by the Moving Voices Facilitators, Teachers, and Students

Reorganized for use at
Memorial Middle School
Laconia, NH USA

May 2004

Developing a Story Around an Idea

All the students in the MovingVoices classes will be developing a story that comes from a basic question:

What we want THE WORLD to know about our school and community?

One of the most important phrases in this question is "the world." The people who will be watching your students' video documentaries are literally hundreds of millions of people who have or will be getting access to the Internet. This includes other teachers and students,

government leaders, people who might be interested in traveling to your country. What a marvelous opportunity!

The other important phrase for your students to consider is "our school". What is unique to the school? Does their school have a special story, a special history, special challenges, or a special source of pride?

The Elevator Version

- What's an "elevator version"?

It is a very useful exercise professional filmmakers and writers use to make their stories as clear and as possible.

The idea is that a person is in Hollywood, USA looking for someone to help turn his or her idea into a big movie. One day, this person is in a hotel and gets on the elevator to ride up to the top floor of the building. Just as the elevator door is about to close, a famous and powerful Hollywood producer gets on the elevator, too. Suddenly the young filmmaker is alone with someone who can make the film dream come true. He or she has a perfect chance to get this producer excited about the film idea. But, elevator rides are very short, 30 seconds at most. In 30 seconds, what is the story the person tells the famous Hollywood filmmaker?

Moving Voices Project Storyboard

Project Title: MY SCHOOL -MY COMMUNITY

Type: 2 Minute **iEARN School:** Memorial Middle School, Laconia, NH USA

Classes: Integrated Arts/Computer/Library Resources **LEVEL** ___ **TEAM** ___

sketch	sketch	sketch
Scene #	Time:	Scene #
Script notes:	Script notes:	Script notes:

Effects:	Effects:	Effects:

sketch	sketch	sketch
Scene # Time:	Scene # Time:	Scene # Time:
Script notes:	Script notes:	Script notes:
Effects:	Effects:	Effects:

EDITING

What is editing? Editing is the process of turning your script into a reality in video by arranging and melding the sights and sounds called for in your script.

Digital editing software typically provides one video track and two audio tracks. "Tracks" are like flowing streams of time. Editing software uses the convention of a "timeline". This presents an application window with the streams of time flowing from left to right, one for video and two for audio (depending on the software you are using). The great thing about digital

editing is you can manipulate and adjust the elements you add to the video and audio timelines, usually by merely selecting and dragging or selecting and replacing. You can add time, remove it, replace video, and manipulate the volume levels of the two streams of audio. These adjustments can be made in very small increments, as small as 1/30th or 1/24th of a second. These increments of time are called "frames".

The art of editing relies on the ability of the editors to work with frames the way a mosaic artist works with tiles. The goal is to put the pieces together in a way that presents the viewer with a flowing whole.

To edit, one must learn how to use the artist's tools. In this case, it means learning the capabilities of your video editing software by exploring help files, tutorials, and the Web's resources.

Recommendations

- **Be ready. Be careful.**
Walk into your editing session with your script and production logs in hand. You should have the latest written version of what your hopes for the finished film (the script) and an accurate and detailed record of where video and audio elements of your movie are located on tape (production log). The best production logs also have clear notes and recommendations of the best versions (or "takes") that have been recorded. Of course, you have to have the elements you have recorded during the production phase. Be very careful to protect your "master" tapes. You definitely do not want to lose, damage, or record over your master recordings.
- **Be selective.**
The editing process begins by transferring the sights and sounds you need from the camera to the computer. Different video editing software programs use different terms to describe this process. Some call it "transferring", some call it "importing", some call it "capturing". Editors must choose and select the sections of audio and video they need for their script and move the digital information from the camera's storage system (usually mini DV tape) to the computer's storage system (usually a hard drive). Choose the best takes. Transfer

what you know you need and a little extra "padding" at the beginning and end of each selection.

- **Be aware of file size.**

The video and information in the camera can use up computer hard drive space very quickly. If you run into storage problems, remember that the camera is itself a storage system, You do not have to transfer everything you need all at once. Store audio and video on the camera until you need it.

- **Build your movie from the words, images, and sound**

Building from these three elements means building the foundation of your film by concentrating on the elements that move your story from beginning to end. We know that your movie's audio track will probably contain many more than just spoken words. Your script probably calls for letting your audience hear music or the natural and environmental sounds around your school that you recorded with your camera. Digital editing software will allow you to add these audio elements later, with great precision.

You will want to make adjustments later to give you movie "breathing space" and "room". Don't jam different spoken word sections too closely together. Imagine how you want your final film to sound and try to create that pace and mood right from the first edit.

Save Your Work.

If storage space is an issue, you can save your work back to the camera's tape by following directions to export your movie to the camera. be sure you have room on the tape. Don't record over master material.

Recording Sights and Sounds

Here are our top recommendations for recording sights and sounds with a digital video camera for Moving Voices projects:

1. **Know what your camera can do.** Read the manual to understand what time code, white balance, focus, and exposure mean to your production. Today's cameras are powerful tools. Get the most out of them.

2. **Know precisely what it is you want the camera to record.** The script and storyboard are your guides. Use them as you would a recipe. Shoot exactly what is called for. Keep improvisation and experimentation to a minimum during your "shoot".
3. **Use a production log to plan, monitor, and cross-check all the different elements** you need to put on tape for each part of your film. A "log" is a record of what elements are recorded. The best way to record where different sights or sounds are on tape is to use "**time code**", a reference system generated by digital cameras that sequentially identifies each frame of video. Generally, time code has a format that shows Hours:Minutes:Seconds:Frames per second. Generally, timecode starts at 00:00:00:00 and builds continuously to the end of the tape. Use scene numbers from the script (and storyboard) and timecode numbers from the camera to keep track of the different elements you are recording.
4. **Think of video tape as a precious resource.** Start recording only when you are ready. Stop recording when you are sure the action you are trying to capture is complete. "Lights, Camera, Action1" is old time Hollywood signal-calling to make sure everything and everyone is ready. Today's television productions use these signals: "Roll Tape", "Speed", "Action". What signals will your production team use?
5. **Keep the camera steady.** Use a tripod or monopod, if you have access to them. If not, lean against a building or tree or steady the camera on a piece of wood or a tree branch — anything you can to keep the camera steady. Lock down your camera and let people and other camera subjects *move through the frame*. This means do not zoom in or zoom out. Do not follow people or objects by moving the camera up and down or side to side. Why not? Because you are making movies for the World Wide Web and these movies will use compression technologies to reduce the file size. Unwanted movement means bigger file sizes. Besides, 90% of the best television and cinema is shot with a locked-down camera because unnecessary motion distracts the audience. Filmmakers lead their audiences by the eye. Break these rules only if you have a compelling reason to do so.
6. **Pay special attention to audio.** If you are using the camera's built-in microphone, be aware that the closest noisemaker to the microphone is the camera operator! If you can use a separate microphone and

monitor the mic with headphones, you are lucky indeed. Ask the people you interview to speak clearly and to speak up. Ask the people in the production crew to keep still. Remember, you can use the camera as a portable sound recorder to record audio elements. Log these recordings just as you will log the video elements. Some filmmakers go so far as to shoot a "silent" film and then re-create and overdub every sound in the studio. We are not recommending that you do this, but want you to know that special sounds and words may require special attention. The Web handles sound very well. Good sound makes great movies.

7. **Get releases from the people who appear in your film.** A "release" is a document that allows you to use a person's picture or voice in your film. Make it clear to the people you want in your film that you are making a student film for educational purposes. We will provide you with forms.
8. **Shoot sequences.** Your script and storyboard should have specific ideas about how to mix combinations of wide shots, medium shots, and close-ups. Take your time to set up these combinations of shots. It is OK to ask the people in your film to do something two or three times so you can "cover" what they with different camera framing. Keep the camera steady, and note down the framing in your log.
9. **Make good use of available light.** Today's cameras are very sophisticated. Read the camera manual to be sure you know how to make the most of very bright or low light situations. Make sure you set the white balance for the different combinations of natural and artificial light in your shooting locations. Take you time to get it right before you hit the record button.
10. **Use a checklist for each shot.** A checklist is a way a making sure you eliminate as many mistakes as you can. (Everybody makes mistakes. Try to learn from them.) Here are the questions we recommend you ask before you press the record button.
 - Do we know exactly what script element we are recording?
 - Are we ready to log the recording session by scene number and time code?
 - Do we have releases from the people who will be in the shot?
 - How will we keep the camera steady?

- How good will the sound quality be?
- Is the camera's exposure right?
- Are our subjects in focus?
- How is the lighting?
- Do we like the framing?
- Should we change angles to provide a variety of shots?
- Is our battery charged?
- Do we have enough empty tape for the elements we are about to record?
- How long will we be recording? Can we be steady and quiet for the whole "take"?
- How is this "take" going to be better than the one before?



The Integrated Arts classroom encourages creative thinking. Moving Voices was a natural addition to the Memorial Middle School program.

Telling the Story with Video in Mind

- What is a Treatment?

A "treatment" is a term used by filmmakers to describe a document that sets out the story, goals, and creative and cinematic characteristics of a film. As you might expect, different writers have

different approaches for writing treatments. They also have different goals. For instance, many documentary filmmakers use a treatment as part of the process of finding grants and other funds to help pay for the film they want to make. For your students, writing a treatment is an important exercise in reaching agreement on what they want their film to show and say about their school and their lives.

Note: An important discussion for your students to consider is "Who is our audience?" Certainly parents, other students, teachers, and education officials in your community will be interested in the work. And since the films are intended to be shared with other teachers and students via the World Wide Web, the world literally is their audience! This may include government leaders, especially in ministries of education, and the general public. We hope you agree that having a potential world wide audience for the work is an inspiring idea.

Thinking about the audience is very important finds for writing an effective treatment. Here are some questions that can help students think through the details of, and get down on paper, the film they want to make:

- What is the story that will be told to the audience? What sights and activities will the audience see?
- What locations will the audience be shown by the camera?
- What are the natural, environmental sounds that the audience will hear at these locations?
- Who will tell the story? A storyteller (also known as a narrator)? Interview subjects? A combination of both? Who is the narrator? Does he or she introduce herself to the audience or is the voice an "omniscient" storyteller? Who are the people that the audience will meet, and why are they important? What unique contributions to the story will these people ("characters") make?

Organizing Our Process

Implementing our Moving Voices Project included two additional subject areas, Computer Studies and Library Resources. The Integrated Arts program organized the 150 students into smaller PRODUCTION COMPANIES. Each group was charged with the task of developing the

elevator story, video story, storyboard, etc. with faculty members from each area acting as resource personnel for the first week.

Each PRODUCTION COMPANY was required to present their ideas to the larger group at the conclusion of week one. The "companies" were then allowed to reorganize their structures based on their need for camera crews, sound crews, writers, editors, and directors. This meant that some "companies" merged while others decided to continue with no additions and a bit of in house reorganization

Week two served as a great week for video taping, photographing, interviewing, and reviewing the results. Some students began to rise to the occasion of decision making while others began to show signs of a "this is going to be too much work" attitude. Because we had so many students involved it was easy to begin to separate the enthusiastic video producers from the others who had the potential to develop related products.

Some of the students worked on scenery, others developed TV identification badges, and others helped to write and print release forms. Others setup the Moving Voices Award Ceremony as well as organizing invitations to the Premiere of our two minute creations.

At this point in time each company of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders carried their enthusiasm into after school editing time and thanks to the support of Project Extra, a 21st Century Grant, the Laconia Education Endowment Foundation, the Laconia Education Association/NEA, the Belknap Mill Society, the MMS Food Services staff our end of the year event was successful.

The outcome was a seventh grade victory with all other videos being compiled into an introduction piece to be used at the Move Up Day Orientation Program for new fifth graders entering Memorial Middle School.



Production Company members review their videos at the Belknap Mill during the Multicultural Market Day in Laconia, NH, USA

What Next?

The Summer of 2004 was memorable for the new fifth graders entering our school related to the Moving Voices Project. Over 35 youngsters were part of a live video conference with the teachers and facilitators participating in the 2004 iEARN Conference in Slovakia. For over one hour they watched and asked questions about how they could be part of this exciting project when school opened in the Fall.

Their enthusiasm carried over into follow up groups conducted by the Guidance staff conducting the Summer Orientation Program with the following ideas growing from those discussions.

- Create more school videos
- Create a video yearbook
- Create a weekly tv show about different countries of the world
- Video conference with more students
- Sponsor a project for iEARN !

Their summer idea is now a "real" iEARN project called EYE TO EYE_



In Conclusion

The Moving Voices Project was more than an on line experience. It opened our students' eyes to their school, community, and each other. It more importantly helped our students to realize how important sharing ideas can be to the development of a safe and peaceful world.

Communication between children and adults is an important part of global understanding.

