

## **I Am “Hyper” About Learning!**

Stacey Hildebrandt

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### **Introduction**

Before I even enrolled in an education class, I heard through the grapevine a number of experiences to be aware of in the wonderful major of education: begin the early field experience hours as soon as possible, keep your grades up in order to take the prerequisite undergraduate classes, start keeping a professional portfolio as soon as you take your first class, and become familiar with HyperStudio. This little list was enough to make me nervous when I heard it as a freshman. However, as time and semesters went by, I was able to see that I could indeed accomplish these things about which I was warned. I took my friends' advice on how they mastered even the most difficult assignments. Unfortunately, the preconceived notion that I developed hindered me from enjoying parts of my education classes.

When I enrolled in Foundations of Education I simply allowed myself to believe that I could not learn HyperStudio and be successful at it. My “myth” about learning how to do this was prohibiting me from even trying (Harri-Augstein, 11). My class attended a presentation explaining the very basics of this program. In about ninety minutes the presentation was over and I was more lost and confused than ever. The presenter knew what he was talking about, but I think he forgot that his students had no knowledge about this subject. Initially, I took the laissez-faire approach, thinking I would be able to complete the assignment, even though I did not fully understand the

program (Harri-Augstein, 5). However, when I attempted to do the assignment, I realized I had not digested enough of the information to complete it (I was to create a program about an educational philosopher).

I was on the verge of tears when the instructor passed out a tutorial booklet on HyperStudio and advised us to walk through the steps to familiarize ourselves with it. With all the courage I could muster, I went to the Teacher Technology Center (TTC) and spent about three hours learning how to do the program. When I finished, I had difficulty deciding if I had learned anything or if I was going to depend on the book to get me through the assignment. A few days later, I returned to the TTC and began my project on Carl Rogers. Although it took me several hours, I was able to complete my assignment. In fact, the more I became familiar with it, the more self-motivated I was to learn HyperStudio.

### **A Bit About HyperStudio**

HyperStudio is a multimedia program that allows the user (teachers, students and so on) to create a computer program on virtually anything one desires. Teachers have found several uses for this new and exciting tool. Many use it in conjunction with a particular lesson they are presenting. For example, perhaps you are teaching a lesson on Texas and want to incorporate more than just a basal textbook and worksheets. This program allows you to scan pictures, other text, sound (music, your voice), and much more. The benefit of using this program is that it allows the creator to produce something that can personally relate to himself and the audience. Teachers have also created programs that they allow their students to play with when they have completed their

work. For example, a teacher could create weekly games and exercises that students could do with their spelling words.

Children seem to enjoy it because it is different from the endless worksheets they are often assigned. Also, many teachers are letting their students do projects that may normally be completed on a word processor or handwritten. Children are doing book report presentations, creating class journals, writing weekly newspapers, making games, and much more. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce children to the technology of computers.

### **Learning to Learn How to Do HyperStudio**

Even though I consider myself fairly knowledgeable about computers, I still developed a sense of fear and anxiety when I started learning HyperStudio. I went into the presentation with a closed mind simply because it was frustrating to pay attention to something I knew little about. Knowing that I had to learn something new, I actually had to think about how I was going to learn how to learn HyperStudio. I made a learning contract with myself: I listed the benefits of learning this and concluded that if I learn this I will be able to use it as a teaching tool. More importantly, when I finished my first product, it would show me that I was capable of doing something that I knew little about.

To begin with, I knew that I must pay attention to the presentation even if everything sounded foreign to me (and believe me, it did)! I had trouble following most of the steps and processes that were being described, but just walking through it allowed me to begin to understand what I needed to do. I closely followed the tutorial guide though I did not understand what I was doing. When I finished, I knew my work was not superb, but I was satisfied with my first product.

### **Another Learning Experience with HyperStudio**

Though my success with HyperStudio was minimal for Foundations of Education, I knew that I would once again face this program and become “hyper” and worked up about it. Sure enough, Clinical Experiences in Teaching re-introduced me to it. However, this time I forced myself to proceed slowly and with caution. I knew I could do it, but the question was, could I do it better? The assignment was to create a project that could be used as a tool for introducing myself to my future students. This assignment is an example of authentic instruction in that “the attained achievement would be significant and meaningful” (Newmann, 8). The first assignment had no guidelines to follow. My teacher simply told us to experiment and see what we could come up with. In fact, we were not graded on the final product, but on effort. I was relieved to hear this for fear that I would have failed that first assignment.

### **Meeting the HyperStudio Rubric**

My Clinical Experiences assignment was given with a rubric that was intimidating at first, but quite helpful as I progressed through my work. There were three main points that I had to meet. Instead of facing it like the previous assignment, I set my standards high because I wanted to produce the best project I could.

The first requirement was content. The highest point was described as the “information should be memorable, well presented, and include standard grammar/punctuation.” I viewed this section as three separate steps. My first question was how to make this memorable. I knew that “the greatest resource of learners is their own experience,” so I began to sort through my pictures of various family and friends (Harri-Augstein, 15). I wanted to include these people in my presentation because they

are a great part of who I am. I chose a picture of myself for the introduction page and a picture of my family vacationing in Colorado for another. My text also made this project memorable because I was not afraid to tell others about what I think and feel.

The presentation part was tricky because I had to choose colors, text script, and font to make it aesthetically pleasing to my audience. When it came to creativity, I always responded with a monotone, “I am *not* creative.” I usually try to avoid “positions where I could use [my] creativity” (von Oech, 165). Knowing that I had to make this assignment creative and original, I re-read von Oech’s chapter entitled “I’m Not Creative” and forced myself “into trying new things and building on what [I] find” (167). I did much experimenting and changing until I found the best combination of how to produce this.

The grammar/punctuation was no problem for me. The English major in me kicked in naturally but, as a back up, I showed my project to several other people for peer editing before turning it in.

The next requirement was graphics/video that was described as the “images [should] enhance information and support it and placement [should] be pleasing to the eye.” As I stated above, the pictures were relative to my text. In fact, the picture of my family could have told a story in itself. As far as placing them, I made sure that the size was adequate and the pictures were clear.

The final requirement was overall presentation which stated that the “project flows well and is very interesting to the audience.” This was actually the easiest to demonstrate because if I aimed for the highest on the above standards, then this would come easily (and it did)!

## **How I Helped Others Learn**

When I finished the HyperStudio for Clinical Experiences, I decided to show my boyfriend, Dave, because I knew he would be genuinely interested and proud of my accomplishment. I brought him to the library and allowed him to click through my creation. Even though I did not think it was that great, Dave raved about the project and continued to go through it several more times. I was ecstatic because I had impressed him with something that I myself was not extremely satisfied with.

I started to show him how I had done a few things and he kept asking me questions. A big motivator for Dave wanting to learn this program was that it impressed him. He saw something that he had no knowledge about and wanted to see if he was capable of learning it.

I told him I would try to teach him some basics about it if he wanted. He showed a strong desire to learn so I began my teaching. I decided against the long boring walk-through that I was given. I had some tutorial books I used as my guide so that I would not forget to explain anything that was essential.

Recently completing the project was beneficial because I remembered everything I had to understand in order to make my product. I asked Dave what he wanted his project to be about. He had some difficulty thinking of a theme. We brainstormed for a few minutes and came up with baseball, which is one of his favorite interests. I continued to ask him questions about baseball and what he wanted to include on his first HyperStudio. He decided to make a short “stack” on the history of baseball. He brought in a few books he had and scanned some pictures into HyperStudio. He also included his own insight about baseball and why he thinks it is America’s greatest national pastime.

While doing his project, he was continuously asking questions, just as I did when I first learned. He did not feel intimidated to ask me because he is comfortable around me. However, when I was learning, I started to feel bad about asking the same person many trivial questions. I taught Dave through lots of demonstrations on the project that I was currently working to complete. There were a few things that he wanted to include in his that I had not learned how to do, such as, recording your own voice onto it. We asked a worker in the TTC and she showed us how to do it. Through Dave's learning, he taught me something as well.

When he finished I was thrilled with his first product. Although there were a few "rough" spots, he had successfully learned how to do a simple HyperStudio. He told me a few days later that it was the way I taught him that made it easy to learn. Through my demonstrations and reinforcement, he was able to comprehend my directions and explanations.

### **Conclusion**

Through examining my process of learning how to learn, I have taken a new approach to learning. For some of my more difficult classes or assignments, I have jotted down ideas and ways in which I would be able to master the task presented. Although it takes some time to recognize how I can learn for different things, I have acquired a new outlook on learning to learn, but more importantly, helping others to learn how to learn.

## References

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## Self-Evaluation

I must admit that writing this paper was more difficult than I thought it would be. It was beneficial to bring several rough drafts to class because it forced me to work on it daily for about two weeks. Each time I sat down to work, new ideas and concepts entered my mind. In fact, after each reading assignment, I was able to highlight certain areas in the text that had personal meaning to my project. The peer editing was also helpful because many different people gave their ideas about my thoughts and what I had written thus far.

Doing this project taught me several things. In order for me to remember I how learned HyperStudio, I had to write down each step that I followed in order to create the product that I did. This was somewhat tricky because I am now able to do HyperStudio without having to think about specific steps. This learning process is similar to many other things that people become accustomed to doing without having to think out each step (like typing)!

I think my project is unique in that even though others have worked on HyperStudio, no other project could tell the same story or show the same pictures because it shows who I am. Also, this paper shows my perspective on the learning process and conversations I had with myself in order to achieve my learning contract.

Writing this paper allowed me to write down how I learned and how someone else (Dave) learned the same thing. I went through an entirely separate process of learning than Dave did because we were taught by people who used different methods.

When I was teaching Dave how to use HyperStudio, I had to experiment with several different methods of instruction before he was able to grasp some concepts. This

forced me to implement different teaching styles. More importantly, it clearly showed me that all people learn in unique ways. As a future teacher, I must keep this in my mind at all times. If I limit my ways of teaching, I will not reach all of my students.