

Point

At convocation last Monday, Dr. Hofstetter presented an entertaining lecture on multimedia. He used a computer to strengthen his points by providing visual and oral images. He stressed integrating slides, video, and music to entertain students in the classroom. Studies show that lecture is one of the least effective teaching methods. So why do so many educators continue to drone facts at students instead of encouraging them to experience new learning concepts?

Some may oppose entertaining students, but our society prepares us for it. Commercials must entertain to sell a product. Television shows must entertain to sell space for the commercials. Since we spend so much time watching television and movies, we expect to be entertained.

Educators cannot waste time questioning why society expects entertainment. Instead, teachers need to spend their energy motivating students. If that means entertain them, then entertain them.

As college students we must encourage our professors to take advantage of the multimedia technology. It will increase our understanding of material, as a visual image of a collapsing bridge triggers the

specific details of Hooke's law. Increased use of multimedia technology will also encourage other educators to model their strategies. Eventually the advancements will trickle down into the public schools. The technology could make teachers more effective. What could be wrong with that?

The multimedia approach has a place in the public school classroom. Yes, the equipment is expensive. Yes, few classrooms have computers with hard discs and compact discs. However, teachers will use what is available to them. Many educators use VCR's to show films or use record players to play music for educational purposes. If parents, students, educators, and superintendents see what an asset multimedia equipment can be, then they will work to integrate it into the classroom.

Advanced equipment is not foreign to public schools. One of my classes had access to video footage on a laser disc. As a high school senior, I could independently manipulate it. Teachers and other students could do the same. Multimedia is not an impossible goal for public schools.

Multimedia technology is exciting because it could motivate students. By presenting the concept, Meredith College makes a commitment to the advancement of education. Multimedia can help reach unmotivated students. It might be you in biology class on Friday morning. It might be your son or daughter in health class in ten years. Use your eyes and ears to learn in the future.

Jan
Gunn

Counterpoint

Yes, I watch *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I even know the theme song. When I was five, I knew the *Scooby-Doo* theme song. However, just because I have grown up watching TV, a lot of bad TV at that, I do not need total sensory stimulation in order to learn, which is why I'm opposed to the multimedia classroom.

I'm concerned that most students today need an elaborately staged classroom in order to learn. I've heard Nan Miller, English professor, say she sometimes feels like her students expect her to turn cartwheels in the middle of class. As much as we all would like to see one of those cartwheels, educators must see their chance to wean students from the "need" for Broadway productions as a part of their classroom experience.

Students need to know they won't always be entertained. What would happen to a student with a media-filled education upon graduating? How could she concentrate at a job or in the college classroom where she is expected to do her work because it is her responsibility? As I see it, a multimedia education would simply worsen a student's dependency on being entertained.

Does it sound like I expect students to be enthralled by the kind of classroom we all hate? You know the one where the professor talks for 50 minutes and then makes a reading assignment as the bell rings. That is certainly not what I have in mind. Many of my English classes here at Meredith have been exciting and

even inspiring. This inspiration doesn't happen just for nerdy English majors like me either. When professors know their material and are willing for their classes to participate in open discussion, the students and professor have ownership of the class. This sense of ownership inspires students to do their work and to do it well.

In addition to believing the multimedia concept is wrong in its promoting classroom couch potatoes, I also believe that most school systems, especially ones in North Carolina, could not afford the technology needed. If local schools were to spend their money on multimedia equipment, what would students lose? There would have to be a sacrifice, and I'm afraid money used for textbooks and basic classroom supplies would be the victim.

In conclusion, I believe a dependence on multimedia would be detrimental to students. I do believe that audio and video should be implemented on an occasional basis, but only when the professor and students cannot present the concept as well themselves.

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Amity Brown, Editor

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