

# Complimentary Pursuits: History, Teaching and Technology

Marc Gilbert, Regents' Distinguished Professor of Teaching and Learning,  
Professor of History, North Georgia College and State University

I have always considered it most fortunate that both my undergraduate and graduate work in history was completed at UCLA, whose Department of History has long regarded teaching and scholarship as complimentary pursuits, rather than mutually exclusive fields of endeavor. For this reason, UCLA historians have long been at the forefront of history education in the United States: the UCLA Center for History education is the acknowledged leader in pedagogy and curriculum development and is at the cutting edge of the use of technology in the classroom. Today, over 200 courses in the UCLA catalog are offered in a "desk-top" computer format over the Internet. My own career, from my current pedagogical interests to teaching philosophy, has been shaped by the UCLA experience.

My personal teaching philosophy, while confirmed by own classroom experience, is derived from the UCLA model which argues that the effective teaching of history rests on three pillars: critical thinking, multicultural approaches to the human record, and lifelong learning. All three are now familiar to any educator. Indeed, they are so familiar that their importance is either overlooked or magnified into battleground of America's current cultural ways. Rarely is their significance correctly judged. Students routinely retain 85% of material taught via critical thinking methodology that challenges students not merely to read, or to listen, but to read, listen and put into their own words the knowledge that instructors seek to share with them. By comparison, students retain less than 50% of what they hear and they hear less than 50% of what an instructor actually says. Critical thinking also best prepares a student to process, evaluate, and judge ideas and values on their merits—in other words, to think for themselves—and instills the flexibility of mind essential to today's ever-changing workplace. The more we learn that the roots of business, let alone our culture, reaches across cultures, the more essential a multicultural approach to the past becomes. After all, time and motions studies were perfected by an American who, rejected by over-confident American business leaders, took his ideas to Japan, where today they serve as a model for a generation of critical thinking American managers not afraid to experiment with "Japanese management" techniques! That American workers will most likely hold more than one job or career during their working lives, and also enjoy longer and more productive lives, underscores the fundamental need for lifelong learning approaches to education: schooling no longer ends with even a college degree. I, too, continue to learn.

It is toward the "new" or "electronic" teaching technologies that my academic activities have been focused this

past year. My interest in the activities of my mentors and former colleagues at UCLA, combined with the experience of the "New Chalk" workshops given by North Georgia College and State University's 1996-1997 Distinguished Professor of Teaching and Learning, Mark Davis, led me to take a new tack for my academic activities. Impressed with Dr. Davis' expertise in developing in classroom tools through technology, I hoped to add to, rather than replicate, his work by developing North Georgia's and the University System's technological links with the wider academic community. Earlier this year, I sought and received a grant from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia's special Faculty Development Initiative to design a Website that would function as a one-stop shopping destination for instructors responsible for courses in world history at the secondary and postsecondary education levels. This effort began with a survey of all instructors in the state who teach world history, so as to ensure that the new site answered real, rather than implied or expected, needs. This survey also solicited course syllabi and successful classroom strategies, resources and exercises currently in use within the University System. The response to this survey, just recently concluded, was overwhelming and the needed materials and syllabi will shortly be posted at the site. Permission was also sought, and acquired, to replicate all existing internet websites that service world history teachers at our new Website, lending it an authority and utility unsurpassed nationally and internationally. Further, the Southeastern Regional Associate of the World History Association, an affiliate of the American Historical Association, has agreed to become a resident of this Website, allowing its users to access SEWHA archives, new services and announcement bulletins. Last Spring, without institutional support, I traveled to Texas Tech University to share some of the early results of this effort, and in November, I will give the first of what I hope will be a series of workshops on using the Internet to teach World History at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Association of the World History Association in Charleston, South Carolina. I hope to supplement this effort by attending several future conferences planned for this Spring on using the new technology. I also hope to participate in the Summer of 1998 in a University of Illinois program that will permit teachers of world history to collaborate with those in India in developing high-technology resources for teaching and learning about world history.

This Fall quarter, I have chosen one of my courses (History 396: The History of India) to use as a laboratory. I will direct the course's three graduate students in developing the course as a "desk copy" course, with syllabus, course lec-

tures, photographic images, lesson plans and study guides all available via the Internet. The hope is to develop in these graduate students the skills they will need in their future classrooms, while developing models, instructional materials and techniques for other courses throughout the University system. I hope this academic year to combine the works of Professor Davis and my own to make all of my courses an elec-

tronic workshop for both faculty and students, providing a model and dissemination point for the use of the new applications of technology to the classroom. At the very least, my students will be assigned work, both individually and in groups, that will enable them to fully utilize the vast array of technology which will shape their future work place within and without the academic world.

## Multimedia and the Senior Seminar

Michele Zebich-Knos, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs,  
Kennesaw State University

As coordinator of the international affairs major and associate professor of political science, I work with words—not pictures. The scholarly values we political scientists convey to students reflect critical thinking, rigorous research and well-prepared analysis. Working in a visual medium is, therefore, very different for me, my colleagues in the discipline, and our students. While we incorporate graphs and tables into our work, we rarely “do pictures.” As a result of this incongruity, the incorporation of multimedia into my department’s senior seminar made me feel as if I stepped onto a weak limb of a threateningly high tree. I did find it comforting to learn that the University of South Carolina has incorporated multimedia techniques into an honors English seminar in which students “attach” photographs, maps and even music to their text.<sup>1</sup> Now that my students’ multimedia projects are complete, I am so satisfied with the results that I would like to share my experiences with others who want to incorporate multimedia projects into their capstone course.

Before I go into the details of how I integrated multimedia technology into the senior seminar, let me provide a standard definition of multimedia. According to Egil and Kinnaman, multimedia refers to “a seamless digital integration of text, graphics, animation audio, still images, and motion video in a way that provides individual users with high levels of control and interaction.”<sup>2</sup>

**How We Began.** In the summer 1997, I met with Kennesaw State University’s Presentation Technology Department (PTD) Director, Karl Aldag, to work out a plan in which he agreed to introduce multimedia technology to my fall quarter senior seminar students. The plan was to be a pilot project for PTD since they were just beginning to install computer equipment in their newly created technology laboratory. I assured them that, because our senior seminar was new to the major, we would not inundate the lab with students. In fact, this pilot project got underway with four students. This proved to be important as both director and Assistant Director, Shannon Cronin, were new administrators to an emerging and technologically sophisticated department. Both provided invaluable time to introduce students to the

various computer programs such as Adobe PrintShop and Adobe Premiere which were required for multimedia productions. Neither student nor their instructor had any idea how to use the multimedia computer software. PowerPoint was about the most I had ever used in “multimedia technology.”

Lest anyone think making a video simply means pointing the camcorder in the right direction, let me add that my students incorporated both audio and video into a digital version on the computer. Only at the end was it downloaded to a videocassette. In fact, a camcorder was not even used. How does one make a video or compact disk (CD) presentation of Mexican oil issues or the French role in NATO from our campus? That is where digital imaging creation from existing photos in books and magazines enters the process. Images are scanned and digitized, and contribute to the final product. Fair use doctrine currently permits the incorporation of copyrighted material into a multimedia product for academic purposes.

**Multimedia Products.** One student created a CD and two students produced videos. One international affairs student who wanted to reveal her language ability, chose to narrate her video in French! Such a technique should hold promise as a means of future assessment within the new “applied foreign language” concentration of the international affairs major. All projects were completed by the end of fall quarter 1997. My instructions required students to prepare a portfolio that included several written components one of which was a research paper. They could choose to write a more lengthy research paper and opt out of the multimedia part, or write a shorter version and use it as the basis for a multimedia production. The multimedia portion of the senior seminar was optional and three of the four students successfully completed a multimedia product. Of the eight course objectives stated in the syllabus, the most fitting was the one which allows “for the production of a research endeavor which will utilize student writing, research, analytical, oral and creative skills.” Putting their research product into a multimedia format certainly fit the creative requirement for my senior semi-