INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS TEXT

These tutorials have been designed to introduce teachers and student teachers to the essential functionality of the Microsoft *Office 2007* suite of software applications. The learning objectives of these tutorials are thus threefold:

- to help the pre-service and in-service teacher acquire the fundamental skills involved in using the Microsoft *Office 2007* suite of productivity programs;
- to help the pre-service and in-service teacher learn how to apply these skills in the context of the classroom;
- to motivate the pre-service and in-service teacher to go on to learn the more advanced features of Microsoft *Office 2007*.

1.2 WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THIS TEXT?

This is certainly not the only set of Microsoft *Office 2007* tutorials available for the education marketplace. Why, then, will the pre-service or in-service teacher select this text rather than another? What features set it apart?

- The tutorials go beyond a cookbook approach to Microsoft *Office 2007*, emphasizing the concepts behind the keystrokes. On completion of the tutorials the student teacher will understand the fundamentals of managing a computer-integrated teaching environment.

Students of education will also be introduced, directly or indirectly, to methodologies for teaching their students essential computing concepts and skills.

- The scope of the material presented in ESSENTIAL Microsoft *Office 2007* is intentionally limited to what can be reasonably covered in 10-15 class hours depending on the computing abilities of the students. It will thus fit nicely within the context of either a course devoted to the broader issues of computer literacy for teachers, or a standalone one credit hands-on course that introduces Microsoft *Office 2007*.
- All the examples that are worked in the exercises are related to activities that might take place in K-12 classrooms. At the end of the tutorials, the pre-service or in-service teacher will take away a set of files that will have direct application in the classroom.
- Proficiency is promoted by frequent reinforcement of skills learned.
- Appropriate exercises at the end of each tutorial provide an opportunity for skill consolidation.
- Teachers are encouraged throughout the text to build on, and grow beyond, the skills learned in the tutorials.
- The authors understand the needs of teachers who may not be naturally inclined to get excited about the latest technology. They have over 40 years experience between them, teaching at all scholastic levels K through college, including experience teaching various disciplines in the Arts and the Sciences.

1.3 WHY MICROSOFT *OFFICE 2007?*

Microsoft *Office* is among the most commonly used software applications designed to run on personal computers. It incorporates the Word Processor, the Database, the Spreadsheet, Drawing/Graphics, Communications and Presentation programs, and allows easy connectivity between these modules.

In *Office 2007* you have a computing environment which will enable you to handle most of the productivity applications expected of a teaching professional. Furthermore, when you teach *Office 2007* to your students and integrate it into the curriculum, you will enable them to gain skills in the use of applications expected of the citizen of today's and tomorrow's world.

The user of these tutorials should be aware that the goal is to learn the ESSENTIALS of the *Office 2007* software. It is beyond the scope of the tutorials to cover all the features of this rich software suite.

It is the author's hope that, on completion of the tutorials, students and teachers will be motivated to venture forth on their own and become proficient in the many quality and productivity enhancing aspects of this and other computer-based teaching and learning tools.

1.4 THE STATUS OF COMPUTING IN SCHOOLS

The question is no longer: "Should the computer be used in schools?" The question is: "*How* should the computer be used in schools?" It is over 20 years since this tool for teaching found its

way into the K-12 curriculum. If you believed the hoopla, and everything you see and hear in the media, you would think that most of children in schools were soaking up a large proportion of their education while seated at a computer keyboard. However, the reality is that the majority of teachers have not yet had a realistic opportunity to integrate computer-based activities into their classes.

Staff development and ongoing support are therefore key to successful integration of the computer into the generally accepted set of aids routinely used by teachers to provide students with the best possible learning experience. Buchsbaum (1992) quotes the experience of Vera White, a Washington, DC Jefferson Junior High principal: "Sometimes technology can be frightening to people who have never had to use anything but a piece of chalk. But give them the time and space to work by themselves, and they can do it and they enjoy it."

Hence these tutorials.

1.5 TEACHING IS A COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR

No tutorial in and of itself can teach you anything unless you are committed to the learning process. Computing is a skill, rather than a body of knowledge. As such, it demands practice in order to foster and maintain proficiency. As Thomas Edison observed: "The most important method of education always has consisted of that in which the pupils were urged to actual performance."

You, the teacher, must be prepared to work at mastering Microsoft *Office 2007*, as well as the myriad other examples of educational software that have been developed for your area of pedagogical expertise. You need to do this if you are to ever feel comfortable using the computer as a tool for teaching.

In Chapter One of our accompanying text, Education for an Information Age, we argue the case that, for K-12 students as well as for teachers, modern technologies make a difference when it comes to improving learning as well as teaching.

All your efforts, then, will yield abundant fruit when you thoughtfully incorporate computer-based instruction into your curriculum. Your students will partake in that fruitful harvest and you will touch their future even as you touch your own.

1.6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

They say good teachers are born, not made. Well, here is one teacher who acknowledges an enormous debt to his own teachers, who have been a source of inspiration and, above all, of ideas. My teachers, like good teachers everywhere, have had a significant impact on my teaching commitment, philosophy, and style.

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Lorrie Jackson wrote the original Lesson 10 and I am indebted to her for doing that. The lesson has progressed since then, through various versions and various additions of skills to be learned. But Lorrie’s spirit still resides therein.

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Life is a work in progress, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank, in anticipation, those from whom I will continue to draw inspiration and ideas to improve the quality of my teaching and writing.

Bernard John Poole, August 17, 2007.

REFERENCES

Buchsbaum, Herbert. *"Portrait of a Staff Development Program,"* in Electronic Learning, vol. 11, no. 7, April 1992.