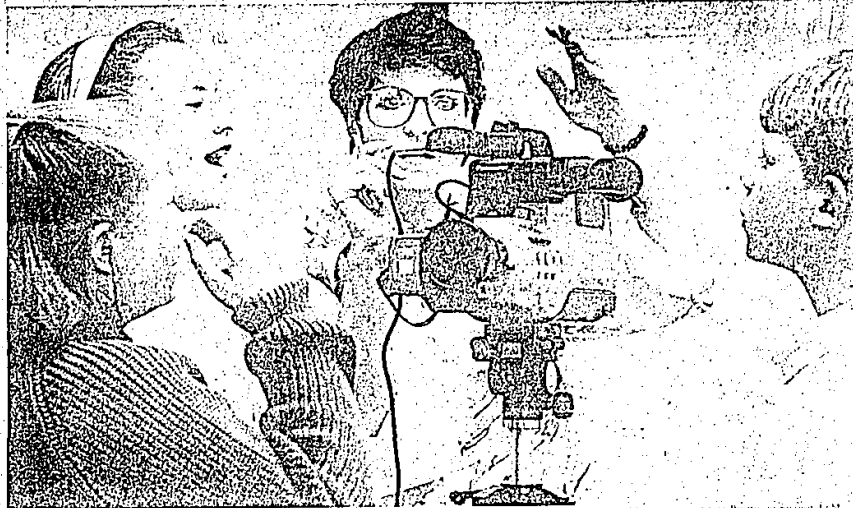


Taping class: Jeff Kotrba begins working with the camera that will be used to make a documentary of the class project.



Setting up: Teacher Barbara Rebbeck helps students (l-r) Jessica Fultz, Chrissy Neassund-Jeff Kotrba get the equipment ready for their project.

World class

Seventh-graders explore learning in "Journeys"

BY CASEY HANS STAFF WRITER
This year, teacher Barbara Rebbeck is helping a group of Power Middle School seventh graders go where no students have gone before.

In a special class called "Journeys" Rebbeck is helping students travel through the worlds of language arts and social studies with the help of technology, learning all the while.

"It's really great," said student Stacey Matlyou. "What this class has taught me is how to work with people more. I think it's made it easier to get along."

"I think it would work for all classes."

Rebbeck's idea stemmed from a districtwide study on secondary education. With district enticements, the 22-year teaching veteran was removed from her role as a gifted coordinator and put back into the classroom to teach. She felt a program which integrated curriculum and used technology would be effective and "Journeys" is something she called "a grab bag of ideas from over the years."

"I think these kids are basically a TV generation," she said. "They need a hands-on way of learning."

The class makes use of video equipment, computers and any other technology Rebbeck can incorporate.

Recently, students took a lesson on ancient Egypt and transformed it into an animated production, an all-class project which took about two weeks. Called "School of the Mysteries," it was a take-off on the book "Motel of the Mysteries" which they had studied. Students broke into groups with some doing drawings, some planning story lines, some writing scripts and still others working with an animation artist who came and helped the class shoot the project.

Credits were done on computer, and a group of students videotaped

One of the things I like to do is bring out the potential of each kid. I would much rather teach this way than have them in rows.

*Barbara Rebbeck
teacher*

the project as a sideline documentary. The students presented their finished project at a recent school board meeting.

Twenty-six students participate in Rebbeck's class, where she can often be found moving from one group to the next offering encouragement and help on various projects.

The students met all year in one of the portable classrooms to the west of the main school building, but students said they were so busy they didn't mind.

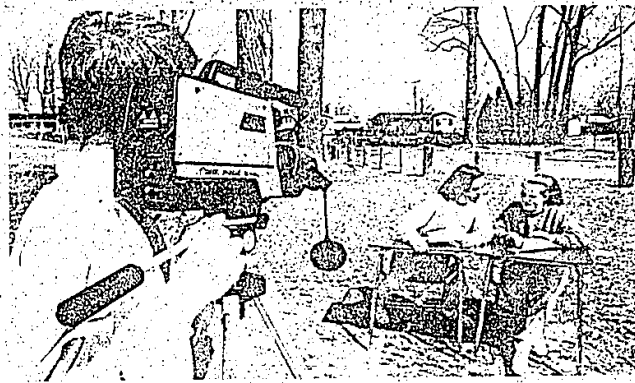
Matlyou, who is new to the district after moving here from California, said the class has made her technologically literate and makes lessons easier to learn. For example, when doing an essay on an explorer for the Social Studies Olympiad, she chose Walt Disney, one of the best known animation artists.

Before, she may have picked someone like Christopher Columbus.

"It influences the way I think on most subjects," she said. "I wouldn't have even thought of Walt Disney before."

As part of the program, students do self-evaluation and evaluations of each other. Rebbeck said after each project, "the standards come up."

"One of the things I like to do is bring out the potential of each kid," she added. "I would much rather teach this way than have them in rows."



Taping outside: Chrissy Neassund interviews Jessica Fultz (right) outside the classroom as Jeff Kotrba operates the camera. The video history is all part of the "Journeys" class project.



Montessori style: Stacey Matlyou said the "Journeys" class reminds her of learning the Montessori method with everybody learning in groups. "It's nothing like any class I've ever had," she said.



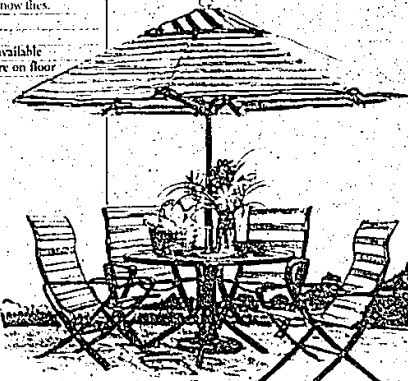
Class cartoon: Dana Haupt (left) and Daren DeCavette assist visual artist Vic Spencer in the filming of the class cartoon. The artist made over the portable classroom's lavatory as a work area.

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