

Mabel Lee media center wired for success

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

About a year ago, the basement of Mabel Lee Hall was a practice gym.

Today the space is wired, carpeted and filled with high-tech computers that compose the New Media Center.

Faculty and students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are using the center's multimedia technology to enhance traditional teaching and research methods.

Faculty members will display their projects during a private demonstration Friday. The center, which was installed last June, is open to any department for faculty or guided student use.

Director Sara Moshman said UNL's media center was leading the nation in multimedia — combining animation, video, text, graphics and sound with 20th-century computer technology.

With up to 64 megabytes of memory, the computers can write CD

programs and reproduce high-quality video and audio. Most home computers have between four and eight megabytes of memory.

The center's multimedia classroom also allows professors to offer more resources and directly expose their students to interactive programs.

The programs, both IBM and Apple-compatible, are relatively simple, she said, and the basics can be learned in a two-hour class.

The focus of the center, she said, is to teach the faculty how to use the programs and hope that their knowledge will trickle down to the students.

For Glenn Dilbert-Himes, a doctoral English graduate student, the multimedia of the 20th century allow him to interface with what he calls the "multimedia of the 19th century."

Dilbert-Himes is working on archiving an 1835 coffee-table book of poetry by British Poet Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

Landon used literature, engraved illustrations and musical scores in the

book, he said — hence, multimedia. The center's computers allow him to digitally clean the book by removing stains and smudges.

He can also compress the information onto a CD-ROM and create full-text and fragmented versions for scholarly use.

Brian Moore, associate professor of music education, has a similar goal in mind for his education program called The Music Suite.

By hooking up an electronic keyboard to the computer, he said, he is able to edit his music through a series of computer codes.

"You can be reflective about your music," he said. "When you're done composing, you can sit back and let the computer create."

"It's similar to creating a story by speaking, and then you could write the story out with word processors, allowing the person to be more creative."

This program also puts creativity into the hands of people who have not

done much composing, he said, such as elementary, junior high and high school students.

Brenda Schick, assistant professor of special education and communication disorders, used the technology to demonstrate sign language.

She developed an interactive program that she said she hoped to publish and distribute across the nation.

Multimedia was especially valuable to her field, she said.

"Sign language is a very visual language," she said. "And once you try to learn it from a book, it doesn't work."

The programs allowed her students to see a variety of people signing, including children.

"College students need to learn how to work with kids," she said. "This gives them access to children."

"I don't see this as a finished product," she said. "I see it as a process where every lesson I do, it gets better."

New media

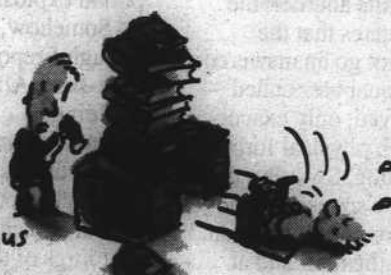
High-tech attractions at UNL

■ The New Media Center in Mabel Lee Hall. It provides the latest in multimedia, combining animation, video, text, graphics and sound with 20th century computer technology.

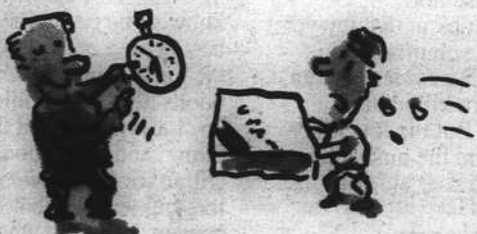
■ Distance-education classes. An instructor teaches from a classroom or studio equipped with video cameras. The cameras can be manually operated or hooked up to a voice control. When students speak, the camera focuses on them.

■ Multimedia classrooms such as the one in Keim Hall 210. Student's desks for notetaking will be replaced with 34 individual computer stations.

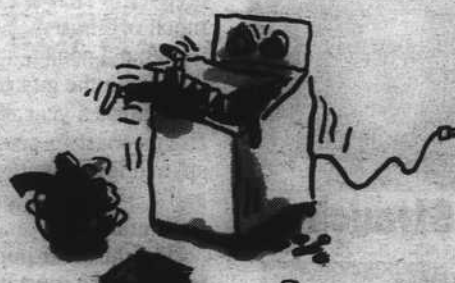
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NU rolls toward 'high-tech' education

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Pencils, paper and textbooks may become obsolete in some classrooms at UNL when computer stations become as commonplace as wooden desks.

The stuffy hallways in Keim Hall on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln East Campus transform upon entering room 210 — a model "high tech" room.

The plastic wrappers still cover the 66 free-rolling chairs, and cables line the newly-carpeted, terraced floors of what will soon be filled with 34 individual computer stations.

The stations will be equipped with Pentium computers and will allow students to interact with each other and with a main computer station at the front of the room by using an electronic-response pad.

The students will be able to take exams and conduct surveys on the computers and have the results tabulated immediately. They will eventually be able to combine their technology with the Internet.

Donald Edwards, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, said the technology made it possible to move toward a paperless classroom.

"Four hundred years ago we had the printed word that came in," he said. "Today, we have the electronic word."

As technology streamlines the classroom, the role of the instructor is ambiguous. It will be defined by experience, Edwards said.

But he said he would like to see an integration of the technology and teachers.

"The students still raise up the issue that we are still human beings, we still relate to one another as human beings," he said. "Is the electronic word going to replace some of that?"

Not all classrooms at UNL will move toward technology, he said. He said he wanted to make sure everything was available, from chalkboards to electronic classrooms.

"Everybody learns a little differently."

