

IT & ME AND IT & ME Works Curriculum Development Process

The Curriculum Development Process – IT & ME:

Sponsored by the Western NH Business & Education Partnership and facilitated by Marsha Miller, thirteen business & technology teachers participated in the IT Summer Institute of 2001 that was held on the campus of Hesser College in Manchester, New Hampshire. The objective of the five-day institute was to create a core course that would prepare students to live, learn and work in the 21st century. To insure that the core course was built on industry skills and standards, the teachers divided into four teams and visited area businesses, including a large regional hospital, a national investment company, a major hotel chain and the state's television station. As each team shared their findings, it became clear that – regardless of the industry site and its core line of business – employers were looking for the same set of academic, technical and employability skills.

Armed with these findings, along with *The Pathway/Pipeline Benchmark Chart of IT Skills and Knowledge* that was produced by EDC, Inc. and the Information Technology Association of America, the teachers conducted an audit of where and how these skills and standards were currently being taught in their school. The result of this self-assessment was a concrete list of skill gaps. For instance, while most of the high school teachers were allocating a significant portion of their contact hours to *word processing/keyboarding*, in some schools, there was either limited or no contact time given to *networking, programming, technology and society, and/or employability skills*.

Closing the Skill Gap:

The course outline and sample lesson plans for *IT & ME* provide a framework for how the standards can be taught, beginning with technology and society and ending with programming. (Please refer to the first column of the Skills and Standards Grid that follows this document.) Included on the course outline is the number of contact hours for each standard. This recommendation is the *minimum* requirement so that, depending upon the skills and interest level of each class and the sequence of courses offered by your school, more time could be spent on a certain topic. However, to prepare a technically literate workforce, the balance among the standards must be maintained.

Depending on the high school's program of study and its course requirements for the ninth graders, IT & ME could be taught in the eighth grade which is the case in Lisbon.. The teachers recommend using this course to satisfy New Hampshire's current standard for computer literacy.

At the end of the *IT & ME* lesson plans is an overview of a course entitled "What's in the Box?" which is being taught at the Sugar River Valley Vocational-Technical Center in Claremont, NH. It is an example of how one school used the standards for Hardware Installation, Configuration and Network Technologies to design a course that meets the needs of their students and, further, promotes enrollment in their PC Hardware & Networking Specialty.

The Curriculum Development Process – IT & ME Works

During the summer of 2002, nineteen high school teachers and three postsecondary department chairs participated in the IT Educator in the Workplace Summer Institute that was held at the Emerging Technologies Campus of New Hampshire Community-Technical College at Pease. The sponsor was the Western NH Business & Education Partnership and the facilitator was Marsha Miller.

The teachers' task was to develop the second core course for the IT Pathway. While the **IT & ME** teachers focused on the identification of skills and standards that measure technical literacy, the **IT & Me Works** teachers created lesson plans for each of the four career specialties; business technologies, interactive media, PC hardware & networking, programming and software development. During the first day of the institute, the full team reviewed the course outline, lesson plans and learner outcomes for **IT & ME**. They also identified the process by which they would create and assess their work, which resulted in the formation of curriculum development teams that included postsecondary faculty for each of the four career specialties. To insure continuity between **IT & ME** and **IT & ME Works**, as well as classroom implementation, they began each day with a full team assessment of the lesson plans that were produced the prior day. This was especially important as teachers were committed to teaching all of the standards – even if it meant charting unfamiliar territory!

Assessment:

In order to comply with the State Department of Education's Technology Plan, each district must assess the technical literacy skills of their eighth graders. To assist our districts in meeting this requirement, twenty-four teachers attended the IT Summer Institute of 2003 and developed a pre/post test based on the core course I.T. & ME. Eighty percent of these teachers had attended prior institutes and have field-tested the core courses. It is their recommendation that the same test be given before and after I.T. & ME so that teachers can measure progress over time and, further, note areas of strength and deficiency. They also created additional lesson plans for this course.

Acknowledgement:

New Hampshire's IT Pathway is a quilt of many colors. It serves all students by having technical literacy as its lining. Many hands came to the sewing table to add their square of knowledge, skill and passion. They are the weavers who shared their pattern for quality teaching. Their willingness to be peer-evaluated and peer-tested and, further, take action to improve their "square" deserves public recognition and support for what they do and how much they give to New Hampshire students.

Sincerely,
Marsha A. Miller
IT Project Director
mamiller@ttlc.net