

Master's students practice giving digital lessons

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Millville's technology projects

By **DIANE D'AMICO**
Education Writer

Jeremias Bermudez had a problem: The Millville school district had implemented Microsoft Office SharePoint, but employees were having problems understanding exactly how to use it.

So Bermudez, a senior computer technician in the district, customized a Web site and video with a tutorial on the system, then surveyed staff about its effectiveness.

He solved an issue in the district, but he didn't do it alone. Bermudez used the project as his capstone for his Master of Arts in Instructional Technology, or MAIT, from Richard Stockton College. As he worked, he had support from Stockton faculty and fellow district employees who attended the classes held in the district.

Professor Jung Lee said the goal of Stockton's MAIT program is to have the students apply what they learn in their districts. In 2003, the college piloted its first off-campus pro-

gram in Linwood. It was a success, and Millville, Brigantine and Burlington have joined Linwood in hosting Stockton faculty on their campuses for master's degree programs.

Brigantine Superintendent Robert Previti said the on-site MAIT program has revolutionized how they teach.

"We have a lot of technology here with smartboards, TV equipment," Previti said. "Teachers can learn something, then use the applications in class the next day."

Linwood's master's in education program this year includes teachers from neighboring districts.

"You do get more people willing to do it when it's held here," Superintendent Thomas Baruffi said.

The dozen Millville employees in the graduating MAIT class gave presentations on their projects Dec. 2 at the Lakeside School. School Superintendent Shelly Schneider said she was impressed that all of the projects were practical and meaningful.

"Technology is still a scary area for a lot of staff," Schneider said. "These graduates can become the leaders."

Many of the students in the program are teachers in Millville who created projects that addressed their specific areas. Kindergarten teacher Brandon Cobb (aka The Dinosaur Hunter) created short videos called "Digging up Dinosaurs" to help his students remember dinosaur facts.

Cobb said he wanted materials to be age-appropriate. He used school buses as a measuring tool, noting that the Brontosaurus — also known as an Apatosaurus, Cobb explained — was as long as two school buses and weighed as much as three.

"I wanted to relate dinosaurs to things they know," he said of his students. "And I include a lot of repetition."

He wrote catchy original songs about each dinosaur, which students sang during a recent class. The videos are a popular choice among the students during rest time, and a

way for Cobb to make learning fun.

"They'll ask to see them almost every day," he said.

Music teacher Rosalind Metcalf created a Web site on incorporating technology into music classes. She was able to find free online resources that help students learn to compose, record, edit and print their own compositions.

"I assessed this all over the place to make sure they were actually learning," she said. "And they actually learned more than in a traditional class."

Metcalf said her only problem was that there were not enough keyboards for every student.

Nina Crain said the teachers learned a lot from each other, as well as the Stockton instructors, and that the classes really focused on their needs.

"And just not having to commute (to Stockton) was great," Sharon Zerra said.

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Jeremias Bermudez: Created video and Web tutorial for district's use of Microsoft SharePoint.

Brandon Cobb: Created kindergarten-level videos on "Digging up Dinosaurs."

Leslie Hurley and Nina Crain: Created "Family Fun with Foundations" DVD and manual for parents on how to reinforce Wilson Foundations reading lessons at home to enhance parent participation and create more interaction with the teachers.

Nellie Eldridge: Developed Web quests and Web site to give students a more cultural approach to learning Spanish.

Amy Johnson: Developed a Web site for teachers with lesson plans using differentiated instruction for special education students.

Karen Kappre: Created a "Help Yourself Help Desk" that teachers can access anytime with answers to basic district technology questions. Site can be expanded based on need.

Juntanee Krongboonying: Developed customized Electronic Staff Orientation Program (ESOP) to provide staff information about district human-resources issues such as benefits.

John Law: Developed training for Information Technology staff. Tried several methods, and

found videos were most successful.

Rosalind Metcalf: Developed music lessons that let students compose, record, edit and print original compositions.

Robert Trivellini: Developed the Veterans Interview Project (VIP) in which students taped interviews with area World War II veterans on the role of regular soldiers in the war. Interviews were incorporated into a video podcasts and Web site.

Sharon Zerra: Developed Get Excited About Reading (GEAR) to help students develop reading comprehension skills. Students recorded themselves reading, then played back and discussed what they read.