Passive presentation programs and authoring language programs for classroom teachers - which is best for the K-12 teacher? Depends on your ultimate lesson and instruction strategy!

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Over a decade of teaching passive presentation programs (PowerPoint) and authoring language programs starting with PILOT and SuperPILOT (Programmed Instruction Learning or Teaching) to the current – Hyper*.* programs, has convinced me that the specific use of each tool for instruction has become clear. Initially a teacher must define the lesson and then decide which program will meet needs for that lesson and then plan an instructional strategy. Instructional strategy will determine whether to use a passive style program such as PowerPoint or to use an authoring language program. Each program has instructional strengths.

For several years I have taught the Hyper*.* programs using the supposition that teachers were creating their own programs and presenting these programs 'lessons' to their classes. The basic authoring skills combined with teaching and learning theory are taught to undergraduates teacher in training and to the graduate students taking teacher education classes. The purpose of teaching passive presentation programs was to give these teachers some tools to create and present 'new' lessons for their classes. The purpose of teaching hyper style lesson construction was to provide the teacher with a means for creating interactive, not passive, lessons for their classes.

Teachers are using these two different programs to create very different instructional scenarios. The passive presentation programs are ubiquitous in most schools where technology is available. The instructional technique used for passive presentation programs is straightforward - mostly passive teacher led instruction with a mix of clip art, pictures, some sound and in some instances internet connectivity. Animation and movies when available are making these tools very popular. Instruction using hyper programs is not in the creation of total lessons and presentations of individual lessons but in the presenting the properties of the authoring language and then letting the student use their own creative ability to present information, lessons, projects, etc.

Preservice and inservice teachers have received training for years in the preparation of lessons using passive presentation programs. The current programs are extremely easy and convenient for new and experienced teachers to use for a multitude of lessons and lesson presentations. PowerPoint has become the presentation tool for teachers. The use of authoring programs is very popular for many teachers but not as a presentation tool but as a tool for the students to use in their classes. Teachers teach the basics of Hyper*.* programs and the students take the program and create their own lessons, presentations, etc.

Teachers who use hyper programs as software options for their classes are easily distinguishing passive presentation tools from active programming tools. Even those teachers who take the classes offering training in the use of both tools and then never teach using the specific hyper programs have indicated the value of learning new instructional approaches and methods for their traditional class lessons. In particular, the authoring program, HyperStudio, has served well the new and experienced teachers as they learn new instructional methods for their classes.