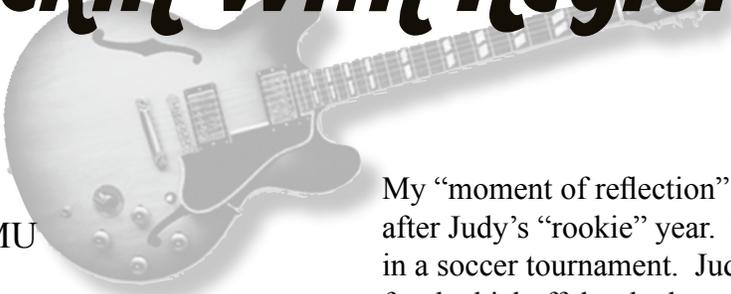


Rockin With Region 4



Lynn Wiley, Ph.D.
T/TAC Region 4 @ GMU

I'm sure most of you lead extremely busy lives. We throw ourselves into our careers, our families, and, basically, work hard to create the necessary balance for ourselves and those around us. We don't often have time for reflection, but every once in a while something happens that causes us to bridge past and present. One day that very thing happened to me. I looked back on how things were when I first began my career in special education, when PL 94-142 was guiding practice in our field. Oddly enough, this chance to reflect on my professional experiences happened in the most unlikely place. It happened on a youth league soccer field.

Years ago, my young daughter played soccer with many of the girls in her elementary school. At the beginning of each season, the "roster" changed slightly, since her team was a community soccer league. One season, a girl with specific special needs joined the team. I happened to overhear some of the little girls discussing this new girl with particular interest. How, they wondered, was she going to be on the team when she had difficulty understanding the rules and concentrating at practice? Well, I joined their conversation and suggested that they might help her learn the rules by going over them a few extra times during practice and, perhaps, they could make sure that she was always a part of every skills activity, which could help her maintain interest. The girls seemed fine with these "tips," and because "Judy" was also in school with them, they grew more comfortable with including her.

The year went on and, as with all the girls, Judy's soccer abilities continued to develop. Eventually, she became particularly skilled at kicking that soccer ball straight and hard down the field. When that happened, it usually evoked such applause from the parents of our team on the sidelines that the opposing team often wondered if they had just been scored upon!

My "moment of reflection" happened a few seasons after Judy's "rookie" year. The team was participating in a soccer tournament. Judy had taken the field for the kickoff, but had not positioned herself in the best direction to support our team. I watched as my daughter walked over to her, and gently took her hand and faced her in the appropriate direction. A small gesture, "no big deal," you might say. When I talked with her about it later, that is what my daughter said, too. But then, that is my point!

When I began my career as a teacher in special education, I never imagined that my work and the work of so many colleagues around our nation would result in what happened that day. I never imagined that children would accept each other's differences, take the necessary time to provide help, and consider it "no big deal." With all our anxiety about assessment, law, policy, etc., we must give ourselves the time to reflect and realize that much of what we have been working for has come to fruition. Perhaps this has happened in small ways, but that makes it no less important. Long ago, as a new teacher, I wish I had told myself that my professional goal was to one day have my daughter and one of her classmates with special needs play side-by-side on a soccer team. And that it would be "no big deal." I wish I had been that ambitious and optimistic. So, please look around your school and community and see the results of your efforts. See the benefits of your work on the sports fields and in the work place and in your neighborhoods. Look around, pat yourself on the back, and then keep working on making our schools a learning environment of excellence for all students, both those with disabilities and those without. You HAVE made a difference in our communities for ALL students and, although there are those who may disagree with me, it is a VERY big deal.

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Have you had a moment that has caused you to reflect positively on your professional goals and efforts? Are you willing to share it and, possibly, have it be part of the next T/TAC newsletter?

Please email your stories (attached as a Word document) to: hwiley@gmu.edu. In the subject line of the email, put **Great Moment!** We will be able to include only one or two great moments in our next Rockin' With Region 4.

Early Childhood Inclusion Survey We Need Your Help!

The VDOE and the regional T/TACs are conducting a survey to determine needs within early childhood programs related to inclusion.

Please go to www.ttaonline.org, click on your region and locate the Early Childhood Survey on the Welcome page. The survey will take 10 minutes to complete. You will be eligible to receive a free resource to use in your early childhood classroom. Thanks for your help.

EC Inclusion Survey Monthly Drawing Winners as of January 9, 2006

November

Christyn Swaim from Northwestern Regional Educational Preschool Program serving Winchester City and Frederick County students, Region IV

Prize: "Alphabet Soup" software from 2Simple USA

December

Sandy Bowman from Marion Primary, Region VII

Prize: "Blended Practices for Teaching Young Children in Inclusive Settings" by Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak (2005) and "Consultation in Early Childhood Settings" by Buysse & Wesley (2005).

You, too, might be a winner of educational material for your classroom or professional library. You must complete the Early Childhood Inclusion Survey as directed above and then enter the drawing to win! Thanks and good luck!

Early Childhood Educators...get the new Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Standards for Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and History & Social Science, December 2005, from the Virginia Department of Education Web site at www.doe.virginia.gov

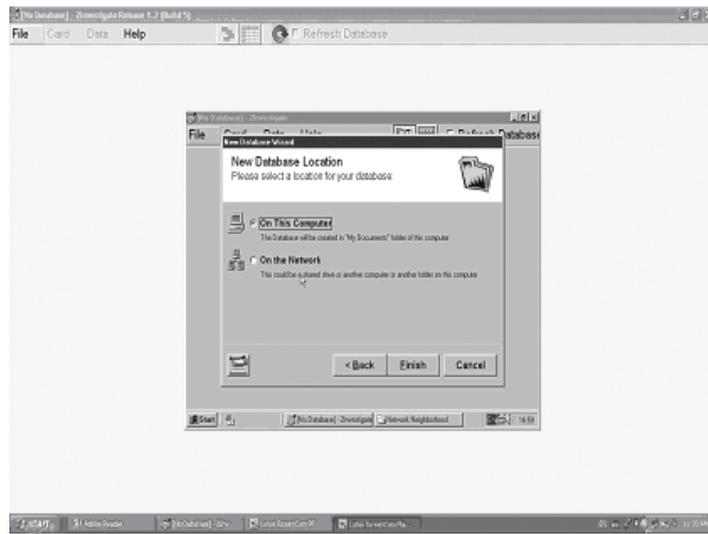
Library Corner

By Estela Landeros



Learning how to use databases can be difficult for some students. This is a review of a program designed to teach students from 2nd to 8th grade how to collect data and present it in a very colorful and attractive way. This program is available through our library at the TTAC at GMU.

2Investigate is a program developed by 2SimpleUSA (www.2simpleusa.com). This program was a finalist on the AEP Distinguished Achievement Award for 2005. 2Investigate offers visual cues that perform advanced searches and permit multiple users to enter data at the same time to a single database hosted on a network.



When the database name is created, teachers can decide who can access the database and whether it will be hosted on a specific computer or server. Once that is done, students can explore the sample databases. 2Investigate allows students to set up a database and maintain, organize and classify the information in several formats.

When 2Investigate initially loads, you will be presented with a menu with the following four choices:

- **Start a new Database**

This option will load a 3-step Wizard which will assist students in creating their own Database.

- **Open an existing Database**

This option allows students to open a database that has already been created either on the host machine or over the network.

- **Open last Database**

This option allows students to open the last database used.

- **Watch a video on how to make a Database**

If a student is having difficulty or is interested in learning how to use 2Investigate, a video tutorial on making a simple database can be viewed. This option is highly recommended for new users.

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2Investigate comes with several sample databases that can either be used for practice or modified to create a new database adding information or new pictures from other sources. Students can then create charts such as bar charts, 3D bar charts, line or pie charts.

