

**Module Report 3**  
**English Composition 101**  
**Getting Acquainted with *Inspiration* Software**  
*By Michele Graham*

**Course**

Composition 101  
3 Semester Hours  
Prerequisite: English 100

**Description**

In this module, students will be asked to create an *Inspiration* diagram based on a selected grammar lesson. The student will be learning grammar and technology simultaneously.

**Transferability**

This software can be infused into any lecture in any discipline.

**Faculty Technology Skill**

- Basic computer skills
- Ability to navigate the Internet
- Ability to work an overhead projector

**Student Technology Skill**

- Basic computer skills
- Ability to navigate the Internet

**Faculty Equipment**

- *Inspiration* software
- Internet access
- Individual PC with *Microsoft Word*
- Printer, black and white or color (optional)
- Overhead projector

**Cost**

Sprysoft is the company that publishes *Inspiration*. The cost is approximately \$69.00 to the public, and for educational institutions, it costs approximately \$25.00 per PC. So, for a computer room of 20 computers (English Department computer laboratory at Olive-Harvey), the price would be approximately \$500.00. If the college decided to only let the instructors have the software, it would be around \$200.00.

**Improvement on Teaching and Learning**

The amalgamation of inventiveness, human imagination, and the electronic/optical tools to transform ideas into reality is what we call technology. This is precisely what

*Inspiration* software brings to the classroom. Students need a different way of thinking. Through technology, students become problem solvers, and they are able to store information in their long-term memories. They are also learning content in the environment where it is applied. The students are engaged in the technology while they are absorbing the lesson plan.

### **Nontechnology Comparison**

The students will be learning cutting-edge technology while reviewing the fundamentals of the selected lesson plan. This activity is fun and more engaging since critical and analytical thinking skills are being utilized.

### **How to Use in the Classroom**

For a selected grammar lesson plan (verbs, fragments, run-ons, etc.), I will give class instruction in the form of a lecture, *Blackboard* exercises, handouts and quizzes—the average mundane methodologies.

The next class period will be held in the English Department computer center. The class and I will collaborate on presenting the same lesson plan in an *Inspiration* diagram. I will give an overview of *Inspiration* with handouts, and the class will be learning the software as we compose the lesson plan. It is imperative that teachers keep students engaged and intrigued. Learning does not have to be like a trip to the dentist's office.

After spending the class period collaborating on an *Inspiration* diagram, students will be assigned to a group to create an *Inspiration* diagram on another previously discussed lesson. I generally teach two courses, and I have two classes each; therefore, each class will judge the others' projects. Each member of the group with the most creative diagram will receive 25 bonus points.

### **Using *Inspiration***

The following is the handout I will distribute on our "Technology Day."

#### **First Steps**

1. Open *Inspiration*. Read, then close, the Tip of the Day window.
2. Remove the Grid Snap in order to have complete control over where the symbols will be placed on your diagram (click on the **Utility** menu, click on **Grid Snap** to remove the check mark).
3. Type your main idea in the Main Idea symbol (the main idea you type becomes the filename unless you change it during the saving process). Click away from the symbol, or press the **shift + return** keys.

#### **Add Symbols to your Diagram**

Add a link symbol.

- Method 1** Click on an existing symbol to select it (square handles will appear around the symbol). Decide where you want the new symbol to appear, and click

on the appropriate arrow on one of the two **Create** buttons in the toolbar. A new symbol will appear ready for you to add text.

**Method 2** Rapid Fire. Just after you type the next symbol, click on the **Rapid Fire** button in the toolbar. A small red lightning symbol will appear. Type the next symbol, and press the return key. Another red lightning symbol will appear ready for the next idea. When finished, press the **Rapid Fire** button to turn this feature off.

### **Add an Unlinked Symbol**

Click away from any existing symbol to remove handles. Click on a symbol from the symbol palette. Move the symbol to the desired location.

### **Link Two Unlinked Symbols**

Click on the **Link** button in the toolbar. Click on the first symbol. Click on the second symbol to be linked to the first. Click on the **Link** button again to turn off this feature.

### **Add Text to a Link Line**

Click on the link line. A box will appear. Type the text. Press the **shift + return** keys or click away from the link to end typing.

### **Change the Size of a Symbol**

Click on the symbol to activate the handles. Put your pointer on the handle in the bottom right corner; hold the mouse button down, and drag.

### **Change the Font Size, Type Size, etc.**

Click on the symbol to activate handles. Highlight the text. Go to the **Format** menu and choose from drop-down lists.

### **Correct Typing Errors**

Complete Text – Click on the symbol and begin typing.

One or Two Letters – Double-click on the symbol. Position the flashing bar; delete incorrect letters; and type the new letters.

### **Make Color Changes**

Click on the symbol. Drop down the **Effect** menu, and choose from a list. The user may also right click on the symbol and choose from the menu that appears.

### **Select More Than One Symbol at a Time**

Click on the first symbol. Hold the **shift** key down and click on other related symbols. Now you can change the color, font type, size, etc. of all the selected symbols at the same time.

### **Print Your Diagram**

1. Choose the orientation of your page (landscape or portrait): Click on **File, Page Setup**.
2. Preview your page before printing. Click on **File, Print Preview** to see whether your diagram will fit on one page. If the diagram does not fit on one page, you may . . .
  - control the look by changing the page layout and margins at this time.
  - let the software control the look by choosing **Print Options**, Fit to 1 page option.

### **To Add a Topic**

Click on **Add Topic** in the toolbar.

### **To Add a Subtopic**

1. Click on the topic to which you wish to add a subtopic; then click on the **Add Subtopic** button.
2. Use the F9 key in Rapid Fire mode to add additional subtopics to the same topic.

### **Moving Topics Around**

1. Click on the topic to be moved. A box will appear around the words.
2. Hold the left mouse button down, and drag the topic-subtopic to its new location. Release the mouse button. All subtopics and notes will be moved at the same time.

### **Change a Topic to a Subtopic**

1. Click on the topic you want to change. A box will appear around the words.
2. Click on the **Move Right** button in the toolbar to cause a topic to become a subtopic.
3. Click on the **Move Left** button in the toolbar to cause a subtopic to become a topic.

### **Add Notes to a Topic or Subtopic**

1. Click on the entry that needs a note.
2. Click on the **Add Note** button in the toolbar.
3. Type the note.
4. You can choose to hide or show notes by clicking on the **+Note** button in the toolbar.

### **Printing Your Outline**

1. Open the **File** menu and click on **Print Options**.
2. Choose from the **Outline Options** area: **Print Hidden Notes**, **Print Hidden Subtopics**.
3. Click **Preview** to see what the outline will look like.
4. Click **Print** when you are satisfied.

### **Internet Resources for *Inspiration***

<http://www.inspiration.com>

- This site is a source of ideas and information about visual learning issues.
- See how others use *Inspiration* in their classrooms.

<http://www.netscapte.com>

- Open HTML files created in *Inspiration*, and embellish them with text and graphics.

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr2graph.htm>

- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
- Learn the basics of graphics organizers.

<http://www.graphic.org>

- This site contains lots of ideas for bringing visual concepts into your classroom.