



March 2003
Vol. 4, No. 6

Inside

2 Dye pulls down Illinois teaching honor.

3 Taylor's program is voted tops in Texas.

4 Parent steps up to lend a hand in Synergistic Systems lab.

5 Exactly what is the warranty on your lab components?

6 Research & Presentation Module prepares students.

Tell us about your honors

If you have recently earned a local, state, or national honor or award because of your teaching performance, share the news with us, and we'll pass it along to our readers.

You deserve to be recognized, and we're happy to play a part in honoring your accomplishments. Send a note to Tom Farmer, tfarmer@pitsco.com.

Emphasizing careers

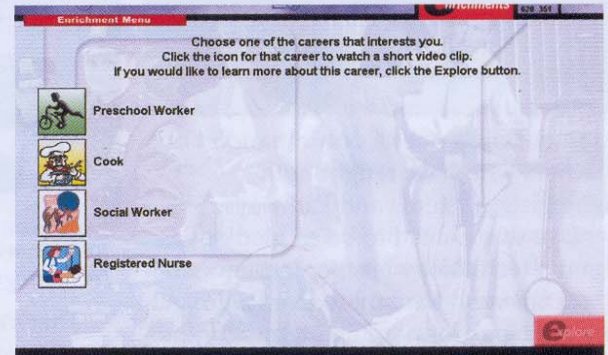
Version 2.4.0 includes new career enrichments/field trips and much more

Technology is ever changing. As such, new versions of Synergistic Systems Modules and Pathways Harbors are released every year and include new features and technologies. In June 2003, Version 2.4.0, packed with exciting additions and improvements, will debut.

Synergistic Systems

Features in Version 2.4.0 of all Synergistic Systems Modules include:

- Audio has been added to the Module Guide; Research, Challenge, and Application (RCA); and Post Test questions. If desired, the instructor can turn off this feature.
- A new Career Paths enrichment has been added to each of the Modules. The enrichment highlights four occupations related to the Module topic. Individuals featured in each career are workers at real jobs. (**Note:** The existing Careers enrichment utilizing the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* remains in the Modules.)
- Closed-captioned text has been added to existing enrichments.
- The tracking of knowledge survey test results



A new Career Paths enrichment (above) has been added to each of the Synergistic Systems Modules.

has been modified. Student points are recorded immediately after *each* Module Guide, RCA, or Post Test question is answered rather than after *all* knowledge survey questions in a session have been answered. This change is a direct result of students using the Ctrl+Alt+Delete key combination option to log out after nearly completing a series of knowledge survey questions. Logging out before the final

See **Version**, page 8

'Teacher of the Year' tag fits many of you

In this newsletter, we recognize a Pathways teacher (page 2) and a Synergistic Systems teacher (page 3) for receiving state teacher-of-the-year awards.

The Pathways teacher is Jim Dye of Plainfield (Illinois) South High School, who was named 2002 Illinois Technology Teacher of the Year. The Synergistic Systems teacher is Ed Taylor of Marsh Middle School (Fort Worth, Texas), who was named 2002 Texas Technology Education Middle School Teacher of the Year.



Robert Stokes
Director of
Development

Originally, I intended to recognize all the current and former teacher-of-the-year award recipients who teach in Pathways or Synergistic Systems labs. However, as I began to compile the list, I discovered two problems.

First, the number of award winners is very large. The list of names would be longer than

the space allocated for this column. Second, and far more important, while I was able to compile a fairly long list of past award recipients, it became clear that the list would not be comprehensive and several award winners would be inadvertently omitted.

So rather than listing the names of award recipients, I simply am honoring all the great teachers in our labs who have received such awards *and* the great teachers who have never been formally recognized.

See **Teacher**, page 2

RESEARCH ← → Presentation

New Module equips students to tackle research projects

Being assigned a research project can seem overwhelming to students. The new *Research & Presentation* Module equips students to tackle research projects by taking them through a step-by-step process, from selecting a topic to delivering an effective presentation.

The Module meets several business and technology standards and also provides the instructor flexibility in meeting various standards not addressed by other Modules in the lab. Research topics are provided in family and consumer sciences, math, science, and technology. Instructors can choose to allow students to select their own topics, assign particular topics to students, or customize the Module by assigning research topics unique to their classroom.

Students are instructed in effective methods of locating, evaluating, and documenting resources, including books, CD-ROM encyclopedias, and Web sites. Students are also shown how to take notes and avoid plagiarism in their work.

The Module includes a diverse library of books covering the four subject areas of provided topics. Students also have access to the *Encarta Reference Library* software, a vast multimedia CD-ROM encyclopedia. For labs with Internet access, Web sites are identified to help students complete their research.

Students use graphic organizers to sort their research and plan their presentation. *Microsoft PowerPoint* software is used to turn their research into a multimedia slide presentation. Students learn basic presentation design principles and apply those to the creation of text and graphics

Objectives

- Learn the steps for completing a research project.
- Use different parts of a book to locate information.
- Evaluate Web sites as potential resources.
- Practice the basics of research note taking.
- Define and recognize plagiarism and paraphrasing.
- Conduct research using different media.
- Use a graphic organizer to sort research information.
- Learn basic design principles for presentations.
- Use *PowerPoint* presentation software to create a multimedia slide presentation.
- Learn and practice the skills for effective presentation delivery.

slides. They also record their own video and sound multimedia elements to enhance their project.

Finally, students are exposed to guidelines for effectively delivering a presentation and communicating with an audience. The culmination of the Module is the students' delivery of the presentation to the instructor. Having students deliver their presentations to the entire class would serve as an excellent Wrap-Up Day activity.

The Module is a great addition to virtually any lab, as the skills students learn can easily be translated to any area of study. Possessing the ability to research a topic and then create and deliver a presentation based on that research information is a valuable skill that can serve students throughout their academic career and beyond.

Curriculum Specialist Gina Sanmiguel,
gsanmiguel@pitsco.com

