The papers in the young child section this year focused on describing possible contexts and activities in teachers can use technology to promote learning with young children. Without exception the papers draw heavily from principles of practice common in more progressive early childhood education literature.

Judith Robbins and Jacqueline Bedell draw from the new expanded definition of reading to include viewing and representing, to justify the use of digital cameras for use in literacy instruction. Even as representing events in pictures is traditionally done with paper and crayons, Robbins and Bedell suggest the use of a digital cameras. Similarly, whereas viewing activities take place traditionally viewing picture books, television, CD ROM, video and digital cameras provide contexts for critical viewing of information. Children today need to be literate both consuming and producing media.

Also drawing heavily on viewing and representing, Nancy Yost describes a project in which preservice teachers learn to co-author multimedia books with young children. Preservice teachers meet with the professor, review the technological context of the room and finally work with kindergarten students in a series of meetings to write and illustrate their multimedia books.

The next two papers draw on the early childhood literature to describe the teaching and learning of mathematics using technology. Both of the papers on the use of mathematics call into question the blind use of technology strongly encouraging teachers not to sacrifice principles of learning when using technology to teach mathematics. Sarah E. Irvine and Andrea I. Prejean observed computer buddies (preservice teachers) working with different software. They discovered that teachers must consider the aptitude of the children, the difficulty of the program, as well as what the programs allow a teacher to teach. Though adding and subtraction appeared to be common activities in software, Irvine and Prejean found problem solving and reasoning to be less popular activities with software.

Picking right up where Irvine and Prejean left off, Yelland and Masters offer similar criticisms of the existing practice of the use of technology in the teaching of mathematics and provide three specific activities in which teachers make use of problem solving and reasoning. Using web based applications, Powerpoint, and Microworlds, students are forced to be active participants while solving problems in mathematics.

Previous research emphasizes the computer station as a place where young children love to socialize. The final paper describes a study in which children with disabilities demonstrated less sophisticated language and lower levels of play at the computer center than at all other centers. McGehee and Heckaman suggest that perhaps teachers need to be more thoughtful and direct when teaching social strategies when using the computer to learn.

These papers all focus on the importance of considering principles of practice when using technology. Certainly, if these papers are any indication, the importance of teacher thought and subsequent guidance of children when using technology is becoming the major challenge in early childhood education.