Using TrackStar to create standards-based modules

Anne Daugherty, University of Kansas, US
James Daugherty, University of Kansas, US

Dimensions of electronic learning for enhancing choral music rehearsals and choral music education courses include web-based rehearsal notes and links, web forms, electronic portfolio assessment, audio and video files, discussion boards, and electronic collaboration.

For the past three years, (fall 1999, 2000, and 2001) pre-service teachers in a choral music methods class at the University of Kansas engaged in a project designed to ascertain the feasibility of teaching teachers to develop electronic learning resources. A particular focus of the project was to design electronic learning experiences in conjunction with the National Standards for Music Education and specific examples of choral literature suitable for school choral ensembles. Specifically, the project sought to gauge the effectiveness of using models or templates that could readily be adapted for use with various real-life contexts and objectives.

In total, six fifty-minute class periods were devoted to the project, including brainstorming ideas, constructing the modules, and sharing the finished products. In 2001, "TrackStar" was used for the first time. Developed by HPR-TEC, TrackStar is a tool that assists users to create a "track," a composite work based on other people's original online creations. Benefits of using TrackStar include its ease of use--users can create a track in approximately 20 minutes. The design of TrackStar is such that users can access the material online, or via a convenient printable format. Further, TrackStar includes an automated link-checker that periodically checks Track links and e-mails authors with a list of broken links.

The purpose of the current project, then, is to evaluate the benefits of using a pre-programmed tool to assist students in developing their standards-based modules to ascertain if the tool further aids students to feel comfortable with designing their web-based work.