

Systems: A Way of Thinking and Learning

Systems theory looks at the world in terms of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena, and in this framework, an integrated whole whose properties cannot be reduced to those of its parts is called a system.

Fritjof Capra, The Turning Point, 1982

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The Electronic Systems and River Portfolio

To record their scientific observations and draw conclusions about natural systems, children create an electronic portfolio using the Hyperstudio program. They document classroom experiments and field trips in the natural world and use the portfolio to showcase their artwork and writing.

Sample pages of actual student graph samples are included in the next few pages. After making the required cards, students are encouraged to add other important information and to use their imagination in creating additional cards for the stack.

Starting simply is important. Since this originally was designed as a first experience with electronic portfolios, the emphasis was on simple text and graphics. As the children (and teachers) become more sophisticated about the use of the software, there are endless possibilities, including video clips, audio, scanned photos, and information from a variety of Internet sources.

