

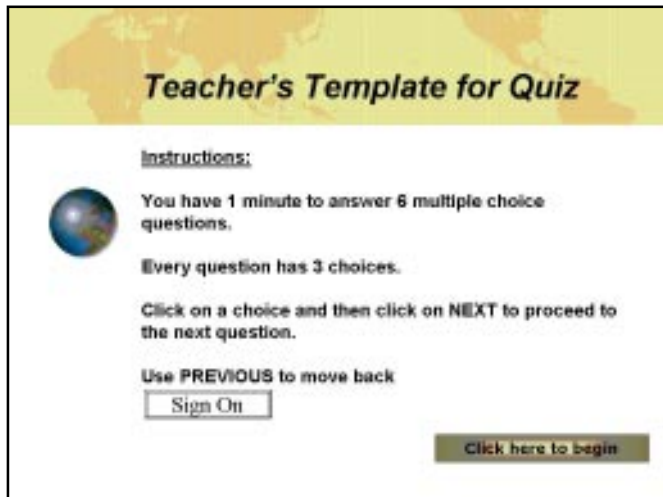
AutoTeacher News

News and How-to Articles for Automotive Teachers

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Fall 2001 California Automotive Teachers Conference

ATech's PowerPoint Development Seminar



Slide 1

VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) is a tool that can be used in any Microsoft Office Application such as Word, Excel, Access and yes, Power Point for additional functionality. VBA is simply Visual Basic syntax with MS Office objects. Unlike the typical Visual Basic application, you have objects pertaining to a particular application such as Excel, or Access available to use. Typical Windows APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) are available to you as well. All MS office applications have a built in Visual Basic Editor where the routines can be entered.

For instance, you can write a subroutine in VBA that copies, moves or deletes a particular file or folder, and call the routine by clicking on an ActiveX object such as a button from within a MS Office application. You can create a text field for user input, then save the user's input in a database or text file. There are not very many limitations when using VBA.

VBA can be very powerful when used in these applications to automate tasks and to add additional procedures. At a recent California Automotive Teachers (CAT) conference Oct. 20, 2001, ATech staged an advanced Power Point workshop to give the attending automotive teachers a chance

to use VBA in a Power Point application first hand. Most everyone attending had used MS Power Point at one time or another in a presentation environment, which consists of making multiple slides with graphics and text, then linking one slide to the other to create a typical slide show. The ATech CAT workshop was the first in a series of four MS Power Point workshops, designed to empower automotive instructors with the tools and the skills necessary to create their own Computer Based Instruction (CBI) application using MS Power Point, with the help of VBA routines.

The goal here is not to become a master Visual Basic programmer, but to understand how Visual Basic can be used in Power Point, and to be able to understand the code well enough to edit an existing VBA module. This will allow an instructor to customize an existing Power Point/VBA application as well as create customizations for future applications.



Slide 2

Our CAT conference workshop project was to create/edit an automated Quiz in MS Power Point that would ask the student a series of multiple choice questions during a specific time, keep track of correct and incorrect answers, and display a score at the end of the Quiz along with the

student's name. The kicker is that even though there are multiple questions, we will only use three Power Point slides to make it all happen.

VBA makes it possible to reuse the same slide for displaying the questions and accepting user input. The quiz has a time limit and makes use of timer routines to time itself. The timer routines are much easier to work with in Power Point 2000 by making use of the SetTimer API. We deliberately avoided the use of any ActiveX control (like a radio button to accept user choice). Instead we made use of the UniCode Character property to simulate a user choice click.

The template of this application can be downloaded from the ATech website along with the instructions which include a description of each routine and some exercises in VBA. The application can be manipulated and customized to become a classroom tool for any automotive program. To download the application, go to <http://www.atechtraining.com> and follow the links to the CAT Conference Workshop download. Forward any and all questions about this application to mblew@atechemail.com.

Evaluating Troubleshooting Skill

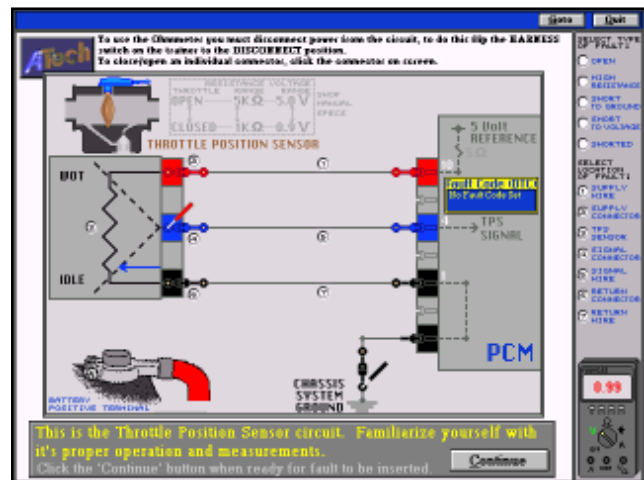


ATech's 3600 series CBI training system is now being used to test the troubleshooting skills of student/technicians at many competition levels. From local VICA competitions to State and National competitions, the 3601 trainer running the 3630 Engine Control Diagnostics program has proven itself a match for the best. "ATech's 3600 training system has no match when it comes to testing troubleshooting skills. The realism of the presentation and problems is excellent." (contest organizer)



Slide 3

The next ATech Power Point VBA workshop will cover use of (ODBC) Open Database Connectivity to record the student's answers and score to a Microsoft database such as MS Access. That application will be made available for download as well. The third workshop will cover the use of API calls to play and control AVIs in Power Point. The fourth workshop will involve the assembly of all the previous Power Point applications to create a fully functional CBI application.



Even though the 3600 series has been available for only a short period of time, it has established itself as the best program for engine control troubleshooting skill development. Students enjoy the level of computer interactivity and actually ask to work with the system. Education and skill development does not have to be painful. Move your program away from "All Pain, Little Gain" with the ATech 3600 series.

Automotive Industry Planning Council

While most people in automotive education are aware of the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (NIASE) and the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), very few know of the Automotive Industry Planning Council (AIPC). The AIPC was founded over fifty years ago. It was instrumental in the initial formation of both the NIASE and NATEF and continues to work closely with them today.

The Automotive Industry Planning Council is a national advisory group of industry leaders, vocational/technical educators, and educational policy makers whose mission is to promote communication, cooperation, and excellence in automotive service training programs. One of the methods they use to accomplish this mission is the Automotive Award of Excellence in Automotive Technician Training Program. Each year, all ASE/NATEF Certified Schools are invited to participate. State winners are recognized in three categories:

- Secondary Program
- Post Secondary - Generic Program
- Post Secondary - Manufacturer Affiliated Program

Programs eligible to apply are Automobile Technician, Collision Repair/Refinishing, and Medium/Heavy Duty Truck. The local entries are submitted to the State coordinator where a State winner is selected in each category. The State winners are then submitted to AIPC where a National winner and two runners up are selected in each category. The National winners receive their trophies/awards each year at the Association for Career and Technical Education Convention. AIPC makes a donation to the schools to assist in offsetting travel expenses. The 2002 convention is in Las Vegas.

The winners for the year 2001 are:

- Secondary Program - Parkside High, MD
- Post Secondary Generic - Trident Tech, SC
- Post Secondary Affiliated - New Mexico Junior College (Ford Asset)

Visit the AIPC website www.autoipc.org for more information and downloadable forms. Get the recognition your program deserves.

A Training Industry Standard



The ATech 1800 series Automotive Electrical/Electronic training system was initially designed in 1987. It has received many upgrades, additions, and revisions in the last 14 years. Many of the additions came at the request of OEMs. For example, Ford asked ATech to develop the 1830 - Automotive Sensors and Actuators, and the 1840 - Automotive Computer Concepts programs. These two programs added activities directly related to the engine control functions needed for OBDII.

Ford has been using the 1800 series program for over twelve years. Obviously, updating and upgrading of the program have taken place, but the basic program concept of hands-on student interaction is still the same. "It is hard to imagine an OEM training department using essentially the same training program for over twelve years. The typical program's life is 4 or 5 years." This statement came from an OEM training director. Both Ford and ATech are very proud of this program and the apparent foresight that was used in its initial development.

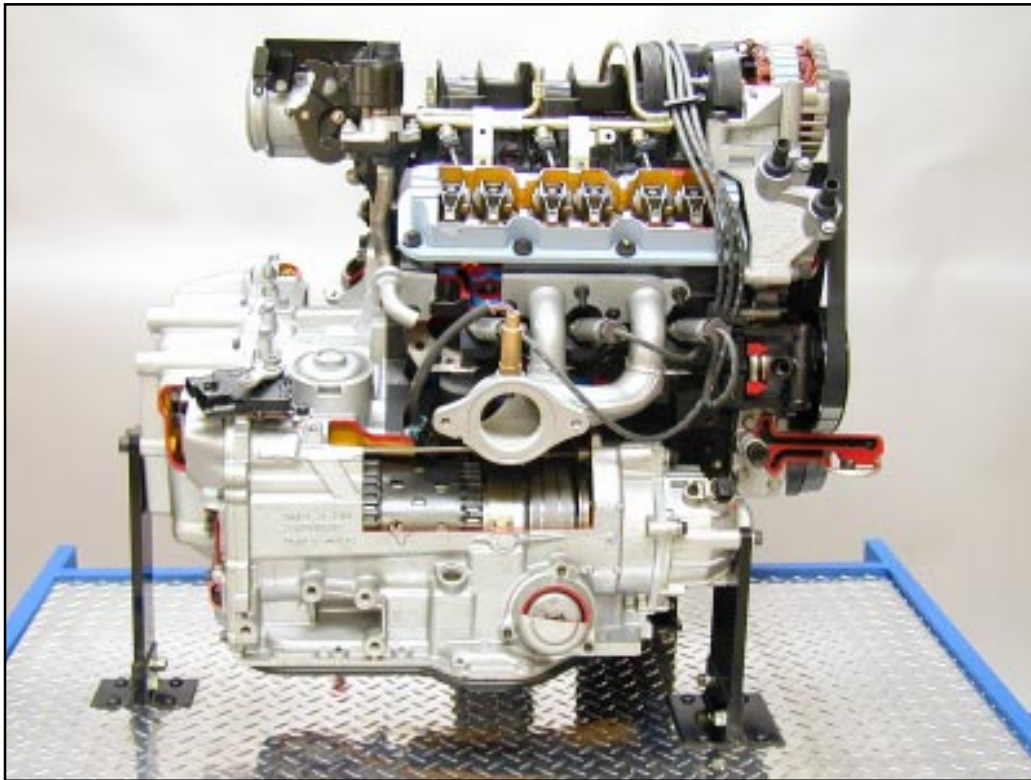
The 1800 series is used in OEM training programs around the world; U.S., Canada, Mexico, Vietnam, China, Thailand, Brazil, Taiwan, Australia, Chile, and more. Other organizations that use this system or variations of it are DaimlerChrysler, Nissan, Robert Bosch, United State Postal Service, Lincoln Technical Institutes, and over a 1,000 schools worldwide.

Visit the ATech website for more information.



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