

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Talking Book Author Project*

Subject(s): Language Arts/Reading/Writing

Intended Grade Level(s): Grades 2-7

Description:

This project integrates technology with a book-authoring project. Students create their own stories, choosing from fiction, non-fiction, or autobiography categories. Upon completion of the handwritten final-draft stories, students use PowerPoint® to type the words of their stories into the classroom computer. They also choose graphics and special effects to illustrate their stories. Through use of a microphone, students narrate their written stories. Their school pictures are posted to an “author page” at the beginning or conclusion of their stories. Finally, the books are posted online via the school’s website for other students, parents and teachers to view and read.

This is a project that has been incorporated into the Title I Reading Program. The students identified to participate are reading below grade level. This project can be used with students of any level and age by adjusting the story requirements and level of assistance with technology use. The goal was to give them an opportunity to feel successful, and provide them with an authentic learning project that would also be a meaningful addition to the regular curriculum. Additionally, the desire was that the experience would be very motivating and empowering for each student regarding reading and writing.

Narrative:

Concept Statement:

To empower struggling readers in applying use of their developing reading/writing abilities to create and publish a “talking book.”

Focus Questions:

- How will the outcome empower the student?

By publishing their work on the school website, students will have the opportunity to be recognized in a positive way for their accomplishment by their teachers, parents, and especially their peers. How can the teacher accomplish this?

Developing an atmosphere of acceptance for difference of abilities, even within the individual small groups.

Planning independent work for other students while working one-on-one with each student to assist as needed at different stages

These are the questions that brought about this particular project. Confidence is a significant issue for struggling readers, and the project needed to be set up in a manner that would ensure each student's success. If developing greater self-esteem, experiencing success, and furthering the development of reading and writing skills were able to be accomplished in one project (albeit over a period of time), there could be no better *best practice* for these students. As this collaborative project is shared with other teachers, parents, and students, it will gain greater exposure. The hope is that it will foster other ideas for technology integration in future educational projects.

The integration of technology improves and supports the *talking book author project* while continuing to meet curriculum goals. The lesson builds on students' reading skills by using words to create their own stories/books. It is an authentic and meaningful learning activity. The work is at the *application* level of Bloom's Taxonomy and, as such, encourages higher-order thinking skills. Students are given a unique opportunity to practice and apply their growing reading and writing skills.

Additionally, the project reinforces students' understanding of story elements and helps to build reading fluency and build vocabulary. It helps students in to increase confidence in their reading and writing abilities. Providing an opportunity to use technology in these core areas also appeals to particular learning styles (kinesthetic, visual, and auditory) that may not otherwise be met in the same way. The use of technology also lends itself as a great source of motivation and empowerment as students know others will be reading their books!

This lesson reflects the integration of standards for teaching and learning into instructional activities by presenting to the student an "I can do it myself" project while providing the "here's how you can do it" instruction as needed. This successful experience should create an increased willingness on the part of the student to continue to attempt new things, especially in reading and writing. It also provides a structured set of learning activities and assessments that are directly linked to curriculum benchmarks from the Michigan Curriculum Framework and the Kent County Collaborative Core Curriculum (KC4).

Curriculum Benchmarks:

Comments: While this project includes participants in grades 2-7, the benchmarks listed below are for lower elementary. However, as appropriate for the student, the upper elementary benchmarks were employed. The targeted benchmarks for this project vary between lower and upper elementary because of the reading/writing difficulties encountered by these students.

This lesson plan was originally designed using the KC4 standards. For purposes of sharing this project with a broader audience, it has been adapted to the Michigan Curriculum Framework.

MI.ELA.1.LE.1

Integrate listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts, such as enjoyment, gathering information, learning new procedures, and increasing conceptual understanding.

MI.ELA.1.LE.3

Read and write with developing fluency, speak confidently, listen and interact appropriately, view strategically, and represent creatively.

MI.ELA.1.LE.5

Employ strategies to construct meaning while reading, listening to, viewing, or creating texts.

MI.ELA.1.LE.7

Recognize that creators of texts make choices when constructing text to convey meaning, express feelings, and influence an audience.

MI.ELA.4.LE.4

Become aware of and begin to experiment with different ways to express the same idea.

MI.ELA.4.LE.5

Explore and begin to use language appropriate for different contexts and purposes.

MI.ELA.6.LE.2

Experiment with the various voices they use when they speak and write for different purposes and audiences.

MI.ELA.6.LE.3

Explore works of different authors, speakers, and illustrators to determine how they present ideas and feelings to evoke different responses.

MI.ELA.7.LE.4

Begin to develop and use strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing a variety of text forms.

MI.ELA.8.LE.1

Identify and use mechanics that enhance and clarify understanding.

MI.ELA.8.LE.2

Explore how the characteristics of various narrative genre and story elements can be used to convey ideas and perspectives.

MI.ELA.8.LE.4

Identify and use aspects of the craft of the speaker, writer, and illustrator to formulate and express their ideas artistically.

Note: KC4 Standards

- KC4 Reading: 1:1, 1:2, 2:1, 2:3, 3:1, 3:2, 3:3, 4:3, 4:4, 4:6, 5:1, 5:3
- KC4 Writing: 1:9, 1:10, 2:5, 3:6, 3:7, 4:8, 5:6, 5:10, 6:6, 7:6
- KC4 Speaking: 2:8, 3:8

Detailed Timeline:

This lesson plan is intended to take much longer than one class period. In a regular classroom, we would recommend doing this project during language arts time. The major components of the lesson are: direct instruction of story creation and use of technology, student draft writings/revisions, practice reading stories, computer input and narration, and final posting of books to a website. This includes teacher preparation/instruction time and student completion time. Depending on your daily block of time, this project could take a good month or more to complete. Perhaps unit is a better descriptive word of this lesson.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

- Network computer(s)
- Microphone(s) for story narration
- Color printer
- PowerPoint® software program
- Internet/website capability
- Capability to store student photographs digitally
- Examples of stories to represent different category choices – autobiography, fiction, non-fiction (the best – one YOU wrote during elementary/middle school)
- Paper for story drafts, pencils, erasers, etc.
- Materials for making student dictionaries (construction paper, writing paper, staples)
- Materials for constructing a “story element” web map to display on classroom wall during project for student reference
- Writing/grammar reference book(s), language arts curriculum reference book(s), dictionary

Teacher Preparation:

A significant amount of “teacher” time is spent on this project. Preparing for and giving direct instruction (story elements, technology use, etc.), the editing/revising writing process, and guiding student use of the many facets of PowerPoint®, microphone(s), and other technology are the sizable aspects of teaching this lesson/project. Older students may require less directed time, as they may be more familiar with technology and have more advanced writing/reading skills. Advanced knowledge of PowerPoint® and Internet/website skills are required to complete this project. If the classroom teacher is not familiar with these, there may be someone on staff that could provide some assistance. (Please see Materials/Hardware/Software section for required teacher materials.)

Prerequisite Student Skills:

Preferably students should have basic keyboarding experience to begin this project. They can be instructed and guided in using PowerPoint®. If students are old enough, or if you have enough time, they can be instructed in how to build a website or connect to an existing website/page. Students will spend a significant amount of time creating and revising their stories, as well as inputting them into the computer. (Please see Materials/Hardware/Software section for required student materials.)

Activities/Procedures:*Instructional strategies:*

Story elements/parts of a story

- Use and discuss examples from books that students already know; include predictable books
- Bring in samples of student written books as examples to read/show to students
- Use story/web maps to identify plot, setting, etc.

Autobiographies, fiction stories, or non-fiction stories

- Teach differences between these categories – how to choose which one to write
- Specifically, discuss peculiarities of the different categories
- Show examples of each category, i.e., bring in samples of student written books as examples to read/show to students
- Discuss motivation for choosing (strong likes, interests, etc.)

First drafts, revisions

- Teach how they differ and what they look like
- Give criteria for revisions
- Show examples of first draft, then with editing for revisions – demonstrate this progression
- Show multiple draft example

How to use a keyboard, PowerPoint®, microphone, etc

- In-class demonstration/review (in addition to computer class)

- Brief student practice

Teach “compare” and “contrast” skill knowledge

- Venn diagrams (fiction, non-fiction, autobiography)
- Manipulatives for different sorting exercises

Teach “cause” and “effect” relationships

- Create a story; make predictions for outcome based on “if this, then what?”
- Use real-life situations as examples

Teach concept of categorization to determine the author’s writing purpose

- Read various selections of different types of writing (informing, entertaining, persuading) and have discussion

Instruction on how to construct complete sentences and paragraphs in writing

- Sentence strips for sentences and paragraphs
- DOL (daily oral language) skills

Teach how one organizes information within a story

- Use graphic organizers (web/story/event maps, story frames)

Assessment/Evaluation:

By utilizing meaningful evaluation tools, greater accurate assessment of student learning can take place. The measurement tools listed below assist in the ability to assess student progress throughout the stages and duration of the project. Reflecting upon and using the gained assessment information is vital in modifying future teaching practices. In addition, the employed evaluation tools will serve as a barometer in assessing the level of success that students experience as they practice their developing reading and writing skills in this unique technology integrated project.

Evaluation consists of a number of the following:

- Teacher Observation
 - level of student effort toward work product
 - level of student’s motivation to progress through project
 - technology skill and/or appropriate questions in order to increase skill
- Checking/Monitoring
 - quality of effort toward creating original story
 - quality of effort toward revisions
 - quality of effort to create final draft in PowerPoint®
 - quality and amount of time on task to produce book (graphics, special effects, narration)
 - quality of final product

- Feedback to Teacher
 - specific attention to spontaneous comments from participating students regarding project (before, during, and after) especially related to a level of frustration and/or feeling of being overwhelmed
 - specific solicitation of comments regarding project/end product from participating students, other students, teachers, and parents
- Specific Tools
 - Pre-test/Post-test(s)
 - . story elements
 - . story types (fiction, non-fiction, autobiography)
 - . computer knowledge/skills
 - Student Survey
 - . indicator of attitudes, likes, dislikes, etc.
 - . helpful for future lesson plan modifications
 - Ongoing anecdotal notes
 - . confidence
 - . motivation
 - . effort
 - . skill level(s) (i.e., fluency, vocabulary, technology use, story elements, story types, writing/revisions)

Follow-up Activities:

Hosting a school wide Young Authors Conference could extend this lesson. In this way, students could create physical copies of their books in addition to the electronic copies stored on the Internet. This would be beneficial in accommodating additional learning styles, and students would have a finished copy to take home with them to keep. Perhaps enlisting parent volunteers to help with bookmaking would make things easier to complete.

The author conference would also be a fun way to promote school wide reading and could be done for “National Reading Awareness Month” during March. A local author or someone dressed as Dr. Seuss’ Cat in the Hat could address the students during an assembly to officially kick-off the conference.

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