Using Technology to Enhance Reading

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Today’s child must be equipped with many skills to be literate in today’s society. The demands and requirements for educators to bring every child up to level are great. Although it is still true that becoming literate requires developing some basic skills and strategies, low-level basic skills that merely involve surface level decoding and recalling of information are not enough. Critical thinking and the ability to personalize meanings to individual experiences and apply what is read or written in the real world, under many different circumstances, and with many different types of texts, may now be termed as the “new basics.” (Strickland, 2002,p. 2).

We must tackle the teaching of reading head on by infusing many different strategies that will help all of our learners to be successful. Instruction must address differentiation, flexible grouping, balanced literacy, multiple intelligences, and the learning styles that walk into our classrooms each and every day. Technology is one mechanism that can help educators to focus on all of these areas and be used as a strategy to help all readers improve.

It is with this rationale that the Using Technology to Enhance Reading professional development workshops have been developed for educators of grades three through five. They support the guidelines indicated in No Child Left Behind, the Core Curriculum Content Standards for Language Arts for New Jersey, and the technology standards as well. The strategies that will be demonstrated in all of the workshops can be easily adapted to any local curricula for literacy.
**Adult Writing Activity**

Sometimes it helps the reader to understand a particular event, person or place in your story if you compare it to something else the reader can relate to. Similes typically use the words “like” and “as” in the comparison.

Let’s take a moment to react to some photos and write similes. See the attached worksheet.

This writing activity can be replicated in a variety of formats for students. Students can read similes provided to them and draw a picture to match the simile. Students can read similes and illustrate the action by taking a picture of it. Students can look at a picture and brainstorm words to use in a simile. Students can read stories and track similes in a spreadsheet. **Suggested technology and software include:** Digital Cameras, Scanners, Internet, Microsoft Paint, Microsoft Excel, and Inspiration and/or Kidspiration.

The Southern Regional ETTC and The Press of Atlantic City have collaborated to offer area educators a source of wonderful photographs published by the Press that can be used as writing prompts by teachers and students. For more activities, visit [http://www.ettc.net/writing](http://www.ettc.net/writing)

**Section I**

**Improving Word Attack Skills (Phonics, Phonemics) and Vocabulary for Meaning with Technology Integration**

The focus of this workshop will be a demonstration of the many ready made lessons, games, and activities that are on the World Wide Web to help students with phonics and phonemics and meaningful vocabulary. If students can’t easily decode the words, they will have difficulty with reading for meaning. This is a very important piece in enabling students to become successful readers.

Play word games online for upper elementary

Free vocabulary puzzles for many grade levels

Create your own puzzles for vocabulary and spelling instruction

**Suggested technology and software include:** Internet
Section II

Strategies Towards Becoming a More Fluent Reader and Thinker
The workshop will show many strategies that can be used and developed to increase fluency. The focus on the use of technology as an enhancement to increase fluency will be shown.

Teachers using technology can create a learning environment that allows students to make connections between what they read, themselves, other texts, and the world around them. Multimedia anticipation guides, electronic graphic organizers, online interviews with authors, and interactive discussion boards for students bring new meaning to how students can collaboratively construct responses to fiction and non-fiction and share their creative ideas with others around the world. See this wonderful site to learn more about these types of activities http://www.lite.iwarp.com/cra2002.html

Suggested technology and software include: Internet, Kidspiration/Inspiration

Section III

Improving Comprehension Skills with the use of Technology Integration
What is important in comprehension? What are the key elements that make it successful? How can technology increase comprehension skills and make the reader more successful?

The U.S. department of Education's Commission on Reading issued a report, Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), which goes so far as to state that "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children." (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23).

Learn more about Read Alouds at http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/resources/languagearts/readingwriting/readaloud.htm

Model Think A Lounds http://www.readinglady.com/Comprehension/Think_Aloud/think_aloud.html

Think A louds and other activities http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/

Create a reader’s theater and make the videogamera the audience.

Suggested technology and software include: Internet, digital video camera
Section IV

Motivation and the Struggling Reader How Can Technology Help?
The workshop will be a demonstration and modeling of various strategies to increase motivation for the struggling and reluctant reader. Such strategies will include storytelling, language experience, reader’s theater, buddy reading, read along texts, e-texts, book talks. The presenter will use the following websites to demonstrate strategies and show how they can be incorporated into any literacy program.

Empower the struggling reader at http://www.lite.iwarp.com/strugtech.html

The art of storytelling: Use video or powerpoint presentations as prompts for storytelling. http://www.storyarts.org/

Link up to Literature - Super sites packed with ideas, activities, and easy-to-use lessons by Kathy Schrock at http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/bio#bio

Booktalks: Quick and Simple http://nancykeane.com/booktalks

Aesop's Fables: Online Collection
www.aesopfables.com
A treasure trove of fables makes this a great spot to visit during a study of Aesop. The collection has more than 625 of his tales, as well as a variety of audio versions with which children can read along. Great highlights include background information on the life and times of Aesop, a selected group of 180 easy-reading fables, and more than 120 fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen.

Suggested technology and software include: Internet

Section V

Becoming a Successful and Independent Reader
The workshop will be a demonstration and discussion on the balanced reading program and what it entails. Brainstorming will take place on how to incorporate technology and independent projects using: individualization, cooperative learning, small and large group work, flexible grouping, and self selection. Demonstration of modeled lessons and projects will take place. Teachers will research and design lessons that they can implement in their classrooms.

WebQuest: A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. WebQuests are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. http://webquest.org/
How do you evaluate WebQuests for the teaching of reading comprehension? Also how do true WebQuests incorporate higher level thinking strategies needed to be successful readers? [http://www.lite.iwarp.com/groton2.html](http://www.lite.iwarp.com/groton2.html)

**Literature Circles:** Introduce Literature Circles and place book reviews online so that other students can read and post their reactions.


**TrackStar:** TrackStar helps instructors organize and annotate Web sites (URLs) for use in lessons. The resource list remains visible allowing the user to easily stay on track. Start with [http://www.lite.iwarp.com/groton2.html](http://www.lite.iwarp.com/groton2.html) or [http://trackstar.hprtec.org/](http://trackstar.hprtec.org/)

**Suggested technology and software include:** Internet, web design
Handouts and Websites

Core Curriculum Contents Standards for Language Arts Literacy at [http://www.nj.gov/njded/cccs/02/s3_lal.htm](http://www.nj.gov/njded/cccs/02/s3_lal.htm)

Samples for NJ Ask at [http://www.ets.org/njask/](http://www.ets.org/njask/)


Tips for teaching story telling

Why use storytelling?

Developing rubrics

Knowledge and Skills for teaching reading

Comprehension what works these are great articles from the readingrockets.org website

[http://edweb.sdsu.edu/TILE/assignments/5_final_assignment.htm](http://edweb.sdsu.edu/TILE/assignments/5_final_assignment.htm)
Integration of vocabulary lessons with technology

On comprehension retellings, etc.

Ideas for spelling

Assessment ideas

Writing ideas transition words, etc.

Great article on reading and what it is two pages
Great article with all kinds of teaching strategies on how to use the internet to promote literacy

Electronic talks, Book Raps, great way to get the children motivated to read and write

Writing sites and information how to teach writing online

Third to fifth grade websites on how to teach poetry and other writing lessons also reading lessons excellent ones.