TILE-SIG

A Special Interest Group of the INTERNATIONAL Reading Association

Technology in Literacy Education Special Interest Group

Welcome Message from the TILE-SIG Chair

Greetings to All TILE-SIG Members!

I'd like to first, extend a warm welcome to any of you who have recently joined our Technology in Literacy Education Special Interest Group and second, I'd like to take a moment to welcome back any older members who have been around long enough to remember the "first edition" of our TILE-SIG newsletter, edited for several years by TILE-SIG's previous chair, Dr. Denise Johnson from the College of William & Mary. After a long hiatus, we are very pleased to share with you our first issue of the TILE-SIG's Electronic Newsletter for the Fall 2007.

In addition to the electronic newsletter, we are putting the finishing touches on a TILE-SIG Wiki and Blog space to provide more opportunities for you to freely exchange good ideas and questions about how we might effectively integrate technology into our literacy and content area classrooms.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the enclosed featured articles from classroom teachers and literacy researchers around the country. If you have additional ideas about how the TILE-SIG can meet your needs, I encourage you to share your thoughts by sending me, or our secretary, Elizabeth Dobler, a short email. All of your comments and suggestions are welcome. And, of course, we would very much enjoy hearing from anyone who is interested in contributing to future issues of our newsletter with your own experiences out in the field! I look forward to learning from and with each of you.

☺ *Julie Coiro*

Chair, TILE-SIG 2007-08

TILE-SIG 2007-2008 Committee Members

Julie Coiro, University of Rhode Island, jcoiro@mail.uri.edu

Elizabeth Dobler, Secretary, Emporia State University, edobler@emporia.edu

Denise Johnson, College of William & Mary, cdjohn@wm.edu

Deborah Kozdras, University of South Florida, kozdras@tempest.coedu.usf.edu

Janice Freisen, Barton Creek Elementary School, janice@jfriesen.net

Jill Castek, University of California - Berkeley, jill.castek@sbc.global.net

Erica Boling, Rutgers University, ecboling@rci.rutgers.edu

Online Tools for Literacy and Learning

Wikispaces: Tools for Teaching
by Diane Mosher-Kinsey

"The smiles and "Cool!" and "Wow!" remarks had me hooked to continue teaching with wikispaces.

Have you ever been so excited about learning something new that you just could not stop? This is the feeling I have right now about Wikispaces! Recently I attended a three hour workshop and learned how to "wiki". Now, I believe this Hawaiian term has taken over my Internet life*! ("Wiki-wiki" means, "hurry quick" in Hawaiian.).*

What is a wiki? A wiki is an interactive web space that allows more than one person at a time to edit and create. Creating a wiki is free and easy to learn because it is very similar to using a word document program. Simply go to http://www.wikispaces.com and sign up. Click on the link for "a series of brief tours" and a site host will orally and visually walk you through the steps of creating a wiki. Once you create your own wikispace, then you think of a unit or book you are teaching your students and type that in as your title. The ways you can use this site from there are truly endless!

I created a wiki about puffins, https://puffins-meadows.wikispaces.com/, for a group of fourth grade students in less than 20 minutes. The students were very excited about the story they were reading in guiding reading classes so I decided to extend their enthusiasm. When the students came to the computer lab, I had each of them bring up the wiki site I had created. They watched a "YouTube" video of puffins filmed off the coast of Scotland. They heard the chainsaw sound of a puffin from the Audubon Society web page. They experienced these things and more, while staying safely within the wiki space. The smiles and "Cool!" and "Wow!" remarks had me hooked to continue teaching with wikispaces.

Next, I teamed up with Dr. Beth Dobler, an associate professor at Emporia State University, to develop a Web reading project based around the process of questioning, understanding, evaluating, synthesizing, and transforming (QUEST). The fifth grade students are going to learn about the American Revolution, without opening their textbooks. They are going to research this time period in history and create a wiki for the final project. The students will create graphic organizers and time-lines, and import download-ed maps, videos and music. They will add pictures and write about what they are researching from the Web. My students will be able to experience a truly diff-erentiated style of learning, while never opening their textbook. To view the project, visit our wikispace at https://meadows-ss-project.wikispaces.com/

I once read (author unknown), "As educators, we cannot "fix" children; we can only provide them with positive opportunities in which they can grow socially and educationally." By incor-porating wikis into education, children have the opportunity to create, edit and author projects that provide new learning opportunities. Not only has this little Hawaiian term taken over my Internet life, it has, more importantly, enhanced my teaching.

Diane is a Technology Facilitator at Meadows Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas. She can be reached at dkimsey@topeka.k12.ks.us

Conference Reviews by Janice Friesen

Janice is a Campus Technology Coordinator at Barton Creek Elementary School in Austin, Texas. She can be reached at janice@jfriesen.net

The 2007 K12 Online Conference
http://www.k12onlineconference.org/

The K12 Online Conference is unique in that it is held totally online. There are many benefits to this method of running a conference. There were no hotel and travel bills for participants and people could participate when it was convenient. Over a two-week period there were four presentations each day (except for weekend days) in four main strands: Classroom 2.0, New Tools, Professional Learning Networks, and Obstacles to Opportunities. The sessions were asynchronous for the most part, but there were a few sessions that were synchronous and people all over the world met online to compare notes about what they were learning.

It was a challenge for the presenters to find the best way to communicate their messages to such a wide-ranging audience. Some presentations used new Web 2.0 tools to create cartoons and recordings. One of them was Voice Thread (http://voicethread.com/#home). Voice Thread is a free site that allows you to create a slideshow with audio that you can record at the site. Then people who watch your "thread" can make audio comments if they want. Other sessions were offered as audio or video casts. Some interesting sessions challenged the participant to try some new things and to interact with each other. All of the sessions encouraged feedback and ongoing discussion. Because this conference was held completely online it is all still there and can be accessed by anyone who is interested. This includes the transcripts of the synchronous sessions. You should go to the site and check it out!

Texas Writing Project
10th Anniversary Teacher's Conference
September 29, 2007
http://www.txstate.edu/ctwp/Conference.html
Theme: *Literacy in the 21st Century*

The connection between literacy and technology was illustrated in many ways at this conference. There were sessions on wikis, digital storytelling; reader-response and literary discussion using blogs; and online classroom management with Moodle. One highlight was the videoconference keynote with Donald Graves, who was in New Hampshire. He urged teachers to help students to realize the importance of emotion in writing. He said that emotion is the engine of the intellect. He also encouraged real purposes in reading and writing and said that teachers should not let tests get in the way.

The Central Texas Writing Project is a state chapter of the National Writing Project. The goal of the National Writing Project is to improve the teaching of writing and to improve learning in the nation's schools. Technology is an integral part of all that they do. A prominent article on their front web page is titled "Americans Believe Computers Have Positive Effect On Writing Skills" – see http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2400

Upcoming Conferences

Technology, Reading and Learning Diversity
San Francisco, CA January 24-26, 2008
http://trld.com/

TRLD is the only conference of its kind, integrating technology interventions with expert literacy strategies to help students of all ages (K-12 through adult) succeed. TRLD brings together educators, experienced literacy leaders, and technology experts to share, discuss, and work toward a solution to the nationwide concern of bringing literacy success to ALL students. The keynote speaker at this conference is Donald Leu, Co-Director of the New Literacies Research Lab and John and Maria Neag Endowed Chair of Literacy and Technology at the University of Connecticut.

You can still access the K-12 Online Conference anytime that is convenient for you - just visit their website at: http://www.k12onlineconference.org/

Stories from the Field

Lights! Camera! Literacy! A Digital Video Summer Camp Experience
By Deborah Kozdras and James Welsh

"The smiles and 'Cool!' and 'Wow!' remarks had me hooked to continue teaching with wikispaces."

How does Napoleon Dynamite relate to contemporary literacies? What does Hannah Montana have to say about new literacy learning structures in classroom settings? Where does Jack Bauer fit into your school's writing curriculum? These are among the questions that we seek to answer during "Let's Make Movies", a digital video summer camp experience, now in its fourth year. From the perspective of the kids attending the camp, it's all about having fun and making movies, but another agenda is at work just beneath the surface.

During the summer of 2007, four one-week movie-making camps were offered at the Tampa Theatre, a 1920's movie palace in downtown Tampa, Florida. A total of ten USF College of Education students and graduates collaborated with the camp director, a USF graduate student, and acted as camp counselors. Participants (students ages of 9-16) created stop-motion animation and short live-action films in small collaborative groups over the course of each one-week session and presented their creations on Friday of each week in a film festival format. Participants employed traditional literacy skills, including reading and writing, and new media skills including digital video production and soundtrack scoring, in a variety of ways to accomplish their goals.

In this type of summer camp setting, there is no pressure to justify learning activities to curriculum guidelines and standards, although time management is critical. The looming deadline does not come from an arbitrary test date, but instead from a fast-approaching and very real film screening schedule. The campers are producing videos to share with their friends and families, and with each other. They are eager to learn effective strategies for communicating their stories because of the authenticity of the experience. Camp counselors, all of whom are trained teachers, get to experience a learning environment where they are assisting the students to meet real world communication goals. The young filmmakers enthusiastically tackle technical subjects like three-point lighting, non-linear editing, camera angles, sound effects, and scoring, all for the real world purpose of creating memorable, engaging, entertaining videos.

Our research at the camp has four objectives: (1) Document the use of traditional and new literacy skills among students engaged in creating digital media; (2) Explore new literacy learning activity structures that can be transplanted to classroom settings; (3) Study the interaction between students and counselors in new literacy settings to inform teacher training and teacher preparation; and (4) Seek out the sources of material used by students in their own enactment of new media literacy.

While the camps were in session, our research team was busily gathering data in the form of written notes, artifacts of the productions, and videotaped observations and interviews. Each project began with pencil-and-paper as each group created a written synopsis, then a script and storyboards, and in some cases, cue cards. Text was also deployed strategically within the videos for titles, credits, and as a storytelling device. Students as young as eight used a variety of memes from popular culture and then transformed them to suit their own needs. While some of these memes originate in the same medium (film), others have been transmediated from one form (i.e., comics, video games, advertisements, You-Tube) into "the digital video short". Themes were identified through semiotic rhizomatic analysis of process and product. Beyond the research model generated, these patterns suggest broader interpretations for intertextuality.

The filmmakers also used sophisticated techniques such as montage, underscoring, allusion, and parallel narratives to communicate meaning beyond the explicit text (action) of their videos. Collaborating with these young filmmakers to design and construct their messages provides insight into media literacy and new ways of thinking about the tension between in-school and out-of-school literacies. For more information on the "Let's Make Movies" camps and research, please visit our project website at http://fcit.usf.edu/lmm/

Deborah is a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. She can be reached at kozdras@tempest.coedu.usf.edu.

James is a doctoral student at the University of South Florida. He can be reached at jlwelsh@coedu.usf.edu

Digital Resources to Keep You In The Loop

Free Digital Literacy Resources

- *Digital Directions* is a new publication from *Education Week*. The quarterly magazine focuses on trends and advice for K-12 technology leaders with a goal of making each successive issue more useful than the last one. A perusal of the articles in the first two issues leads one to believe that the editors are well on their way towards this goal. Topics include practical classroom applications and issues of concern for technology educators alongside trends and new ideas within the field of educational technology. In the fall, 2007 issue, topics include wikis in the classroom, interactive whiteboards, email overload, and digital equity. Online versions of the magazine are currently available free at http://www.edweek.org/dd/toc/2007/09/12/index.html. Paper copies of the first two editions are available for purchase online at www.edweek.org in the product webstore.

- *Juicy Studio Website Readability Tests*. This resource lets you input any website address (URL) and calculate an estimated readability of the site using one of three popular readability formulas. It also provides a link to an informative review titled "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Readability Tests." http://juicystudio.com/services/readability.php

- *Global Virtual Classroom* is a free online educational program designed to promote communication, collaboration and understanding among students around the world. Each year, students from 7 to 18 years old and their teachers are invited to join a contest in which schools from around the world build websites judged on their content and presentation. Contests run from October through April and include both a primary school and secondary school category. Learn more at http://www.virtualclassroom.org/

- *Awesome Stories.com, The Story Place of the Web* provides a free and interactive online learning experience designed to facilitate the use of primary source material in your classroom. The searchable database contains links to primary source documents and informational websites framed in the context of cohesive stories and/or summaries of science, history, and social studies content. Educators are given free access to the information. To learn more, visit http://www.awesomestories.com/

Fall 2007 Classroom Blog Watch

If you are wondering how you might begin to use blogs with young children at your school, this is a great site to explore!! *The Sandaig Primary School* in Glasgow Scotland hosts a number of blogs that were created by young students and their teachers to exchange and comment on book reviews, poetry, ecological news about their community, classroom projects and much, much more. A special "Radio Sandaig" blog features student podcasts on a range of activities including reports, articles, and special school performances. Surely something here will spark an idea for your own classroom adventures with blogging!

http://www.sandaigprimary.co.uk/pivot/index.php

TILE-SIG Book Review

Review written by Jill Castek, University of California-Berkeley.
Jill can be reached at jill.castek@sbcglobal.net

Reading the Web: Strategies for Internet Inquiry
by Maya Eagleton and Elizabeth Dobler
Published by Gilford Press, 2007

"Not teaching children how to use computers is like giving them books and not teaching them how to read." Eagleton & Dobler, p.xii

If there was ever a book for our times, this is the book. Our literacy instruction must keep pace with the new forms of reading, writing, and communicating the Internet has made available. This teacher-friendly book introduces tangible instructional ideas that classroom teachers can easily implement to support learners in navigating the rich information spaces they encounter online. The abundant reproducible student sheets that correspond with each of the instructional ideas add to the book's usefulness for teachers.

The authors introduce a research-based, classroom-tested model the authors call QUEST (**Q**uestioning, **U**nderstanding Resources, **E**valuating, **S**ynthesizing, and **T**ransforming). The book introduces each part of the **QUEST** framework by first providing a clear and compelling rationale that for why that part of the framework is important to teach. Then, the authors describe several classroom-based examples of how to teach and assess each framework, informed by their own research in the field. These ideas are presented using well-established theories of learning and student-centered instructional practices. In implementing the QUEST framework, teachers can incorporate specific strategies for enhancing online literacy development while encouraging critical evaluation and the synthesis of information gathered from multiple resources.

The wide-array of instructional resources available within the book provides teachers many options for designing instructional activities. Each of the activities addresses the interests and needs of a range of learners including struggling, average, and advanced readers. Selecting carefully from these useful resources is key.

This book is a must read for all teachers from Internet innovators to Internet beginners. It helps professionals thoughtfully integrate technology across the curriculum by providing easy to manage instructional ideas that can be implemented in classrooms with several Internet connected computers, or just a few. This book not only inspires new ways of teaching, the inquiry-based activities reinforce for students a life-long love of reading and learning that embraces the online literacy spaces today's students find so engaging.

You can access the online companion website to Reading the Web by visiting the following website:
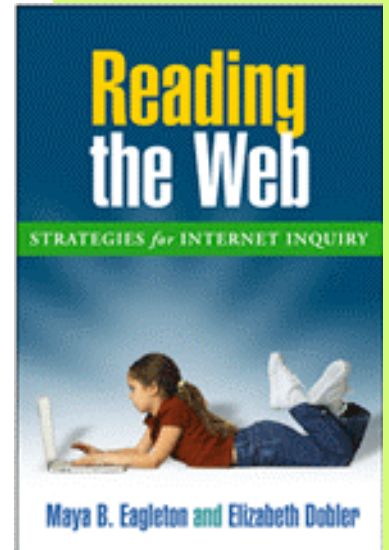
http://readingtheweb.net/

*"In implementing the **QUEST framework**, teachers can incorporate specific strategies for enhancing online literacy development while encouraging critical evaluation and the synthesis of information gathered from multiple resources."*

TILE-SIG Membership FAQ's

What is the TILE SIG?

The Technology in Literacy Education SIG is a special interest group of the International Reading Association (IRA). The purpose of the group is to bring together members of IRA who are interested in literacy and technology.

What Does the TILE SIG Do?

Each year at the IRA Conference, the TILE SIG hosts an annual meeting and presentation session. The length of this session varies from 1 ½ hours to 3 hours, depending on the number of members we have in the SIG. Various members share information and teaching ideas in the areas of literacy and technology. Also a TILE SIG business meeting is held at IRA. All members, or those interested in joining, are welcome to attend the business meeting. Dates and times for both of these sessions can be found in the IRA program. Currently, we are also seeking to share information and bring together those interested in literacy and technology through the creation of a newsletter, blog, and wiki resource.

How Do I Become a Member of the TILE SIG?

Anyone who is a member of IRA can join the TILE SIG simply by sending the following information to Elizabeth Dobler, the membership chair at edobler@emporia.edu:
name, mailing address, email address, IRA membership number and expiration date.

Are There Dues to Join the TILE SIG?

At this time, no dues are required to join the TILE SIG. In the past, dues were collected, and the group may decide to collect dues again in the future. Presently, the goal is to increase membership, so dues have been suspended.

How Many People are TILE SIG Members?

Currently, we have 65 members. The number of members we have is important, because the amount of time the TILE SIG receives on the IRA Conference program is based on the previous year's membership totals. Our goal is to have over 100 members by May 15, 2008. *Only individuals who are members of IRA are eligible to be members of the TILE SIG.* Each spring, membership must be renewed and IRA membership numbers and expiration dates must be verified.

We encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and invite them to become a member of the TILE-SIG.

Thanks to everyone who worked to make our first newsletter possible. Contributing writers include Janet Friesen, Diane Kimsey, Deb Kozdras, James Welch, Jill Castek, Elizabeth Dobler, and Julie Coiro. If you are interested in writing an article for a future newsletter, we would be glad to hear from you!

Contact Julie Coiro at jcoiro@snet.net or Elizabeth Dobler at edobler@emporia.edu.

Coming soon in the Spring 2007 issue…

- We will be seeking your nominations for the 2008 TILE-SIG Research Award Winner – to be announced at IRA's Annual Convention held on May 4-8, 2008 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- We will unveil our new wiki and blog space and invite you to join in the conversation!
- We will begin efforts to develop a coordinated list of members who are willing to serve as a liaison of the TILE SIG to each state or local reading association. We have several people who have already expressed an interest and we will be looking for more!

We Need Your Ideas

Although our first newsletter is a good start, we would like to continue to make it better. What would you like to see in future newsletters? Do you have any suggestions for making the newsletter available to more people? Would you like to help with the newsletter? Would you like to submit your own "special interest article" about your experiences or contribute to one of our regular "featured sections"? To share ideas or volunteer to help, contact Julie Coiro at jcoiro@snet.net or Elizabeth Dobler at edobler@emporia.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.