

10 Easy Ways to Integrate Technology

There are many, many ways to use computers and other technology in effective ways in the classroom. Here are a few ideas of simple activities that will add to your lessons. Remember, technology never takes the place of teaching. As the teacher, you decide what your students need, whether it's modeling or small group work or independent practice. Modify these ideas to fit *your* instructional goals for *your* students. Enjoy!

1. Doodle Splash!

Go to http://readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=22 and check out the lesson plans listed that use the Doodle Splash tool.

Teaching kids to visualize what they are reading helps them become better readers. Doodle Splash provides a reader with a drawing space and then prompts him or her to write about the connections between what was read and what was drawn. The exercise can be done with small groups, or with a whole class in a computer lab setting. It can be done with a single computer center or with multiple computers.

2. Whiz! Bang! Boom! Comic Creator!

Go to http://readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=21 and take a look at the Comic Creator tool and the fifth lesson plan under "Lessons That Use This Tool." Remember that there are many ways this tool could be used. This is only one example. In this lesson, students create comic strips as a way to learn about onomatopoeia - words that sound like their meaning. Meow!

3. Ecosystem Digital Picture Books

Have students take photos of examples of living things in an ecosystem using a digital camera. Put the pictures into a Powerpoint slide show. Let the students write captions for the pictures describing the different living things they see in the pictures. Consider letting the kids record their comments as narration for the slideshow. The link below will take you to a tutorial for making Talking Books in Powerpoint.

http://atto.buffalo.edu/registered/Tutorials/talkingBooks/ppt_adepted.pdf

4. Lend Me An Ear

Use a computer to record Tropicana speeches (or other speeches) written for class. Use the audio alone for students to practice and improve. Have the students trade speeches and look for appropriate visuals to complement the main ideas.

5. What's your angle?

Go to <http://www.mamamedia.com/areas/surprise/home.html?src=sdws> and click on "Flip Sticks" to find a simple (and really fun) animation builder. The tool lets you pose and animate a simple stick figure. As you move each piece, it tells you the measurement of the angle that you are creating. After teaching about angles, ask kids to create an animation that includes acute, obtuse, and right angles and you can quickly assess their understanding. Further, you may specify a list of angle measures for students to create in their animation.

6. Map Exploration

Go to Google Maps at <http://maps.google.com/> Find your city and look at a satellite picture by clicking on "Satellite". In a separate window, open a map of another location (NYC or Denver work well for this example.) Have students analyze these two maps, looking for similarities and differences. Based on the map evidence (geographic features, roads, etc.) what can they say about these places? Have students complete a Venn diagram to share what they found.

7. Wrestling Professor G.

<http://www.professorgarfield.com/ReadingRing/Strips/strips.html>

In this online activity, kids practice sequencing skills by placing panels from a Garfield comic strip in order. After finding the correct sequence, the student answers comprehension questions about the strip that test inferencing skills.

8. Myth Making

While studying myths, visit <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/index.htm> and click on "Myth Brainstorming Machine". Students can select a setting, a hero, a monster, and begin a myth-writing activity.

9. Fractured Fairy Tales

http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/fractured_fairy.htm

While studying fairy tales, read "The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs" by Jon Scieszka. Have your students create their own "fractured fairy tales". Go to the website above to publish your students' original fairy tales online.

10. Everyday Math with Digital Pictures

Armed with digital cameras, have kids take pictures of things in their everyday world to use as the basis for math questions they will write.