



Instructional Technology Newsletter

Developing 21st Century Skills One Byte at a Time

Using Technology To Support the Writing Process

What are your student's biggest challenges when it comes to writing? What is your wish or vision for incorporating writing into your classroom activities? What resources do you have available to support your students with the writing process? These are all questions that are important to think about before you plan a shift in your writing instruction.

Successful educators have developed a toolkit of resources that are available to support the needs of students in his or her classroom. What is in your toolkit? Where can you go shopping to fill your toolkit? Do you support your student's with the [principals of the Universal Design for Learning](#) by providing various avenues of presentation, assessment and engagement? Can we use instructional technology in writing to provide the UDL resources to our students? **The answer is YES WE CAN!**

This issue is the first of a multi-part series in which I will introduce instructional technologies that support the writing process, the 6 traits of writing, and the writer's workshop model. I will explore resources that can be accommodated for grades K-12.

I will expand upon each of these resources in depth on my [Blog](#).

Storybird

www.storybird.com

[Storybird](#) is an interactive writing site that allows students to create stories using a collection of artist illustrations and their own words. These stories are published online as [a page turning book](#). The stories can be shared and readers can leave comments. There is a [full teacher menu](#) that allows for the creation of managed student accounts. Privacy settings limit who can view student stories. This provides a safe place for students to publish their work for an authentic audience.

Storybird promotes imagination, literacy, and self-confidence. Students are provided the opportunity to turn nothing into something. Success in the 21st century requires a paradigm shift to an idea based society. Storybird is a fabulous tool for development of those traits.

Storybird can has been successfully used with students from grades 2-12. Early elementary students can use the site to develop stories based on assignments created by the teacher that follow a particular theme. Secondary students may create stories that teach a lesson or topic to younger students.

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Jefferson Township
Public Schools



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Points of Interest

- 🕒 **Writing with Technology**
- 🕒 **Authentic Student Publishing**
- 🕒 **Student Blogging—Bridging the gap from experience to learning**
- 🕒 **What's Cool on the Web**

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Student Blogging—One Person's Reflection is Another's Lesson Learned

Reflection is the process of looking back at an experience, an outcome, an event, or a learning exercise. We are all familiar with reflection. Every time we look in the mirror we experience the process of light bending back and presenting our own image back to us.

[In the classroom we are looking for ways for students to bend the metaphorical light of learning experiences back into their mind.](#) We ask students to reflect on what they saw, what they experienced, what did they learn. The process of reflection can be a key component in bridging the gap between experiences and learning"

A common practice of reflection found in most classrooms are journals. Students maintain journals that are shared between the teacher and the student. It provides an opportunity to reflect on their learning. What are the limitations of such a medium? Can we uti-

lize technology to not only engage students more in the process, but provide a more authentic, social, experience that can contribute to the educational experience of the entire class?

Blogging presents just that opportunity. By starting a class Blog teachers can provide a number of benefits that could not be achieved without the use of such technology. A blog creates an online learning community that extends learning beyond the confinement of the classroom and the typical school day. It provides an authentic, global audience for student writing. This encourages deeper thinking, higher quality writing, better research and writing skills. Students will learn to capture and retain an audience.

Blogging provides an online feedback loop. It enriches reflection by providing a social platform that facilitates group feedback and interaction. It supports differentiation

by providing some of our more verbally reserved students a forum to formulate and express their thoughts.

Blogging can have an immediate impact on student learning. Student's who publish their reflective writing will also have the opportunity to read and comment on other student's work. This collaborative, social ,experience will provide the student with a variety of interpretations and may direct their learning in ways that are difficult to accomplish in a classroom.

There are many resources available in our district to have students maintain an individual or class blog. These resources are simple to use and manage and provide a safe experience for all. To get started, please contact me directly. Together we will decide which platform will work best. We will work together to implement this tool.

Digital Storytelling— Examples and Experiences From Our Faculty

The student's and faculty in White Rock Elementary School Grade 4 recently wrote and published scary stories in honor of Halloween. Each class selected one winning story from their class. Collaboratively, they illustrated and narrated the story. We published the stories on the [White Rock School Digital Story Blog.](#) The entire process was engaging for the students. We provided an authentic opportunity for students to express their creativity and publish their writing for a

global audience. The end result was wonderful collection of digital stories.

The student's in Mrs. Bock and Halsall's class created [digital stories that explore artifacts from ancient civilizations.](#) "Our students where engaged in the entire process. Knowing that they would be publishing their work inspired them to go above and beyond. I witnessed pride and commitment with the end result", said Mrs. Bock.

The student's in Ms. Reichel and Mrs. Mathiasen's classess in Brigg's School have been busy publishing their writing as digital stories. You can view these publications on the [Brigg's School Digital Story Blog.](#)

The student's in Mrs. Evans's kindergarten class in Milton School recently published digital stories about the fall. You can view their stories on the [Milton School Blog.](#)

Please feel free to leave a comment on any of our blog postings.

Using Technology To Support the Writing Process Continued...

An example might be an children's book that teaches a younger student about composite numbers, a famous historical event, a health topic, or PSA.

You can start exploring story bird by first [reading the teacher instructions](#). I then recommend watching the [3 video tutorials found here](#).

I am available for consultation, training, class demos, or co-teaching. Please contact me directly if you would like assistance using this resource with your students.

Story Jumper

www.storyjumper.com

[Story Jumper](#) is another web-based authoring site that allows students create [page turning children's books](#). The site offers many of the same features as Story Bird with a few differences.

Story jumper allows students to develop their own illustrations by selecting characters, scenes and props. They can create a page turning story book that can be up to 16 pages long. Students provide the illustrations and the text to complete their stories. The final product is an online book that can be shared via the web and displayed on an interactive whiteboard. Parents have the opportunity to purchase the book as a hardcover children's book.

Story Jumper has [detailed instructions for setting up your class and student accounts](#). Upon completion of class setup you will be able to print out individualized instructions for each student and parent that detail school and home connection to the site.

Story Jumper may be used by students in grades 2-12. The site provides an authentic publishing experi-

ence for students of all ages. Older students may use the site to write stories that teach a topic to younger students. Research has proved that when student's teach a topic their comprehension of that topic significantly increases.

Younger students may use the site to develop stories based on a teacher assigned theme or they can use their creativity to develop their own topic. Students may select story jumper as an assessment option for any subject area by developing a story to demonstrate understanding.

Story Bird and Story Jumper should be added to all content area teachers toolbox as an option for students to publish their work, demonstrate knowledge of a topic, and become engaged in the writing process.

What is cool on the web?

Google Fast Flip

By combining print media and the web, fast flip allows users to quickly flip through news events. This is a new tool from Google Labs.

Storyline Online

Developed by the Screen Actors Guild this website provides video recordings of actors reading well-known children's books.

Jeopardy Labs

Jeopardy labs is a free service that allows you to create your own online Jeopardy Game. Once you create your game you are provided with a website link and an embed code. You can add the game to your blog or website for others to play. This can be a great tool for test review.

North Korea & South Korea— Every Incident Map

The Guardian has put together an interactive map that details every incident that has occurred between North and South Korea over the past 62 years. If you are planning to discuss this with students given the recent events this map may be useful