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Using Technology to Enhance Writing: Innovative Approaches to Literacy

Instruction

By Richard E. Ferdig, Timothy V. Rasinski, and Kristine E. Pytash (Editors)

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Using Technology to Enhance Writing: Innovative Approaches to Literacy Instruction*, edited by Richard E. Ferdig, Timothy V. Rasinski, and Kristine E. Pytash. This comprehensive anthology unites leading educators to examine the benefits and challenges of harnessing technology to support writing instruction.

This guide is divided into eight parts covering three chapters each, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify ways that technology can help students craft good writing while providing richer learning experiences.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to promote writing instruction in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Driving Without a License: Digital Writing Without Digital Citizenship

Gail Desler and Natalie Bernasconi

1. In your own words, define or describe digital citizenship. Consider the four foci the authors have identified as the components of a digital citizen; in what order of importance would you put these four foci relative to your students?
2. The authors reference documents that schools often use to describe their web policies, including acceptable-use agreements, netiquette procedures, and parent and student paperwork that explains safeguards and guidelines. How does your school or district currently document its web policies for teachers, parents, and students to review? How do you think your documentation for online academic activity could be improved?
3. What tone do you think is best to strike with students in regard to online activity? How can you set this tone with students at the beginning of the year?
4. Consider the real-life examples provided of how teachers have incorporated digital citizenship and Internet vocabulary into lessons. What did you learn from these methods? Could you see yourself incorporating aspects of these techniques into your classroom?

Guide

Chapter 2

The Language Experience Approach Goes Digital

Gilda Martinez-Alba and Sharon M. Pitcher

1. Consider how you would use a digital language experience approach (LEA) with an English learner (EL). What do you see as the benefits and the detriments of the approach the authors recommend? What balance would you seek to strike in using a digital LEA with an EL?
2. How can word walls be valuable for students and specifically for ELs? How do you think you could incorporate word walls into a class for best results?
3. What are the five characteristics of texts that aid reading comprehension? Review a text that is currently given to your students. Do you see these characteristics present in this text? What aspects of this text could be improved to buttress these characteristics?

Guide

Chapter 3

Integrating Expository Writing With Technology

Carol Wade Fetters

1. Why do the authors feel it is important to integrate the new literacies into writing instruction? What might you do to bring these literacies into writing instruction?
2. How are students able to use their reading time more flexibly when technology is added into content areas?
3. Consider Nate Smith’s method of teaching a lesson with a SMART Board and students’ own wireless technology devices so that students get immediate feedback for their answers. What are some ways in which you might provide immediate feedback for students using technology?
4. Describe the benefits of combining expository writing with technology.

Chapter 4

Fostering Deep Engagement With Malleable Digital Genres

Amber White and Paul Morsink

1. What are the three ingredients necessary to boost deep learning in writing? According to the authors, why is the last-stated ingredient a breakthrough in thinking about writing?
2. In your own words, define or describe the *malleable genre approach*. How can this approach encourage deep learning?
3. The authors assert that students should ask themselves these essential questions as they work on their assignments: “Given what I want to communicate, what is the best possible way for me to express myself or present my ideas and information?” and “Given alternative ways of communicating ideas or information, why is one better than the other?” Why are these questions essential? How do they encourage students to think about the audience for their work?

Guide

Chapter 5

Reading for Tone and Writing With Expressive Voice

Timothy C. Pappageorge

1. Why does the author say using recordings can be helpful during the writing process?
What can it teach students?
2. What is *declarative knowledge*? What can students learn and not learn from it?
3. Develop a plan for including oral interpretation in class throughout the year. Considering the author's illustration of how its use might be altered as the school year unfolds, how would you integrate vocal recordings or public speaking into instruction at different times of the year?
4. What can students learn from addressing audiences and expressing themselves in subject areas other than writing?

Chapter 6

Digital Reading Logs: A Third Space for Literary Growth

Sue Nash-Ditzel and Tammy B. H. Brown

1. What are a student's first two spaces in Third Space Theory? When does the gap between these two vary? How does digital text connect to Third Space Theory?
2. In your own words, describe the think-aloud strategy. Why might it be difficult to get students to say what they're thinking as they read? What would you do to learn what students' thoughts are in response to their reading?
3. In this chapter, Sue Nash-Ditzel says that her students who were less tech-savvy had better success using Microsoft Word's track-changes feature than Google Drive to create shared documents. Try using both methods with your students. Which is more successful, and why?
4. What is meant by the concept of *thinking about thinking*? Name some of the strategies good readers use to understand text. Which of these strategies do your students need to improve the most?

Chapter 7

Screencasts: The Integration of Reading, Writing, and Technology

Monica T. Billen and Renee M. R. Moran

1. Janet Emig's (1971) study found that teachers have often overlooked revising as a necessary step in the writing process. How do you explain the writing process to students? In your experience, which of the steps described in this chapter get the most attention? Which steps get the least amount of attention?
2. What is a *screencast*? How can screencasts be helpful teaching tools in the classroom?
3. Ruth Michaels allowed her students to try several different brainstorming methods, including talking through their ideas on a recordable device and gathering images that mirrored their own ideas. Before a writing exercise, bring these different brainstorming techniques to the attention of your students. How do their results differ depending on what brainstorming technique they used?

Chapter 8

Digital Storytelling

Julia Kara-Soteriou and Ashley Callan

1. According to the authors, how can teachers use digital storytelling during instruction?
What can students use digital storytelling to share with their teachers?
2. During the brainstorming phase, what should students first write down about their story?
What seven elements of digital storytelling must then be considered?
3. What is a storyboard? How can a storyboard help a student with the development of his or her story?
4. Create your own digital story so that you get a good feel for the digital storytelling process. What software do you find to be the most helpful? Upon completing the process, what do you think you learned that will help you teach your students about telling a story through digital means?

Chapter 9

Digital Writing Workshop

Sally Valentino Drew

1. Why does a digital writing workshop hold promise for preparing students for 21st century writing demands? What principles are described as foundational themes that are critical to a digital writing workshop's success?
2. Consider the example of Jan Rose's sixth-period sophomore English class. What did you learn from Jan Rose's workshop that you can put to use in a digital writing workshop?
3. Create some examples of good and bad digital writing. Why are these samples exemplary of what should and should not be done in your students' digital writing work?
4. How can a 21st century digital writing workshop help you to better coordinate your writing goals with what students write outside of school?

Chapter 10

Electronic Family Message Journals

Victoria Seeger and Robin D. Johnson

1. Why should families be included in students' education in the classroom? How can a family message journal bridge the gap between the classroom and students' homes? How has your school tried to bridge that gap?
2. What themes do teachers need to keep in mind as they work to wholly combine technology and instruction?
3. Considering the examples of Grace, Jessica, and Tanya, how would you bring up the topic of family message journals to students' families or go about incorporating electronic family message journals into the classroom?

Chapter 11

Blogging and the Tool of Storytelling

Ewa McGrail and J. Patrick McGrail

1. How does blogging help students write their own stories and understand the roles of the reader and writer in the writing process?
2. In your own words, what is an *addressed audience*? What is an *invoked audience*? In your students' writing, have you seen a divide between the two? How can you help students write for the addressed audience instead of the invoked audience?
3. How do *causality* and *resultancy* relate to each other in storytelling?
4. Describe in your own way the different elements of a narrative syntagm and how they connect to each other, so students will understand what you mean. Include *narrative arc*, *rising action*, *complication*, *falling action*, and *conclusion* in your description.

Chapter 12

Engaging the Okal Rel Universe

Lynda Williams

1. The blog *Reality Skimming* builds on the series of *Okal Rel Saga* novels. Can you identify another website that extends the reach of a fictional setting established by a book? Does the site seek contributions? What steps are taken to cull the site's contributing posts?
2. How does taking part in blogs like *Reality Skimming* help students learn more about writing for people besides themselves?
3. Review the technique used to develop the Dialogues blog post on page 118, in which two contributors provide their own opinions on a topic. How can this side-by-side writing technique be incorporated into a classroom setting? What do you think students could learn about their own writing voices from this exercise?

Chapter 13

Using Technology for Collaborative Writing

Laurie O. Campbell

1. How does the author define collaborative writing? In your own words, define serial writing, compiled writing, and co-authored writing, which are all types of collaborative writing.
2. This chapter includes examples of several ways in which collaborative writing can be used in different subjects. Provide an example of a subject in which collaborative writing could be beneficial and explain why.
3. The author suggests that each user in a collaborative document should have his or her own font color. What guidelines would you set up so that collaborators all working in one document know what they have contributed and what comes from their collaborators?

Chapter 14

Digital Content Curation

Michael S. Mills

1. In your own words, what does digital content curation entail? Why is prioritization necessary in the process of curating content?
2. Briefly describe the six steps of thoughtful digital curation. Explore the examples of aggregation resources that are provided in the explanation of step two. Which ones appear to be the most useful for your class, and why?
3. How do students' curated collections of web resources relate to a course textbook? Why do you think it is important to have both—web-based resources and a textbook?

Chapter 15

The 4E Wiki Writing Model

Jenifer Salter Thornton

1. What is a *wiki*? According to the author, what is one way that wikis can improve students' writing processes or their absorption in a course's content?
2. Describe the four steps of the 4E Wiki Writing Model. How do the scale and movements of the steps encourage students to consider different perspectives?
3. What is a topic related to your class that you think would be a good fit for a class wiki? In what ways does this topic branch off into connected subjects that students could cover?

Chapter 16

Data-Driven Learning for Grammar Classrooms

Jooyoung Do

1. What do *corpus* and *corpus linguistics* mean? How do these relate to data-driven learning?
2. What is an advantage of data-driven learning? What is a drawback of data-driven learning?
3. According to the author, the first step in setting up a data-driven learning session is deciding what to teach. What area do you think your students need help with that could be incorporated into a data-driven learning session? List a few corpora that could be included as language samples for this area.

Chapter 17

Writing Pattern Poetry on Facebook

Youngmin Park, Sarah T. Dunton, and Juan M. Ruiz-Hau

1. What does it mean to *know* a vocabulary word? What does it mean to understand a word's semantic relations?
2. Discuss the three conceptual frameworks described in this chapter. How do these three frameworks say that students learn?
3. How can pattern poetry be a vital tool in developing a deeper understanding of vocabulary and language?
4. How can social networks—particularly Facebook, according to the authors—be incorporated into the classroom to improve pattern poetry writing? Also, how can teachers use Facebook to evaluate student literacy? As a teacher, how would you utilize Facebook?

Chapter 18

Visual-Syntactic Text Formatting

Charles A. Vogel

1. The author states that students have experienced problems with grammar rules and sentence structure because these topics are separated from exercises in free writing. How can grammar instruction and writing be integrated? How have you seen grammar and sentence structure taught in ways that helped students in their own work?
2. How does visual-syntactic text formatting (VSTF) teach students about syntax?
3. Why do history and science texts require specific methods of rhetoric? Analyze another genre of writing. What do you think is specific to writing in this subject area? Can you identify an effective piece of writing in this subject area and describe why it works?

Chapter 19

Using 21st Century Technology to Edit and Revise

Katie Stover and Chase Young

1. How has writing changed in the 21st century classroom?
2. This chapter offers ways in which students who are editing and revising benefit from technology. How do you think writing teachers benefit from this change in technology?
3. What is VoiceThread? In the classroom example provided in this chapter, what do the students' comments suggest about what they gained from using VoiceThread? How do you think you could incorporate VoiceThread into your lessons?

Chapter 20

Peer Review in a Digital Space

Lisa Holmes and Dawn Reed

1. Define digital peer review in your own words. How can digital peer review enrich student writing?
2. Research described in this chapter found that students mostly have positive opinions about digital peer review. Conduct your own anonymous classroom survey, asking students how they would feel about having their work featured in a forum where others can comment on their writing. What are the results of the survey?
3. According to the authors, what are the three qualities of high-grade peer review? Is there anything you would add to the descriptions of good and bad versions of these qualities?
4. The authors say that they have been impressed and encouraged by students' reactions to peer review. How have your students reacted to peer review in the past? Did their work and their abilities improve from receiving advice from their peers?

Chapter 21

Effective Revision and Editing Strategies

Matthew T. Pifer

1. In your own words, state the three components of the instructional process.
2. Collaborate with a teacher or several teachers at your school to review assignment questions you are giving to students. Working together, do you find areas in which learning objectives and evaluation criteria could be stated more clearly for students? How could you clarify these areas?
3. How are *minimalist tutoring* and *directive tutoring* different? In your experience, how have you found these two approaches to be effective? How can these two methods be combined in an online environment?
4. How can a writing space prove beneficial for faculty and students? Given your school's resources and the availability of software that can create online writing environments, how do you think your school could incorporate a writing center or a writing space?

Chapter 22

Automated Essay-Scoring Software

Deborah-Lee Gollnitz

1. According to the author, how do teachers use assessments, and how do students use them? How does assessment need to change as teachers work to differentiate learning according to students' needs?
2. Why does the combination of automated scoring software and teachers' expertise create the best method of writing assessment?
3. What did you learn about automated essay-scoring software in this chapter that you hadn't considered before? Why is it in teachers' best interest to maintain current knowledge on scoring technology?

Chapter 23

Authentic Writing Through Digital Feedback

Andy Schoenborn

1. Why does feedback need to be digitized as writing becomes digitized? How can an effective feedback loop be created?
2. Try out Google Drive and Google Docs for yourself. What are your first reactions to these tools? How do you see Google Drive and Google Docs being incorporated into your classroom instruction and your students' writing? What tools on these sites are useful for editing and providing feedback?
3. Review the author's guidelines for giving digital feedback, which borrows from Nancy Sommers's scale of concerns. In your experience, what else do you keep in mind while giving feedback?
4. Review the author's feedback template on page 226 and create your own template for providing a student with feedback. What was utmost in your mind as you created and organized your template?

Chapter 24

Measuring Student Growth With Digital Portfolios

Jeremy Hylar

1. Why can digital portfolios be great assessment tools? How can they be more beneficial than hard-copy portfolios in a language arts class?
2. In what areas does the author say teachers should look for growth in students through using digital portfolios?
3. There are many different ways to set up digital portfolios and many decisions to be made. After reading this chapter, how do you think you would set up digital portfolios for use in your class? What guidelines would you give to students on what they can include?