Reading/Language Arts Kidspiration in the Elementary School Classroom[*]

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Abstract

This module emphasizes the use of Kidspiration in the classroom of lower elementary schools. The use of this module is based on Kidspiration with a Reading/Language Arts subject context. This module is to help understand and utilize this technology in the classroom through examples, instructions, and description of its purpose.

1 Introduction

Kidspiration is a new technology that helps children develop their thoughts and new information with a graphic organizer. The students will begin to recognize symbols in place of words to help them navigate through each subject. Teachers can use this tool for all subjects and each section of Kidspiration has a variety of templates to help the students organize and understand the materials necessary for a particular unit. Students are connecting with their subject materials through hands-on experience through technology. The product Kidspiration is a new way to develop stronger thinking skills and new methods of comprehending other subjects including: Social Studies, Reading/Language Arts, Math, and Science.

"Kidspiration provides a cross-curricular visual workspace for K-5 learners. Students use visual tools combining pictures, text, numbers and spoken words to develop vocabulary, word recognition, comprehension, reasoning and problem solving skills". (Inspiration.com/kidspiration)

The students studying Reading and Language Arts will develop stronger reading and writing skills through Kidspiration. Kidspiration offers students graphic organizers to help them complete their reading and writing tasks. The software provides children character webs, story plot organizers, and basic brainstorming strategies.

Our mission is to understand how Kidspiration is helpful for students in Reading/Language Arts. The students should be able to utilize this tool during class and outside of class. The main use of this software for Reading/Language Arts is to strengthen students word study, literacy, organizing thoughts, remembering elements of thoughts (characters, story plot, setting, etc...), and basic comprehension.

[*]Version 1.1: Oct 27, 2008 8:51 pm -0500
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2 Kidspiration 101

Kidspiration is a workspace that the student can work independently or in collaborative groups. This workspace allows children to explore, expand their thinking, and creatively learn about each individual subject. This interdisciplinary technology helps students to navigate and work simple applications in order to complete each task. Kidspiration is a fun way of keeping the children focused and interested on the subject. This application is important for children because it is an easy method to organize and develop new ideas. The program has instructions for the students and symbols to help the students comprehend where everything this. The students can add a personal touch by selecting words, symbols, and pictures to describe their workspace.

The Kidspiration Software is available in a package which includes a Getting Started Guide, the installation CD, and a Reference Card. The software is also available for downloading from the Inspiration Website. The software costs around $70 and up depending on the package chosen. The website has several resources available for purchasing and viewing to help with the educational process using Kidspiration. There are lesson plans, activities, and examples to help the students and teachers navigate around this technology.

There are several websites that give examples and templates of each subject. For Reading and Language Arts, the resources available will help with different writing skills, reading activities, and word identification. Below are several websites from schools and experts who have worked with Kidspiration for teacher inspiration.

How to use Kidspiration in the Classroom: http://www.northcanton.sparcc.org/∼elem/kidspiration/presentation/handout

3 Kidspiration in the Classroom

Teachers can integrate Kidspiration into every aspect of their curriculum because it allows for incorporation of visual learning throughout your lesson plans. There are several ways to use Kidspiration in the classroom when teaching Language Arts. Kidspiration provides a variety of helpful ways to organize stories, work on phonemic awareness, learn how to write more efficiently, and many more options. The Kidspiration website also makes it easy for classroom teachers to attend to their state standards because there is a "standards matches" page providing every state's standards.

http://www.inspiration.com/Standards-Matches/Kidspiration

Kidspiration provides students with visual learning that is proven to improve their conceptual knowledge of subjects. The different views allow students in the classroom to see things in pictures and words using graphic organizes and in integrated writing view they build on letter and word skills. The symbol categories are aligned with K-5 curriculum so they are always focused on relevant information. Kidspiration is innovative because it combines student's visual thoughts with written expression. The symbols are paired with their words to strengthen student's literacy.

Some potential problems could be students need to be familiar with how the program works in order to learn it efficiently. A teacher would need to have a lot of time that they could dedicate to using the Kidspiration program so students become familiar with what the icons mean and are able to use it on their own successfully. Teachers also need to know the answers to the lesson they are teaching because Kidspiration does not correct wrong choices made. Students and teachers are responsible for making all of the corrections on the website.

4 Notable Examples

• The official website provides several good examples of how Kidspiration can be introduced and utilized in the classroom. A good example is called "Writing my First Report", this lesson provides students with the opportunity to organize their thoughts and begin the writing process. The students are asked to read a book about and animal and then they are asked to create a web including where the animal lives, what it eats, how it moves and how it reproduces. Students fill in these categories and use them to organize and develop a simple essay. After the "picture view" is complete switch to the "writing view" and the teacher aids students in creating complete simple sentences.

http://www.inspiration.com/LessonPlan/Writing

• Going on a Bear Hunt Story Investigations Activities- In this example there are several different Kidspiration graphic organizers that relate to one another. The teacher starts by reading several different versions of the fairy tale Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Students are going to compare and contrast versions of the same story, describe characters and setting, and use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting. The first activity involved a simple character template which is used to describe the character in Abuela and the Three Bears. The students then read "Somebody and the Three Blairs" and complete a comparison stories template. The students have an opportunity to be creative and create an alternate ending to the stories. The finally Kidspiration tool used is the story element activity where they combine skills to compare and contrast setting, characters and plot.

http://www.northcanton.sparcc.org/∼elem/kidspiration/oryszak/Create3bears.gif or http://www.northcanton.sparcc.org

• An important skill for students to learn in third grade is how to pick a "just right" book. As students become more confident and capable they use certain strategies that aid them inhow to be a good reader. One of these important strategies is for readers to ask questions before, during, and after reading the text. A good example of using Kidspiration to utilize this strategy is found at the website listed below. Teachers have the opportunity to model a question web allowing students to ask questions before, during, and after a story. After reading the selection teacher can go over how questions were answered in the text. Teachers may use this activity for guided practice of allow students to complete the question web independently while reading.

http://www.inspiration.com/LessonPlan/Question

• Students can use a Venn Diagram to practice their rhyming words. In this example students read Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss. They are asked to think about the rhyming words. Students then use Kidspiration to complete their Venn Diagram independently. Teacher checks work, prints out finished diagram and include it in their Language Arts journal for rhyming practice.

http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LACIMDRhymingWordsGreenEggsAndHam1.htm

• In second and third grade students are all working on improving their comprehension. Kidspiration offers a way to organize your thoughts and information about a story. The title and author of the story should go in the center. Students can summarize the plot in the "What is happening in the story" section. Other categories could include "What is the writer trying to say?" "Who are the main characters?" and "Where does the story take place". In the web there will be a combination of pictures and text. When you switch to the writing view there are more details about each subject. This can help students to analyze what they have read and review between readings. A good example can be found here:

If you go to this website and click on The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe example at this link... http://www.inspiration.com/Examples/Kidspiration#Reading_and_Writing

• Kidspiration can also be very helpful for teaching word study. In this lesson the teacher is focusing on the "ea" sound. The students will work together and they will get to see many words in the "ea" sounds. The students will explore the words and discovery how many different sounds and words these vowels are in. The partners will match the object to the matching sounds using Kidspiration. On their worksheets, students will get to write down all the words that they heard on Kidspiration. Kidspiration is an organized and easy way to allow all children to hear the sounds and develop a letter/sound connection.

http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LACIKidspirationEASounds12.htm

5 Tips for Teachers

• Plan ahead for these lessons. Go through what you expect the students to do and make an example.

• If you are struggling with basic directions the tutorial found here, which provides simple instructions of how to navigate, label, save and many more helpful tips:

http://summit.k12.co.us/SummitTechnlogy/TechnologyImages/KIDSPIRATION.pdf

• Have plenty of examples planned so if students are struggling to find answers you can guide them.