

Allyson Dewar
CEP 815
November 6, 2011

Writing is an area of major concern at my elementary school as it is in most elementary schools across the state of Michigan. In order to raise our MEAP writing scores, we adapted the Write Steps writing program created by Suzanne Klein three years ago. The main issue with our students was getting them to develop and organize ideas and then transfer those ideas to a written piece of work. With our school name being the Academy for Business and Technology Elementary, naturally we have many educational technologically opportunities for both educators and students. While the Write Steps program is helping the students make great strides with their writing in their classroom, I would like our school to be able to provide a similar type of assistance utilizing the technology we have available at our school. At the beginning of the year, our staff was introduced to computer based writing program called Solo 6. The professional development on the program was very brief and it seemed very complicated to use. As all educators know, it is hard to find time to “play around” with a new program. I would like our school to adapt an Internet based writing program that focuses on organization and composing for students that is user friendly for educators. While doing some research, I came across a program that I used during my student teaching. Kidspiration is an Internet based program for grades K-5 that allows students to create thought webs and then combine pictures, text, and audio to develop comprehension, organize ideas, and create stories.

TPACK

PK-What pedagogical practices would I expect to see used to support my learning-technology initiative?

The Write Steps writing program needs to be followed in the classroom to assist in using Kidspiration on the laptops with the students. Teachers should be regularly practicing developing ideas, organization, and transferring ideas to a written piece. Students should also have experience with laptops and the Internet at least twice a week in order to use Kidspiration with confidence.

CK-What content knowledge needs to be known?

Kidspiration is a K-5 program. In all grades, students do organizational planning according to what they are required to write. Although the writing types differ between grades, the amount for each grade is pretty much set. In kindergarten, students need to be able to compose one sentence. In first grade, students need to be able to compose three sentences. In second grade, students need to be able to compose two paragraphs. In third grade, students need to be able to compose three paragraphs. In grades four and five, students need to be able to compose five paragraphs.

TK- What operational skills do teachers need to be proficient users of technology?

Kidspiration is a relatively user friendly program. I picked it up by observing students and other teachers using it while I was completing my student teaching. Teachers need at least an hour of training with the program and explore the program briefly on their own in order to be successful with it. If teachers are proficient with Microsoft Office, then they will be able to use this program. Teachers will also need to be comfortable demonstrating the program to students via the Promethean board in the classroom.

TPACK- Technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge shape each other. How does technology change how and what I teach?

I rely on my Promethean board and document camera daily. I am very dependent now on technology and I believe technology has allowed me to give my students a better, more in depth education. My white board is covered with posters and I gave away my overhead projector in the beginning of the year. If my technology isn't working, I do indeed freak out but have to calm myself down and remember that I did not always have these resources. I have to teach all five core subjects since I am an elementary teacher. I feel that I teach science, reading, and social studies "better" than math and writing because there are more ways I can incorporate technology with the three.