

Teaching First-Graders that Tweeting Isn't Just for Birds: One Class' Journey into Technology Integration

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Setting the Context

From a Scholastic report:

- 25% of students have read a book on a digital device
- 57% are interested in reading books on a digital device
- 33% of kids say "I'd read more books for fun if I had greater access to eBooks that I could read on an electronic device"

To become fully literate in today's world, students must become proficient in the new literacies of 21st-century technologies. As a result, literacy educators have a responsibility to effectively integrate these new technologies into the curriculum, preparing students for the literacy future they deserve.

International Reading Association Position Statement

Literature

- New technoliteracy practices become more deeply embedded in society, they impact on ever-younger age groups (Marsh, 2003)
- New Literacies perspective (Leu et al. 2004) – teachers are challenged to transform reading/writing instruction in response to emerging ICTs
- Lankshear (2000) – if teachers are to meet the emerging education challenge presented by new technologies, they must "base their judgments of the potential of new technologies for classroom teaching and learning on real experiences and informed personal understanding" (p. 2)
- Chen & Chang, 2006 – over 50% of primary teachers self-identify as technology novices
- Merchant (2005) - writing in which students communicate about themselves to audiences other than the class teacher is rare
- Larson (2010) found using digital devices promoted new literacies practices and extended engagement with and manipulation of text
- Web 2.0 applications such as Twitter are becoming increasingly prominent in society and children needed opportunities for reading and writing for a real purpose and audience

Data Collection

- Administration of a modified version of the Writer's Self-Perception Scale (Bottomley, Henk, & Melnick, 1997) three times (September, February, April)
- Writing Samples to match administration of WSPS (September, November, April)
- Parent Surveys
- Student Surveys

Results - Students

- Writer's Self-Perception Scale
 - Increased from Admin. #1 (M = 98.79) to Admin. #2 (M = 104.21), but decreased from Admin. #2 to Admin. #3 (M = 102.42); Efficacy in General Progress increased all 3 admin.
- Scores of writing samples as assessed by 6 + 1 Writing Traits rubric:
 - First Writing Sample: 15.47
 - Second Writing Sample: 20.50
 - Third Writing Sample: 26.24
 - Largest increases overall were seen on Voice (+2.2) and Ideas (+2.6)
- Correlations of WSPS & rubric scores per administration:
 - #1, $r = .56$
 - #2, $r = .46$
 - #3, $r = .62$

Impact -Parents

- Helped parents learn about events that occurred during the school day, which created a conversation starter (beyond "what did you do at school today?")
- Helped them to learn details about students in class as a result of conversations centering upon other student's tweets
- Parents liked the immediacy of access to information and the use of Twitter as a resource for communication of reminders and resources

What Did We Learn?

- Increased access to technology for students (= more computers!)
 - Allow for more student to student communication
 - More student-led technology use (as opposed to teacher directed)
- Children are engaged and motivated by using the tools
 - The children who did not like writing, in general, did not write using traditional tools or technology (How can we engage them more?)
- Parents see the tools as effective for communication purposes
- Twitter can be used as an effective professional development tool
- Specific attention needs to be directed towards the writing model used for implementation
- Tool for measurement should be specific to first graders

Select Resources

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Leu, D., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J., & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Towards a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet... In M. Kamil, P. Rosenthal, P. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 743-770). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

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