

The Impact of Technology on Elementary Writing

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Introductions

Howdy! I'm Sara Ratliff. I teach first grade at Bourbon Central Elementary.



Hey y'all! My name is Sarah Rose. I teach 4th grade at Cane Ridge Elementary.

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Literacy Action Plan Focus

Our focus was to show how the use of technology during a pandemic has affected student writing abilities and the writing process. We chose to compare and contrast how students completed the writing process with pencil and paper vs. digitally. We had three objectives:

1. To see if students would perform better on their writing pieces with the assistance of technology or not.
2. To compare the ease of using technology at the primary level versus at the intermediate level.
3. Find ways to engage students in learning during virtual only instruction.

Primary Focus

Major Steps - Primary



Step 1: How do you use technology to enhance writing instruction?

One of the biggest stigmas around primary instruction and technology integration is that students will not be able to navigate the technology. Fear not! Just like setting up your classroom takes a little time, or organizing groups takes a little practice, the same is true for young students using technology. And here's the thing....they love it! They love doing “big kid” stuff. In my instruction I used google applications and Nearpod to enhance my writing instruction as well as increase engagement during virtual learning.

Step 2: Find Strategies that WORK!



Using Google Apps

Strategy 1: Model, Model, Model!

Any primary teacher knows how important it is to model. I spent a lot of time modeling how to use Google applications. We used it in the same way you would use anchor chart paper and markers during carpet time. Only instead of paper it was Google slides, and instead of markers we had a whole new plethora of tools at our disposal. The kids got used to seeing me navigate Google slides to add images and create text. They were a part of the experience suggesting the text and the pictures. The cool thing was, when I gave them the opportunity to do it on their own, they not only succeeded but got excited about the work they were doing.

Strategy 2: Add pictures!

Remember when I said that kids love doing “big kid” stuff? When I taught my first graders that they could add real images or clipart to their writing they thought it was the coolest thing in the world and because Google applications allow students to safely search for images directly in the same window it was a perfect opportunity for students to work on sounding out the image they wanted in order to add it to their writing.

Step 2: Find Strategies that WORK!

Using Google Apps (Continued)

Strategy 3: Make them do it!

Ok this is the hardest part. Asking students to do it on their own...especially when they are used to having parents help at home with all their virtual work. But they **CAN** do it! This is how I start:

- First I remind the students that I am only one teacher and I can't help them all at once, but that I will help them.
- Secondly I give them a fun task...one they want to accomplish, like playing a fun online game, inserting a funny picture into their project, or typing a silly sentence. Starting with a fun exercise gives them more motivation to figure it out while they are waiting for me to help.
- Third I “snake” around the room, moving from one student to the next, up and down each row, helping students. This way they know when to expect my help and are not in an eternal state of holding up their hand or calling out my name. This incentivizes them more if they know it will take me awhile to get to them and they will typically figure it out on their own.
- Lastly the kids start to brag about what they did and they are proud of themselves, because using a computer is cool!



Step 3: Be amazed!

That's right! It's time to celebrate because after all those struggles and climbing that mountain to achieve computer efficacy with your primary students you will find that their writing actually improves.



One reason is because when students are typing they are not worried about letter formation. Let's pause for a brief analogy:

Have you ever been on your way to one room in your house, get interrupted, and then forget where you were going or what your were going there for? We've all been there. Think of the room as the sentence for kids. The interruption is the letter formation. When you take away that piece students are able to write more freely.

***I am NOT saying handwriting isn't important. In fact many studies have shown how pen and paper develops brain power, improves memory, and enhances creativity. However at the beginning stages of writing using keyboarding helps students focus on the letter sounds they hear in the word to get down their sentences while continuing to develop handwriting skills separately.

Student Work Samples from Virtual Instruction

Write a folktale explaining how an animal got a special body part.

Long ago turtles were fast. One day a turtle was running down the road. He saw a cave made of rocks & went in. In the cave he found a pill of rocks & at the top was a rock that looked like a shell. When he accidentally bumped in to it fell on him & the rock that looked like a shell fell on his back.



Write a folktale explaining how an animal got a special body part.

How frog got his webbed feet. One day he was going to play a game. First he blew up the balloons. When he was doing that one of the balloons was broken and the balloon dropped on the floor and he noticed that there was glue on the floor and it stuck to his feet. That made the webs.



Student Work Samples from our Folktale Unit

Write a folktale explaining how an animal got a special body part.

How sharks got sharp teeth.
One day a shark saw a rock. The shark thought it was a fish. The shark bit the rock! All the shark's teeth broke into sharp pieces!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Name: _____

OPINION WRITING

Which do you like better?

troll



or

dragon





I like dragons better. Dragons blow out fire. They come in different colors.

- ★ I used capital letters.
- ★ I used spaces.
- ★ I used punctuation.

December 7, 2020

Dear Santa,

Santa I hope that you are having good time. I wish for Mario Action Figures. paper Mario, and Halo action figures. My friend wants paper Mario too. My big wish is to play prodigy for ever. I hope you have a good krismis.



Sincerely,

Ben

W.13 Narrative Writing

Snowmen At Christmas

Write a story about what your snowman would do if it came to life. Make sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end!

I build a snowman with a scarf and hat. The hat is magik and maks him come aliv. He starts playing with my dog and cat. We sing songs togethr to. When it gets night time I tak his hat off and he is not aliv anymor.

More student work samples from throughout the year



© Goodness Gracious Grade 1

Intermediate Focus

Major Steps - Technology Integration (Intermediate)

- **How I used technology to enhance writing instruction:**
 - Creation of rough drafts using Google Docs
 - I created a blank template, copied the template for all students, and created an assignment in Google Classroom for students to complete their writing process.



Major Steps - Technology Integration (Intermediate)

- **How I used technology to enhance writing instruction:**
 - Using tools in Google Docs such as comments for peer revising and teacher conferencing
 - Students shared their drafts with selected peers (at least 2-3 other classmates) and used a template for leaving feedback on their peer's paper



Major Steps - Technology Integration (Intermediate)

- **How I used technology to enhance writing instruction:**
 - Used activities from the *Writing Strategies* book by Jennifer Serravallo and made those activities accessible for virtual students
 - Examples of technology used include Google Slides and Nearpod
 - Use of Loom (Video Recording Software) to create video lessons that provided step-by-step instructions on use of Google Docs and other Google applications



Major Steps - Strategies Used (Intermediate)



- **Strategies that worked:**
 - Modeled use of digital graphic organizers in Google Slides
 - Use of this technology included modeling how to create duplicate slides and how to create a text box within the graphic organizer during the brainstorming process
 - Modeled how to create comment boxes on highlighted text of student work to leave feedback during peer revisions
 - Basically -
 - **MODEL, MODEL, MODEL!** (Think in terms of I do, we do, you do)

Templates and Student Work

Get Ready: Brainstorm

The first step in writing a fictional narrative is to choose your characters and setting. Begin by answering questions such as: Who are the main characters? Where and when does the story take place? Here's how the author of the mentor text brainstormed characters and setting.

Characters	Setting
Who Ian and Eve, twins; their dog, Cinnamon	Where at home and in a forest
Personality Ian: dedicated, faithful; Eve: somewhat lazy, means well	When in the present
	Details trees, brush, deer

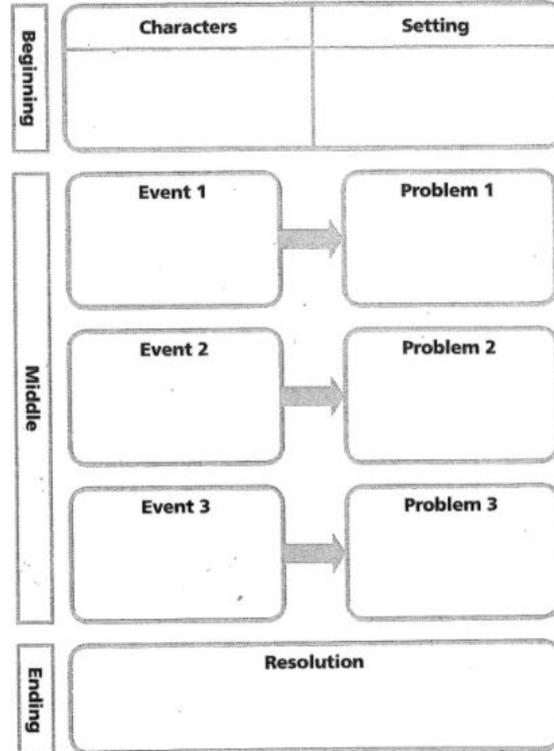
Try It! Use a Brainstorming Graphic Organizer

Now use the chart below to help brainstorm for details to include in your own fictional narrative about two friends who see a strange light in the sky.

Characters	Setting
Who _____ _____	Where _____ _____
Personality _____ _____ _____	When _____ _____
	Details _____ _____

Try It! Organize Your Fictional Narrative

Now use the graphic organizer below to plan the narration and plot for your draft.



Templates and Student Work

Going to delaware with my cousin

by: E [redacted] brown

Have you ever been to delaware? Well I have. I went with my mom,dad,my cousin,my brother and to delaware. It was beautiful, the ocean waves and birds chirping. I could hear the ocean waves hitting shore.

First, my brother had the hotel blanket, his blanket and my cousin's blanket. My cousin woke up and reached over for Oliver's blanket. My brother woke up and sed that is my blanket. My cousin sed well can I have my blanket back. My brother gave her blanket back evinchaly .

Next, my brother was trash talking to the ocean. He said is that all you got ocean. The next wave was taller than him. He got knocked down by the wave. I don't know if he got ocean water in his mouth.

Then, I started trash talking to the ocean too. I said your waves are pathetic. The next wave was a lot taller than me. So that wave knocked me down. Also I got ocean water in my mouth.It tasted horrible.

Next, we went to the gift shop. At the gift shop I got a seahorse necklace. My cousin got a cute cup. Then we went to the cash register. We didn't hafe to pay tax.

Last, my cousin digged a deep hole. She took out some sand. There was 2 hurmicrabs. Thar was a small one and a big one. The big one pinched her. She though them and put back the sand in the hole. I hope you liked my story.



Sarah Rose
6:57 PM Today



I love how you started out your story with a question! Great hook!



Sarah Rose
6:58 PM Today



I love the imagery you use here. I love your description of how you could hear the ocean waves hitting the shore.



Sarah Rose
7:00 PM Today



Remember to use correct punctuation when quoting dialogue in your story.



Sarah Rose
7:00 PM Today



See previous comment about punctuating quotes



Sarah Rose
7:03 PM Today



HA! I like the personification you used to show how the ocean was "getting you back" for trash talking to it!

Try It! Peer Review with a Partner

Now you are going to work with a partner to review each other's fictional narrative drafts. You will use the peer review form below. If you need help, look back at the mentor text writer's peer review form for suggestions.

The narrative includes a strong beginning, middle, and ending.

You did a good job of

The beginning introduces the characters and setting.

You could improve your fictional narrative by

The plot develops from the events that happen and the problems the characters face.

You did a good job of

The writer shows how the characters deal with the problems.

You could improve your fictional narrative by

The writer uses dialogue to move the plot along, to show the characters' traits, and to make the narrative interesting.

You did a good job of

You could improve your fictional narrative by

The ending shows how the problems are resolved.

You did a good job of

The writer makes the ending satisfying to the reader.

You could improve your fictional narrative by

Templates and Student Work

Harvey Wet

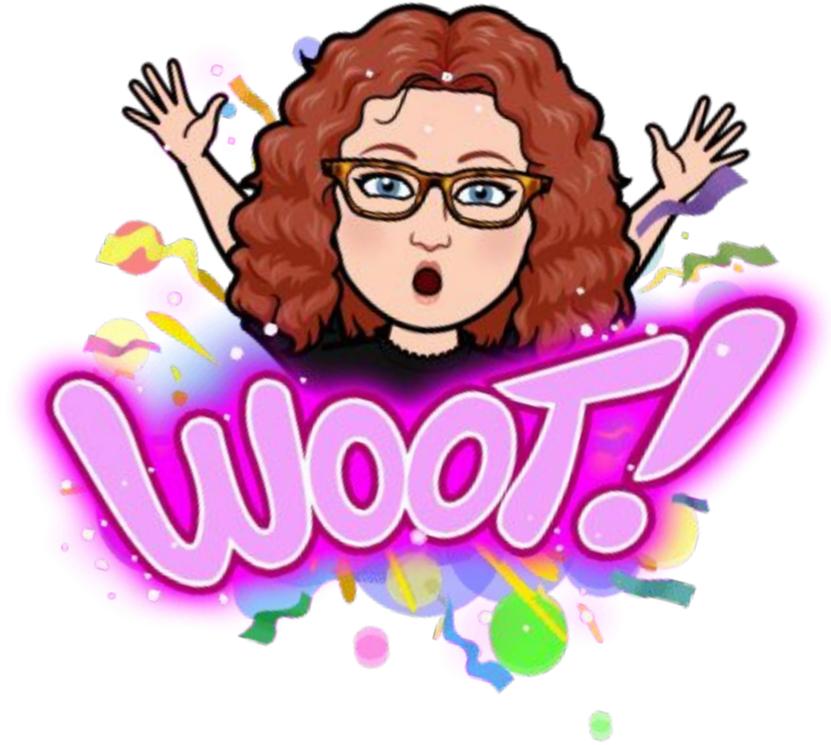
Many years ago Harvey Wet was born in Texas. Harvey Wet was so big that he slept in a broken house. Each morning he ate a dozen eggs, 3 pecks of toast, & 6 pieces of bacon for breakfast. As Harvey Wet grew older he decided to learn to dig. He became so good at digging that he could always beat anything or anybody. One day, Harvey Wet found a baby bear & rescued it from starving. Harvey Wet named his new friend Dimond. People were amazed to see Harvey Wet trawling with a bear. Then, the two saved 510 foot Sue from drowning in the ocean. Since then Harvey Wet & Dimond have been best friends ever since. But one day there was a big drought & there wasn't enough water for Dimond. Harvey Wet started to cry & cry into one of the holes he dug. The hole was overflowing with water. Soon Harvey realized Dimond was drinking the water. When people saw this they took advantage of Harvey Wet. The people would find one of the holes he had dug & tell him they were going to die soon. Harvey would cry & cry filling the whole for the tippy top. Soon the people had rivers everywhere. Soon

but one day there was a big drought & there wasn't enough water for Dimond. Harvey Wet started to cry & cry into one of the holes that he had dug. The hole was overflowing with water. Harvey Wet realized that Dimond had started to drink the water & wasn't thirsty anymore. When people saw this they took advantage. They would find one of the holes that he dug & tell that they were going to die of thirst. So Harvey would cry & cry until the hole was filled. After the people did this they had rivers everywhere. Soon Harvey Wet realized what the people had done so he cried a whole ocean. Soon Harvey got older & passed. Now every time it rains Harvey Wet is sobbing about the clouds hugging Dimond.



Successes and Celebrations

- Despite the obstacles that Covid-19 presented on learning this year, my 4th grade students still rocked out their writing pieces and had fun, too (who'da thought?!)
- Once initial modeling took place for virtual graphic organizers and peer revisions, students acclimated easily to the digital format and were able to take their writing pieces through the entire drafting process.
- All students made some measure of growth with their writing pieces and showed improvement in idea development as well as language and mechanics - that's huge!





Grand Finale



Challenges and Next Steps

- Continue to use technology to enhance writing and engage students while increasing computer literacy.
- Work on developing learning continuum both within grade levels and across grade levels to incorporate both technology writing strategies and work towards pencil and paper writing.



Resources

- Serravallo, J. (2017). *The writing strategies book: Your everything guide to developing skilled writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- (n.d.). The effects of handwriting experience on functional ... - NCBI - NIH. Retrieved April 14, 2021, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4274624/>