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INTRODUCTION

Technology, especially use of the computer, is quickly increasing the ways and means in which students will be required to convey their thoughts and ideas. As a result, previous methods of teaching language arts no longer provide students with all the necessary communication skills. *Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum (Challenging)* has been written to help teachers, technology specialists, technology coordinators, and curriculum specialists seamlessly add computer technology into existing units of study.

The first portion of *Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum (Challenging)* is designed to assist the student and teacher in implementing the projects within this book. Computer labs, computer pods, and the one-computer classroom are addressed. Software packages are suggested, equipment requirements listed, and assessment tools introduced.

The second portion of *Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum (Challenging)* offers ideas on incorporating technology into the study of the various literature genres. As students read, study, analyse, and interpret the various literature forms, they can use projects from this book to hone their critical thinking skills and practise their reading and writing skills while using technology. An in-depth project on John Steinbeck's *The Red Pony* is part of this section. Twenty-six other projects are outlined and samples given that can be adapted to any novel.

Writing skills are addressed in the third portion of *Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum (Challenging)*. The varied forms taught in the middle school are revisited with suggestions offered on how to use technology to encourage writing that is more creative and more logically presented. Computers make publishing students' work easy.

Here's some advice to those who are just beginning technology integration: try one or two projects, evaluate their effectiveness, and then make adaptations. It is better to stay afloat with one endeavor than to sink from the weight of too many.

We hope *Integrating Technology into the Language Arts Curriculum (Challenging)* will prove to be a valuable resource in the middle school communication skills curriculum.

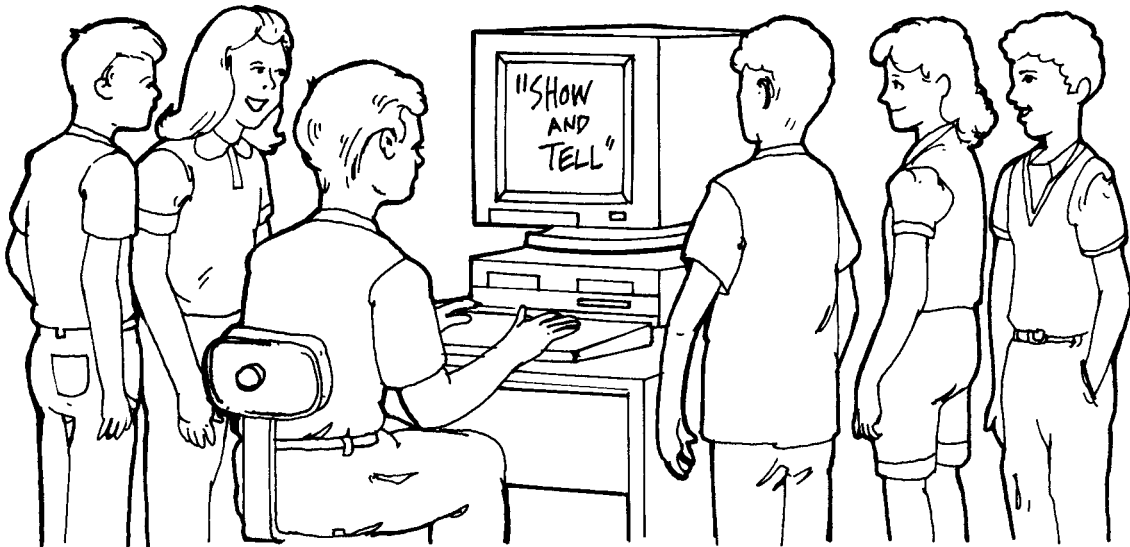
ASSESSMENT

Today students and teachers use multimedia to communicate knowledge about a topic or concern, but the traditional methods of assessment cannot effectively evaluate this new product. Multimedia assessment should be fourfold: the author, a peer, a teacher, and the end user should all assess the product at various appropriate stages of development.

Students should have checklists and time lines as they work on projects. After the initial editing and proofing are completed, a peer should experiment with the project and use the checklist to evaluate the contents of the project. Student peers should then discuss the items on the checklist and make corrections on the project. The teacher is the second editor and might find that a rubric works well for providing clear and specific feedback. A conference should follow to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the product. Editing is again a part of the process. Publishing, sharing, and showing the project are the final step. The end products should be made available to other students.

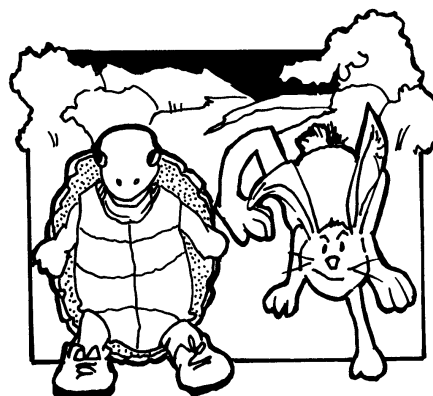
Using this approach to assessment helps ensure a polished product with accurate information, correct grammar, and ease of interaction.

The assessment tools that follow were developed from the article "Judging Student Multimedia," by Cornelia Brammer (see resources). They may be copied and used as models, or you may create your own.



PROJECT: FABLES AND FOLK TALES

This project helps students understand allusions and proverbs by presenting three types of folk tales and fables: Aesop's traditional favorites, verse fables, and Thurber's humorous *Fables for Our Times*. Folk tales reinforce the values of community and strengthen character. As students read and understand the material, they learn that doing good for others is a reward in itself. The entertainment value of the humorous situations in which the characters find themselves make fables and folk tales a natural for videotaping.



Teams are allowed three scheduled video sessions to complete taping. Final editing involves all members. All students view the productions. If available, play the videos on Channel One (the school network) for the whole school. Local cable channels also may want to play the tapes for the community. Sharing tapes with younger students always delights middle school students.

Grade Level: six to eight

Duration: one week in planning and three videotaping sessions

Materials: video storyboarding sheets, video camera and tapes, cordless microphone, costumes, scenery, props

Before Videotaping:

- Discuss fables and folk tales with the students and identify and analyse the human character traits that are depicted.
- Be sure students understand rhetorical overstatement.
- Explain archaic terms and adapt them to today's language.
- Place students in cooperative teams and define the roles of each person.
- The teams choose a fable or folk tale to tape, storyboard the literature, and decide on roles, costuming, setting and necessary props.
- Teams are allowed three scheduled video sessions to complete taping.

On the Computer:

- Team members organise the materials and type notes using a word processing program.
- Using a desktop publishing program, students create professional-looking signs and other props to improve the video presentation. With some programs they can also add special effects and simplify editing.