Preface

Literacy education has been inundated in recent years with an onslaught of innovation. Technology in the form of hardware, software, and now computer applications has been flooding into classrooms, and, at times, overwhelming teachers. Students are now taking an active role in learning, rather than the more traditionally passive role in seeking, manipulating, and generating information. Additionally, students are performing more authentic tasks, which has led to more problem solving and self-evaluation. The new role for students has necessitated a shift in the role of teachers as well. Teachers can no longer be viewed as the sage on the stage, but rather must now embrace more constructivist views and strive to become both a mentor and facilitator. This new role involves supporting technology by supervising, questioning, and suggesting ideas to students rather than dispensing information (Singh & Mean, n.d.). This surge of technology, combined with the new demands on teachers, has spawned the need for practical, hands-on methods for integrating technology into the literacy classroom. This volume seeks to provide teachers with user-friendly, research-based applications of technological tools.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS BOOK

This book is intended as a guide targeting various issues that arise when infusing technology into literacy instruction. This book addresses pressing needs in literacy by: 1) connecting theory and practice, 2) addressing emerging issues in technology integration, and 3) identifying best practices in literacy instruction. It targets educators globally, emphasizing technology’s use in the literacy classroom. The overarching goal of this book is to bring together a collection of practical samples that not only can be used for teaching, but also used as a resource for others who are seeking for answers on how to best utilize current technology in the literacy classroom. At the theoretical level, it contributes to the knowledge base on literacy education. It expands our understanding of the underlying issues, barriers, and pitfalls when tackling the task of building quality literacy programs.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

The five sections of this book are organized to maximize the experience for the reader. It begins with a brief history of technology used to support literacy instruction, provides information related to web-based tools, describes the use of hardware and software applications for use in the classroom, discusses teacher preparation as well as professional development, and ends with an insightful chapter on the future of technology used to support literacy instruction.
Section 1 provides a foundation from which to view the remaining chapters. It contains one chapter. In Chapter 1, a brief history of technology used to support literacy instruction is covered. Karin Perry, Sam Houston State University, outlines important key developments from the past.

Section 2 presents an overview of web-based/online tools for use in the literacy classroom. It contains four chapters.

In Chapter 2, Rebecca S. Anderson, Gretchen S. Goode, Jessica S. Mitchell, and Rachel F. Thompson, The University of Memphis, provide four examples from K-12 classrooms that use a variety of current, research-based online tools for teaching specific writing pedagogies.

Chapter 3 describes important Web 2.0 tools, the new literacies they reflect, and their applications for classroom use. Jodi Pilgrim and Christie Bledsoe, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, present an overview of these tools.

Chapter 4 highlights the potential of digital curation as a means for facilitating multimodal literacy instruction. Michael S. Mills, University of Central Arkansas, draws on recent research on the cognitive benefits of multimodal literacy instruction and its potential for increasing opportunities for student engagement.

In Chapter 5, Theresa McGinnis, Hofstra University, explores new ways of envisioning a balanced literacy curriculum where, through a balance of Literacy 1.0 with Literacy 2.0, educators can sufficiently prepare students to navigate the complexities of 21st century literacies.

Section 3 describes various hardware and software applications for use in the literacy classroom. It contains eight chapters.

Chapter 6 discusses the TECH framework that can be used to guide school personnel in making decisions on choosing assistive technology for students with disabilities. Anya S. Evmenova and Margaret E. King-Sears, George Mason University, present four scenarios for using TECH framework for literacy goals.

Chapter 7, written by Sheila Flihan, The College of Saint Rose, presents the findings of a study which examined how Microsoft Photo Story 3 for digital storytelling influenced the language and literacy development of an eighteen-year-old English Language Learner.

In Chapter 8, Jean Kiekel, University of St. Thomas – Houston, and E.E. Kirk, Concordia University Chicago, explore the readability of one of the more popular applications for iPads in an attempt to discover whether reading levels of the application are appropriate for students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Chapter 9 reports results of a study conducted by Jason T. Edwards, University of Arkansas, and highlights general findings from a semester-long case study involving high school students using Kindle® e-book readers.

In Chapter 10, James R. Stachowiak and Liz Hollingworth, University of Iowa, review assistive technology solutions to literacy teaching challenges in the classroom, current trends with literacy and technology, available open source, commercial, and mobile literacy technology tools, and how to select the proper tools in the classroom to create a valuable toolbox of literacy-based technology tools to advance literacy goals in K-12 schools.

Chapter 11, written by Howard P. Parette, Craig Blum, and Katie Luthin, Illinois State University, presents an overview of a conceptual framework and its relationship to instructional strategies and assessment with descriptions of three prominent apps having UDL features which hold potential to support literacy development.
Finally, chapter 12 focuses on digitally enhanced picture books. Maria Cahill and Dawn Peterson, Texas Woman's University, and Anne McGill-Franzen, University of Tennessee, provide a rationale for using digitally enhanced picture books (EPBs), electronic texts which pair text narration with animated pictures, with young children in the classroom and as a home-school connection tool.

Section 4 discusses the opportunities for high-quality professional development in technology available for literacy personnel. It contains four chapters.

Chapter 13, written by Donna Wake, University of Central Arkansas, explores teacher education candidates’ perceptions of technologies used to support K-12 student literacy development.

In Chapter 14, Christie Bledsoe and Jodi Pilgrim, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, focus on project-based learning, problem-based learning, and challenge-based learning as pedagogies that readily integrate technology to promote new literacies.

Erin White, Purdue University North Central, examines various technology-based tools and their potential impact in Chapter 15. These technology-based solutions could help to alleviate an already taxed educational system, as well as significantly aid in improving and increasing English language acquisition among the nation’s K-12 ELL population.

Section 5 serves as the book end for this work. It contains one chapter. This chapter looks at the future use of technology in literacy classrooms.

In Chapter 17, a vision of the future is painted. Whereas Chapter I provided a historical overview of technology used to support literacy instruction, Chapter 17 continues the story by looking at emerging technologies and instructional strategies. Chris Underation, The University of Findlay, outlines important key developments that will impact the future use of technology in literacy education.

Jeff Whittingham  
University of Central Arkansas, USA  
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REFERENCES