Technology In The Language Arts Classroom

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Introduction

Technology is transforming how the language arts are taught. The language arts curriculum, designed and developed over the years, includes the content areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visual expression. The transformation currently underway has been fueled by the enormous growth of the World Wide Web and educational software. Learning is no longer constrained by printed materials, as the language arts become more accessible across cyberspace. Electronic books from classical and contemporary authors are readily available. The application of theories and practices throughout the English-speaking world...
are dispensed for real-time consideration. Students entering online writing communities examine the virtual works of peers in other states and other languages. Numerous sources of information support the development of a more literate population.

**Historical Evolution of Language Arts-Based Technologies**

Classroom teachers historically follow the linear, rigid scope and sequence format of the language arts textbook, an approach often described as a scope and sequence system. The step-by-step regimen challenged early learners to explore new ways of spelling, building vocabulary, comprehending sentence and paragraph structures, communicating with authors, writing more effectively, and reading from an ever-growing array of resources.

The effect of evolving technologies on the study of language arts across grade levels has been exciting and thought provoking, and often formidable and chaotic. For the alert teacher, agile in making curriculum changes, willing to take new initiatives for the improvement of instruction, and open to new thinking, advances in technology have been extraordinarily positive.

Not so long ago, chalkboards, books, handouts, worksheets, and illustrative visual aids were primary vehicles supporting students in their journey toward fluency in reading and language arts. Veterans of the pre-1960s classroom remember their introduction to educational radio, touted to advance the listening and learning pleasures of children. Solid thinking skills were widely considered keys to good reading comprehension; a "truth" confirmed by researchers who claimed to measure such things.

Tape recorders revolutionized the 1960s classroom. They represented something close to sorcery, or at least mysticism, as they wheeled endless reels of captured voices and returned them to the anxious listener. Students thought their own voices sounded "funny." For teachers of the decade, technology literacy consisted of reading books onto audiotapes in an attempt to develop listening and reading stations for "read along" activities in order to help students achieve higher recreational or instructional reading levels. These new technical skills accommodated individual differ-
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