

I first had to pick technology that I could access at my school. Many websites are blocked and even if I can get on them with the teacher computer that does not mean the students can get onto the same sites. Having not much in technical training, compound on that the fact that our school has limited resources, and add to that the limited knowledge of technology I have, I had to find something I had never used before in the classroom. At first it looks like my technology choice is fairly easy, but I had not used it in the classroom, nor had most of the students used it, nor were they quick to get the hang of it.

I chose two technologies, Inspiration 8 software and Photo Story 3 for Microsoft. I chose Inspiration 8 because one, our school has Inspiration 8 and two, it is a graphic organizer. It is a great interactive way to create the web for an essay. Once the web is made you can export it to Microsoft Word and it puts your ideas into an outline for you. Ideally now, all you would have to do is compose the essay one paragraph at a time. I, naively, thought that this would make the writing process easier.

I also chose Photo Story 3 because it was a free program and our school already had it loaded onto computers. I knew a little about each program from this class and training in the district, and I was pretty sure the students had never used it before. In TE 831 I made a video for the *To Kill a Mockingbird* essay that I do with the sophomores, and was inspired to try this with a class. My juniors were getting ready to write their character/symbol paper for *The Scarlet Letter*.

The influence of TPACK is integral. I picked the technology based on my teacher understanding to the students and the technology. Yes, my experience was limited but at least I knew how to work it, and teach it to the students. My experience with technology (T) paired with my content knowledge (C) of *The Scarlet Letter* paired with the pedagogical knowledge (P) about the writing process created a step-by-step approach to a digital essay. I am certain this was the first lesson that incorporated all of the TPACK, usually I have different combinations.

One thing I miscalculated was how much time it would take students to do this project. They have a hard time with writing regularly, and I added a few unfamiliar elements; the whole timeline broke down from student resistance. I honestly think that most of the students were positive about the assignment. Using Inspiration 8 was novel to them; it inspired some to get their thoughts down, but to others it was a distraction or a stopping block. For my some of my special education students I had to take this element off the table so they wouldn't melt down. And for other students it was a distraction because they kept changing the shapes and pictures. The finished products of the webs were very nice and helpful to the writing process.

Another miscalculation was having access to the computers that had the correct technology. The computer lab in the library had Inspiration 8 and Photo Story 3. The mobile laptops on my floor had Photo Story 3 but no Inspiration 8. The laptops in the library had neither. First I needed Inspiration 8, but the correct computers were checked out to another class. I begged and traded and was able to get Inspiration computers for a few days. Then we used the laptops to type the essay. Then we moved onto Photo Story. If students were not finished with each step when it was time to move on they were pretty stuck because I could not get the computers with Inspiration 8 after my borrowed time. Deadlines were tough, and with the computers there are always deadlines because every class needs access to the computers. To supplement for the students I came in early and stayed later during this project to give students extra times with the computers. Overall

the response from the students was favorable. No one was ever off task. The digital story brought a visual piece to their writing, which surprised them.

I plan to use the Inspiration 8 with all writing assignments showing students how to link the items correctly so they will not have extra steps in fixing their outlines before writing. I also know that Inspiration 8 has other templates in the program. I just have to play around more with it.

The Photo Story is too much fun. I want to get it into all of my classes. I can use it for essays, for plays (Caesar is coming up next semester), for book commercials, for learning the classroom rules and lots more, I'm sure. I can see it working well with Drama, Journalism, Science (especially lab procedures), and Social Studies (I made many movies back in the 90s).

When we neared the end of the project I sent invitations to all of the principals, and English teachers describing the projects and inviting them to come and view the videos with the class. Just the invitation alone prompted the department to ask for a tutorial over the two programs and the assignment I gave. The principals are incredibly excited to see what we are doing in class. I will use part of this reflection to present about the situation of our resources in our high school. This assignment has also prompted me to book mark all of the technology and websites mentioned in our TE831 lessons so that I may learn and incorporate them into my lessons from now on.