

March 6, 2009

5H News

Technology

With the rapid rate of change in technology, our children live in a very different world than the one in which we grew up. I never thought I would find myself saying the things that my mother said or using the expression, “when I was your age....” With all of the change, we need to ask ourselves what is the **purpose** of technology and what is it that I really want students to know? The answers to both of these questions are fairly straightforward. First, technology is a tool. Second, I want children to learn how to think and to apply knowledge. Technology is a tool for accessing, developing and sharing knowledge.

Two areas of the curriculum I have recently given a great deal of thought, in regards to technology, are Writing and Social Studies. Students use technology to plan, organize, draft, revise and edit work. In addition, students use technology as a way to share writing –

Upcoming Dates

March 11 Math Games Open House

March 12 Thompson Island Info Session Visit

March 23 Musical Mosaic

March 25 Chinese Artists Visit

April 1-3 MCAS - Language Arts

April 27 Grace Lin Visit

April 30 Visit Middle School

on our website and in the classroom on our projection system.

Recently, I noticed a trend in students typing while using no punctuation or capitals. Horrified, I inquired with children as to why they believed it was ok to do this. “*Word* will fix it for you when you download it.” While this may be true, you need to know and apply the mechanics of writing. Other instances have had children using text abbreviations in writing such as “i” “luv” “ya” “tmi” or “bff.”

The class needed more explicit teaching in audience and purpose for writing. We teach children to be “bilingual” in their oral communication; speaking with friends is different than speaking with adults, (my sons benefit from explicit reminders there too...) This week I modeled the contrast between two types of communication – text messages and story writing. We examined how the purposes and audiences differ. One is quick, get the information out and then delete it. No one crafts, revises and edits text messages. However, an essay, story or report needs careful crafting, revision and editing. There is more information being synthesized and communicated. The later is intended to show a deeper level of understanding and to last.

In Social Studies I have been looking for additional ways to have children share their knowledge of the curriculum using technology. Our technology specialist, Brian Allieri, and I are planning a pilot culminating project for the China Unit this spring. Children will be creating pod casts to share one aspect of

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their knowledge of China. This will not replace writing, reading or artwork related to the culture. This will be a project in which children still have to research, read, write and revise their “casts.” All of the information must be researched, synthesized and written into a presentation before it is recorded and edited in *Garage Band*. This technology will be new to me and to the children, but being a huge NPR fan, Brian’s idea appealed to me immensely.

In preparation for this larger project, your child wrote a short *Light* pod cast for homework this week. Next week, Brian Allieri will be coming in to 5H to help children record and edit these pieces so that they are ready for a larger project this spring.

As this project grows and develops this spring I will keep you informed. Along the way we will continue to use technology as a tool for accessing and sharing information, but with our main focus always on developing critical thinking skills and curiosity for learning!

Welcome Ms. Vachani

Samira Vachani has joined 5H full time this semester. She is a student at Wellesley College completing her student teaching internship. She will be with us until mid-May. She will be joining us in all aspects of the curriculum and with your permission, will be sitting in on some parent conferences.

Conferences

On our website has a grid of appointment times for conferences. Please email me your first, second and third choices!