

The Literacy Centre



Heather Baptie & Terry Dobson

2011 - 2012

Welcome to The Literacy Centre 2011 - 2012, a collection of ideas and resources we've compiled during the school year.

Supporting Struggling Readers
"Resources and ideas that make a difference for struggling readers"
Curated by Literacy

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www.rtinetwork.org - April 3, 6:21 PM
Using Technology to Enhance RtI Implementation
RTINetwork.org guides educators and families in the effective implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) as a means to improve educational outcomes for all students.
Scopied by Literacy

books.google.ca - April 3, 6:21 PM
Overcoming Dyslexia
From one of the world's leading experts on reading and dyslexia, the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and practical book yet to help us understand, identify, and overcome the reading problems that plague so many children.
Scopied by Literacy

www.goodreads.com - April 3, 6:20 PM
What Really Matters in Response to Intervention
Literacy researcher and best-selling author Dick Allington offers clear recommendations and a teacher-friendly framework to guide classroom teachers in designing response to intervention programs.
Scopied by Literacy

www.apple.com - April 3, 6:14 PM
Apple - Accessibility
Apple offers a variety of built-in tools and technologies that help people with disabilities get the most from their Mac, iPad, iPod, or iPhone.
Scopied by Literacy

www.dropbox.com - April 3, 6:14 PM
Dropbox - Sign in - Simplify your life
Dropbox is a free service that lets you bring your photos, docs, and videos anywhere and share them easily. Never email yourself a file again.
Scopied by Literacy

www.evernote.com - April 3, 6:13 PM
Evernote
The Evernote family of products help you remember and act upon ideas, projects and experiences across all the computers, phones and tablets you use.
Scopied by Literacy

animoto.com - April 3, 6:12 PM
Animoto
Animoto turns your photos and video clips into professional video slideshows in minutes. Fast, free and shockingly.
Scopied by Literacy

www.edmodo.com - April 3, 6:15 PM
Edmodo - Secure Social Learning Network
edmodo

Scoop.it!

[Scoop.it](#) allows you collect and curate web content then present it in a magazine format. Colleagues and other educators who share your interests can follow your topics and suggest additional content.

This Scoop.it highlights some of the resources we feel are most effective for struggling readers. We invite you to follow the topic and share your ideas!

Please click [here](#) to view our Scoop.it.

LiveBinders

Struggling Readers Binder Author: [literacy](#)

Welcome 21st Century Learning Web Tools Implementation Digital Citizenship iPads Apps Google Pro-D Blogs Parents Children's Books

Reluctant Readers Dyslexia Reading Research Writing Games Retention Videos

Apps for Special Education Moms With Apps Ways to Evaluate Educational Apps Apps for Grading Assessments 10 Apps for Finding Apps 5 Simple Apps That Let You Do More With Evernote

The Best Education Apps at FETC 200 Apps for (Special) Education Top 5 Apps for Organizing School Work 25 Essential Children's Book Apps English Apps for Middle School

Apps for Professional Development Evaluating Apps for Educational Use Monster List of Apps for People with Autism APPitic - 1,800+ EDUapps Voicecards Are Not Flashcards

Apps for Children with Special Needs Special Education Apps The Power of Video: Animoto Founder Shares His Vision Teaching Appz - a guide to great educational apps for teachers Best free iPhone apps

New Web App Gamifies Your Classroom With Text Messages

Apps

<http://www.livebinders.com/media/get/MilwMjc0OA==>



Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.

Bill Gates

[Click here to view our LiveBinder.](#)

LiveBinders is a powerful web tool to help you organize and share resources. Similar in concept to traditional tabbed three-ring binders, you use LiveBinders to categorize and save information and ideas. LiveBinders, allows you to easily store all your website links, PDFs and word documents in one place, online, so you can access and update them anytime, from any computer. You can share your LiveBinder with colleagues and invite them to collaborate with you.

Here is a LiveBinder we created with ideas and resources that we've been gathering during the school year. It focuses largely on technology as we've been exploring how we can better use digital resources to meet the needs of our struggling readers.

Glogster



[Click here to view our vocabulary glog.](#)

Glogster is a fun, easy to use "drag and drop" tool that allows teachers and students to create unique interactive posters, called Glogs. We wanted an environmentally friendly way to share a variety of multimedia resources we were presenting at conferences and decided to try Glogster. We loved how simple it was to incorporate images, video, audio and text into our vocabulary glog. It's free for educators and a wonderful tool for 21st century learners to present information they've learned.

Prep Tools for College

Technology is growing at an exponential rate and an overwhelming number of tools are available to support students who struggle with reading and writing tasks. Here are a just a few inexpensive or free options that can help school students achieve greater success and better prepare them for college or university.



[Evernote](#) is free and the benefits are endless. We use it for both personal and work related tasks everyday. Evernote is like a huge filing cabinet that can be used to capture and save almost anything (audio, video, information from websites, etc.). It works on any device, so you can access the notes on your computer or iPhone and work with them later on either device. Here are

just a few of the possibilities: keeping track of assignments, making text or audio notes or sketches, creating flashcards, recording lectures, saving images or information from websites that contain text, audio or video files. The information can be shared with instructors, friends and family.



[bubbl.us](#) and [Popplet](#) are free and relatively simple to use tools for creating mind maps, flow charts and brainstorming diagrams online. iPad users might also want

to check out the popplet lite app available from the iTunes store.



[Voice Cards Are Not Flashcards](#) "are an innovative way to study and a replacement for all the flashcard/notecard apps out there!! Create a voice record of your questions/ answers and play them back in different ways." This app is available in iTunes and can be used with Quizlet. Students who are auditory learners or like to study while working out or traveling to and from school like this option.



[EasyBib](#) or [BibMe](#) are free resources that save time and reduce errors by correctly citing the student's references and formatting their bibliography. Easy Bib has a free iPhone app.



[Dragon Dictation](#) is a free app that comes with an iPhone or iPad. This voice recognition software removes some of the obstacles that prevent our students from getting their thoughts onto paper. Students sometimes prefer this to other more expensive speech to text software.



[Ginger](#) is a powerful proofreading software designed primarily to help people with dyslexia. Since it's highly accurate in correcting spelling errors, we like to recommend this grammar and spell checker for students with learning disabilities. We suggest starting with the free basic software, but students may want to upgrade to the premium version that includes

text to speech. Unfortunately, a Mac version isn't available yet, but Mac lovers can add their name to the notification list.

Audiobooks Leaves Them Begging For More



By the time struggling readers reach high school, many have shut down or given up completely. For years, reading classroom material has been difficult, if not impossible, and they've rarely if ever experienced the pure joy of getting lost in a captivating story, or the excitement of learning something amazing from a non-fiction passage. Instead, they've spent most of their school days sitting in desks filled with textbooks they cannot read.

When students don't read, over time we begin to see a decline in both their language and comprehension. They suffer from not having experience with the vocabulary, concepts and ideas expressed in text. Their spelling and writing skills are impacted and their overall achievement is often limited.

Fortunately, technology is revolutionizing the lives of struggling readers and opening the doors to a literary world far beyond their reading abilities. A variety of digital options exist, but audiobooks provide a simple, effective way to motivate and re-engage struggling readers of all ages.

Audiobooks have been around for quite some time, but until recently, they have been expensive and not always readily available. Now, most students have their own mobile device and books are easily accessible through a variety of sources.

People may argue that listening to audiobooks is not 'reading', but what exactly is reading? Is it the mechanical process of pulling the words off the page or is it the experience of engaging and interacting with the content? The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and most importantly we want our students to connect, analyze, question, imagine, reflect and finally synthesize new understandings into their world.

Audiobooks provide an opportunity for struggling readers to engage in content at their cognitive level, rather than being restricted by their limited reading capabilities. They develop vocabulary and comprehension skills and are able to be active participants in class discussions and activities.

We recently had a teacher approach us about one of the boys we were working with. Apparently, he was unable to read the classroom novel and was falling further behind in the class. She tried providing him with a text to speech version of the book, but he claimed it was boring and refused to listen to it. No one was available to read the novel to the student, and she was looking for some suggestions or support.

Fortunately, the boy was a proud owner of a new iPad, and the solution was quick, easy and free. An audio version of the book was available to download from the public library. The narrator of the book was a talented, expert reader who brought the story to life in a way our student had never imagined. Along as the story was read to him.

Audiobooks (cont.)

He was hooked! For the rest of that school day and most of the evening, he was glued to his iPad, listening and following along as the story was read to him.

The following morning, the student came to visit us. He had finished the book and was ready to discuss and analyze it along with his classmates. The purpose of his visit wasn't to brag about that accomplishment though. He wanted to tell us that the book he had just completed was part of a series, and wondered if we'd be able to get the next book for him too! Wow! This student, who probably hadn't read a book by choice for several years, was actually asking for more. All of sudden, reading wasn't a chore, but rather a vehicle that allowed him to explore a whole new world. Audiobooks are available from a variety of sources. Commercial companies such as iTunes, and

audible.com have audiobooks for purchase. In addition, organizations such as [Learning Ally](#) offer memberships for all persons with a documented learning disability or dyslexia.

What's especially exciting though, are the number of audiobooks that are now available at no cost. Libraries around the world are growing their collections of audio and ebooks and individuals can borrow them, just as they would a traditional book. The downloading process is easy, and at the end of the loan period the book simply disappears from your device.

If you know someone who refuses or struggles to read, try introducing audiobooks. It truly can be a life changing experience!



[Click here to view video](#)

Weebly

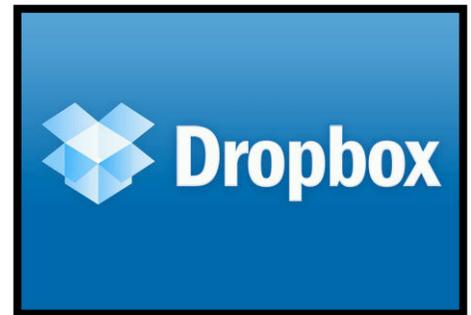
[Weebly](#) is a quick and easy way to create a professional looking website or blog. Text, pictures, videos, and maps can all be added just by dragging and dropping them right onto the site. The education version lets your students create sites too.



[Click here to view video](#)

LiveScribe

A [LiveScribe](#) smartpen records as you write. Simply tap on your notes to replay what was said. Notes can be saved to your computer, searched for key words and shared with others.

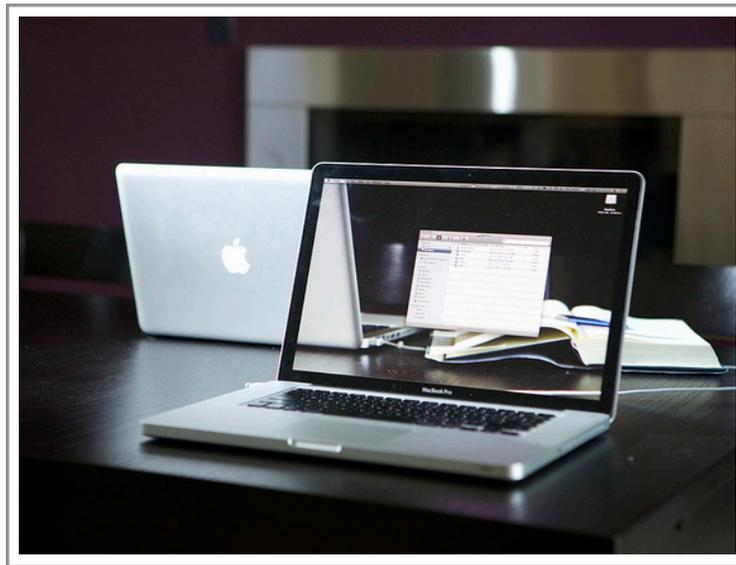


[Click here to view website](#)

Dropbox

[Dropbox](#) is a tool that saves all your documents, photos, and videos in the 'cloud' so you can access them anywhere. It's easy to share files with others or work collaboratively on one document.

Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World



flickr.com/photos/meckert75/5364825863

Are you looking for ways to support and engage your students? Here's an example of how we recently integrated some simple, but effective digital tools to engage, educate and empower our students.

A Bit of Background . . .

This fall we provided literacy support to sixteen high school boys with severe learning disabilities. We reviewed their files, met with staff and completed the required standardized testing to gain a basic understanding of their literacy skills and needs. They were bright and creative, but despite working with skilled and caring teachers, most had experienced a great deal of academic failure. Many struggled with basic everyday reading tasks and their spelling scores explained their reluctance to write - only two scored above the 17th percentile on a standardized spelling test.

Our goal was not only to address deficits in critical literacy skills; but also to provide tools and strategies that remove obstacles to learning and empower students with alternate ways to access information and communicate ideas. To personalize their learning and achieve greater success, we wanted to learn more about their background, previous experiences, values, attitudes, talents, interests, strengths and needs. Rather than quizzing, testing, interviewing or assigning an 'All About Me' essay, we chose a multimedia format and integrated some of our favorite digital tools - Animoto, YouTube, BrainPop and Wordle.

Animoto is free for teachers and you can add their app to your IOS devices. To learn more and set up an account, visit <http://animoto.com/education>. Animoto "analyzes music, photos and video clips, and orchestrates a custom video." If you're wondering what to do with all your vacation photos or want to impress parents with a year end video that doesn't take hours or days to create, try Animoto.

Programs like Wordle (www.wordle.net) and Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com) are fun, free and effective tools that allow you to enter your own text to create unique word cloud images. They can be used in countless ways and we're sure you and your students will love them.

Continued on next page

Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World (cont.)

The Project . . .



Using Animoto and Wordle, our students created a video, or digital description of themselves. Evaluation rated the following:

- Overall Effectiveness:** solid understanding of how to effectively use Animoto and Wordle to create a digital description (lifestyle, personality, values, etc.)
- Content:** unique, shows evidence of planning and is presented in a logical sequence (introduction, main idea or theme, supporting details, conclusion)
- Images, Text, Theme and Music:** well suited to the message, add impact and reflect a positive digital footprint
- Wordle:** unique word cloud image contains interesting adjectives to describe personality traits
- Literary Devices:** a simile or metaphor was used to "spice up" the text
- Application and Extension:** share 3 examples of how a multimedia format might be an effective way to deliver a message or complete an assignment

A word of caution: Before you begin, try to anticipate potential problems that are often associated with technology. Poor Internet connections, out-dated equipment/technology and blocked websites are a few that we encountered. Students may not remember to email or bring images from home, but they can likely find them with access to Facebook. Setting up Animoto accounts for your students can be tricky, but this link is helpful: <http://help.animoto.com/entries/104077-how-do-i-set-up-accounts-for-my-students>

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Developing Literacy Skills in a Digital World (cont.)

The Benefits . . .

- We discovered so much more about our students than their files or test scores could show. Some were easily defeated or distracted and accomplished little, while others spent extra time working at home. Each video revealed a unique story and a glimpse into their lifestyle, personality, passions, talents, interests, values and beliefs. Some featured fun, sports-loving, personalities who loved to ski and play video games. Others crafted their digital story to show a more sensitive, deep thinking and perhaps misunderstood side of their personality.
- Multimedia projects can help develop digital footprint awareness (But, we suggest you discuss guidelines for appropriate content and use.)
- Our students were developing relevant 21st century literacy skills and the ability to effectively communicate in ways that involve more than just text and speech. Initially, some were skeptical and chose alternate assignments because they saw little value in a project with minimal text. Later, they began to see multimedia formats as an alternate and sometimes more effective way to demonstrate knowledge. The applications are endless, but here are a few of the ideas we discussed: creating a timeline for Social Studies; a portfolio for Art, Cooking, Band, Woodwork; explaining procedures in Math, Science or PE; or producing book or movie trailers for English or Theater and highlighting events, like field trips.
- The project incorporated core English Language Arts expectations related to reading and reviewing, writing and representing and oral language (speaking and listening).
- Students were actively involved in the reading process as they searched for instructions, quotes, music, images, definitions and adjectives. As inspiration, we discussed parts of Neil Parischa's best seller, Book of Awesome and their 'connections to the text' were reflected in their video.
- The video creation closely paralleled the writing process and involved planning, editing and revising unique content to reflect their personal voice. Text was intentionally minimal to suit the format, but word choice was a focus.
- YouTube music clips and BrainPop's Similes and Metaphors movie helped our students understand, recognize and incorporate literary devices.
 - (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1c6zF9aJxs>)
 - (<http://www.brainpop.com/english/writing/similesandmetaphors/>)
- In small group conversations, our students were communicating ideas, clarifying understanding and expressing their personal views and perspectives. They developed a richer vocabulary as they made up their own student friendly definitions and played with words. They described themselves as epic, loquacious, upright, conscientious, obnoxious and inspirational!
- The resources and strategies involved in this multimedia project are affordable, effective and accessible for all students. The project can easily be expanded, modified or enhanced to incorporate other digital tools.

Read Naturally - An Effective Fluency Development Tool



Stuart Miles/FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Read Naturally has come under some criticism lately for a couple of reasons. Some people confuse speed reading and fluency. Fluency is NOT about reading as quickly as you can. Rather, fluency involves reading accurately, at an appropriate pace and with suitable expression. Research has clearly documented the correlation between fluency and comprehension. A study by Duke, Pressley, and Hilden (2004) estimated that 75-90% of students with comprehension problems also lacked fluency.

Programs are just tools that help teachers do their job more efficiently and effectively. At our literacy centre, we used a variety of strategies and resources to personalize learning and respond to each student's unique needs. Some of the resources we've used and shared with others include, but are not limited to: Lindamood-Bell, Phonographix, Discover Reading, Read Naturally, REWARDS, Phonics for Reading, Read Well, Spellography, Ticket to Read, Reading A-Z, Raz-Kids, Earobics and Wordmaker. Read Naturally is just one tool - it is not a total reading program. Rather, it is a supplemental intervention

program specifically targeting students who struggle with fluency. Not all students need the Read Naturally strategy. For those that do, it is a very effective intervention when properly implemented.

Well-designed studies that implement the Read Naturally strategy with fidelity, have consistently demonstrated its effectiveness. For example, Christ & Davie (2009) found that students using Read Naturally had 39% greater gains in fluency than students in a control group. In a study by Heistad (2004), students receiving year long supplemental intervention using Read Naturally improved significantly in overall reading proficiency. The Florida Center for Reading Research gave Read Naturally the highest possible rating for fluency and comprehension, and in a review of supplemental and intervention programs by the University of Oregon's Reading First Center, Read Naturally received a 92% rating for fluency instruction.

In addition, notable reading educators speak highly of the Read Naturally strategy. In her book, Overcoming Dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz speaks of the importance of fluency training and recommends Read Naturally because it, "follows the basic principles of effective fluency instruction." Jan Hasbrouck says that, "Read Naturally makes best use of the research base on fluency and has the strongest evidence of effectiveness as a fluency intervention." Kevin Feldman believes that Read Naturally is the "gold standard for intervention in fluency".

Read Naturally (cont.)

It's important to note that the evaluations of Read Naturally by What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) are misleading. The July 2010 review is based on a 2006 study by Belle Chenault, designed to examine students with persistent writing problems, not fluency concerns. Read Naturally was used as contact control and the strategy was not properly implemented. Chenault has stated that, "The Read Naturally program is a widely recognized and widely used curriculum that has been appropriately validated in other studies. This study was not intended as an examination of the Read Naturally program. Using our study to evaluate Read Naturally or its effects is a misapplication of our data." Earlier evaluations by WWC were also based on studies that were not designed to evaluate Read Naturally. In each case, the researchers have stated that using their study as an evaluation of Read Naturally would be inappropriate and have asked WWC not to post them.

Numerous researchers and organizations have criticized What Works Clearinghouse. As quoted in Richard Allington's book, What Really Matters in Response to Intervention, Slavin (2007) wrote, "the clearinghouse gives its highest rating for evidence of positive effects to programs supported by studies that

are often very small, very brief, very biased, and/or very seriously flawed in other ways."

More concerns about What Works Clearinghouse can be found at:

http://www.nifdi.org/what_works_clearinghouse.htm

In our own district, many teachers have used Read Naturally for years with very positive results. When using Read Naturally to develop fluency at our literacy centre, we consistently saw significant growth. Also, we believe that the structure of the Read Naturally program helped improve their confidence and attitudes toward reading. We weren't responsible for coordinating the district Read Naturally program, but it shouldn't be surprising to see inconsistent results if the strategy was not implemented with fidelity.

Research studies have shown that explicit fluency instruction can improve overall reading achievement. This year, we've been using [Read Live](#), the online version of Read Naturally, to help our students develop fluency. The online format allows anywhere, anytime access to the program so students can continue to practice when they are away from the centre.



A video player interface with a dark background. The title "I Need My Teachers to Learn" is displayed in large, white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, there is a video player control bar with a speaker icon, a progress indicator showing "0:02 / 3:08", a settings gear icon, a play/pause icon, and a full-screen icon.

I Need My Teachers to Learn

[Click here to view the video](#)

We're passionate about learning. Digital resources and social media have revolutionized our professional development and enabled us to learn and collaborate with educators all around the world. Our professional learning networks continue to grow as we interact and share ideas on Twitter and Facebook. Digital magazines such as Zite provide personalized, relevant content, and Pocket (formerly Read it Later) offers us the luxury of learning anytime, anywhere. Our students are special and it's critical that we continue to learn and grow so we can better meet their very unique needs.

Heather & Terry