

A Participant's Manual for

USING TECHNOLOGY

with Teaching Writing in the Content Areas



McREL Technology Solutions

McREL

Notes:

Activity 3: How Technology Supports the Stages of the Writing Process

This whole-group activity previews technology's unique contributions to every stage of the writing process. You will see one sample activity for each writing stage. Afterwards, you will have about thirty minutes for investigating other activities listed. Jot down any questions, notes, or teaching strategies that come to you. There will be time for sharing these during this workshop.

The resources generally fall under three categories of technology use: as a multimedia tool, as an information resource, and as a collaboration tool (Urquhart and McIver, 2005). In *Teaching Writing in the Content Areas*, the authors stress the need for teachers to be able to evaluate and identify characteristics of quality use of technology, especially software.

Use the questions provided by Urquhart and McIver in the matrix on the next page to evaluate Inspiration, PowerPoint™, and the two Web sites listed. What is your assessment of each of the resources once you have considered all of the criteria? Take about thirty minutes to complete this activity.

Evaluating Technology

Technology Evaluation Matrix				
	Inspiration Go to File > Open Template. You may choose to see Language Arts content, or you may choose to explore a different content area and see how the writing process is supported in other curricular areas.	Microsoft PowerPoint Go to Outline View and create an outline of a story that you know well. Include plot, characters, setting, metaphors, etc.	www.bbc.co.uk/skills/wise Go to Words > Grammar and choose any of the lessons. Be sure to look at the Factsheet, Quiz, Game, and Worksheet.	www.readwritethink.org Go to Student Materials and choose any of the activities.
How does it directly support the curriculum objectives I will be assessing?				
How does it provide opportunities for students to collaborate?				
How does it allow for adjustments for student ability and prior experience?				
How will I get feedback about student performance or progress? How will the students get feedback?				
How will students be able to use it to design and implement projects that extend the curriculum content?				

Notes:

Self-Reflection

After completing the matrix, take a look at your assessment to see which resources are most appropriate for various activities. Record your thoughts below.

Evaluating Internet Resources

Urquhart and McIver (2005) have the following tips from research on evaluating and using technology:

When selecting writing software that emphasizes the basic skills, consider selecting software that provides students with some type of tutorial help in using the software itself.

When you evaluate software, take your own teaching style into account.

Allow students to work together at computers.

When you or your students evaluate Web sources, consider the following as criteria for the quality of the Web resource:

1. Accuracy
2. Authority
3. Objectivity
4. Currency
5. Credibility

Let's Try It!

Using the scoring guide on page 17, evaluate one pair of the listed Web sites for these criteria (**Please note that some of the Web sites on the following list are for *mature learners***). As you explore these sites, ask yourself, "What important lessons should students learn in using the Internet for research on writing?"