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Books 'N Kids On-Line: An On-Line Book Club

Pamela J. Martin

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BOOKS 'N KIDS ON-LINE:

AN ON-LINE BOOK CLUB

A Graduate Research Project

Submitted to the

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Principle Six of the nine Learning and Teaching Principles of School Library Media Programs identified and developed by the Information Power Vision Committee, states:

"The library media program encourages and engages students in reading, viewing, and listening for understanding and enjoyment." (American Association of School Librarians [AASL] and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, [AECT]1998, p. 58)

Promoting reading has been a part of school library programs for many years, encouraging children and young adolescents to read for enjoyment. This inlcudes activities ranging from the process of selecting books that children will enjoy to giving book talks to entice young people to pick up a book, to reading aloud passages or complete books to a group of children. "These core abilities of reading, viewing, and listening, along with writing and communication, form the basis for developing information literacy skills that are equally basic for today's students." (AASL and AECT, p. 66)

Lucy Calkins, (1996) discusses several strategies for planting the seed for lifelong learning. These strategies include treating independent reading seriously, making the environment conducive to reading, and encouraging students to share their reactions and feelings about books with others. (p. 32-33)

According to Raphael and McMahon (1994), theories about reading instruction have progressed from a focus on individual skills to an emphasis on teaching reading as a social process. Students also need to be provided with the opportunity to work with their peers, determine what a particular passage means, share thoughts or ideas, and question the content of a passage. (p. 102-103)

Raphael and McMahon (1994) state that:

Reading and writing develop through interactions with both adults and peers; students should not sit in isolation, working on individual worksheets to practice skills outside the social and cultural contexts of normal use. Instead students should interact using oral and written language to construct meaning about what they have read. (p. 102)

Book clubs incorporate the strategies mentioned by Calkins (1996) and Raphael and McMahon (1994).   Book clubs promote and reinforce reading, and they provide the opportunity for children to interact with others, especially their peers, about the books they have read in an atmosphere that is not competitive or threatening. Books clubs allow for free and open expression of what the reader has garnered from a particular book or passage.

Literature Circles are similar to book clubs. They provide an atmosphere which allows young people to read and discuss books and share their ideas. Daniels (1994) describes a Literature Circle as a temporary discussion group that has chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book. "While reading each group-determined

portion of the text (either in or outside of class), each member prepares to take specific responsibilities in the upcoming discussion, and everyone comes to the group with the notes needed to help perform that job...When they finish a book they plan a special way to share highlights of their reading with a wider community." (p. 13)

Ward (1998) states that book discussions have been taking place for many years in libraries, and are now becoming popular with the public. She encourages librarians to capitalize on the interest and start a book discussion group. Ward discusses strategies for a successful book discussion and says "successful discussion books are generally those that tap into the big questions with which all ages grapple. These books allow readers to go beyond the plot to discover deeper layers of meaning." (p. 25-26)   Ward offers suggestions for getting readers to respond and interact with each other. She says that it is important to emphasize from the start that it is fine to disagree, but to discuss with the members how to listen to the other members' ideas before responding, and point out that there are no right or wrong answers. According to Ward, the facilitator of the book discussion group must be a good listener, ready to ask follow-up questions that can help explain the story. (p. 27-28)

Literature Circles, Book Discussion Clubs, and Reading Groups all involve the same basic concepts of reading and sharing ideas about what is read. According to Irvin (1997), "Educators can capitalize on young adolescents' intense interest in themselves and in

social interactions, their emotional ups and downs, and their nascent capacity for analytical thought." (p. 290) This natural proclivity to socialize should be fostered during the strive toward literacy.

Incorporating adolescents' interests and allowing them opportunity to interact will enhance their chances to become literate as well as socially adept adults. (Irvin, 1997) The school community strives to prepare young people for entry into the world of work. "New technologies have changed the requirements of literacy. The workplace now emphasizes group task performance, problem solving and collaborative learning." (p. 291)

The skills that are needed before entering the work place include the ability to use a computer, as well as accessing and interpreting On-line resources such as the World Wide Web and interactive On-line communication technologies. E-mail, bulletin boards and conferencing tools are being used for intra-office communication as well as international communication. Students entering the work force will need skills that include electronic collaborating with a team to solve problems and create new projects. Dede, 1995, p. 7-9)

More and more classrooms are being wired for Internet access and educators are being trained to use this electronic information environment. "Classroom use of the World Wide Web is growing at an astounding pace and affecting the way teachers and students function." (Quinlan, 1997, p. 15). As educators search for ways to incorporate Web technology into the curriculum, students are

becoming proficient at navigating from one Web site to another in their quest for information.

Many educators are creating and using web pages to enhance their classes. Some teachers use them to make lesson plans available through the Internet, to display student projects or to provide information. Others are moving toward interactive web pages that involve the student and allow for a real exchange of ideas and information. "The incorporation of specific educational goals, objectives, and activities into the Web presentation is the key to creating educationally sound Web documents." (Quinlan, 1996, p. 27)

Internet access is becoming a reality both in schools and in many homes. On-line communication is quickly taking its place along side the telephone and newspaper as a communication tool. 'On-line connections appear to be critically important if students are to grow up literate in the 21st century." (Follansbee, Hughes, Pisha, and Stahl, 1997, p. 15)

The combination of Internet Web technology with On-line communication offers an opportunity for educators to develop On-line learning environments in which their students can access and read information, communicate with instructors, and interact and share ideas with classmates. Educators could use this type of learning environment to encourage reading by conducting a book discussion club On-line. Students would read book independently, and then interact electronically to share their thoughts on the books with each other.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to create an On-line book club for 4th and 5th grade elementary students that will encourage them to read and interact with other members regarding their thoughts and feelings about particular books. This project, Books 'n Kids On-line, will integrate the reading, writing, and sharing elements of a book club with On-line Web communication.

Definitions

To be sure that there is no misunderstanding about what the writer is discussing, the following terms are defined.

Book club: For this paper, book club will mean any group consisting of three or more members with or without a moderator, that reads and discusses a particular book or books in order to gain understanding of the content, and to interact with others about the selection they have read.

Interactive: Mutual or reciprocally active. Of, relating to or being a two-way electronic communication system that involves a user's orders or responses. (Merriam-Webster, 1997)

On-line: Connected to, served by, or available through a system and especially a computer or telecommunications system. (Merriam-Webster, 1997)

On-line communication: Communication between the user of one computer with the user of another computer. (Merriam-Webster, 1997)

Project Description

The project consisted of creating a Web environment that served as an interactive medium from which the book club operated. A Web-based software program called WebCT, available from WebCT Educational Technologies in Vancouver, British Columbia, was used to design and operate Books 'n Kids On-line. WebCT provided a set of interactive educational tools, e-mail, threaded bulletin board, and chat room, which was integrated with an interface used by the writer to design the presentation of Books 'n Kids On-line. The book club was accessible through the Internet via a WebCT site called Books 'n Kids On-line. Aside from an initial informational meeting and an instructional session on how to use the software and its features, all communication took place through the Web site.

Book club members were fourth and fifth grade students. They entered through the Books 'n Kids On-line Web Page where they found a link taking them to the book club instructions. Students accessed the list of books, descriptions of the books, information about the author, and links to related Web sites. Two separate three week sessions were held. Students read two books during each session. Discussion questions were posted and participants were asked to respond by posting comments to a threaded bulletin board. The objective was to have the participants respond to each other's questions and comments about the books so that they were interacting without prompts from the moderator. Each session culminated with a live chat. The moderator initiated the discussion

for the chat room.

The project was an attempt to create an interactive learning environment involving reading and discussion of books through the use of web page technology and electronic communications. The moderator's role was to facilitate learning by giving the learners a sense of control over their environment. The expectations imposed for Books 'n Kids On-line were assessed through the use of a post-survey about what members felt they had gained and level of enjoyment in the book club. Statistics on student participation were taken from the log records of each student.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Literature Review

The literature review focuses on reading motivation and book clubs, electronic learning environments and electronic communication technology.

Reading Motivation and Book Clubs

The development of literacy education has undergone changes over the years, from an emphasis on decoding skills to the inclusion of authentic reading experiences. (Raphael & McMahon, 1994) Students are now encouraged to read and discuss books and the meaning that those books have for the students' own lives. "Students should interact using oral and written language to construct meaning about what they have read. . . Instruction in decoding and comprehension may be important, but it is not sufficient for bringing students into the community of readers." (p. 102)

Susan McMahon (1992) conducted a qualitative research study called The Book Club, to examine how written log entries, discussion within student-led, but teacher-directed heterogeneous groups, and drawn representations contribute to the development of student thinking about themes presented in texts. (p. 8) The study took place within a classroom where the teacher gave the students opportunities to present their ideas in written and illustrated form before, during, and after reading and the students were given daily opportunities for group interaction. The subjects were urban fifth

grade students from the Midwest.   They were part of a school population that was 46% Caucasian, 30% African American, 18% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 1% Native American.

Raphael and McMahon (1994) discuss the development of Susan McMahon's Book Club program. The main components of The Book Club were reading, writing, community share and instruction. The reading component included vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and exposure to different genres.   Students were given class time to read the stories and books selected. Sheets were kept where students could record words that were unfamiliar to them and which they needed to learn. Students could confer with one another to determine the meaning of unfamiliar terms. These exchanges evolved into conversations about the text. When different genres were used, students were directed to look for similarities and then integrate these into writing their own stories.

The writing component included keeping a reading log to share ideas and record responses. Students created categories such as *wonderful words* and *character map* to help with comprehension and *me & the book* or *book/chapter critique* to analyze the stories and their responses. (p. 108) Other special categories in the reading log were *pictures* where students could draw pictures to show their thoughts on the text. In a category called, *author's crafts and special tricks*, students jotted down techniques that they noticed the author used to get his story across, special vocabulary, repetition, or humor. (p. 109)

The third component, community share, took place with the teacher as a preliminary or follow-up activity. If community share took place before the book club met, the teacher used this time to prepare the students for the next book or chapter by discussing some interesting terms in the text or discuing with the students some predictions of what was to come. When community share followed book club it was a time for students to share ideas from what they read and to discuss the issues and events.

McMahon's Book Club project was designed to enhance students' ability to talk about books. This was done when students began interacting with each other about the book. In their analysis of the study, Raphael and McMahon (1994), discovered that students in The Book Club project reached a level where they drew their peers into participating in the discussion by asking questions rather than commanding each other that it was their turn as had happened in the beginning stages. When The Book Club project concluded, the results showed that students came to hold meaningful conversations about books. Students who spoke English as a second language and Special Education students actively took part in discussions and even took on leadership roles. And when the participants' writing was analyzed it was discovered that over the course of The Book Club project, the writing held more depth and became more sophisticated. Children looked forward to reading when they were allowed to choose their own books and have an opportunity to share their thoughts and

feelings about the books with others. (Raphael and McMahon, 1994)

The moderator or facilitator plays an important role in the operation of a book discussion club. (Montgomery, 1992) Not only does the moderator need to be knowledgeable about children's literature, but this person must be ready to lead a discussion without dominating the conversation. The stage must be set for an open discussion to take place and the moderator's role is to establish appropriate guidelines.   Participants must be encouraged to be honest in their responses, respectful of others' comments, and responsible for their own contributions. Montgomery offers these suggestions for getting a book discussion going:

1. Discuss what occurred in the story or book itself (identify characters, events, feelings, and relationships).

2. Analyze what happened in terms of the characters (identify changes in behavior or relationships between characters).

3. Relate characters and events to their own experiences or to characters in other stories.

4. Consider the consequences of certain behavior of the characters and events in the main story and other books read. Completing the Discussion

5. Come to a conclusion about the topic or generalize so that points of view are clear.

6. Decide on a method of follow-up. (p. 38)

A book discussion should produce a natural conversation in which the students can relate events or characters in the story to

their own lives to gain a better understanding of themselves. Members should be able to contribute to the conversation whenever they have something they want to share. (Raphael and McMahon, 1994) The moderator can avoid letting the conversation become simply a series of questions, one following another, by making a reflective statement or inviting the student to elaborate in more detail. (Montgomery, 1992) Students, as well as the moderator, should identify questions for the discussion. (p.37)

Interactive Learning Environments

Laszlo and Castro (1995) took steps to link technology and learning in their discussion of Interactive Learning Environments. They noted the change in education from producing *knowers*, individuals who knew a lot of information, to producing *learners*, individuals who can use information to adapt to the changes presented on a daily basis. Laszlo and Castro refer to a learning environment as "an unstructured landscape of information such as might be represented in a collection of unsorted documents. . . The key to this learner-oriented educational paradigm is a renewed and redirected emphasis on the relationship between the individual and his or her information environment." (p. 9)

Computers and reading are beginning to interact. Books on CD-ROM provide assistance in word pronunciation and vocabulary through manipulation of the text. Greenlee-Moore and Smith (1994) conducted an instructional research study which investigated how reading comprehension compared between narratives read from an

actual book to the same narratives displayed by a computer. The study involved thirty-one fourth grade students in a suburban school district in the Midwest. Fourteen of the students used the printed pages of actual books. The other 17 students read the same passages from the computer screen and were able to listen to the story being read aloud, listen to background music or sound effects. (p. 8)

The books were selected based upon their availability as part of The Discus Books: Adventures in Learning, books on CD-ROM which contain music and textual manipulation. Student scores were taken from a total of six multiple-choice comprehension questions. Two of the questions were literal, one was vocabulary, and three were inferential questions.

Greenlee-Moore and Smith found that the use of interactive CD-ROM software produced higher scores on comprehension questions related to the text. According to the authors, "teachers should explore the use of interactive computer technology to facilitate the comprehension of longer and more difficult narratives." (p. 12) One might question results based upon an assessment instrument consisting of only six questions.

Interactive learning situations engage the user's complete attention and involvement and allow the learner to set his own pace. (Laszlo & Castro, 1995) Interactive learning environments are also referred to as computerized learning environments, or virtual learning environments. "Interactive learning environments can help generate the attitudes necessary for personal development. They

encourage the learner to engage in activities that boost self-esteem, self-control, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation." (p. 11)

Chris Dede (1996) described an alternative instructional paradigm, distributed learning, as "a learning through doing environment in which students are immersed in a computer-supported collaborative learning, multi-media/hypermedia, and experiential simulation." (p. 4) In a position/discussion study, Dede described several educational programs that utilized technology to create one of these interactive environments. The Jasper Videodisc Series for Mathematics Learning developed by the Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt University was designed to promote problem solving, reasoning, and effective communication. Students were given authentic problems and they then worked together, navigating through a multimedia database to gather information to solve the problem. (p. 7) Another program, Broadcast News Project, from Northwestern University's Institute for Learning Sciences, taught social studies and journalism by letting students edit and anchor a TV news show. (p. 9) This was done by navigating through a network of multimedia resources. Students were also able to participate in computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL). Electronic communication tools were used to communicate each individual's ideas and to promote a group discussion. An example of this was Collaborative Visualization Project (CoVis) at Northwestern University's Institute of Learning Sciences. In this project students used electronic communication tools to converse across distance with

other students, researchers, and scientists in the field to study the weather. Students interacedt with various multimedia as well as other people to solve problems. (p. 14)

In the type of learning referred to as Interactive, the role of the teacher changes to that of a facilitator. Instead of directing students in the learning process and giving knowledge to them, the teacher is available to guide the learner in his or her quest for information. (Laszlo and Castro, 1995, p. 12)

Electronic Communications Technology

Breakthroughs in technology continue to emerge which affect the development of reading. Electronic communication technologies open the door to new and innovative ways to teach reading and writing. The Internet provides volumes of information at the touch of the finger. (Ediger, 1997) "Use of the Internet will revolutionize reading instruction. . . methods of teaching reading will indeed change how literature is taught and what pupils will learn." (p. 8) Information will be available faster, allowing access to the most current information possible. Ideas for teaching will be shared among educators from all over the world. Students can share thoughts and ideas about books with other students from classrooms around the world. (p. 9)

On-line communication affords many opportunities for authentic reading and writing experiences. (Follansbee, Hughes, Pisha, and Stahl, et al) An experimental study was conducted by Center for Applied Special Technology, an independent research and

development organization, to look at the impact of using an on-line service and measure its affects on students. The study was sponsored by Scholastic Network and the Council of the Great City Schools. The study looked at five hundred students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade classes in seven urban school districts. Half of the students had on-line access and the rest did not. The students were divided into small groups of three to four to work together on projects. The control groups and the experimental groups received the same unit of study which was structured to fit into the regular classroom curriculum. Both the control and experimental groups were advised to use computers. "All the classes were encouraged to use technology-based resources such as multimedia reference materials and video tapes for their projects. Only the experimental groups were allowed to take part in on-line resources, activities, and communication." (Follensbee, et al., 1997, p. 18)

There were two main goals of the study. One of the goals was to measure the impact of on-line use on student ability to perform real-world skills such as researching, analyzing and synthesizing information, and developing a point of view and effectively presenting it. The other goal was to gain insights into what it takes to effectively use on-line communications in school. (Follensbee, et al., 1997, p. 19) The projects provided the data for measuring student learning. Pre-study and post-study questionnaires provided data on the changes in attitudes and behavior. Telephone interviews with teachers provided first-hand information on the teachers'

perceptions of the study. (Follensbee, et al., 1997, p. 22)

Results suggested that on-line use can increase student performance and have a positive impact on student learning. "Students with on-line access became more confident and students without on-line access became less confident. . ." (Follansbee, 1997, p. 20)

Through the use of on-line communications offered by Scholastic Network, the experimental groups were able to learn from other students, teachers, and the larger community. Students obtained information from a larger number of sources and in a wider variety of formats and used the information in ways that were more relevant for their lives. (Follansbee et al., 1997, p. 25)

Use of the Internet and Electronic Communication technology is increasing at universities and high schools across the country. (Powers & Mitchell, 1977, p. 3) Many college professors use e-mail to correspond with their students and give assignments. "Electronic communication has become an integral element in the higher education environment." (p. 3) Virtual classrooms are becoming more common with on-line courses accessed through a web site created by the instructor.

Professors and students are discovering the positive effects of electronic communication technology. Anderson and Lee (1995) identify several benefits that e-mail offer for an educational environment.

1.   Participants are not constrained by time and distance.

2.   E-mail is less threatening than face to face communication.

3.   E-mail helps develop a sense of community among participants.

4.   E-mail is intrinsically motivating and encourages communication.   (p. 225)

Powers and Mitchell (1997) conducted a qualitative research study of a virtual classroom environment using electronic mail, listserv and a chat room. The subjects used for this research study were students enrolled in a graduate level course. Some of the students were on campus while others were not. The extent of student experience with the technology ranged from none to having used all of the technologies. The course consisted of a class web page which contained the information that was needed. There was an individual Web page for each day of the course which had notes and assignments. Students could use e-mail and the class listserv to correspond. Finally an On-line chat was used to hold a real time discussion. Powers and Mitchell found that the group of students became very supportive of each other throughout the course. The authors felt this might be due to the anonymity the students felt they had. Students felt that the use of e-mail encouraged them to be more supportive of fellow classmates. (p. 11) They also found that the instructor did not have to be the main initiator of the discussions as students themselves were likely to initiate conversation. (p. 15)

Colleen Garside (1996) discusses the value of electronic journals in the development of writing and their importance in the

education experience. "Electronic journals provide students with an opportunity to respond to course materials in ways that can help them clarify concepts and promote critical thinking about a concept." (p. 4)

Electronic communications technology can be integrated with the curriculum to provide an interactive learning environment. Garside says, "The utilization of electronic mail can have a significant impact on the communication process, which, in turn, impacts the educational experience of the student." (Garside, 1996, p. 6) Students are encouraged to discuss relevant content and exchange ideas and information when using electronic mail. As students use electronic mail to exchange information, receive assignments, ask questions and collaborate with peers, they are developing skills necessary for future employment as well as for their own personal benefit. "The excitement of reading through technology use might well enhance reading achievement substantially in personal reading as well as future skills needed at the work place." (Ediger, 1997, p. 11)

Procedure

Books 'n Kids On-line was an interactive Web site where students conversed with each other electronically. The Web site was a vehicle for that conversation. Books 'n Kids On-line gave students an opportunity for the kind of interaction that takes place in a face-to-face book club.

Books 'n Kids On-line integrated Electronic Communication tools

available through a WebCT Web page with the elements that make up a book club to provide an interactive learning environment in which the members corresponded with each other about the books they read. The author acted as the creator/designer and moderator.

Book Selections

Two different themes were chosen for the two sessions. The theme for the first session was *Survival Stories*. The them for the second session was *Dog Stories*. The writer felt that these two themes would be high interest to the age group and also contain issues that the young readers could identify with, such as self-reliance and making right and wrong choices. Hatchet by Gary Paulsen and Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George were selected as the *Survival Stories*. Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor and Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls were selected for the *Dog Stories*. Questions related to each story were posted on the Web page for students to look at as they read the books and use to help them understand and follow the story. Some of these questions were composed by the designer as the book was studied and some questions were taken from study guides for the books, such as Scholastic Literature Guides by Scholastic Inc.

Software

There were two major pieces of software required to create Books 'n Kids On-line. The first, World Wide Web Course Tools (WebCT), enabled the creation of a Web-based learning environment. WebCT, located on the World Wide Web at www.WebCT.com, was

developed by the Department of Computer Science at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. WebCT provided the interface which allowed the writer to design the presentation of the book club. WebCT set up the structure, or shell, and the designer developed the book club. WebCT provided a set of tools that could be used with the students to create an interactive web site that could be accessed from any computer with a Web browser and Internet access. The cost for WebCT varied according to the number of users accessing the Web site. Initially Books 'n Kids On-line was to reside on the school district's server. Technical differences prohibited this, requiring Books 'n Kids On-line to reside on WebCT's server. The cost of operating Books 'n Kids On-line through WebCT for four months was $150.00 This permitted up to twenty-four users accessing the Web site.

Files containing information and images about the books had to be created as hyper-text markup language (HTML) files. The software, Adobe Page Mill , was used to create the files containing summaries of the books, images, related questions, the beginning survey and the evaluation survey. The designer had had some previous experience using Adobe Page Mill to create a school Web page. Adobe Page Mill allows the designer to create the file as a word processing document and converts the text to HTML coding.

Participants

Fourth and fifth grade students were contacted about participating in Books 'n Kids On-line. The designer/moderator

visited classrooms, explained how the book club would operate and handed out flyers telling about Books 'n Kids On-line. Members were accepted on a voluntary basis. It was made clear to the students that having a computer and access to the Internet was not required in order to participate. One teacher expressed an interest in participating and this person was allowed to take part also. A total of thirteen students and one teacher signed up. All thirteen students were given the names of different presidents of the United States in order to keep their anonymity. The teacher was given a different false name. All participants were given individual passwords. One of the students dropped out after the initial meeting and two others never participated by posting any comments so therefore were not being counted in the total. Three of the remaining ten students had completed fourth grade while seven had completed fifth grade. All of the students and the teacher said that they had computers at home and had access to the Internet. Nine of the students indicated that they had E-mail. Two students answered that they had used an electronic bulletin board and four stated that they had used a chat room. It is believed that the students who stated that they had used a chat room may have been confused as there appeared to be a lack of understanding on the part of the students as to what actually occurred in a chat room. Even though all the students indicated that they had access to the Internet, almost half of them chose to use the school lab at some point during the book club. Reading levels of the students ranged from one who received assistance on a regular basis

to the rest who were considered average and above average readers.

Role of Participants

Members accessed the book club, navigated to the instructions, read the books for the theme, and interacted with the moderator and other students while working his/her way through the book. Members were encouraged to ask questions and comment on other's responses. The goal was to have the members interacting with each other without the coaching of the facilitator. At the end of each theme an On-line chat was scheduled to discuss the issues, similarities and differences in the books, and determine what kind of messages the books held for the readers that they could apply to their daily lives.

Student Preparation

Two preliminary meetings were held to lay the foundation. One meeting was held for book club members to provide information about the format of the book club and participation requirements. A second meeting was held in order to give instruction on how to use the On-line book club. Members were given a user name and a password which was needed in order to log on to Books 'n Kids On-line. Members were instructed on responsible use of the Internet and the book club features such as the bulletin board and chat room. The books featured were made available to students through the school library and borrowed from other libraries in the district. Some students also found the books at the public library or from friends.

Role of Moderator

Once Books 'n Kids On-line began, the designer took on the role of moderator of the book club. The moderator was responsible for initiating discussion. This was done by posting one or more questions on the threaded bulletin board. At times participants needed guidance in how to write comments so that others could understand them. The moderator sent examples to students through E-mail in an attempt to help them in their writing. It was often necessary for the moderator to revive discussions, or to try to prolong them. This was done by asking another question about a response made by a member, or adding another aspect to a comment.

Main Components of Books 'n Kids On-line

There were four main components to Books 'n Kids On-line. Reading was the first of the four main elements of the book club. Students were given a selection of books to read throughout the span of the book club. Guided questions were posted for members to view On-line or to print a hard copy. These guided questions were intended to help individuals understand the story line and key events. By the end of a session, each member had read two books related to that session's theme.

Writing was the second component. Students were asked to submit comments and questions related to the books. These comments were posted to a threaded bulletin board on a regular basis, or submitted during an On-line chat.

Sharing was the third element. This was done through the use

of the e-mail, bulletin board and chat features of the software used to create the book club. Students were encouraged to share thoughts with the moderator through e-mail, and with the other members through the use of the bulletin board and chat room.

The final component, Instruction, involved training in the use of the software and coaching on how to respond to the bulletin board and how to converse in the chat room.

Chapter Three

WebCT provided the interface used to create the interactive environment in which Books 'n Kids On-line operated. The following screen shots and content sheets are from Books 'n Kids On-line. They represent the operation of Books 'n Kids On-line from the survey asking about the students' computer use to the examples of dialogue taken from the threaded bulletin board and chat rooms.

Beginning Survey

The beginning survey was filled out by students at the beginning of Books 'n Kids On-line to determine how many had any experience with the Internet and On-line communication such as e-mail and also the amount of reading they did.

Books 'n Kids On-line

Beginning Survey

1.   Do you like to read for fun?

2.   How often do you read a book just for fun?
     ___ 1 or more times per week
     ___ 1 or more times per month
     ___ 1 or more time per year

3.   Do you have a computer at hme?

4.   Do you use the computer at home?

5.   Do you have internet access at home?

6.   Do you have e-mail at home?

7.   How often do you use e-mail?
     ___ Never
     ___ 1 or more times a month
     ___ 1 or more times a week
     ___ Almost never

8.   If you use e-mail, what do you use it for?
     ___ correspond with relatives
     ___ correspond with friends
     ___ correspond with others

9.   Have you ever used an electronic bulletin board?

10. Have you ever used a computer Chat Room?

The Participation Contract

Students were asked to sign the Participation Contract when they decided that they wanted to take part in Books 'n Kids On-line. The purpose of this was to have the students commit to participating throughout the two sessions and to take the responsibility for using appropriate on-line etiquette.

Books 'n Kids Online Participant Contract

As a member of Books 'n Kids On-line I, _____
(Print Name)

agree to the following requirements.

1. I will be an active participant from the first meeting throughout the time the book club meet. *(Remember membership is limited and others are counting on your participation.)*

2. I will read the four books on the reading list.

3. I will e-mail any questions or concerns about what to do to the moderator of the book club.

4. I will use appropriate etiquette when communicating online.

5. I will have fun!

_____
Your signature

WebCT Course Listing for Books 'n Kids On-line

Students accessed Books 'n Kids On-line by typing in the Internet Address of the WebCT Home Page and clicking on Books 'n Kids On-line under the Category: English.

WORLD WIDE WEB COURSE TOOLS

webct

Go To Homepage   **Welcome Page**   **Create Account**

Category:
- Anthropology
- Applied Science
- Burlington County College
- Business & Economics
- CALSTATE
- CS UBC
- Caldwell College
- Career Development
- Chemistry
- Computers
- Criminology
- Earth & Ocean Sciences
- Education
- English
- Family Science
- Ferris State U
- Forestry
- Government
- Health Sciences
- History
- Human Kinetics
- Indiana University
- Internet

Books 'n Kids On-line

College English

College English 1

English 121 - Introduction to Literary Theory

Lee College: English 1302

Lee College: English 2336

<u>Books 'n Kids On-line Home Page</u>

    The Home Page for Books 'n Kids On-line contained a heading and the Tools used to operate the book club. The designer selected the picture of an open book for the heading to represent the book club and added the welcome message. The choice of icons was available through WebCT and the titles for the icons were adapted by the designer to represent the relevant Tool. To activate a Tool students clicked on the icon or the underlined title below the icon. The counter listed at the bottom of the page showed the number of times the site had been accessed.
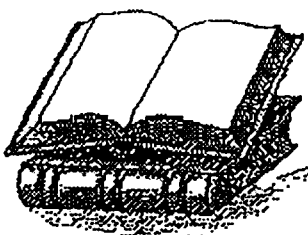
Welcome to Books 'n Kids On-line

Books 'n Kids is an on-line book club for 4th and 5th grade students and parents. Click on the Books 'n Kids icon to begin. HAVE FUN!

contents

Books 'n Kids

calendar

Calendar of
Course Events

password

Password

mail

Private Mail

bulletins

Bulletin Board

chat

Chat

This page has been accessed 00276 times.

Books 'n Kids On-line Membership

Thirteen students and one teacher originally signed up to participate in Books 'n Kids On-line. Students were given names of past American presidents to allow for anonymity. The teacher was given the User Name, Elmer Smith. One student, George Washington, dropped out after the initial meetings and James Polk and Ronald Reagan logged on but never contributed. Members User Names, or User IDs consisted of the first letter of the first name and the last name. Passwords were unique for each member.

Student Management

Edit	Last Name Edit	Login ID	Student No Edit	Test Quiz Graph Out of 50	Midterm Edit Graph	Final Exam Edit Graph	Final Gra Edit Graph Out of
Andrew	Jackson	AJackson	103	---	---	---	
Abe	Lincoln	ALincoln	112	---	---	---	
Calvin	Coolidge	CCoolidge	13	---	---	---	
Franklin	Pierce	FPierce	110	---	---	---	
George	Washington	GWashington	108	---	---	---	
John	Adams	JAdams	107	---	---	---	
James	Madison	JMadison	105	---	---	---	
James	Monroe	JMonroe	104	---	---	---	
James	Polk	JPolk	102	---	---	---	
John	Tyler	JTyler	109	---	---	---	
Elmer	Smith	LachR	101	---	---	---	
Ronald	Reagan	RReagan	113	---	---	---	
Thomas	Jefferson	TJefferson	106	---	---	---	
Zachary	Taylor	ZTaylor	111	---	---	---	

Books 'n Kids On-line Log-on Procedures

Students were given a set of procedures to follow to log-on to Books 'n Kids On-line. Log-on procedures were also covered during the instructional meeting.

Books 'n Kids On-line
Log-on Procedures
http://www.WebCT.com:8900/

Step 1   Open Netscape

Step 2   Type in the URL for Books 'n Kids On-line.

Step 3   Press Return

Step 4   Click on Course Listing

Step 5   Click on English

Step 6   Click on Books 'n Kids On-line. Bookmark this site.

Step 7   Type in your User I D and your Password

There are several icons that appear on the Home Page of the book club.

This icon contains the Instructions. Click here to get directions.

This icon contains a calendar for you to follow and add to.

This icon will let you send an e-mail to the instructor or to other members of the book club.

This is the icon you will click on when you are asked to post a message to the bulletin board for all members to read.

This icon is the one you will use when we have a live book chat.

Books 'n Kids On-line Tools

The Tools used to operate Books 'n Kids On-line included Content/Instructions, Calendar, Password, Private Mail, Bulletin Board, and Chat.

Books 'n Kids

Click here to find the pages with information about the books, the authors, and links to related web sites.

Calendar

Click here to see what is coming up and notes for each day. Click on the day to find the complete day's note. You may add reminders to the calendar for your own viewing.

Password

Click here if you would like to change your password. Do not change your password unless you think you have told someone else what it is. Remember to memorize your password so that you will be able to log-on.

Private Mail

Click here to send an e-mail to the instructor or to someone else in the book club. You will be asked to post responses and comments about your feelings about a book. To post a message, click on Compose. In the box next to Send to: type the name of the person you are sending mail to, or click on the Browse and scroll to the name of the person.

In the Subject box type in something that will give the receiver some idea of what the message will be about.

In the large text box type in your message. When you are finished click on Send.

Bulletin Board

To read a message click on the underlined word(s).

To post a message click on Compose.

In the Subject box type in the Keyword that is given for this discussion. For example the question you are to respond to is: What were Marty's feelings as the plane was going down? (Feelings) Feelings is the keyword so that is what you will type in the Subject box.

Next, click in the large text box and start typing your message. If you want to see how your message appears to others, click on Preview. If you are ready to post your message, click on Post.

Chat

Click here to enter a Chat Room and participate in an On-line discussion of the books being read. Click on the name of the Chat Room that matches the name of the book currently being discussed. Remember, the text you type will appear in the Chat box very quickly so try to type your comments completely.

Books 'n Kids On-line Calendar

The Calendar tool allowed the designer to set up a schedule of events and give encouragement along the way. Notes were put on different days suggesting where students should be in their reading, when certain discussions would take place and when the On-line chats would occur. The Calendar could be amended by the students, allowing them to add their own personal notes to their calendar.

WebCT Calendar Tool   http://www.WebCT.com:8900/SCRIPT/   Thursday, August 13, 1998
                                          BKCLUB101/scripts/student/

Course Calendar

June 1998

◀ | June | | 1998 | | View | ▶

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 - Check out the reading list and get your books.	2	3 - Read! Read! Read!!!	4	5	6
7	8 - Enjoy your first day of vacation.	9	10	11 - Check Guided Questions	12	13
14	15 - First day of Books 'n Kids On-line. Tell us about yourself.	16 - Meet the members.	17 - Hatchet discussion begins	18 - Be sure to take part in the discussion!	19 - You should have posted at least one message to the B.B.	20 - The weekend's a good time to read.
21	22 - Check out the related web sites.	23 - Keep Reading!	24	25 - Have we heard from you this week?	26 - Have a question? E-mail it to me.	27
28	29 - Hatchet discussion ends/Julie discussion begins	30 - *Read Julie of the Wolves*				

Note: All private entries are italicized.

July 1998

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 - Read Julie of the Wolves	2	3	4
5	6 - Use Julie Questions	7	8 - Don't understand the story? Check the Guided Questions.	9	10 - TODAY	11
12	13 - How's the reading going? Send me a note.	14	15	16 - On-line Chat 10:00-11:00	17	18
19	20 - Read Shiloh and Where the Red Fern Grows	21 - How is it going?	22	23 - Let me know how you like the books.	24	25
26	27 - WELCOME BACK! Check the bulletin board for messages!	28 - Shiloh discussion begins	29 - Check the Questions of the Week	30 - Be sure to submit at least one response to the bulletin board	31	

Note: All private entries are italicized.

Course Calendar

August 1998

◄ | August | 1998 | View | ►

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 - Shiloh Chat 10:00 a.m.	4	5 *- Begin discussion of Where the Red Fern Grows*	6	7 - Have you posted a comment to the B.B. this week?	8
9	10 - Red Fern Chat 10:00 a.m.	11	12 - Shiloh and Where the Red Fern Grows Chat 10:00 a.m.	13 - TODAY - Last Day Celebration	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Home | **Calendar:** | Student Entries | Compile | Upload | Clear

Hatchet
by Gary Paulsen

Hatchet was the first book read in session one. The story dealt with a boy' struggle to survive in the Canadian Wilderness. A page containing a summary of the book and links to Gary PaulsenWeb sites was available through the Books 'n Kids instuction icon.

Hatchet

By: Gary Paulsen

When the pilot of his small plane has a heart attack, the plane crashes and Brian finds himself alone and lost in the Canadian wilderness. With only his hatchet and his instinct to help him, will he survive? Will he find food? Shelter? Is he lost forever?

Read Hatchet and share Brian's experience!

For more information about the author, click on one of the following web links.

Gary Paulsen

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The web sites linked on this page are not closed web sites and may link to other web sites on the internet.

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Questions For <u>Hatchet</u>

Questions related to the book, <u>Hatchet</u>, were available for students to view or print through the Books 'n Kids instruction icon. These questions were intended as a way to guide the student through the book and help them follow the story line. The questions were not intended to be answered in written form, but it was felt that they might help the student in the discussion of the book.

Questions from Hatchet

As you read Hatchet, use these questions to help you understand the story

1) What thoughts were going through Brian's mind when he realized what had happened to the pilot?

2) How did Brian prepare himself for when the plane ran out of gas?

3) When Brian finally realized that he was alone in the wilderness and decided to take inventory of just what he had, what did he come up with?

4) What do you think was Brian's greatest need? How did he satisfy this need?

5) How did Brian's quest for food change the longer he was in the wilderness?

6) What were some of Brian's "First Days"?

7) What was Brian describing when he said it was "like all the holidays and birthdays in the world"?

8) What do you think Brian was feeling when he was rescued by the pilot?

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<u>Julie of the Wolves</u>
by Jean Craighead George

     <u>Julie of the Wolves</u> was the second book about survival and was the second book read during session one. The story was about a young Eskimo girl who fled to the tundra to escape an arranged marriage. She finds that to survive she must learn a way to live with the wolves. A page containing a summary of the book and links to related Web sites was available through the Books 'n Kids instuction icon.

_____

Julie of the Wolves

By: Jean Craighead George

Julie finds herself lost on the Northern Slope of Alaska, forced to learn the way of the wolves in order to survive. What is she running away from? How does she "become" one of the pack? Where is she running to?

Read Julie of the Wolves and discover life in the arctic.

For more information check on one of the following links.

<u>Alaska</u>

<u>Alaska</u>

<u>Alaska</u>

<u>Eskimo Women</u>

<u>Jean Craighead George</u>

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Eskimo Women

Jean Craighead George

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Questions For Julie of the Wolves

Questions related to the book, Julie of the Wolves, were available for students to view or print through the Books 'n Kids instruction icon. These questions were intended as a way to guide the students through the book and help them follow the story line. The questions were not intended to be answered in written form, but it was felt that they might help the student in the discussion of the book.

Questions for Julie of the Wolves

By Jean Craighead George

1) Why was Julie all alone on the North Slope of Alaska?

2) How did Julie learn what the wolves' actions meant?

3) How did Miyax get the name Julie?

4) Why was Julie able to live among the wolves?

5) Why did Julie go live with a family she didn't know well?

6) Where did Julie think she wanted to go after she left Daniel?

7) Who were the gussacks? Why didn't Julie like them?

8) What did Julie discover about her father?

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8) What did Julie discover about her father?

Shiloh
by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Shiloh was the first book read during the second session. It is the story of a boy who befriends a dog that has been suffering from abuse by its owner. In his struggle to save the dog, the boy is faced with making choices that go against his upbringing.   A page containing a summary of the book and links to the author's Web sites was available through the Books 'n Kids instuction icon.

Shiloh

By Phyllis Reynolds Nayler

When Marty sees how afraid and hurt this poor dog is, he just can't send him back to its owner. But his parents say that he can't keep the dog. How can Marty save this dog he calls Shiloh? What choices does he face and how does he decide what is right and what is wrong when it comes to saving Shiloh?

Click on the following web links for more information.

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

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[Phyllis Reynolds Naylor](#)

[Phyllis Reynolds Naylor](#)

The web sites linked on this page are not closed web sites and may link to other web sites on the internet.
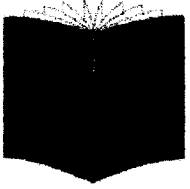
Questions for <u>Shiloh</u>

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Questions for Shiloh

- Why did Marty think that the dog he called Shiloh had been mistreated?

- Why is Marty concerned about taking Shiloh back to Judd Travers?

- What would Marty like to have happen to Shiloh?

- How do Marty's parents feel when they find that Marty has been keeping Shiloh?

- What was Marty planning to do before he saw Judd shoot the deer?

- How did his plans change?

- Why does Marty decide to not turn Judd in for shooting the deer out of season?

- Why does Marty feel uncomfortable about making a deal with Judd for Shiloh?

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<u>Where the Red Fern Grows</u>
by Wilson Rawls

     <u>Where the Red Fern Grows</u> was the second book read during session two. The story is about a young boy who desparately wants a coon dog. He works hard to buy two but tragedy strikes and one of the dogs is hurt badly. The young boy has to deal with the loss of his beloved dog and grows as an individual.   A page containing a summary of the book was available through the Books 'n Kids instuction icon. There were no links to Web sites for this story.

Where the Red Fern Grows

by: *Wilson Rawls*

Billy Coleman has "dog wanting disease." He just has to have those two hound dogs that are listed for sale in the paper. It takes him two years to save enough money to buy them, but it is worth it when he can bring them home. Old Dan and Little Ann are everything that Billy could want in a hound dog and they become well known in the county as good coon hunting dogs. So good that Billy's grandpa enters them in a coon hunting contest. But something terrible happens to shatter Billy's life, and Billy finds himself dealing with something more difficult than anything he has had to deal with before.

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Questions for <u>Where the Red Fern Grows</u>

Questions related to the book, <u>Where the Red Fern Grows</u>, were available for students to view or print through the Books 'n Kids instruction icon. These questions were intended as a way to guide the student through the book and help them follow the story line. The questions were not intended to be answered in written form, but it was felt that they might help the student in the discussion of the book.

Where the Red Fern Grows
Guided Questions

1. Why do the names carved in the tree seem perfect to Billy for his pups?

2. Why doesn't Billy want to tell his parents he is going to Tahlequah?

3. Why doesn't Billy give up when his dogs have a raccoon up the big tree?

4. Why does Grandpa put soap in Billy's pocket?

5. How do the Pritchard boys get Billy to accept their bet?

6. How does Big Dan's behavior get Billy and the dogs in trouble?

7. Why do hunters at the contest treat Billy like an equal?

8. Why is Billy willing to give his cup to his youngest sister?

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Examples of E-mail Messages to Moderator

E-mail was used as a means of communicating to each other about matters other than discussion of the books. The moderator used e-mail to inform members of schedule changes or events that might effect the book club and also as a way to transfer ideas about how to respond to questions on the bulletin board. Students used e-mail when they had questions about procedures or to let the moderator and others know when they would be on vacation or unable to participate.

Examples of E-mail Messages to Moderator

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 38: Sent by James Monroe on Thu, Jun. 18, 1998, 19:37
Subject: see you later

Hi, I'm going out of town on 6-19. I'll be back on 6-30.
I'm bringing my book. See ya!
   ~Val   *(J.Monroe)*

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 39: [Branch from no. 30] Sent by Zachary Taylor on Sun, Jun. 21, 1998, 17:24
Subject: re: Need a book?

Lee & Thomas are having trouble getting on line.
Ian

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 60: Sent by James Madison on Mon, Jun. 22, 1998, 08:57
Subject: Hachet

Kids
   Did you think hachet was a good book. E-mail me at
JMadison.

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 68: Sent by John Adams on Mon, Jun. 22, 1998, 17:26
Subject: Sorry!

I am sorry that this is the first time I have been to this
site! Every time I tried it would not work! I need a
copy of Julie of the Wolves. Hatchet was a great book! I
am having fun with this!
Laura Miller

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 76: Sent by Pamela Martin, Moderator on Mon, Jun. 22, 1998, 18:44
Subject: Posting comments

*Hi, Everyone! I am really pleased with how quickly you all
have caught on to using Books 'n Kids On-line. There is a
lot to figure out and you have done great!*

Here's a tip to help our discussions.

*Be sure that when you respond to a question or a comment
on the bulletin board that you use complete sentences so
that everyone can understand what you are talking about.
Do not use sentences like this: "No, do you?" or " Yeah."
You need to rephrase the question so that the answer is
understood, like this: "No, I didn't think Brian would be
able to get a fire started." or "Yeah, I would have
really been scared, too."*

*Keep up the good work. I hope you are having fun!   Mrs.
M*

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 88: Sent by Ronald Reagan on Thu, Jun. 25, 1998, 09:08
Subject: How far

*Hay you guys. How far are you in Hatchet. I know some
people are on a chapter above five. I just thought you
might some one to talk to you*
                        From,   RReagan

[Prev Thread] [Next Thread] [Prev in Thread][Next in Thread]
Message No. 90: Sent by Thomas Jefferson on Thu, Jun. 25, 1998, 20:34
Subject: Going Away

*I'm sorry to say that I'm going to going to be away for the
next couple of weeks so I will not be able to particapate
in the on-line chat. I'll see you soon. :-)*

Examples of Threaded Bulletin Board Messages

It was the intention of the moderator to get the conversation started with an opening question and let the participants take over, to get the conversation to a point where the students could relate the experiences of the main character with their own lives.

The following bulletin board threads, Subject: Food, and Subject: Won't he get sick, show an attempt to do this. The conversations discuss Brian's experience with choke cherries and the students are discussing the effect of the cherries. The moderator wanted the students to get to the way Brian became more sophisticated about his hunt for food.

Subject: Food
Article No. 25 posted by Moderator
"How does Brian's quest for food change the longer he is in the wilderness? What did Brian rely on to help him obtain food?

Article No. 39 posted by Andrew Jackson
"Brain was lucky to see birds eating berries. He was even luckier to find rasberries." Jackson

Article No. 47 posted by John Tyler
"I agree with elmer smith and I think that he sould have tried to figure out what kind of berries it realy was. I mean what if they had a deadly poison." J Tyler

Article No. 74 posted by Thomas Jefferson
"It said in the book that they where rasberries."

Article No. 78 posted by Zachary Taylor
"We are talking about the choke cherries"

Students got stuck on the debate over what the "berries" actually were. They continued the discussion by talking about the effect the berries had on Brian.

> Subject: Won't he get sick
>
> <u>Article No. 40 posted by Zachary Taylor</u>
> *"don't you think he would get sick eating berries. Mike is rregan*

Zachary is still concerned about discovering each other's identities.

> <u>Article No. 41 posted by Thomas Jefferson</u>
> *"When I read that Brain found berries I was wondering if he would find more food."*
>
> <u>Article No. 51 posted by Andrew Jackson</u>
> *"Brain might have gotten sick of berries but now that he has foolbirds and fish he has more to choose from."*
>
> <u>Article No. 53 posted by Moderator</u>
> *"What might have happened if Brian hadn't been able to find other food?"*
>
> <u>Article No. 71 posted by Thomas Jefferson</u>
> *"I eat wild rasberries all the time and I don't get sick, do I?"*
>
> <u>Article No. 91 posted by Moderator</u>
> *"Do you think you'd get sick if you ate as many as Brian did? And on an empty stomach? Why would Brian have to be careful to not get sick?"*

The moderator wanted participants to think about what would happen to Brian if he got sick from the berries and had no doctor and couldn't take care of himself. Zachary started to get close to this.

> <u>Article No. 131 by Zachary Taylor</u>
>
> *"If he gets sick he won't be able to work"* Z

The moderator was pleased to see a student member open a discussion by posting a question as in the following example.

Subject: The Hatchet
Article No. 70 posted by Thomas Jefferson
When Brain tossed the hatchet at the porcupine it got a
nick in it and it caused some sparks. What did Brain think
about after he saw the nick in his hatchet and the sparks?

Article No. 76 posted by Zachary Taylor
The chip would make it jagged and deadly

Article 76 posted by Zachary Taylor
The chip would make it jagged and deadly

Article No. 90 posted by Moderator
Why did Brian regret throwing the hatchet?

Article No. 139 posted by Zachary Taylor
If he chips it to much it could lose some of it's values

Article No. 145 posted by Andrew Jackson
I agree with ZTAYLER

This discussion sample is an example of the moderator trying to get students aware of the conflicting feelings Marty might have had about being rescued.

Subject: Rescue
Article No. 55 posted by Moderator on
Do you think Brian was glad to be rescued?

Article No. 58 posted by Franklin Pierce
He may have been happy to have been saved, but he also may
have been disappointed he didn't get much of a chance to
use all the stuff from the survival pack.

Article No. 124 posted by Moderator
Brian probably was glad to be rescued but I agree he
prbably had mixed feelings. What about all that he had

*learned? Would he have to leave that behind? Would any of
it come in handy when he returned home?*

Article No. 134 posted by Zachary Taylor
*He was probably getting used to the wilderness and then he
was just taken back. Z*

Article No. 103 posted by Calvin Coolidge
*I think that Brian was glad to be resqued. I think that
because he probubly didn't know if he would live or die
utill he was rescued.*

Article No. 104 posted by Calvin Coolidge
*I think he was glad to be rescued because he pobubly didn't
knowif he would live or die untill he was resscued.*

Article No. 127 posted by Zachary Taylor
*He probably figured he would live when he got the fire and
emergency packet. Z*

In another discussion about wolves hunting caribou, the moderator
wanted the students to understand how survival of the strongest was
important to the existence of species.

Subject: Old & Weak
Article No. 107 posted by Moderator
"Why do the wolves go after the old and weak?"

Article No. 113 posted by Franklin Pierce
"They can't run as fast, so they make an easy target."

Article No. 120 posted by Moderator
*"What would happen to the caribou population if the wolves
only went after the strong and healthy?"*

Article No. 131 posted by Zachary Taylor
*"It would increase tremendiously! and the wolves would lose
the caribou part of their diet and maybe starve."*

Sometimes the moderator had to pull students into the conversation with additional questions, such as in the following line of discussion.

> **Subject: Wolves**
> Article No. 66 Moderator
> *How did Julie learn what the wolves actions meant?*
>
> Article No. 69 posted by Franklin Pierce
> *She learned by careful observation.*
>
> Article No. 89 posted by Moderator
> *What kinds of things did she observe and what did they mean?*
>
> Article No. 94 posted by Elmer Smith
> *One thing she observed was that the baring of teeth was for the young ones to lie down. (p.14-15 in the edition I have) Mr. Ross*
>
> Article No. 82 posted by Andrew Jackson
> *Julie learned the wolf actions by watching what the wolves did.-AJackson*
>
> Article No. 125 posted by Calvin Coolidge
> *by watching their actions.*
>
> **Subject: Riches of life**
> Article No. 106 posted by Moderator
> *The Eskimo hunters refer to the riches of life as intelligence, fearlessness and love. What do you think of as the riches of life?*
>
> Article No. 112posted by Franklin Pierce
> *I think having good friends is one of life's riches.*
>
> Article No. 119 posted by Moderator
> *What makes good friends "riches"?*
>
> Article No. 129 posted by Zachary Taylor
> *There help is better then gold Z*

Article No. 128 posted by Zachary Taylor
family, love, friends, Z

Article No. 147 posted by Andrew Jackson
I agree with Z.

Sometimes the conversations really tried to figure out who the character was and what he stood for.

Subject: Marty
Article No. 151 posted by Thomas Jefferson
What do you guys think about Marty and eating meat?

Article No. 155 posted by Zachary Taylor
I think he needs to eat meat Z

Article No. 160 posted by Thomas Jefferson
So do I but he doesn't like anything with a face.

Article No. 164 posted by Andrew Jackson
Tough eat it anyway

Article No. 185] posted by Zachary Taylor
He won't get any protein.   Z

Article No. 159 posted by Andrew Jackson
I think he's like protesting the helpless slaughtering of animals for food.

Article No. 188 posted by Zachary Taylor
I doubt it he's talking about being a veggieterian when he remember fried chicken and other good stuff. This is from Saving Shiloh. Z

Subject: Just starting Shilo
Article No. 156 posted by John Adams
I just started reading Shilo. It is a good book so far. I like the way Mardy wants to save Shilo. He is over coming all the opsticks on his way to getting the dog. I like that!   ME

Article No. 165] posted by Andrew Jackson
Yes Marty shows lots of determination trying to get Shilo.

Article No. 186 posted by Zachary Taylor
He has doggy determanation Z

Example from Chat Log

These samples are from the chat logs for <u>Julie of the Wolves</u> and <u>Shiloh</u>. They demonstrate how students changed their way of writing by using a more conversational language when participating in a chat.

The chat about Julie of the wolves shows how it took a while for people to get into the chat room and situated.

Instructor:	*"Hi"*
Zachary Taylor:	*"Is this the right room we are supposed to be in?"*
James Monroe:	*"Yes this one"*
Zachary Taylor:	*"Hi instructor"*
James Monroe:	*"Be right back"*
James Monroe:	*"did you guys like the book"*
Zachary Taylor:	*"Hello again"*
James Monroe:	*"hi"*
Zachary Taylor:	"yea it was pretty interesting"
Zachary Taylor:	"What was your favorite part?"
James Monroe:	"i liked it to"
James Monroe:	"i dont have a favorite part"
James Monroe:	"do you?"
Zachary Taylor:	"Oh mine is when she lives on her own"
Zachary Taylor:	"Is franklin online write now?"
James Monroe:	"i dont think so"
Instructor:	"I'm back. I got cut off a while back. Zachary, would you begin by telling us which of the two books you like best and why?"
Zachary Taylor:	"Hold on I'll find out give me a min
Franklin Pierce:	"Good morning"
Instructor:	"Good morning"
Zachary Taylor:	"GOOD morning!"
Franklin Pierce:	"I was in the general chat room. Now I found everyone.
Zachary Taylor:	"Have you been on since 7:52?"

Once they got going, though, the discussion was interesting.

Instructor:	"I really liked Hatchet.........I liked Julie of the Wolves, too, but I couln't see myself being able to do what she did, could you?"
James Monroe:	"no, i couldnt
James Monroe:	"i would run out of food"
Zachary Taylor:	"Brian had a hatchet"
Franklin Pierce:	"Miyax had some upbringing on hunting and food, Brian had no training."
Instructor:	"That's true, but could you eat recycled food?"
Zachary Taylor:	"yes but it would taste bad"
James Monroe:	"it would be gross"
Franklin Pierce:	"It wasnt recycled, just predigested"
James Monroe:	"That is even more sick"
Zachary Taylor:	"it could have worms"
James Monroe:	"i know"
Franklin Pierce:	"yum"
Zachary Taylor:	"so she took a risk"
James Monroe:	"lol"
Instructor:	"So you think that if your life depended upon it you could eat that predigested food?"
Zachary Taylor:	"yes"
James Monroe:	"i guess"
Franklin Pierce:	"yes"
Zachary Taylor:	"I still could die though"
Instructor:	"Would there be anything that you just could not do even if it meant saving your life?"
Frankline Pierce:	"I couldn't eat another person."
James Monroe:	"I would't eat myself"
Zachary Taylor:	"you would die if you did for a crime then"
James Monroe:	"what?"
Zachary Taylor:	"you would get arrested"
James Taylor:	"for what?"
Zachary Taylor:	"eating another person"
James Monroe:	"oh"
James Monroe:	"one thing i didnt like about hatchet was the 1 word sentences"
Instructor:	"James, do you think the author didn;t tell you enough when he used those one word sentences?"
James Monroe:	"no"

In this sample from the chat log of Shiloh, the participants had a tendency to get off track. In some cases the students themselves tried to get the discussion back to the book.

John Adams:	"I'll try this again, What is your favorit part of Shiloh?"
James Madison:	"hello"
Thomas Jefferson:	"HI"
James Madison:	"what are we talking about?"
John Adams:	"finally! Mine is at the end when he gives Mardy Shiloh"
John Adams:	"What is your favorite part?"
James Madison:	"what part are we on?"
John Adams:	"Your favorite part of the story Shiloh"
Instructor:	"Why do you think Judd is so mean?"
Thomas Jefferson:	"because he is lonly"
Instructor:	"I know lonely people who are not mean."
James Madison:	"when marty lets the boy work for shiloh

James Madison probably meant when Judd let the boy work for Shiloh.

Instructor:	"Do you think he is lonely?"
James Madison:	"Who is lonely?"
Instructor:	"Judd"
John Adams:	"He lives by himself"
Thomas Jefferson:	"It's when Judd lets Marty work for the dog"
Instructor:	"Would you be afraid if you had to work for Judd?"
John Adams:	"He likes seeing kids suffer"
Thomas Jefferson:	"yes"
James Madison:	"I know"

Participants seem to lose focus when James Madison says he has to go. Thomas Jefferson was always concerned about who was on and who wasn't, but tries to keep the conversating going.

James Madison:	"I need to go bye bye"
Thomas Jefferson:	"why?"
John Adams:	"Yes but he doesn't want Shiloh hert"

Thomas Jefferson:	"not you"
John Adams:	"ok"
Franklin Pierce:	"Greetings"
Thomas Jefferson:	"Hey, Granklin!
Thomas Jefferson:	"some of the people will be back in a minute"
John Adams:	"I'm back"
Franklin Pierce:	"okay"
Franklin Pierce:	"have you finished discussing Shiloh yet"
Thomas Jefferson:	"almost"
Franklin Pierce:	"There is a video on the book but it has a lot of differences"
John Adams:	"i know"
Thomas Jefferson:	"Were having troble getting Mrs. Martin on.
Franklin Pierce:	"Mr. Movies has it"
John Adams:	"I hope she gets on soon"
Thomas Jefferson:	"What do you think of the book?"
Franklin Pierce:	"It doesn't take long to read"
John Adams:	"Its a very good book so far."
Instructor:	"What makes it good?"
John Adams:	"The way mardy over comes fear of judd and helps Shiloh"
Thomas Jefferson:	"I think thats cool"
Instructor:	"Marty did have to overcome fear, didn't he?"
John Adams:	"yes"
Thomas Jefferson:	"why not?"
Instructor:	"Was Marty afraid of anything besides Judd?"
John Adams:	"afraid Shiloh would get hurt. Maybe"
Franklin Pierce:	"He wants to protect the dog with his touch"
Thomas Jefferson:	"Why does Judd abuse his dogs"
Franklin Pierce:	"It was part of his training the dogs"
John Adams:	"because he likes to take out his anger on them"

Just as the discussion seemed to heading in an important direction, a couple had to stop and the conversation dwindled.

Books 'n Kids On-line Member Participation

The WebCT Interface kept records on the number of times each individual logged on to Books 'n Kids On-line, the number of items read and the number of times each one posted a comment. Participation varied from member to member. It was obvious that some individuals were more active in participating than others. Some were quite passive, logging on and reading what others posted, but not posting themselves. Books 'n Kids On-line was held during summer vacation. It is believed that this was a factor that contributed to the drop off in participation. As the summer progressed participation went down. Family vacations took students away for weeks at a time, as did camp and other activities. Technical difficulties had an effect also. On the day of the last chat, the district server was off-line and no one could connect to Books 'n Kids On-line. The moderator tried to reschedule, but was not able to.

Student Tracking

Personal Information		Access Information			Articles	
Full name	Login ID	First Access	Last Access	Hits	Read	Posted
Adams, John	JAdams	Jun 22 17:02 98	Aug 12 11:28 98	243	182	6
Coolidge, Calvin	CCoolidge	Jul 2 9:22 98	Jul 28 16:53 98	108	47	6
Jackson, Andrew	AJackson	Jun 15 17:46 98	Aug 10 8:07 98	247	182	26
Jefferson, Thomas	TJefferson	Jun 15 8:36 98	Aug 6 9:09 98	274	175	17
Lincoln, Abe	ALincoln	Jun 15 8:39 98	Jun 15 8:54 98	8	1	1
Madison, James	JMadison	Jun 15 9:13 98	Jul 30 9:23 98	189	144	5
Monroe, James	JMonroe	Jun 15 8:36 98	Jul 28 8:56 98	80	37	3
Pierce, Franklin	FPierce	Jun 10 5:22 98	Jul 31 20:57 98	304	156	21
Polk, James	JPolk	Aug 13 10:07 98	Aug 13 10:29 98	14	9	0
Reagan, Ronald	RReagan	Jun 15 8:38 98	Aug 10 8:54 98	50	11	0
Smith, Elmer	LachR	May 28 7:15 98	Aug 12 8:29 98	394	193	18
Taylor, Zachary	ZTaylor	Jun 18 19:29 98	Aug 10 8:07 98	263	130	36
Tyler, John	JTyler	Jun 22 7:57 98	Jul 28 8:33 98	123	101	5
Washington, George	GWashington	---	---	0	0	0

Books 'n Kids On-line Evaluation

The evaluation form was available for the students to print out and then fill out and turn in. The purpose of the evaluation form was to determine what the participants liked about Books 'n Kids On-line and what they felt they had learned from participating in the book club. There was a mistake in the title of this form. It was supposed to read, Books 'n Kids On-line, but was uploaded reading, Kids 'n Books On-line. The mistake was not noticed until after the book club concluded.

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home | contents
retrace | refresh
pg back | pg fwd

chat   bulletins   mail

Kids 'n Books On-line Evaluation

Please take a minute and answer the following questions.

- **Are there things you liked about Books 'n Kids On-line?**

- **What did you like?**

- **Are there things that you didn't like about Books 'n Kids On-line?**

- **What did you like?**

- **What would you like to have had done differently?**

- **Would you recommend Books 'n Kids On-line to others?**

- **What did you feel you learned through participating in Books 'n Kids On-line?**

Home   Page: Glossary   Index   Goals   Audio   Video   Quiz
Contents   Questions   References   Add Link   Page Text   Customize

Chapter Four

Reflections

Children   need to be given the opportunity to read independently and participate in book discussions if they are to become lifelong readers. (Calkins, 1996) Books 'n Kids On-line was created to give students in fourth and fifth grades this kind of learning experience.   Books 'n Kids On-line was an attempt to integrate a book discussion club with On-line communication technology.

The idea for Books 'n Kids On-line came from the writer's observation of students using the computer for various activities, from using an encyclopedia on CD-ROM to using the Internet to search for information. These students requested these kinds of resources and proceeded to use them independently. They were self-motivated when it came to using the computer to find information or use educational software. It was felt that this interest in using computers could somehow be connected to reading and thus encourage and motivate students to read independently.

Designing a Web page seemed to be the way to proceed, but how to make the Web page interactive required more thought. The literature indicated that electronic communications were becoming important in the educational setting with features such as e-mail having positive effects on students. (Anderson and Lee, 1995) The writer investigated the use of a Web-based course software, WebCT, to design an On-line book club.

It was discovered, after viewing many Web pages that one must look at an interactive Web page differently than a typical Web page. Many Web pages contain pages of information that one can navigate to by clicking somewhere on the page and the user simply moves from one page of information to another. An interactive Web page requires the user to respond in some way and gives the user a certain amount of control in manipulating the Web page. The important elements of Books 'n Kids On-line were not the content pages but the tools that allowed the participants to communicate with each other, e-mail, threaded bulletin board, and chat room.

The designer loaded several pages of introductory material for each book with links to related Web sites as a starting point for students using the Web page. Then, acting as moderator, the author attempted to initiate discussion of the books by posting questions about the books on the threaded bulletin board. Students were able to log on at any time of the day and respond to any or all of the messages posted. An On-line chat was held at the end of each session to discuss and compare the books read in each session.

From the beginning it was obvious that the students were drawn to the bulletin board and e-mail features of the Web page. Participants read the books independently and sometimes did not check the content pages first. It was felt that the content pages of Books 'n Kids On-line were not significant in motivating the students to read the books. The content pages might have been more significant if the students had to respond to them in some way.

E-mail was used as a means of communicating to each other about matters other than discussion of the books. The moderator used e-mail to inform members of schedule changes or events that might effect the book club and also as a way to transfer ideas about how to respond to questions on the bulletin board. Students used e-mail when they had questions about procedures or to let the moderator and others know when they would be on vacation or unable to participate. Students were quick to discover that they could simply visit with each other using e-mail. Students were given false names and individual passwords to encourage anonymity. One of the first activities the students engaged in On-line was to try to discover who the other members really were. Students got to know each other through e-mail.

The threaded bulletin board began as the main method for discussing a book. As questions were posted members responded with their own comments. This feature worked well for individuals who logged on to Books 'n Kids On-line at varying times during the day. Because the bulletin board had no time or place constraints, one could count on using this feature whenever it worked into one's schedule. Using a threaded bulletin board let the user follow the lines of a conversation by seeing all the responses pertaining to a particular subject. This was helpful since several different topics might be posted at any given time. The conversations tended to be short, though, and not long-lived. Students had a tendency to post a response to a specific question more often than responding with

additional inquiries.

Once students had the opportunity to participate in a live chat, the bulletin board became less important to them as a way to share ideas. Students liked participating in a chat room a lot. When asked what they liked about the chat room, they responded that they liked the idea of the immediate response and following the words as they appeared on their screens. The chat feature posed some problems for the moderator. Students' On-line behavior changed. Students demonstrated behaviors similar to those one would find in a face to face situation. Some students got silly and the silliness appeared in written form rather than verbal. Students had difficulty staying with the book discussion. It was necessary to send frequent reminders to stay on track. Once the first chat was held, this became the preferred method of conversing. Students even initiated chats on their own and discovered that they could hold private chats with each other.

Even though the chats may not have been as effective as the moderator would have preferred, it is believed that this kind of interest demonstrated by the students shows that there is validity in the use of this type of technology in combination with reading or other learning situations.

The writer observed some of the same positive effects that Anderson and Lee (1995) discovered about the use of e-mail. Participants did not have any time constraints, students developed a sense of camaraderie, and the use of e-mail appeared to be motivating. The students wanted to use e-mail, the threaded

bulletin board and the chat room and found the activity itself to be a reward.

The number of participants in Books 'n Kids On-line shrank as the weeks went on. Many factors contributed to this such as family vacations, sports activities, and camp. There was a small core of students who stayed active to the end. Some of these students had difficulty connecting to Books 'n Kids On-line at home and had to use the school lab in order to log on. They would continually inquire as to whether the lab would be open and if they could use it.

<div align="center">The Conversations</div>

It was the intention of the moderator to get the conversation started with an opening question and let the participants take over, to get the conversation to a point where the students could relate the experiences of the main characters with their own lives.

It is believed that Books 'n Kids On-line could have had more success if it had been held during the school year. It is felt that the number of participants would have been higher and that there would be fewer drop-outs and absences. Eight to ten active participants would make a comfortable size group to hold a conversation. If all the original members had participated throughout, a broader discussion could have taken place. One could look at the print-out of student tracking to see how many of the members participated and how often each one actually posted comments. It was interesting to notice the large number of comments read by each person compared to the number each person posted. The writer interpreted this to

mean that the book club members were benefiting from the book club without always actively submitting comments. It also indicated that, as in a face to face discussion, there are those who will sit back and resist offering comment.

Students were asked to print and complete the evaluation form after the book club ended. Only five evaluations were turned in. The following answers were given to the questions.

1. **What did you like?**
    a. chat, e-mail
    b. liked chat, e-mail, bulletin board
    c. chats, e-mail, talking about books on computer
    d. liked reading, using e-mail and bulletin boards, getting people's opinion on books, and on-line chats, working on internet and reading the books

2. **What didn't you like?**
    a. kids wouldn't stay on topic
    b. didn't like Julie of the Wolves book
    c. nothing
    d. nothing
    e. when we couldn't get on

3. **What would you like to have done differently?**
    a. more time
    b. have a different book like Dog Song instead of Julie of the Wolves
    c. more chats
    d. more chats
    e. more chats

4. **Would you recommend Books 'n Kids On-line to others?**

a. yes
b. yes
c. yes
d. yes
e. yes

5. What did you feel you learned through participating in Books 'n Kids On-line?
    a. "How to use the internet better and I read more books, also it's like being on a internet book club"
    b. "Use a chat room, talk about books"
    c. "learned about e-mail, on-line chat, and bulletin boards"
    d. "How to use a chat room"
    e. "chat rooms, bulletin board"

Recommendations

Further investigation into the integration of On-line communications and Web page technology with reading should be considered. First it is recommended that a study be done to look at the results of an On-line book club that occurs during a time frame other than the summer vacation months to observe whether any significant differences result. Research should be done to determine whether students participating in a book club that meets On-line read more than students participating in a book club that meets in a face to face situation. A study could be done to compare the content of the book discussions of these two kinds of book clubs.

Writing occurs to some extent in both On-line and face to face book clubs. It is this writer's recommendation that research should also be done to compare the writing of students before and after participation in an On-line book club with the writing of students before and after participation in a face to face book club.

Extending beyond the realm of an On-line book club, research should explore the use of Interactive Web technology with other learning situations. For instance, cooperative units of instruction could take place with participating students being miles apart. The content applying to all would reside on the Interactive Web page where students could access it at any time. The use of a threaded bulletin board and chat room could be used for collaborating with each other to solve problems or share ideas. Research could be done on this type of environment to determine whether this type of collaboration shows more benefits than one involving students from the same classroom and using the conventional methods of communication involving face to face discussions.

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