

Inspiration
SOFTWARE, INC.
The Leader in
Visual Thinking and Learning™

Using
graphic
organizers to
strengthen
literature
circles

See page 3

Inside:

- Inspired sitespage 2
- Scholarship announcement ...page 2
- Graphic organizers strengthen literature circlespage 3
- Tips & Trickspage 4

Realize the classroom of tomorrow today with Kidspiration® 2.1, Inspiration® 7.6 and Inspiration® for Palm OS®

New updates to Inspiration and Kidspiration support emerging technologies

Visit Disneyland, and you might notice that the future predicted in the classic exhibit, "Tomorrowland," is the world of today. Likewise, in the days of inkwells and slates, or even typewriters and carbon copies, a classroom equipped with computers, interactive whiteboards and handheld computers was only a dream. Today, as that dream becomes a reality, Kidspiration®, Inspiration® and Inspiration® for Palm OS® bring the power of visual learning to these emerging technologies, helping students learn to think and learn.

Imagine a fourth-grade classroom where students are studying their state.

The teacher starts off by having the students brainstorm about what they already know about the state. Using Kidspiration on an interactive whiteboard, the whole class works together to develop a graphic organizer illustrating their knowledge. Students come up to the whiteboard and add new items to the rapidly growing map. After the brainstorming session, students select topics from the large graphic organizer for small group research projects.

The teacher saves the graphic organizer on a desktop computer, which is then synced to the students' handheld computers so they can begin their research. Using Inspiration for Palm OS, some students go to the school library and research the history of the state, adding what they learn to their graphic organizers. Others focus their projects on the state government and use their handhelds to record their interviews with state legislators. Another group of students chooses to



research flora and fauna, and they meet after school in a nearby park to record data about indigenous birds and trees.

After finishing their research, students sync information from their handhelds to desktop computers in the classroom where they organize and expand their graphic organizers, adding symbols and details. When they are ready to complete their papers, they transform their graphic organizers into outlines and transfer them from Kidspiration to a word processor.

Does this sound like the classroom of the future? It isn't. It is a classroom of 2005. With the most recent updates to Kidspiration and Inspiration, teachers and students can now use graphic organizers to build knowledge and develop thinking skills with an array of technology options—including handheld computers, desktop computers or interactive whiteboards.

Learn more about the latest enhancements to Kidspiration and Inspiration and discover ways to use them in your classroom at www.inspiration.com/productinfo/2005updates. Updates to Inspiration 7.6 and Kidspiration 2.1 are free to users of Kidspiration 2 and Inspiration 7 or above. ★

Graphic organizers strengthen literature circles

Kidspiration and Inspiration help students interpret text, apply meaning and make connections with reading material

Graphic organizers are known to provide students with many learning advantages, including increased reading comprehension. Can graphic organizers be successfully integrated into student-led literature circles? Educators are answering with an emphatic “yes!”

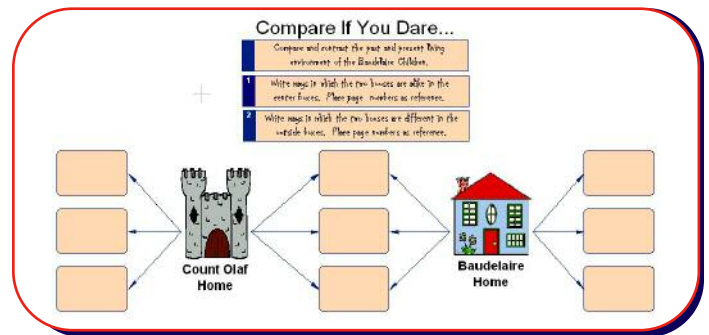
Enhancing literature circles with technology

Literature circles offer students the chance to choose their own reading materials, discuss their selections and write about the themes and topics they encounter. Some experts, such as Susan Silverman, see an opportunity to enhance literature circles with technology—namely, with Kidspiration and Inspiration graphic organizers.

Silverman, an educational consultant and the author of numerous online collaborative reading projects, says, “Kidspiration and Inspiration can play a very big role in literature circles. In every aspect, from analyzing characters during discussions to completing extension projects, Kidspiration and Inspiration provide tools that help students organize their thoughts and communicate their ideas.”

Turning theory into practice

To address what she observed as a “lack of focus on technology integration” within current literature circle pedagogy, Silverman organized a unique collaborative reading project. The project brought together fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms in New York’s Comsewogue School District with pre-service education undergraduate students from the University of Delaware and Silverman’s graduate students from the New York Institute of Technology. Together, they set out to read and ruminate about the first book in Lemony Snicket’s *The Bad Beginning*



Susan Silverman’s graduate students created Kidspiration and Inspiration activities based on *The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket. Download these templates at comsewogue.org/~ssilverman/snicket.

(*A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 1*) and to test Silverman’s theory that incorporating technology, such as Kidspiration and Inspiration, would add a new level of excitement and involvement from students.

The elementary students read the book and participated in literature circle discussions, playing roles such as Word Wizard, Summarizer or Researcher. Students were given the option to use Kidspiration or Inspiration to complete their tasks. “You name any role, and I could tell you how to integrate Kidspiration or Inspiration,” says Silverman. “The Researcher could use Inspiration to link to primary documents on the Internet. The Illustrator could use Kidspiration’s Symbol Maker to illustrate a passage. And the Summarizer—well, what better tool is there to summarize than Inspiration?”

Beyond the basics

Based on results from the school district’s language arts testing that identified skills that needed to be strengthened, Silverman’s graduate students created Kidspiration and Inspiration diagrams to accompany the elementary students’ reading and discussion of the book. These Kidspiration and Inspiration projects helped them develop a range of challenging literary skills, from learning new vocabulary to understanding foreshadowing techniques. What’s more, creating the activities showed how easy it would be for educators to create complementary materials to guide their students and meet curriculum goals without interfering in the student dynamics of the literature circle. The downloadable Kidspiration and Inspiration templates, which can easily be applied to other books, are available at comsewogue.org/~ssilverman/snicket/.

Spreading the word

Due to the success of her “fortunate collaboration,” Silverman has published information on the web and taken her ideas on the road. She will be presenting at technology conferences on how to integrate Kidspiration, Inspiration and other technology tools into literature circles to challenge students, and most of all, help them develop a love for reading and a connection to the text. “I am doing this to benefit the global community,” explains Silverman. “I absolutely adore Kidspiration and Inspiration. They are among the best software tools out there.” ★

Resources pairing literature circles and graphic organizers

www.eduscapes.com/ladders/themes/

Annette Lamb, president of Lamb Learning Group and co-author of eduscapes.com, offers a variety of resources on her website to help teachers integrate technology and graphic organizers into literature circles. Lamb created a number of thematic units with corresponding book suggestions that offer ideas for technology connections, including Kidspiration or Inspiration. “Kidspiration and Inspiration are a perfect match for literature circles,” says Lamb. “They’re wonderful tools that help students visualize and share understandings about the books they are reading. Some students have a difficult time expressing their ideas in small group discussions, Kidspiration and Inspiration provide a great way to illustrate their thoughts.”

www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/highlandes/agraywww/pairitbooks.html

Alana Gray of Montgomery County Public Schools, MD created a number of Kidspiration activities that offer extension projects for a variety of primary reading material.

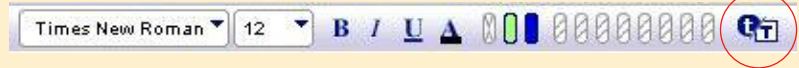
home.att.net/~teaching/litcircles.htm

Laura Candler’s literature circle information provides a great resource for structuring literature circles. At the bottom of her page she includes a variety of graphic organizer templates that could easily be created in Kidspiration or Inspiration.

Quick-change diagrams & outlines

Working with defaults makes quick work of enhancing diagrams and outlines

Defaults button



Defaults in Diagram View

Quickly customize the look of your diagram with Inspiration's Defaults button. Using the Defaults button is an easy way to give multiple symbols the same characteristics. Plus, the Defaults button works on links and notes, too. For example, following a whole-class brainstorming session, a teacher can quickly organize symbols into groups and identify each group with different colors and shapes.

To use Inspiration's Set/Apply Defaults button:

1. Select a symbol.
 2. Change the symbol attributes to reflect your preferences using the Formatting toolbar or menu items. This may include symbol shape, fill color, text color, text size or line thickness
 3. On the Formatting toolbar, click the **Defaults** button, and then choose **Set Default**.
 4. Select the other symbols to which you wish to apply the default settings.
 5. Click the **Defaults** button and choose **Apply Default**.
- Note:** New symbols added to your diagram will reflect these changes.

Defaults in Outline View

With Inspiration's **Topic Default** button you can also customize the look of your outline before or after you create it.



Topic Defaults button

1. On the Formatting toolbar, click the **Topic Defaults** button.
2. Select the level for which you want to change the defaults.
3. Set the options to match your preferences.
4. Do one of the following:
To preview the changes and leave the Topic Defaults dialog box open, click **Preview**. –or–
To apply the changes and close the Topic Defaults dialog box, click **OK**.

To choose defaults for..	Select...
All text in the outline, including topics and notes, and all text in Notes List View	All items
Main idea and all topic levels in the outline	All Topic Levels
A specific level in the outline	The level, such as Main Idea or Level 1
All text in Notes List View	Notes List Topics
All notes text in the outline	Notes Text

Tips

To override a default, simply select the item in Diagram View or the text in Outline View that you wish to alter and change the attributes.