Using Technology in Teaching

The Pocket Tutor Project
Ula Manzo, Ph.D

This semester, children in the Reading Clinic are receiving an innovative kind of instruction that is both high-tech and personalized. At the end of the regular tutoring session, new recordings are uploaded to iPods that have been loaned to each student for the semester. The recordings are read-alouds, with new sections added each week, of books selected based on students’ individual interests and reading levels. Imbedded throughout the recorded read-alouds are generic “comprehension prompts” that model ways to remind oneself to use comprehension strategies before, during and after reading. The Project is being overseen by clinic director, Dr. Erica Bowers, and implemented by graduate assistant Melissa Base. The iPod read-alouds are being developed and recorded by department chair, Dr. Ula Manzo.

Research in reading comprehension suggests that modeling comprehension strategies is the most effective way to teach comprehension; however, in practice, this seems to require extensive training and teacher commitment (Duffy & Roehler, 1988; Pearson & Dole, 1987; Hagaman & Reid, 2008; Wigfield, Guthrie, et.al. 2008). In the Pocket Tutor Project, we are testing the theory that it may not have to be this compli-
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cated. The “comprehension prompts theory” says that the teacher should develop a few
general phrases – one for schema activation, one for comprehension monitoring, one for
comprehension fix-up, and, a few based on developmental level, such as, at 4th grade
level, a prompt for visualization, and one for summarizing a larger block of text. The
teacher then uses those generic comprehension prompts frequently, in read-alouds, with
the goal of having the student internalize and use them independently.
Our expectation is that by merging the comprehension prompts theory with the “cool fac-
tor” of the iPods for repeated listening to each new (prompted) read-aloud, students will
experience far more repetitions of the embedded comprehension prompts. Carrying their
reading “tutors” in their pockets throughout the week should help them to internalize use-
of comprehension strategies much more efficiently than could be accomplished in the regular classroom, or
even in individual tutoring sessions.
Support for the Pocket Tutor Project has been provided by research grants from the College of Ed Dean’s Of-
fice, and from the Dr. Hazel Miller Croy Endowment.

References
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Slogging through Blogging
Mary Bogan & Angela Henderson
We have been using blogging in our college reading development courses
for the last couple of years. We use blogging as a tool to complement our
traditional in-class instruction. Specifically, students do context clues voc-
cabulary work, practice time management, and spend time reflecting on
the skills and strategies they are being taught.
Blogging has the advantage of both utilizing some students’ existing digi-
tal literacies and introducing it to those students who have not had the
same exposure to the digital world. Additionally, students have freedom in blogging to put
their “selves” in their blog—not just through the content, but also in the design.
As instructors, we have seen results that we expected in the form of increased technological
fluency and metacognition. We have also seen, though, a positive impact on motivation and
witnessed mutual learning, between classmates and between our students and ourselves as
instructors. We hope to continue exploring the benefits of blogging as we continue to de-
velop as reading professionals.

Photo Story
By Natalie Haney
This year, in my first year as a first grade teacher, I was struck with the question of how to integrate

REG will again be co-hosting with Reading faculty a reception immediately
following the College of Education graduation ceremonies on May 22.
Join us on the second floor patio of the EC Building to congratulate the
graduates.
Please contact Robin Barry if you would like to help us honor our graduates at
this festive event. Contact rbarry@fullerton.edu

Hancock Fund
REG was able to fund four $500 scholarships for Reading graduate students for 2009-2010. We are already
receiving donations for this year’s scholarships. REG members who would like to donate money for schol-
arships or REG’s other projects (clinic student scholarships, classroom teacher grant, or Reading Center ma-
terials) can do so by contributing to the Hancock Fund online at http://www.fullerton.edu/foundation/
donate/index.asp or by including a Hancock Fund donation along with membership renewal.

Hancock Fund Contributors
Janet Bagwell
Margaret Hirsen
Gena Lovett
Kathleen Naylor
Andrea Sward
Mary Bogan
A.C. “Pat” Irot
Leslee Milch, NBCT
Donna Padgett
Kathi Bartle-Angus
June Hetzel, PhD
Debbie Lombardi
Laura Monahan
Maureen Provenzano
Kim Hanley

Check Us Out on Facebook
Search for Reading Educators Guild and “like” us today! On our page you will find
photos from the breakfast meeting plus slide shows of the presentations on technol-
ogy and education.
This wonderful resource was created by Kimberly Mundala and is fueled by Read-
ing Program alumni. For more information contact kimberlymundala@yahoo.com.
Honor an Educator

REG members, Janet Bagwell and Angela Henderson, were honored at the Honor and Educator event, sponsored by the College of Education on April 9. Both were recognized for the leadership roles they have played in the field of college reading. Janet Bagwell currently serves as chair of the Reading Department at Saddleback Community College. In that role she has fostered an innovative curriculum and partnered with the CSUF Reading Department to provide opportunities for graduate students in the program. Angela Henderson, past chair of Reading at Fullerton Community College, also has partnered with CSUF Reading Program and provided support for uses of innovative technology for the teaching of college reading. Both Janet and Angela have served in leadership positions for the College Reading and Learning Association and consistently model a high standard of professionalism and commitment to the field.

Those interested in learning more about the Honor an Educator event should visit the College of Education site at http://ed.fullerton.edu/Awards/Awards.html.

Information regarding past recipients and how to nominate new recipients is available. The event is held each spring with all proceeds earned going to support scholarships for current College of Education students.

Mission Accomplished – Hazel Miller Croy Reading Center Named

Friends, colleagues, admirers, and family of Reading Department founder, Hazel Miller Croy celebrated the official naming of the Reading Center in her honor at a special event on April 2. Dean Claire Cavallaro commended all involved for exceeding the initial fund raising goal of $25,000. The $37,000 raised thus far will support ongoing work of the Reading Center by providing student scholarships, funds for materials and technology, and support for research.

Speakers provided an impressive history of Dr. Croy’s impact on the field of reading. Dr. Erica Bowers, Center Director, gave an overview of current projects and parents of children currently served by the Reading Center shared their appreciation. A highlight of the event was the unveiling of the name plaque that will be displayed in the center by Dr. Croy’s grandsons.

Steering committee members, Dr. Deborah Hancock, Pat Irot, Dr. Ruth May Siegrist, and Dr. Julie Chan, are to be commended for their amazing effort in bringing their vision for honoring Dr. Croy to fruition.

Photo: Dr. Croy’s grandsons, Kent Breazeale (of Aliso Viejo) and Brett Breazeale (of Texas).

Teaching in an On-Line Environment

JoAnne Greenbaum

I recently had the pleasure of speaking to the REG membership, as a member of a panel discussion, on technology in education. Teaching in the online environment was the focus of my presentation. I used the following seven principles as a framework for sharing the online practices that I have found to be most effective.


1. Encourages student-faculty contact.
2. Encourages cooperation among students.

This was a great opportunity for even my most struggling students, who walked away with proud faces after hearing the playback of themselves as readers.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Some students enroll in online classes with the mistaken assumption that the course will be easier than the traditional version. This is a myth. Students must understand from the beginning that online classes take more time, require more reading and depend on the student being a self-motivated independent learner. By using rubrics for all assignments, including discussion boards and group activities the students know what is expected. Providing samples of acceptable work is also beneficial.

The online environment really lends itself to a respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. In my presentation of material I try to provide a variety of options for students. All of the presentations are narrated and have links to relevant videos and websites. I also provide podcasts of the presentations so students can take the information on the go with them. In addition, the transcript of the presentations and podcasts are provided for those students who want to read and take notes. Students are encouraged to use the tools that work best for them.

Student work can be completed in a number of ways. Opportunity is provided for students to express their ideas via multiple mediums such as videos, webpages, and multimedia presentations.

My experience teaching online has taught me the following:

- Don’t get hung up on lots of bells and whistles. The technology is a tool…not the course.
- Keep it simple and preserve the integrity of the course curriculum.
- Don’t assume that students will know how to learn online just because they are digital natives.
- Students appreciate acknowledgement of the challenges they face in the online environment.
- Engage in reflective practice by asking students what works and making changes in your teaching based on experience.


Donna Padgett Honored

REG member, Donna Padgett, will be honored this month as Faculty of the Year at CSUF. She will be presented the award at the Scholar Athlete Banquet. Padgett was nominated by the students in her college reading and critical thinking classes and was selected by a vote of the student athletes. This is a much coveted award as it comes directly from the students who recognized her for providing excellent instruction and a remarkable commitment to their success.

Donna Padgett Honored