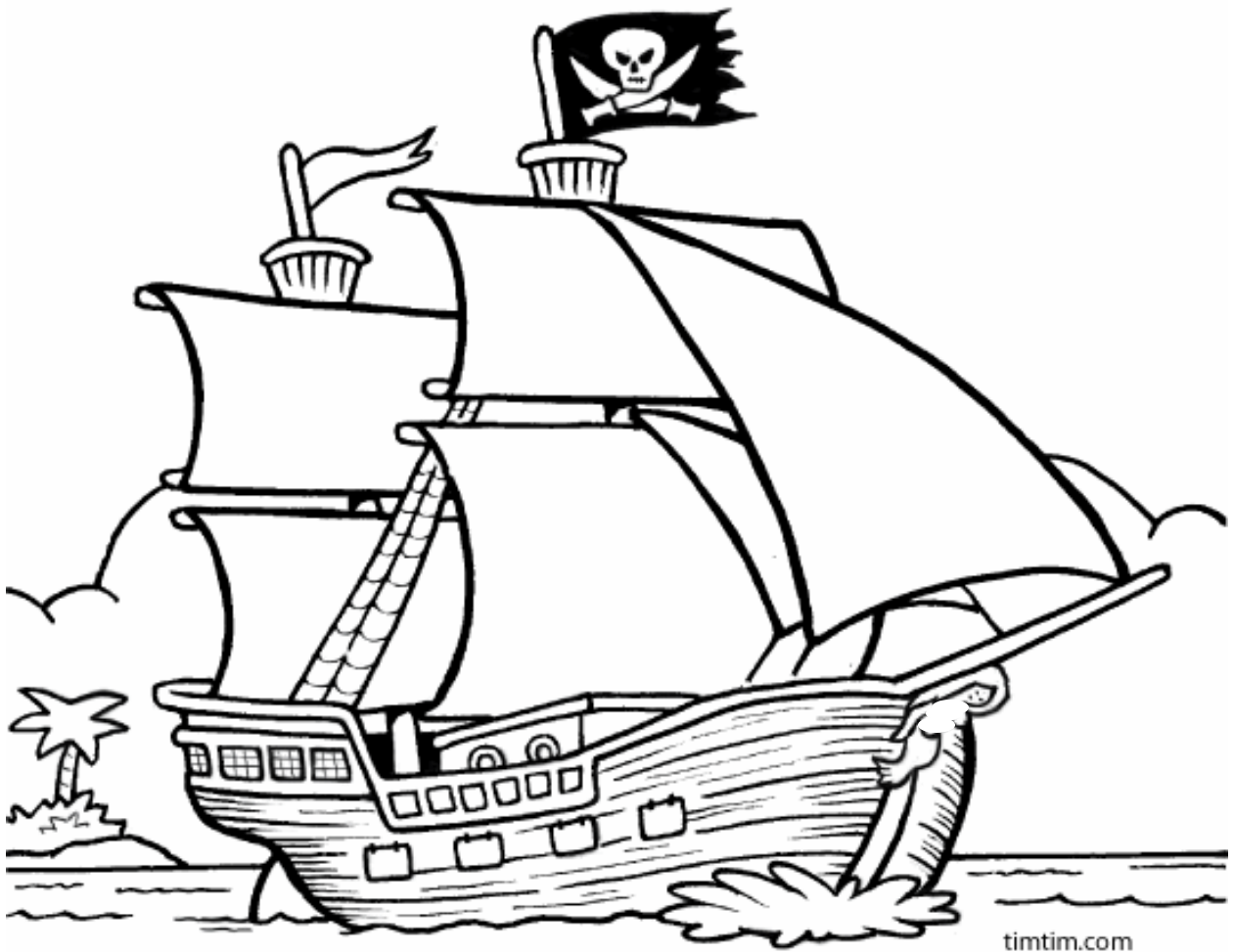


TechQuest: The Quest for Buried Treasure

A Tech Solution for the Writing Process

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The Four Common Elements in Education

Someone Teaching -

I will be teaching my first graders how to stick with a piece of writing through the writing process as they turn a piece of their writing into a piece to be proud of and showcase.

Someone Learning -

The students will be learning how to use the writing process to produce quality writing through a series of mini lessons in Writer's Workshop. The content matter will be broken down to make the goal more attainable for our learners.

Some Subject Matter -

The Writing Process

In Some Setting -

Elementary School Classroom

The Problem of Practice

The compelling problem of practice I am addressing is student's not taking ownership of their writing and seeing a quality piece through to the end.

My first graders have a difficult time applying the skills we have been working on all year for the writing process in Writer's Workshop to their written pieces. The students typically remember part of what is learned at different times. When it all has to come together it is difficult for them to apply the writing process.

They don't understand that a good author rereads, reflects on, and edits their pieces. They often forget that writing is meant to be read, not just pushed aside after they have filled their page. I want their writing to be something they are proud of and want to showcase.

Learning how to be a good writer is an important skill. It is part of the literacy equation to build good readers and thinkers. It helps with storytelling and expression. Writing and being able to put coherent thoughts together is an important life skill that they will need all through schooling and in future professions.

The Plan for a Solution: *The Quest for Buried Treasure*

Everyone has a story. The problem is the stories are buried deep inside us as treasures waiting to be found. The proposed solution is to break up the writing process into a series of technology based mini-lessons to complete during a Writer's Workshop unit. These mini-lessons will see the students brainstorming, writing a rough draft, revising, editing, and publishing in the form of a Digital Anthology as they set out on *their* quest for buried treasure.

At the beginning of the unit the students will receive a treasure map that has all of the mini lesson titles on it as stops. After successfully completing each lesson, the child will receive a sticker to place on their map signifying completion of the task. The stickers will be placed where X marks the spot on their map. The map will be coloring book style to add to the interactive excitement. I have found a number of free drawings that I will use from www.timtim.com. The treasure map will lead the way to the final project for the unit where they will get to showcase their treasure of a story.

I will also create the map in interactive Notebook Software to be displayed on the SmartBoard. This will act as a larger than life classroom visual and be used for whole group discussion purposes. An icon of a ship will travel around the map to the different mini-lessons so the students have a visual of their progress toward the completion of their project.

Phase 1: Brainstorming Ideas

- *Lesson Title: Choosing Your Vessel*
- The first thing needed to write a story is an idea. This idea, like the ship or vessel that takes an adventurer to their treasure, will be your vessel as you go through each step of the writing process looking for that amazing story. All of the decisions you make will depend on which idea you choose. This idea will be what you use for your travels in this unit.
- Using Kidspiration the children will record their great ideas for writing by creating an easy to read diagram.
- The student will start with their name in the center of a web diagram template. Arrows will point out from the center to create an empty web. The students will add text or clipart images of ideas they have for writing.
- Example: If the student would like to write about the time their dog jumped in the pool they may add clipart of a dog and a pool at the end of the arrow. Or they may also choose to add a text box that reads, "When my dog jumped in the pool"
- The student will fill in all of the empty arrows with small moment ideas from their own lives. They may scroll through clipart to trigger ideas.
- When the student's web is complete it will be printed and kept in their writing folder.
- They will choose one of the topics to write about for this project.

Phase 2: Prewriting

- *Lesson Title: The Plan*
- An adventurer wouldn't set out for their buried treasure without a plan first! What route will they take...what should they bring along...what supplies do they need? The same is true for us as writers. We don't want to jump into writing our stories without first thinking about our idea and making a plan for what needs to be included.
- On day one, the students will draw a picture to use when writing their story. They will be instructed to both draw and label.
- On day two, the students will hear from child author, Adora, about using descriptive words. Both of the following You Tube Videos are good descriptive writing explanations by Adora.
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJp_qnyymik&feature=related
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaVXBXLeaA&feature=channel>
- Students will then be instructed to add to their drawing through a simple PowerPoint slide show. The slide show will consist of slides with simple icons to prompt them to add specific information/labels to their pictures.
- Slide 1 - Title
- Slide 2 -Task
- Slide 3 - Instructions
- Slide 4 - Eye: What did you see?
- Slide 5 -Ear: What did you hear?
- Slide 6 - Mouth: What did you or others say?
- Slide 7- Nose: What did you smell?
- Slide 8- Hand: What did you touch or feel?

**Take a photo of the child making a face they made at the time of the event depicted in their story. Encourage the child to let the emotion they felt take over their body as you snap the photo. This will be used in phase 4.

Phase 3: Writing the Rough Draft

- *Lesson Title: The First Record of Our Journey*
- An adventurer always takes notes and records what happens along the way. The same is true for writers! We need to begin recording our ideas in writing. This is called a rough draft.
- Model for the children how you use the ideas in your own picture to write a story. Have the children write a rough draft of their story.

Phase 4: Revising

- *Lesson Title: Things Are About To Get Interesting!*
 - In this phase the children will revise their written piece over the course of a few days to make it more interesting. Each day will include various ways for the children to add style and voice to their writing.
 - The children will participate in each lesson, adding the focus point of the daily study to their story.
 - Using editing pens the children will add the following items to their story.
1. Adding Body Language and Emotion - The children will use the photograph of themselves to add emotion to their story. They will pay close attention to their body and facial expressions. (Example: My eyes opened wide. My mouth dropped open. My fingers curled up into fists.)
 2. Adding Simile - Read as Quick as a Cricket. Discuss with the class what the boy means when he is comparing himself to the different animals. Show the beginning of the clip from You Tube, [Rock and Learn](#). Challenge the kids to add a simile to their story.
 3. Adding Onomatopoeia- Show the You Tube Video, [Onomatopoeia Story](#). Discuss the effect of possibly repeating the chosen word. Example: Drip...drop...drip...drop...) Challenge the kids to add an onomatopoeia to their story. Challenge the kids to find a word or phrase that would have a good effect if repeated.
 4. Adding interesting words - Show part of the [Rock and Learn](#) video where she chooses to add words with more interest. Challenge the children to find at least three places in their story where they used a boring word and change it to add interest.
 5. Adding more detail – For the mini lesson, go to the link [Mystery Places](#) and listen to CogDog ask questions to prompt a story. As a whole group use the voice thread prompts to write a story with great detail. Partner up the students to ask questions about each others stories. The student asking the questions will be playing the CogDog role just like in the mini lesson. Instruct them to help each other add at least 2 more descriptive details or sentences to their story by answering the questions of the CogDog.

Phase 5- Editing

- *Lesson Title: Wrong Turn*
- On an adventure it is easy to accidentally take a wrong turn. This happens to writers too! Writers get so excited about the words they have written that they forget to pay attention to conventions. That's okay. We can always go back and fix it.
- On the interactive white board choose sentences from stories the children wrote. Invite the children up to the board to fix the sentences. Focus on uppercase letters, spacing, punctuation, and spelling. With a partner, children look at their own stories and edit mistakes.

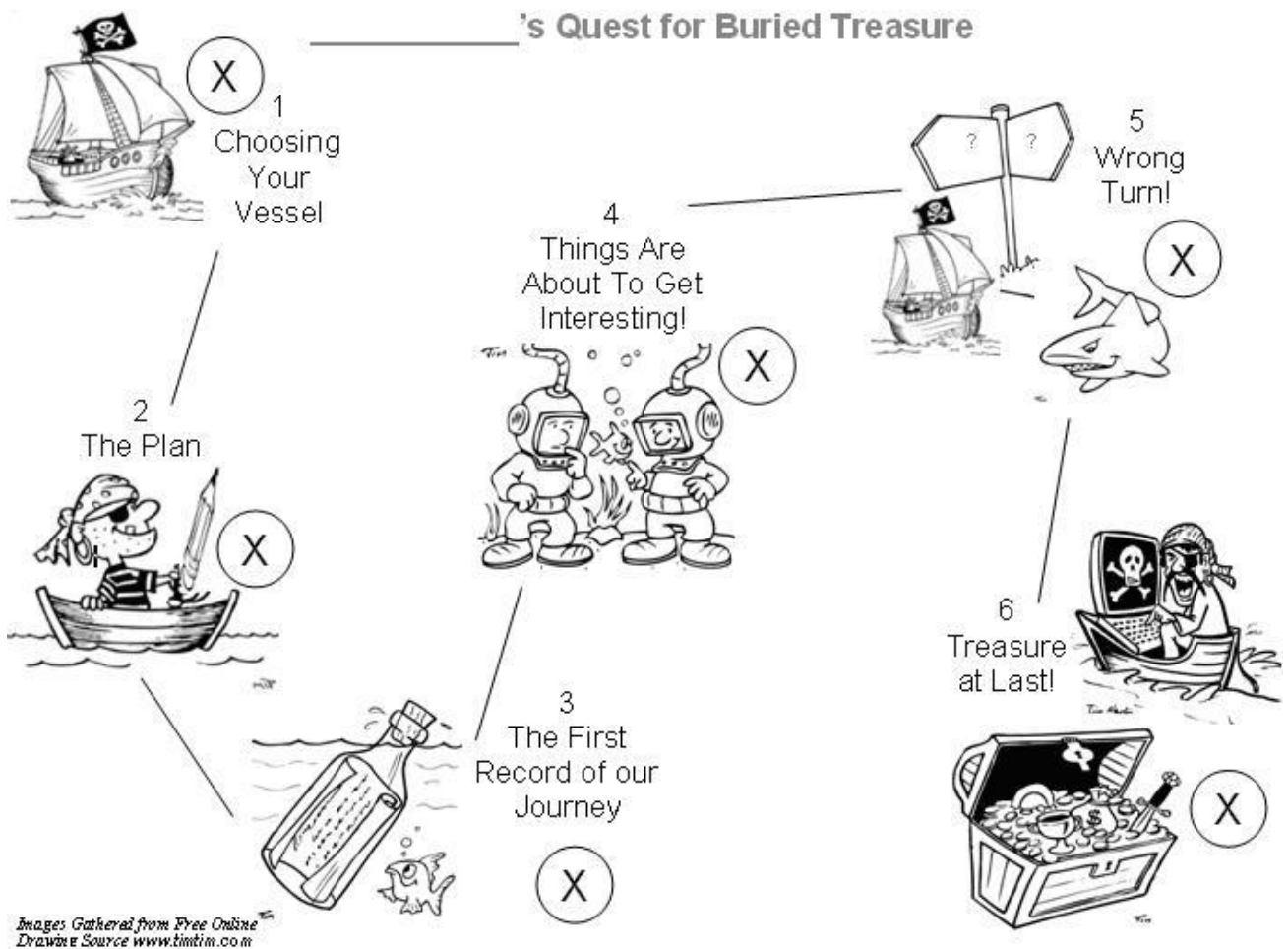
Phase 6 – (1) Publish in Writing and as a (2) Digital Anthology

- *Lesson Title- Treasure at Last!*
- It is always exciting to finally find that treasure you have been searching for! As writers you have been working hard to unbury the story deep inside you. Congratulations! You did it! Adventurers never keep the treasure hidden once they find it. They want to show it off. As a writer you should too.
- (1) Write a final copy of the story in the form of a paper book complete with a cover, dedication, and illustrations.
- (2) In PowerPoint create a Digital Anthology with the kids.
- Step 1 - Using KidPix, have the students create an illustration. This will be used in the anthology.
- Step 2- The students will each create 2 slides for this project. The first is a title and author slide with the picture of themselves they used in phase 4 inserted. The second slide is the image they created in KidPix. The students will record their voice reading their title and name on the first slide. They will read their story on the second slide.
- Teacher will format the PowerPoint with Action Buttons in a way that in the final copy of the Digital Anthology you may choose from a list which story you want to hear. This will be done from the first slide and then through action buttons the listener will be returned to the list after each story so they can choose another to hear.
- Each child will take home a burned CD of the Digital Anthology. The school library will also get a copy. Select stories may be played on the morning video announcements.

Implementation During This Course

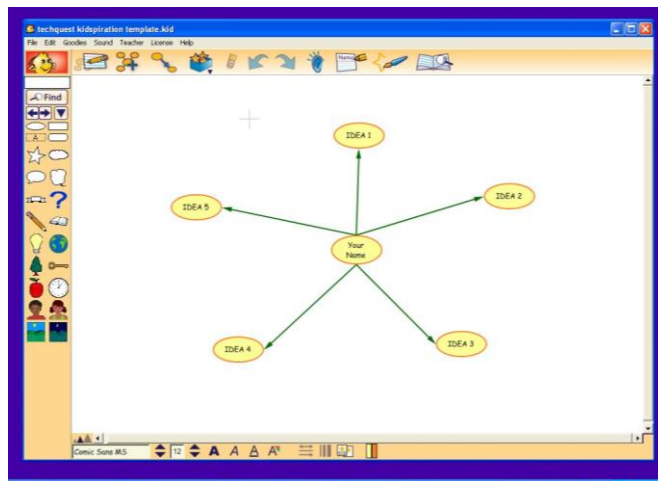
The Map:

During this course I have created pieces of the phases necessary for implementation of the TechQuest as a whole. I started at the beginning and created the unit treasure map. The map was created using Microsoft Word. I hit my first bump in the road when I attempted using clipart to make the map. I didn't like the outcome because it didn't flow very well. The clipart pictures that were available did not suit my needs or carry out the theme of an adventure as I had hoped. I began to search online for free clipart when I stumbled upon a website at www.timtim.com. This website has numerous coloring book style drawings for free. They even mention on the site to tell your local school if you like what you see. At this site I was surprised to find exactly what I was looking for to create my treasure map. I am very delighted with the final outcome and can't wait to use it with my students.

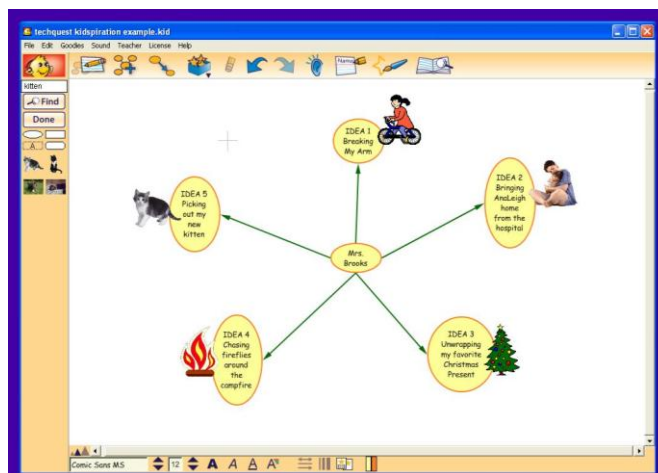


Brainstorming:

The next piece I worked on was creating a template in Kidspiration for Phase 1 of the unit. In Phase 1 the lesson is titled Choosing Your Vessel. Here the students brainstorm ideas that they could possibly write about. My next bump in the road came when I realized that working from home I didn't have access to the Kidspiration software. I thought I was going to have a chance to do it at school but ran out of time. Now on summer break there was a hiccup in my plan! I visited the official website for Kidspiration to find that they offer a free 30 day trial for the Kidspiration software. I downloaded the trial and was back on track. I created the web template for the students to use as well as an example of what a final product would look like. This bump in the road turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Now, working from home, I have the luxury to explore everything the software can do. I had no idea of its capabilities. It is great for my primary students because it reads the words and actions out loud to them, it is simple to use, and it spans different curriculum areas. I actually found my mouth dropped open as I discovered the base ten trading feature and other great applications!



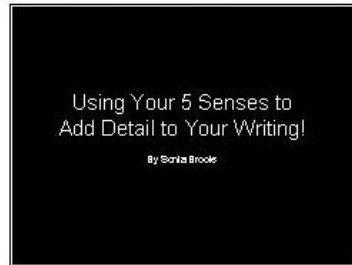
Kidspiration Template



Sample

Prewriting:

I went on to create the PowerPoint Slides for Phase 2 where the students add to their drawing and prewriting with the help of simple PowerPoint prompts in the lesson titled, The Plan. I simply wanted the PowerPoint to act as an aide in my lesson as I instructed the children to add more ideas to their pre-write. I kept the slides simple so the student's focus would remain on their story.



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The Digital Anthology:

The final portion that I implemented during this course was the creation of a Digital Anthology. Teaching in a year round school gave me the opportunity to try this project with my students as an end of the year writing celebration. I began this process by creating a template for the students to manipulate. The template was complete with action buttons that helped the listener navigate the Digital Anthology when it was complete. The students used the template to add their story title, author name, chose colored backgrounds, and insert a drawing that they created. In my TechQuest solution I mention using KidPix to create the illustrations for the stories. This however was not possible due to the fact that we couldn't get access to the computer lab. This was a disappointing bump in the road but it was only a quick detour. Instead of using KidPix I had the children choose any medium to create a drawing for their story. Most chose to do crayon or marker drawings while one boy chose to make a collage Eric Carle style. After the illustrations were created I was able to take a photo of them using my digital camera. I then uploaded the photos and the students inserted them into their slides. This is something I may revise when implementing the TechQuest next year. If the art teacher will team with me I would love to have her help the students create a piece of art to use as their illustration. I was surprised at how smoothly all of this went with first graders. Many of them did not know how to use PowerPoint until I showed them for this project and they did a fantastic job!

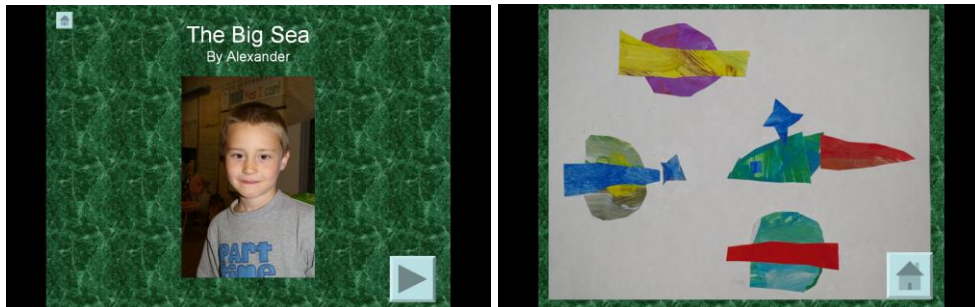
Once the slides were completed I put them all into one PowerPoint presentation. I created an opening slide that listed each of their names. Their names were hyperlinked to the slides they created and with the click of the mouse you were taken to that author's story.

The next bump in the road came when it was time to record the children's voices on their slides. I knew how to do the audio recording, but I had to be with the class teaching lessons. Parent volunteers came in to help. Some parents were tech savvy and others were not. It took a lot longer than anticipated to finish the recordings. In the end it was all worth it. The students, parents, staff, principal and I were all delighted with the outcome! Each student was able to take a copy of the anthology home to share with their friends and families. They were so incredibly proud of the stories they had written and their hard work that all the bumps in the road and time spent was well worth the effort.

My students took writing more serious than ever before once they learned how they were going to digitally publish their stories. I saw beautiful thoughts and detailed sentences coming from my first graders. Next school year I look forward to implementing the TechQuest in its entirety and hopefully convincing my first grade team to all take part in this quest for improving our children's writing using technology!



Title Slide for Digital Anthology



Sample student created slides for title and story.

Internet Research for TechQuest Project

The results of my search:

My research began from watching television with my 3 year old niece. We were watching Dora the Explorer. I could see how excited she was to follow Dora's map to get to the end of the adventure. The map allowed her to see where they have been and where they are headed.

I began thinking that this may be one of the problems with the writing process. It is such a big undertaking that it is difficult to see where you have been and where you are headed... unless you have a map! This is where the analogy and treasure map idea was formed.

I took my idea and headed to the search engines to make the idea come to life. I first visited the [Dora the Explorer Website](#). Dora is all about learning through adventure. They break the concept down into small steps that a child can wrap their head around. This was the direction I wanted to go with my TechQuest.

I then started researching how others have used technology in writing lessons. At a web page titled [The Digital Camera in Education](#) by Dr. Terence Cavanaugh & Dr. Catherine Cavanaugh I found a list of ways to use a digital camera in the classroom. One of the suggestions was to use a photo as a prompt for narrative or descriptive writing. I decided this was a great way to get students to notice their body language (face, arms, hands, legs... whole body!) and add it to their writing for style and voice.

I also found a site that explained some of the benefits of using an interactive whiteboard in the classroom titled Using Electronic Whiteboards in Your Classroom: Benefits. From that site you can link to a full text article written by Dr. Mary Ann Bell about the interactive whiteboard.

Prior to this course I didn't know much about digital storytelling. I found very useful definitions that helped spark my thinking at the Center for Digital Storytelling.

In my research on Digital Storytelling I came across the article, Introduction to Electronic Publishing: Planning Lessons: An Elementary and Secondary Teacher Share the Strategies That Work by Gayle Berthiaume and Michelle Bourgeois. They had great ideas on how to digitally publish children's stories. They suggest using KidPix as the illustration software. My school has access to KidPix so I thought that would be a great resource! I used what they suggested and tailored it to my own classroom needs. My first graders LOVE anthology books so I decided to go the route of a digital anthology containing stories from everyone in the class.

I also came across the website, Everybody has a Story to Tell: Digital Storytelling put out by Innovative Teaching Concepts. There were great examples of digital stories. The website lists applications to use and even provide downloads. After my students conquer a digital anthology with PowerPoint, I would love to introduce turning them into more movie like stories using Microsoft PhotoStory 3, an application I found at the previously listed website. I had a chance to play with the software and as I become more comfortable with it I would like to implement its use in the classroom.

What I Learned About Searches:

I learned that there are multiple search engines to use. I used Bing, Google, and Ask.com. I used many different phrases when searching. They turned up totally different results. "Writing in the first grade classroom", "Technology in the first grade classroom", "Using technology to teach writing", "digital storytelling", "digital cameras in education", "using PowerPoint with first grade".

Some of the searches turned up great results. Some of them failed to give me information that was useful to me project.

I also found that links within helpful pages proved to be helpful as well! Once I found a good page it seemed that the pages they suggested were also useful.

I learned that there are many ways to go about digital story telling. There are so many that you could have a different treasure at the end of the map each time! It keeps it new and exciting for the children and teacher.

Other Relevant Internet Resources:

1. Links to You Tube Videos within the Phases
2. Digital Story Teller - This website explains what a digital story teller is. This is what my students will be doing through their Digital Anthology.
3. Using digital camera's in the classroom - This teacher used a camera for writing. His project is much different from mine, but I was able to take what he used and change it to suit my needs.
4. Interactive White Board - This site tells some of the benefits of using the interactive white board with students.
5. Stories Going Digital - The Lesson laid out here is not exactly like mine. She talks about a few ways her kids make their stories into digital presentations. I wanted to have my students read their story into the computer so they could hear themselves reading it out loud. There are great ideas on this site that I would try in a different lesson, or for a different "treasure" at the end of a unit.
6. TimTim – This website has numerous drawings for free.

Project Evaluation

Given what I learned from this TechQuest, next time I approach a project of this type I would tackle my research a little differently. It was difficult to know where to begin so I just started searching how others used technology for my similar dilemma. I didn't find those searches to be particularly useful. I found it much more useful to start thinking about what I already had available to me as far as resources at my school. As I researched those resources and ways to use them, I discovered other programs, often free downloads, people used for similar projects such as Microsoft Photo Story 3.

Grants are available, but if your problem can be solved using what you already have then go for it! I learned a lot more about the resources my school has ready and waiting for teachers to use such as Kidspiration through this project. Your school may already have what you are seeking. If not seek out a grant.

If I were to do this same project again, I would add an element in phase 2 for students to record their voices as they talk about their story in a prewriting setting. I was inspired by fellow group member Dina Matasovsky's research and TechQuest project. She is implementing a Recording Studio into her classroom. I endeavor to do the same in my classroom through writing a grant for digital recorders as she mentions in her paper.

I would also add more mini lessons to Phase 4:Revising. There are so many different things you can do to a story to add style and voice. It would be useful for teachers to have a stock pile of revision mini lessons at hand to choose from.