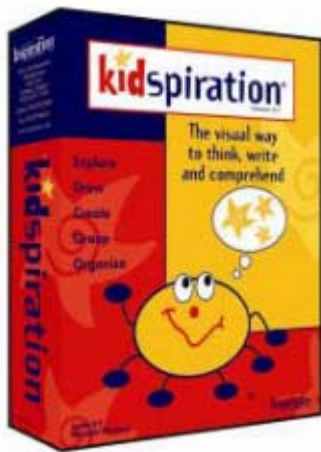


Teacher Uses Visual Learning to Plan and Organize Technology Project



Third graders planning and executing their own podcast? It may seem like an overwhelming task for such a young group of students, but for Judy Ezra, third grade teacher at St. Andrews Priory School, an all-girl day school in Honolulu, Hawaii, the project was not only accomplished, it was a huge success. Ezra, winner of the Inspired Teacher Scholarship Best Project Award for Kidspiration®, credits the important role Kidspiration played in helping students plan and organize the project. Ezra's students are no strangers to Kidspiration; her classroom is a frequent user of the elementary school's two laptop carts loaded with the visual learning software.

Visualizing small steps leads to easier completion

Following a nine-week study of Ancient Egypt, Ezra's students were enthusiastic about sharing what they learned with their families. As a class, students decided to create a podcast—or

“Paw-dcast” in honor of the school's lion-oriented mascot, the Priory Pride—as an exciting way to demonstrate their new knowledge. Since students were unfamiliar with all the work it would take to create a podcast, Ezra used Kidspiration to demonstrate the various steps involved in planning and production. At first, students were daunted by the complexity of the project, but once they could see each segment outlined in Kidspiration and realized that they would be working together to complete each one, their anxiety was relieved.

The first task was to decide what topics to cover in the podcast. Nine weeks of study gave the students a lot of material to consider, and a whole-class brainstorming exercise in Kidspiration captured students' ideas. The class then voted to create a podcast on mummies—a subject of particular interest to many of the students. The class then used Kidspiration to brainstorm which specific topics to include as segments in the podcast, choosing items such as vocabulary word definitions, an interview with King Tut, a commercial describing embalming, plus poetry, jokes and other interesting information about mummies.

Students broke up into pairs and used Kidspiration to brainstorm their assigned segment and decide how much time they would need and what exactly they would say. After students reconvened as a class to share what they had planned for their topic, Kidspiration was used to place the segments in order.

The final steps of the project—recording the students and compiling the recordings into a comprehensive podcast—were completed with the help of the school's technology coordinators. The project was shared with the students' families and school administrators, who were all impressed with the work accomplished by the young students.

According to Ezra, Kidspiration helped students plan and visualize exactly what needed to be done and check off completed steps as they were accomplished. “Kidspiration is a great tool to teach students planning and time management skills,” says Ezra. “Technology projects, like this podcast, do take a lot of time, but with careful planning, and the use of the Kidspiration web, we can show students how to take one bite of a project at a time until the entire project gets done.”