



Ten Cool Ways to Use MS Word in Your Classroom

Folwell Dunbar, from *Educators' eZine*

<http://techlearning.com/story/showArticle.php?articleID=196604183>

I love MS Word. It's one of the few programs that have actually changed the way I teach. The following are the top 10 ways I use this powerful software in the classroom.

Note: Word offers excellent help when you need to learn a new skill or review an old skill. And you don't even have to go to the Help pull-down menu. Instead, simply press the "F1" function key on your keyboard and a search box will appear — along with the friendly "Mr. Paper Clip" assistant. Type the appropriate search term into the search box and be prepared to read some easy-to-follow explanations. Soon you will feel like a real computer pro. Oh, and do remember to put Mr. Paper Clip to sleep when you're done. Just right-click on him and select "Hide." He'll need the rest.

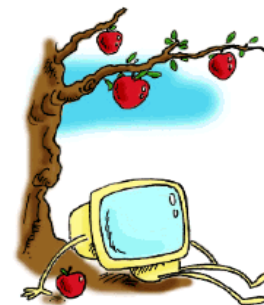
- Compose **original work**. Brochures, newsletters, illustrated stories, and editorials: You name it . . . you can create it with Microsoft Word. Print and publish final drafts or post them to your school's Web site.
- Insert **comments** and communicate with your students electronically. During the drafting and revising phases of the writing process, provide feedback to your young authors or colleagues without wasting a drop of ink or a single sheet of paper.
- Check **readability**. Scan or download an article, save it as a Word document, and then check the Flesch-Kincaid readability level. Make sure it's appropriate for your kids and/or challenge your students by allowing them to check their own writing.
- Eliminate **busywork**. Use Mail-Merge, Find and Replace, Send To, the Formatting Paintbrush, Style templates, and more to update old documents, consolidate looks, replicate

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ten Cool ways to Use MS Word In your classroom	1
Read All About It	1
Technology Tips	2
E-Portfolios are the wave the Future	3

lessons, and better reach target audiences. Save time, energy, and trees; as they say, "work smarter not harder!"

- **Track Changes**. As we all know, writing evolves. Show your students how their work changes throughout the writing process. From rough draft to final product, in portfolios or on the wall, see how collaboration and hard work pay off.
- **Reformat** documents. Change fonts and margins, delete and/or add images and text. Customize documents to better meet individual and group learner needs.
- Support **language and mechanics** instruction. When working with students, change, save, and protect spelling and grammar options. Give peer editors and author's tools selectively depending on the purpose of the activity.
- Spice up documents by inserting attention-grabbing **graphics**. Include tables, visual organizers, images, spreadsheets, AutoShapes, animated objects, symbols, and more. Like an advertiser, get your meaning across, whatever it takes.
- Make your documents **interactive**. Insert hyperlinks to Web sites, multimedia presentations, and other documents, and/or use links to navigate within the original piece.
- Build your own **Web page**. Save your Word documents as .html files and eliminate the need to buy and learn Web authoring software.



Read All About It

Harry Grove Tuttle, from *Technology & Learning*

<http://www.techlearning.com/showArticle.php?articleID=196604155>

Motivate your students with these exercises.

Educators at elementary levels will find that integrating digital tools and resources — many commonly used by students in their "out of school" lives — can be a springboard to creativity and new skills. Following are ideas for how word processors, search tools, and visual literacy Web sites can contribute.

Elementary

- Students can practice their reading strategy of sequencing by looking at four or more pictures in a sequence from Flickr. Next, they look at the word processing document that their teacher prepared in which the sentences are not in the correct sequence. The students rearrange the sentences to depict the actual sequence from the pictures by moving the sentences around in the word processing document. In a future activity, they do the sequencing without the visual prompt.
- Teachers can show students a Flickr or Google picture that focuses on a topic and have each student list all the topical vocabulary in the picture. Students look at a restaurant picture and list all the words about food. In groups of two or three, the students share their lists to increase the reading vocabulary of all the students. They organize their words into categories such as food, adjectives describing foods, and what is used to serve or eat food. The teachers then give them a passage about a restaurant to read.
- Elementary teachers might prepare their students to answer the question words (who, what, where, and when) by showing them an Internet picture on the whiteboard. The students circle the visual clue on the whiteboard that answers each of the questions. The teacher verifies that all students can answer these question words for the picture. Then the students look at a written passage and circle the words that answer the four question words for that passage.
- To help students focus on details in their reading, teachers may find a Google or Flickr picture and then write statements about it. Some of the statements are true and some are false. The students look at the picture and then read the statements. If the students indicate that a statement is false, they circle the part of the statement that is incorrect. A variation is for the teacher to write a passage based on a specific picture. The teacher takes four slightly different pictures of a city corner, such as pictures taken one minute apart. The students read the passage and then look at four similar pictures to pick the one being described. Often the students will have to reread the passage to find the details to be able to identify the correct picture
- Students can overcome the difficulty of finding the answer to a question about a passage. They go up to the passage being displayed on the whiteboard, underline the critical words in the question, and then underline the same words found in the text. A student underlines the critical words in the question, "Where did Bob study for the test?" and then searches for the same words in the passage. She finds "Bob studied for the test in the kitchen before he ate supper," and so she under lines the critical words Bob, studied, and test. She easily answers the "where" part of the question. Students see how words in a question can literally be in the passage or the words can be inferred through other words.
- Another exercise is to have students from two distant classes demonstrate their reading comprehension by using

videoconferencing. Students read the same story and then groups of students create a literary frieze. In a frieze, students position their bodies and use facial expressions to show what is happening in a scene and the emotions in the scene; there is no movement and no talking. As the group from one school does a frieze, the other school tries to identify the part of the story, what characters are in the part, and what emotions are being shown. The frieze students verify if the other class is correct. Then the other class presents a frieze about another part of the story.



Technology Tips

The IT Guy

<http://www.techlearning.com/itguy/>

Installing Shareware and Freeware



Question: Why does our school network administrator not want us to install extra software?

The IT Guy says:

Every time you install new software on your computer, you increase the chances of a crash or hang-up caused by a software conflict. Many people write

software who are not professionally trained or certified, and much of this software is circulated via the internet as shareware or freeware. Some of this software is excellent, but sometimes the creator is not savvy enough to create a program that does not interfere with others. Network administrators sometimes discourage users from installing new programs because the results can be unpredictable. Especially on a school or work computer that you rely on for day to day work, it is usually NOT a good idea to install extra programs that you haven't checked on with your network administrator. These can even include screensavers. Not only can these downloaded programs contain viruses or other 'bugs' that accidentally or intentionally causes problems with other programs on your computer, but they can also slow down the overall performance of your computer. Windows 2000, XP, and Macintosh OS X allow users to configure different types of accounts for different users, to prevent unwanted software installations. You can configure classroom or home computers this way too, so students can use software programs that are already installed but cannot install new ones.

E-portfolios are the wave of the future.

Harry Grover Tuttle

<http://techlearning.com/story/showArticle.php?articleID=196604246>



Digital-Age Assessment

Effective 21st century assessment reaches beyond traditional testing to look at the broader accomplishments of learners. Assembling an *e-portfolio*, or electronic portfolio, is an excellent method for assessing students' progress toward school, state, or national academic standards, as well as 21st century skills. An electronic portfolio is a purposefully limited collection of student selected work over time that documents progress toward meeting the standards. Work may be collected over a semester, a year, or even several years, passing from one grade level and teacher to the next. E-portfolios reflect more in-depth, more comprehensive, and better thought-out evidence of student learning than on-demand tests. For instance, a student's three-hour state benchmark essay offers the feedback of a 5/6 score, while an e-portfolio allows students to document the many aspects of their essay writing improvement over the course of a year.

Jeremy Ferrara
Block 2 > Content Knowledge

Block One Reading Chart

Summary
This was originally from my Block One Portfolio, and I added some new activities on after my time in Block Two.

Artifacts

Supporting Evidence

Strategies for the four main components of reading

GETTING STARTED

Educators can begin by showing the students sample e-portfolios so they understand the overall format and the richness of artifacts—digitally produced homework, class work, and projects—that can be put into it. A common e-portfolio format includes a title page; a standards' grid; a space for each individual standard with accompanying artifacts and information on how each artifact addresses the standard; an area for the student's overall reflection on the standard; and a teacher formative feedback section for each standard. Within the e-portfolio, the evidence of student learning may be in diverse formats such as Web pages, e-movies, visuals, audio recordings, and text. Elementary students might explain the biology standard through e-movies of plant experiments and

explain their cultural art to another class via a recorded videoconference. Middle school students might demonstrate their understanding of community by posting interviews to a Web site, or for P.E., display their understanding of life-long fitness through a spreadsheet of their wellness activities. High school students might document their comprehension of negative numbers through digital pictures or record a radio show where they role-play the parts of authors discussing common book themes for a humanities class.

STORING ARTIFACTS

Students need to be able to store all their digital artifacts in one location such as on the network, on a flash drive, or on their class laptop. The ideal scenario is to store them in multiple locations and archived on a CD or DVD. Some teachers have students store their artifacts within a digital folder labeled for the standard such as IUnderstand. Others have students save each artifact with the number for the standard such as 3Comparetwo poems.doc. Students spend more time in thinking about the artifacts and less time in trying to figure out what the file contains if the artifact file name is very descriptive.

THE PROCESS

Another advantage to e-portfolios is that they encourage self-guided learning. Students take the lead in selecting appropriate artifacts for a given standard and explaining how these exemplify the standard's requirements. Next, they write a reflection, learning that it is not the rewording of the standard or a description of the learning experience, but rather a statement of what they did not know beforehand, what they learned during the creation process, and what they have yet to learn.

TOOLS

Educators can select from many possible tools to create e-portfolios. Some use commercial software specifically designed for e-portfolios such as Live Text, Grady Profile, Scholastic Electronic Portfolio, and Sunburst Learner Profile; others use noncommercial software such as Open Source Portfolio. Another avenue is to create e-portfolios from generic software such as word processors, an Adobe Acrobat PDF file, Web pages, multimedia tools, or blogging. Students feel most comfortable with these generic e-portfolio software programs when the instructor provides a high degree of structure through a template.

ASSEMBLING THE PORTFOLIO

Using the template as a guide, students choose which of their artifacts will go in the final e-portfolio. Because they already know how to word process, they will find it easy to add all the germane parts of their projects into one long document. For example, science students open up a word processed lab report which they've saved, copy the part that illustrates a particular standard, and then paste that portion of the report into the appropriate location under the Standards section of the template. In addition, they may put in any other already created digital artifacts such as images, movies, or sound. The

only new work they have to do for the e-portfolio is to write their reflections for each standard.

BLOG E-PORTFOLIOS

Many word processed e-portfolios are predominantly text-based with a few images, and these can be saved as PDFs to maintain all of the e-portfolio's formatting, such as alignment and font size. In a blog e-portfolio, students create an individual blog entry and give it a name, such as Standard 2. Students enter the e-portfolio parts in reverse order so that the title page is the most recent entry and, therefore, at the top of the blog listing. The reviewer can click on the listing of previous blog entries to see each component. Artifacts can be in the form of text, image, video, or other digital content. Teachers provide a template that each student can copy into the blog since the teacher cannot format each student's blog.

POWERPOINT E-PORTFOLIOS

For students already comfortable creating multimedia presentations, assembling a PowerPoint e-portfolio is not difficult. Each slide may reflect one component of a standard and therefore a single standard may comprise five or more slides. Students can link pages together to help reviewers navigate. However, PowerPoint is not a good vehicle for long text passages such as an essay. When students use Web pages, they create a page for each standard or a page for each part of the standard. They can link from standard to the supporting

EDUCATOR FEEDBACK IN E-PORTFOLIOS		
English Standard	Teacher Rating(s)	Teacher Comment
1. Understanding and Information		
A report based on a graph	5	You understood the graph and could apply it to the problem. Use more details from the graph to prove our point.
An analysis of a speech	5	Bob, you showed that you can listen and get the main idea from a speech. You did miss the difference between what she has actually done and what she says she will do.
2. Personal Response		
A poem	6	Your poem has a central metaphor. The tone, sound patterns, and images all support that metaphor.
A short story	6	Bob, your story started strong and kept my interest. Your twist ending added to your story's message.

An e-portfolio should include areas where educators can rate student progress and provide helpful feedback.

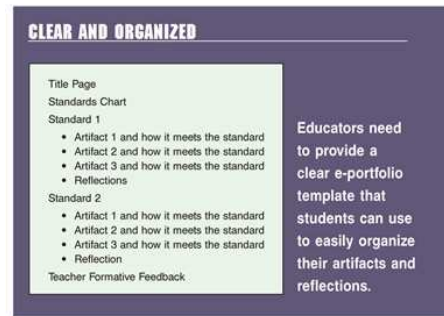
THE DOWNSIDE

A disadvantage of these generic software e-portfolios, however, is that there is no management aspect—a teacher cannot compare how well all students have done on a certain standard without manually checking each e-portfolio. Therefore, program evaluation becomes very time-consuming. Also, these student e-portfolios are not cumulative from year to year, so teachers cannot see a growth on the standards over several years in a single e-portfolio. In addition, students who do not understand the mechanics of resizing photographs and other images for their e-portfolios can create files that are too memory intensive for transfer. Furthermore, generic software, unlike many other e-portfolio packages, does not contain an archival space for the students' artifacts.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

E-portfolios support 21st century skills in a variety of ways. Self-assessment becomes a regular part of learning as students frequently select or re-evaluate which of their work is the best evidence of their skills and strive to create even better evidence in their future assignments. Formative assessment

also plays a key role through regular teacher feedback. He or she might comment that a student did a great in-depth explanation on a part of the standard but still needs to address the whole standard in a more comprehensive fashion. Or a teacher may note that the student's critical contrast of two literary works would have been more analytical if the student had contrasted the theme for both novels in the same paragraph.



As we continue to move more deeply into the digital age and increasingly ask students to create and innovate, the e-portfolio is likely to all but replace high stakes and other traditional testing as a method of authentic evaluation.

TEN TIPS

Creating an Electronic Portfolio

1. State and explain the specific standards and the subparts of each standard that will be evaluated in the e-portfolio.
2. Tell how the e-portfolio will be assessed and by whom. Share the assessment rubric with students and let them know whether the teacher, a team, or a group of experts will assess the e-portfolio.
3. Model several e-portfolios for the students so they understand the e-portfolio's purpose and general format.
4. Provide a detailed e-portfolio template for the students so they understand what is required for each part of the e-portfolio.
5. Label each class assignment, homework assignment, and project with the appropriate standard; therefore, the students can quickly identify all of the possible artifacts for a particular standard.
6. Provide network and other storage for the students' digital artifacts to facilitate frequent archiving.
7. Model how to select an artifact for the e-portfolio based on how well the artifact reflects the standard.
8. Model a reflection on a standard so that students show their growth in the standard.
9. Include regularly scheduled e-portfolio days in which the students archive artifacts, decide which artifacts best support the standards, assemble their e-portfolios, write their reflections, and, possibly, present it. Some teachers schedule e-portfolio days every 5 weeks, and others do it every 10 weeks.
10. Have an e-portfolio review and provide each student with an assessment of the e-portfolio.