

Teachers Want to Know

October 2010

A tip sheet for teachers to improve teaching and learning through use of Ministry licensed software and web services

Ministry Licensed Software

The question:

How can I use Ministry licensed software and web services to improve my teaching and learning and the learning and achievement of my students?

The answer:

Use Ministry licensed software to:

1. plan for a variety of instructional approaches
2. teach in the digital world
3. engage learners
4. reach all students
5. build professional knowledge

1. PLAN FOR A VARIETY OF INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES

Use different software types for different approaches. For example:

- Plan exploration, review and mastery learning activities using Math and Science Gizmos, Froguts, Grolier On-line, Naxos Music Library, and Career Cruising. Review the content and find the best application of the content to support learning.
- Support student/teacher creativity using MS Publisher, Pixie 2, Bitstrips for Schools, Frames 4, Comic Life, Adobe Photoshop Elements, Adobe Premiere Elements, AutoCad LT, The Canadian Clip Art Collection. Teachers and students can consult a variety of

Get Started Guides and on-line tutorials and videos available from most vendors' web sites and from the OSAPAC repository.

- Utilize web services for streamed audio/visual materials such as Learn360, Naxos Music Library, NFB Screening Room. These streamed services require a review of the content to plan the best application of the content to support learning.
- Communicate and share on-line with products such as Turnitin, Adobe Connect, First Class, Bitstrips for Schools, Naxos music library on-line playlists, Learn360 playlists and blogs. URLs, log ons and passwords are available through O.E.S.S. representatives.

Access to Ministry Licensed Software and Web Subscriptions is provided to your site Ontario Educational Software Service (O.E.S.S.) contact. Don't know who that is?



Go to the OESS website and click the Contact Search link at the left. Enter one word from your site (board, faculty etc.) name. You will locate the individual who can help you with access to the web services and software.

Available Software and Web Services

To see what is available for your classroom, go to the Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee (OSAPAC) web site www.osapac.org and click on the Software/Resources Search tab. Software is listed from the most recently licensed.

2. TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Licensed software and web services provide opportunities for student exploration and individualized learning that do not exist without the use of technology.

Students are immersed in a digital world and with teacher guidance can use the digital environment to support their learning inside and outside the classroom.

Many students benefit the most by working with a learning partner to discuss the activity, problem solve together and develop lifelong skills such as collaboration, team work and respect. This model allows teachers to be freed up to work with small groups to provide advice and support

3. ENGAGING LEARNERS

“An important feature of computer-based technology, and possible advantage if used appropriately, is that it allows for the presentation of multimedia instructional messages (Mayer, 2001, 2009) – that is, instructional messages consisting of words (such as spoken or printed words) and pictures (such as animation, video, illustrations, or photos). Computer-based technology also allows for levels of

interactivity, computational power, graphic rendering and information retrieval that may not otherwise be feasible.”

(Learning with technology, Richard E. Mayer, University of California, Santa Barbara. The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice © OECD 2010)

Licensed software facilitates differentiating with respect to the student’s readiness, interests and learning preferences.

Audio narrations and dynamic animations appeal to multiple learning styles and help students focus their attention. Students can work at their own pace, with the option of being able to go backward and review when they don’t understand.

Enriching and extending activities to differentiate instruction for disengaged and bored students is possible with digital tools that encourage student creativity and collaboration.

Students who have an interest in computer-based technology could:

- learn the key features of a particular software and provide a demonstration for teachers and students
- view online product tutorials and provide a review and effectiveness rating
- develop strategies to communicate their findings within their schools and school board.

4. REACHING ALL STUDENTS

Licensed software can usually be installed on all educational site computers and usually has take home rights for teachers. WordQ, word prediction software in English and French, which has been licensed in fall 2010 is available not only for installation on all site computers but can be installed on student and teacher home machines as well. This software can

be an excellent resource for ELL and early writers in English, French and FSL. Other software titles that can help students with special needs are Clicker 5, Smart Ideas, and Dragon Naturally Speaking. When the software is installed on all school machines, it helps all students and does not focus on students with special needs.

There are twelve web services currently licensed by OSAPAC that provide access to resources for teachers and students from home and school: Career Cruising, Grolier On-line, Universalis, Passport to the Internet, Learn360, Naxos music library, Turnitin 2, Mathville 1, Mathematics and Science Gizmos, Bitstrips for Schools, National Film Board, and ESRI on-line training for Arcview.

5. BUILDING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Teachers report that explorations with Science Gizmos have increased their own scientific knowledge and given them more confidence in teaching a wide range of science concepts through manipulation of the science Gizmos’ built in variable parameters. Data from Gizmos graphs can be exported and extended in spreadsheets to further build student awareness of scientific outcomes.

The wide range of music available on-line through naxosmusiclibrary.com allows music teachers easy access to catalogues of music and playlists at no cost that would be impossible to find elsewhere. Playlists can be

shared with other teachers to build professional knowledge.

Learn360 streamed video also provides playlist features and blogging tools that allow teachers to share their knowledge with other teachers and students.

Can your school or board provide sessions where mentors who know and use the products share their strategies and successes?

Demonstrations by champions of computer based technology can provide teachers with strategies to improve communication, manage their time and extend their reach beyond the classroom and school day.

Adobe Connect provides an opportunity for teachers to attend learning sessions on-line and saves travel time and dollars. Adobe Connect sessions can be recorded to allow teachers who cannot attend to view them on-line when they wish.

Many teachers are collaborating with their peers on using Web 2.0 technologies in the classroom to enhance student and teacher creativity and collaboration. As teachers have become more aware of the digital world that students inhabit, appropriate use and safety concerns have become an issue. Passport to the Internet was licensed as a web support to provide students with the opportunity to explore these issues with their teachers in a safe, but realistic, simulated social networking environment.

Thanks to the 11 OSAPAC members who maintain the software selection process and web site, and the 179 OESS representatives who order and deliver licensed software media and URLs, log ons and passwords to their technical staff, teachers and students.

