Descriptive Writing;
Traditional Writing
vs.
Collaborative Writing
on the SMART Board.

Smarttech.com

K-6 Students with Moderate – Severe Disabilities

Sample Screen-Shots From This Activity:

Move topic left (Shift+Left Arrow)

I. **It is a hurricane.**
   A. **Katrina**
   B. **It is a big hurricane**
II. **The storm is big**
   A. **The houses are small compared to the hurricane.**
III. **The water is going to tear up the houses.**
   A. **The water can flood the houses.**
IV. **It is going to rain.**
   A. **It looks cloudy**
   B. **It is going to rain because there are black clouds.**

V. **It is strong.**

Diagram Topic Subtopic Left Right Note Hyperlink Spell Transfer

▼ **The picture is pretend.**
▼   I. **Jets are too fast.**
     A. **The jets go too fast to see.**
   II. **The water looks like a tornado.**
     A. **The water looks fake**
▼   III. **You cannot ski with a jet.**
     A. **The man is not skiing on the water.**
▼   IV. **The jet doesn't have a hook for the rope to hold on.**

     A. **The guy couldn't hold on.**

The Author

I am a special education teacher in a low-mild to severe disabilities special education classroom of Kindergartener through Sixth-Graders. I am currently in my fourth year as a classroom teacher at Frontier Elementary.   Prior to this position, I worked briefly as a Behavior Consultant in another school district and before that, while still a student at Purdue University, I started my own business, privately consulting with families with young children on the autism spectrum, which I did for about four years. In addition to my classroom teaching position, I lead our school's Universal Design for Learning team, am part of our autism team (Frontier United Support for Autism), Student Support Team, Corporation Technology Committee, and Crisis Team. I am also a graduate student at Purdue University completing my Master's Degree in Special Education; Applied Behavioral Analysis and Instructional Technology.   I would estimate that my experience with & knowledge of technology is more than our average teacher, but not beyond the grasp of most people. For the most part, I am self-taught when it comes to computer literacy.

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Introduction to This Lesson

This lesson-concept is an on-going attempt to utilize four non-traditional components in order to get students with moderate-severe disabilities to produce organized descriptive writing:

- **Group collaboration and peer modeling**
- **Inspiration Software**
- **SmartBoard Interaction**
- **Co-Writer Software**

The traditional descriptive writing lesson tends to consist of individual student efforts following a brief introduction by the teacher, who then makes his/her way around the classroom attempting to provide individual assistance.   Additionally, it tends to consist of paper/pencil output and only auditory input.

This ULD - version dramatically improves all of the "problems" with the traditional methodology for this student population and adds several other benefits including motivation, self-esteem, computer/technology skills and most importantly access to the curriculum.

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~Targeted~
Indiana Academic
State Standards

Language Arts
K.1.5, K.1.9, K.1.11, K.1.15, K.1.18, K.4.4, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.1.10, K.4.1, K.5.1, K.4.3, 2.1.2, 2.1.3
3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.7, 3.4.8

*Several more standards are also met with this lesson, however, the above were the standards indicators that I specifically targeted and collected IEP-Objective Data on.

*One of the ***greatest things*** about this lesson is its flexibility and the ease with which it can be modified in order to meet more/different objectives. The ability to apply a single lesson to learners across 6 grade levels and 8 ability levels simultaneously is rare, but can be very beneficial.

More information on the Indiana Academic State Standards:

www.indianastandards.org

www.edStandards.org/Standards.html

www.mcrel.org/standards/

www.doe.state.in.us/standards/

National Educational Technology Standards
http://www.cnets.iste.org

Planning Pyramid

What Should Students Know?

Some students will, when asked to report in writing on a topic, be able to identify verbally a topic of interest, locate a visual writing prompt dealing with that topic (internet, magazines, books), develop a topic sentence, 10 supporting sentences and a closing statement, no capitalization errors, using word prediction software, with no more than 1 additional prompt.

Some students will be able to independently use a graphic organizer (Kidspiration/Inspiration) software to develop and organize their ideas, followed by the transfer of this information into a standard word processing program, like Microsoft Word, for revision and final presentation.

Some students will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of spelling patterns, such as cut/cutting, slide/sliding), and decoding (sound out phonetically) regular words with more than one syllable (dinosaur, vacation) and distinguishing beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words; rhyming words; and clearly pronouncing blends and all vowel sounds.

Most students will, when asked to report in writing on a topic, be able to identify verbally a topic of interest, locate a visual writing prompt dealing with that topic (internet, magazines, books), develop a topic sentence, 1 supporting sentence and a closing statement.

Most students will be able to use a graphic organizer (Kidspiration/Inspiration) software to develop and organize their ideas with some instructor assistance and understand that they can then seek help to transfer this information to a standard word processing program, like Microsoft Word, for revision and final presentation.

Most students will able to write/type/dictate phonetically spelled words containing 3-5 letters, using each of the vowels, without consonant doubles and without prompts, such all vowels (a,e,i,o,u) are used, in the patterns CVC, CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC.

All students will, when given a visual writing prompt that may consist of a video clip or photograph, will verbally produce 3 ideas describing what he/she sees, without prompts AND verbally produce one full sentence.
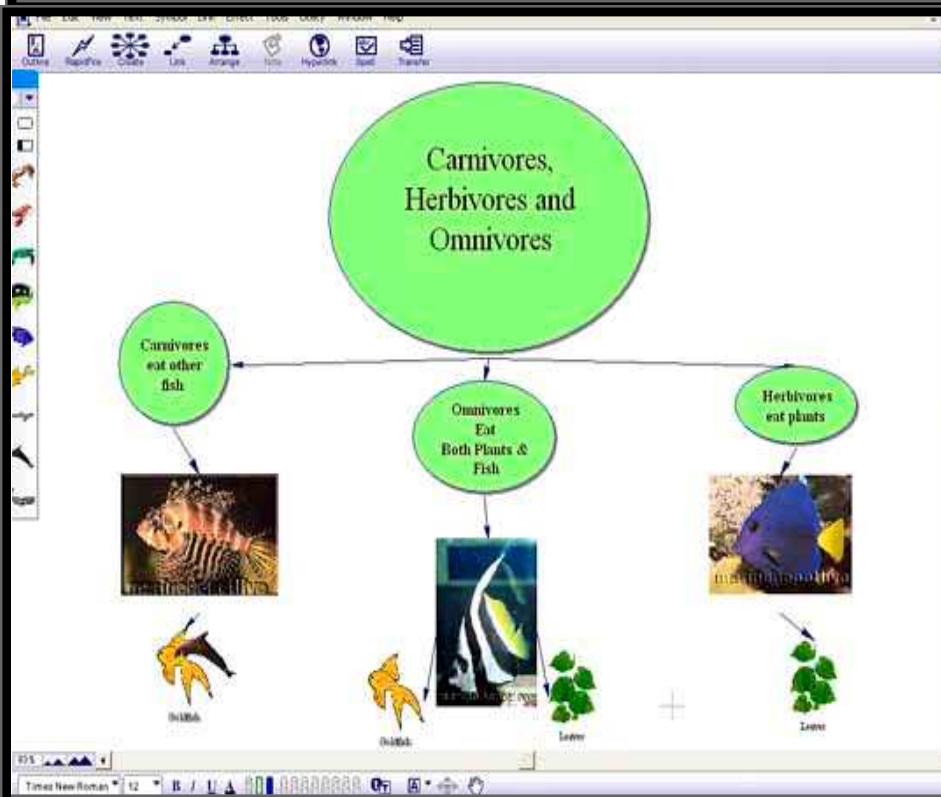
Teacher/Learner Library

Screen shots and brief descriptions of websites included in this lesson:
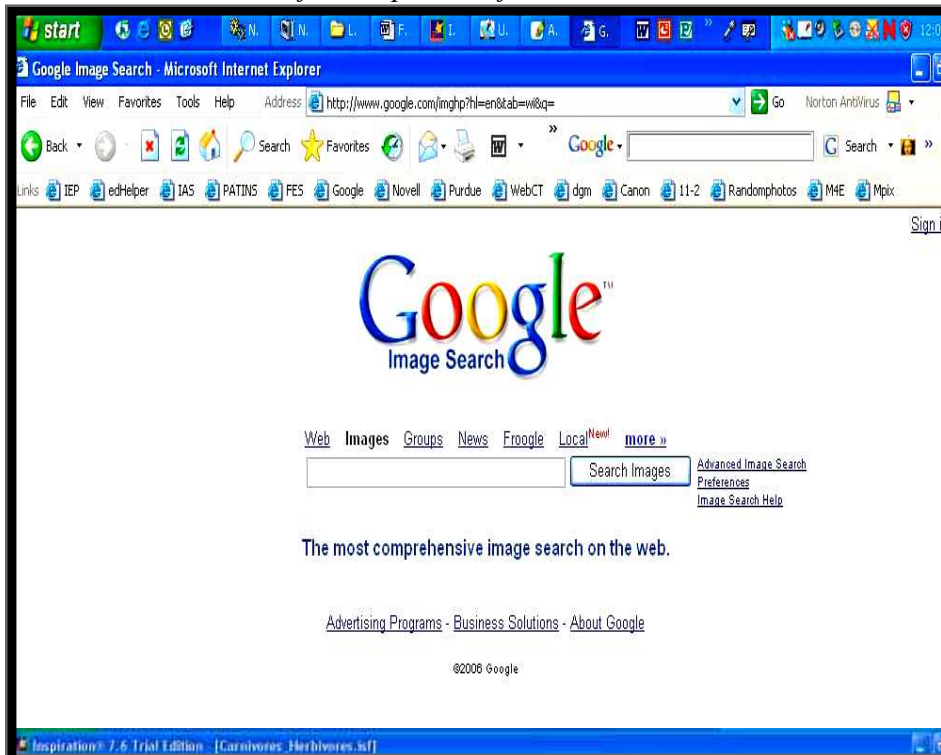
A Screen Shot 'Google Images.'

I've found that reluctant writers consistently perform better & are more motivated when included in the choice of choosing an image to serve as a writing prompt. Google Images is a fast & easy way to search for images. We teach to not use copyrighted images & to always credit the images we do use.
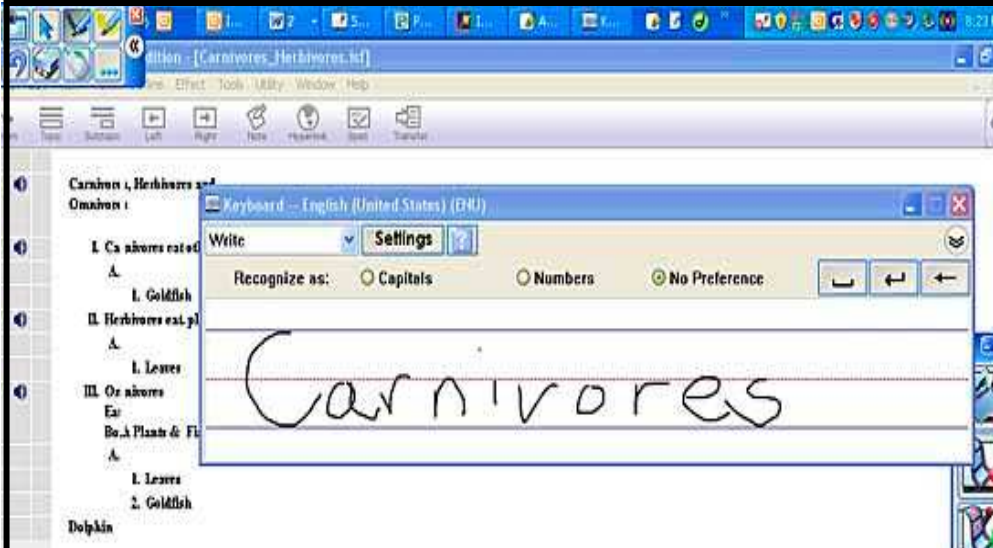
Google.com

A Screen Shot 'Carnivores, etc..'

Intermixing actual & familiar images (from our classroom tank), with traditional text explanations of the different diets, allowed even my most significantly delayed students to grasp this concept firmly.

Teacher/Learner Library *(continued)*

Screen shots and brief descriptions of websites included in this lesson:

A Screen Shot 'On-Screen Keyboard Use.'

Students exchange roles with the teacher to an extent. The students interact as a group and provide their ideas for the teacher and/or another student to write on the SMART Board in front of them using the on-screen keyboard. We target creative & descriptive complete thoughts, phonetic spelling, staying on topic and evaluating ideas.
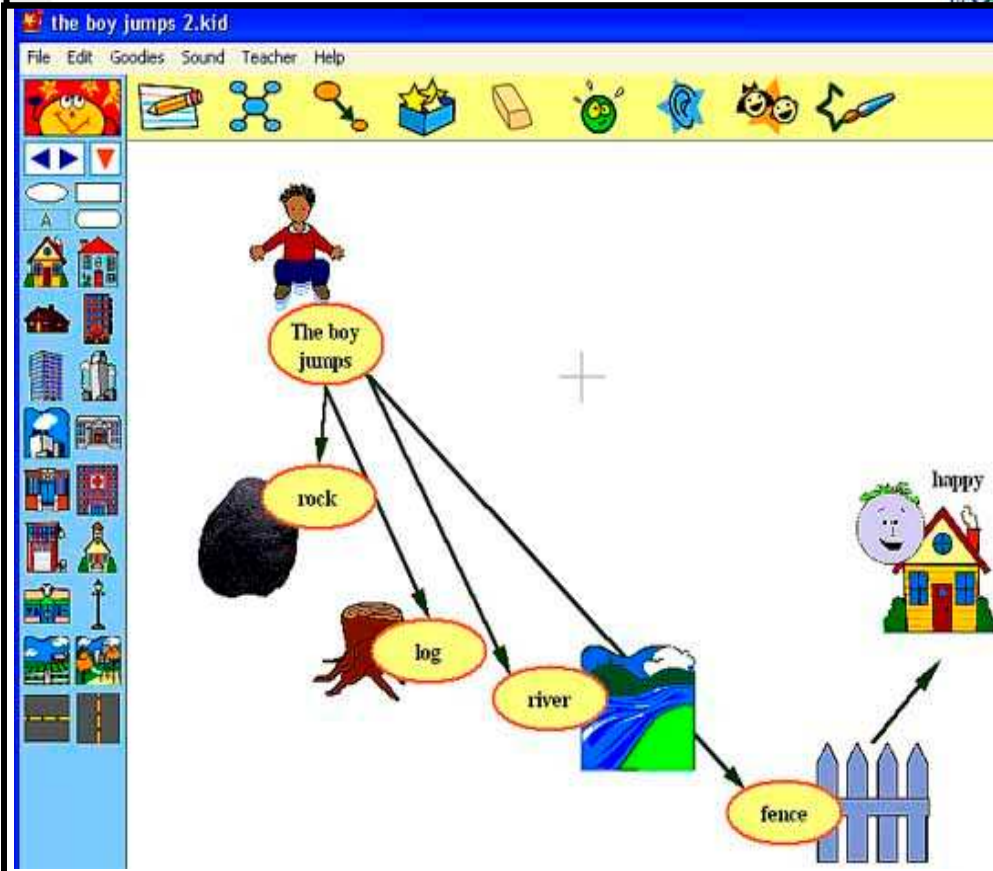
A Screen Shot 'Sequencing Story.'

A Screen Shot from a collaborative story based on sequencing from a prior story that had been read during another class period for comprehension work. This image shows the combination of text & images to portray the sequence of objects that our character (the boy) jumped over and where he ended up (home, happy:)

Additional Resources:

http://www.edcompass.smarttech.com,   http://www.smarttech.com   http://www.inspiration.com/

Assessment

Student knowledge is assessed in two ways:

1. Formal data collection; students receive one of three scores/trial from a staff member observing this lesson. ***Correct – Incorrect – Prompted.*** Each is given a numeric value and graphed. Over time, progress is visually apparent. This follows protocol for all of my students' IEP Goals/Benchmarks/Objectives.
   (Do they Know IT?)

2. Anecdotal notes. During and after this lesson, I collect anecdotal information on significant progress/problem areas as well as possibilities for expanding this lesson into more/different areas. *(Can they do it now AND can they apply it to other areas.)*

3. Additionally, my students OFTEN get the opportunity to demonstrate this cutting/edge lesson-style to other teachers both in our school and from other schools, their peers, their parents, etc. This is a tremendous self-esteem builder. This gives my students a chance to truly shine; something they rarely, if ever, have experienced in the past.

Modifications
Planning for Academic Diversity

~ Please See Next Page ~

LEARNING BARRIER	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	WEB LINK RESOURCES
Student cannot read at grade level	1. Text to Speech Software 2. Utilize Group-Learning Format to have better readers practice reading out-loud 3. The instructor writes using the on-screen keyboard, based on students' ideas & verbal output. The students instruct the teacher in this sense; "I want to say___," "Move that idea under the second one." …etc.	http://www.readplease.com/
Student has difficulty comprehending the material	1.Utilize Inspiration Software to graphically organize written material & the SmartBoard to create a large, visual, interactive process to the traditional task of descriptive writing. 2. Utilize the many visual representations available from the websites, from the Notebook Gallery, from custom-created Galleries.	http://www.inspiration.com/ http://www.edcompass.smarttech.com
Student has difficulty mastering the vocabulary of the unit	The content of this writing lesson is based on the students' current vocab., but also challenged & expanded as student's listen to the ideas of other student's with more advanced vocabulary and those students receive ideas from the graphic representation of ideas and interjections from the instructor.	
Student needs the instructional material in a language other than English	Text to Speech is easily converted into other Languages, the multiple visual representations of information is also helpful.	http://www.babblefish.com http://babelfish.altavista.com/translate.dyn http://free.translated.net/
Student has difficulty with handwriting (speed or accuracy)	Utilize the on-screen Keyboard, , or simply utilize the largely verbal response nature of this lesson. The instructor writes using the on-screen keyboard, based on students' ideas & verbal output. The students instruct the teacher in this sense; "I want to say___," "Move that idea under the second one." …etc.	
Student needs additional challenge	Content is very easily modified on the spot with Inspiration gallery content, immediate access to the internet and requiring more length & complexity to	

	the writing itself.	
Student has difficulty with calculating activities	All of the utilities on a PC are accessible with a double click (touch on the SmartBoard), including the basic calculator and/or online calculators, though not needed for this writing lesson.	**http://www.calculator.com/** **…very comprehensive site**