

Ten Tools for Struggling Students in Every Classroom

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No Child Left Behind has helped educators understand that there are struggling students in every classroom. Given the limits of time, energy, and resources, teachers understand that only a finite number of technology tools can be integrated into the classroom. As a result, one important technology integration strategy focuses on identifying a core set of technologies that support learning. If you were challenged to defining no more than 10 technology tools that could be provided in every classroom to support struggling students, what would you recommend?

Teacher Planning

I believe one of the ways to help teachers meet the needs of diverse students is to increase the instructional resources they have at their fingertips. Toward this end, I believe every teacher should have a set of 3-10 web bookmarks that they can use to support any instructional topic.

42explore	http://42explore.com/
Internet4Classrooms	http://www.internet4classrooms.com/
netTrekker	http://www.nettrekker.com/

Organization and Memory

Perhaps you know some students who have difficulty remembering things and staying organized. Since no one organizational system works for everyone, it is important for students explore a variety of tools until they find one that they like and works for them.

Backpack	http://www.backpackit.com/
Memo to Me	http://www.memotome.com/
Zoho Notebook	http://notebook.zoho.com/

Reading Materials: Tiered

Why is it that there is only one version of every reading assignment? Tiered reading materials offer similar information at different reading/interest levels.

Ben's Guide to US Government	http://bensguide.gpo.gov/
Star Child	http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/
Windows to the Universe	http://www.windows.ucar.edu

Reading Materials: Personal Interest

Struggling readers have learned that they don't like to read. What if we could reverse this perspective by putting students in charge of creating their own reading materials?

Google News	http://news.google.com/
My Yahoo	http://my.yahoo.com
Page Flakes	http://www.pageflakes.com/

Reading: Audio Support

A variety of strategies can be used to provide audio support for struggling readers: talking web browsers, text to speech software, and text-to-MP3 audio files.

Browse Aloud	http://www.browsealoud.com/
Read Please	http://www.readplease.com/
VozMe	http://www.vozme.com
WebAnywhere	http://webanywhere.cs.washington.edu/

Vocabulary Support

Vocabulary development is at the center of all learning. How do we help students gain new words and concepts?

VisuWords	http://www.visuwords.com
Voycabulary	http://www.voycabulary.com/

Writing: Brainstorming

Graphic organizers are valuable tools for helping students develop their ideas before they begin writing.

Inspiration	http://inspiration.com/Inspiration
Kidspiration	http://inspiration.com/Kidspiration
Eduplace	http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/

Writing: Drafting

Provide supports that guide the process of creating a first draft.

Draft:Builder	http://www.donjohnston.com/
iDictate	http://www.idictate.com
Fracture Fairy Tales	http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/fairytales/

Writing: Collaborative

Increasingly professionals are expected to collaboratively work on projects. What does this mean for teaching about the writing process?

Google Docs	http://docs.google.com
Zoho Writer	http://writer.zoho.com/

Interactives (Learning Objects, Widgets)

Many struggling students do not produce their best work on paper and pencil tasks. Therefore, how do we find comparable learning activities that provide engagement in the core tasks of learning? In many cases, interactives can be superior to traditional learning materials because of the immediate feedback and support that is provided.

Interactivate	http://www.shodor.org/interactivate/activities/
Thinkfinity	http://www.thinkfinity.org
Virtual Math Manipulatives	http://nlvm.usu.edu/