

What's New

Software

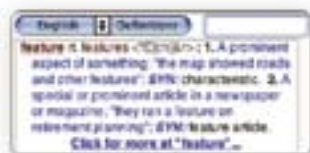


Middle and high school learners can enhance their writing skills using two PLATO products, *PLATO Essential Writing Process and Practice* and *PLATO Fundamental Writing Process and Practice*. Designed to teach writing strategies, grammar, and mechanics, the software emphasizes teaching grammar and mechanics in context, with a focus on usage rather than on terminology, while teaching writing as a process that is flexible, adaptable, and nonlinear. Each allows for learner interaction and self-paced instruction. Contact PLATO for pricing.

MORE INFO: PLATO Learning, 1.800.44.PLATO, <http://www.plato.com>

According to the company, even those with no video editing experience or technical skills can create a video blog, or “vlog” using *Vlog It!* video creation software from Serious Magic. Users can create a vlog in minutes that includes video clips, pictures, and music with personal narration. Vlog It! comes with a library of templates containing TV-style titles, graphics, transitions, and effects that enable vlogs to have the production value of TV shows. Users can add pictures, video, and sound clips from cameras, camcorders, or even photo-capable cell phones. Files are output in standard Windows Real Media Player or RealPlayer formats. The software is priced at \$99.95.

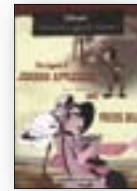
MORE INFO: Serious Magic, <http://www.seriousmagic.com>



Ultralingua Inc. has released *Ultralingua Translation Dictionary version 5.0* for Windows. According to the company, users now have access to enhanced databases, stemming (recognition of conjugated and other inflected forms) for most languages, a special

mini-mode that takes less room on the desktop, and improved interaction with other applications. The dictionary includes thousands of idiomatic expressions, slang, and indications of usage, as well as online language references and reverse translation. The company also offers a version 5.0 for Mac OS X. Products are available to order online starting at \$29.95, with a 10-day evaluation period, and upgrades for \$19.95.

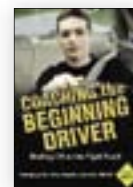
MORE INFO: Ultralingua Inc., <http://www.ultralingua.com>



American Legends Volume 1: The Legend of Johnny Appleseed and Pecos Bill Classroom Edition from Disney Educational Productions

brings these American heroes to life. The two interactive stories, according to Disney, offer educators ways to incorporate the programs into their language arts and social studies curricula, with instantaneous scene selection and clips correlated to the electronic Educator's Guide that offers standards-based printable activities and extensions designed to boost comprehension and augment classroom lessons. The 38-minute DVD is closed-captioned and sells for \$59.95.

MORE INFO: Disney Educational Productions, 1.800.295.5010, <http://www.edustation.disney.com>



Drive Safely Inc. offers teens, parents, and teachers tools to improve driver's training and skills through their line of videos. Geared toward raising levels of driving skills and safety awareness, video topics include “*Coaching the Beginning Driver*,” “*How to Park Your Car*,” and “*How to Back Up Your Car*,” all available in DVD and VHS format. Further videos address specific driving programs, including defensive driving for beginning drivers, seasonal driving, road rage, SUV safety, and car crashes. The videos are priced from \$29.75 to \$119 depending on topic and length.

MORE INFO: Drive Safely Inc., 1.267.372.2371, <http://www.howtodriveacar.com>



Students preparing for college admission tests and applications can submit practice writing samples and receive instant feedback through Vantage Learning's *MY Access! 5.0* writing skills development software. MY Access! is a Web-based assessment and diagnostic writing environment that scores student essays and provides individualized instruction that engages and motivates students to improve their writing proficiency. The online reporting feature provides up-to-the-minute student performance data, enabling teachers to make timely, data-driven decisions for successful differentiated instruction. MY Access! analyzes more than 300 semantic, syntactic, and discourse characteristics and provides a holistic score as well as domain scores for five major areas: focus and meaning, organization, content and development, language use and style, and mechanics and conventions. Pricing is based on the number of students and length of subscription, ranging from \$19 for 3,001–5,000 students for one semester to \$36 for 1–500 students for a year.

MORE INFO: Vantage Learning, 1.800.230.2213, <http://www.vantagelearning.com>



Sentient Learning has launched a learning object repository, *Sentient LearnBase*, which is delivered with a Microsoft Word-based authoring tool, Sentient LearnBuild. Sentient LearnBuild is fully integrated with the Sentient LearnBase repository, allowing users within Word to create content-rich learning objects across an institution, create their own collection or contributor area of teaching materials, create IMS content packages; share, reuse, and repurpose learning objects, and search along multiple dimensions to target relevant material. According to the company, Sentient LearnBase can be configured to suit any institutional hierarchy or diverse structures, and can be installed or delivered over the ASP Service Model depending on institutional preference.

MORE INFO: Sentient Learning, 1.800.489.8937, <http://www.sentientlearning.com>

The information here is compiled from press releases that come into the ISTE editorial office. The products and resources are not reviewed by the L&L staff and are offered here without recommendation. Send press releases and suggestions for entries to products@iste.org.

Hardware



Classrooms that use laptops without legacy I/O ports (e.g., serial/parallel ports, PS/2 keyboard and mouse ports, network connection port) can add nine new ports with the *DS920 Hi-Speed USB 2.0 Docking Station* from Koutech Systems Inc. The docking station adds two USB 2.0 ports, a 9-pin serial port, a 25-pin parallel port, a 10/100 Ethernet network port, an audio-out port, a mic-in port, an optical-out port, a PS/2 keyboard port, a PS/2 mouse port. It is fully compatible with Windows 2000 and XP. The unit sells for \$69.99.

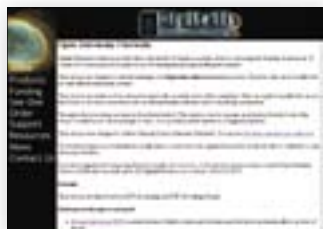
MORE INFO: Koutech Systems Inc., 1.562.699.5340, <http://www.koutech.com>

SMART Technologies has introduced *LinQ* software to enable teachers and students to use SMART Board interactive whiteboards with mobile and wireless devices. LinQ connects a networked computer, such as a wireless laptop, to a SMART Board. According to the company, once the information on the PC is displayed on the interactive whiteboard, students can present their projects, annotate on top of material in digital ink, and control their own computer by touching the large display. Teachers can also connect their networked Tablet PC to the interactive whiteboard computer to share information and control the whiteboard from anywhere in the classroom. LinQ software is available as a free download along with SMART Board software 9.0.



MORE INFO: SMART Technologies, Inc., 1.888.42.SMART, <http://www.smarttech.com>

Resources



Digitalis Education Solutions has published a dozen astronomy lesson plans for use in K–12 classrooms. Lessons are aligned with the National Science Education Standards and cover a variety of topics, including moon phases, solstices and equinoxes, and debunking astrology. Digitalis

has made these lessons freely available as a public service to encourage the teaching of astronomy and to help increase scientific literacy. A simple license allows educators to copy, modify, and distribute Digitalis' lesson plans. See the full text of the license on each lesson plan for details. Educators are encouraged to submit their lesson modifications, translations into other languages, or original lessons for wider distribution through this Web site.

MORE INFO: Digitalis Education Solutions, 1.360.616.8915, <http://DigitalisEducation.com/curricula.html>

Mayetic's *Premium Workspaces* are Internet-based, ready-to-use packages that provide flexible and secure collaboration workspaces, available directly on the Internet. According to Mayetic, key functionalities provided by these workspaces enable intra- and inter-enterprise information and document sharing, as well as project methodology follow-up, implementation of collaborative extranets, publication of technical documents, access rights, and user management. Packs are charged per-workspace—there are no limits to the number of users—and subscriptions can be cancelled at any time. Services include online help, FAQs, and two hours worth of six-minute training modules. There is no charge to use the site, but users may upgrade by purchasing one of three Premium Workspaces, ranging from \$4.95 to \$49.95 per month.



MORE INFO: Mayetic Corporation, 1.212.656.1094, <http://www.mayetic.com>



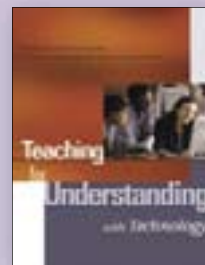
Registration is open for the *2005 Creative Connections Project*, which links predominantly U.S. classrooms with partner classes in Latin America, China, and Africa through the arts and the Internet. All participating classes and schools gain access to curriculum-based, password-protected online resources that allow students to travel electronically to the region they are studying and meet students who live there. Prices start at \$25 per class and \$100 per school. Teachers may choose one of four sessions (winter, spring, summer, or fall).

MORE INFO: Creative Connections Project, 1.518.269.1480, <http://www.ccproject.org>

Merit Software has launched an instructional Web site, <http://www.howtowriteanessay.com>. According to Merit, the site helps students better comprehend the mechanics and components involved in writing an essay by explaining the process and making it more manageable for students. Each step is on a



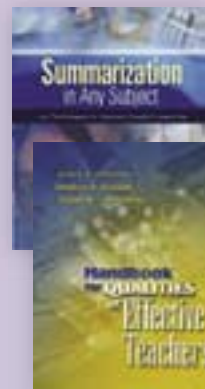
Books



Teaching for Understanding with Technology, by Martha Stone Wiske with Kristi Rennebohm Franz and Lisa Breit,

shows teachers how to maximize the potential of new technologies to advance student learning and achievement. According to the publisher, the book uses the Teaching for Understanding framework that guides learners to think, analyze, solve problems, and make meaning of what they've learned. The book offers advice on tapping into new technologies such as Web information, online curricular information, and professional networks to research teaching topics, set learning goals, create innovative lesson plans, assess student understanding, and develop communities of learners. The book costs \$25.

MORE INFO: Jossey-Bass, 1.800.956.7739, <http://www.josseybass.com>

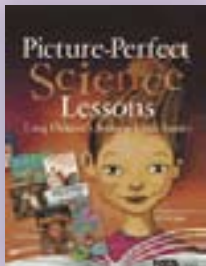


Schools looking to implement a staff development, teacher education, or a self-help program to improve teacher qualities that are most apt to raise student

achievement can find examples of real-life scenarios in ASCD's *Handbook for Qualities of Effective Teachers*. Written by James H. Stronge, Pamela D. Tucker, and Jennifer L. Hindman, the book

includes assessments, observation guides, planning tools, and other resources to provide an understanding of the aspects of a teacher's job that yield gains in student learning. ASCD has also published *Summarization in Any Subject: 50 Techniques to Improve Student Learning*, a guide to written, spoken, artistic, and kinesthetic summarization techniques for individual assignments and group activities. According to the author, Rick Wormeli, the 50 strategies improve students' comprehension and boost their long-term memory. The books are available separately for \$22.95 for ASCD members and \$29.95 for nonmembers.

MORE INFO: ASCD, 1.800.933.ASCD, <http://shop.ascd.org>



Picture-Perfect Science Lessons by Karen Rohrich Ansberry and Emily Morgan incorporates children's favorite

books into a teaching resource that combines the appeal of picture books with standards-based science content in 15 ready-to-teach lessons for grades 3–6. This book for new and experienced teachers presents lessons that use picture books to guide science inquiry explicitly tied to the National Science Education Standards. The lessons are complete with student pages and suggested assessments, as well as refresher explanations of scientific concepts. The 304-page book is \$28.95 and discount-priced for NSTA members at \$23.16.

MORE INFO: NSTA, 1.800.277.5300, <http://www.nsta.org/pressnew/>

separate page and has links to allow jumping from one page to another. The site offers a list of resources at the end to further a student's research into essay writing.

MORE INFO: Merit Software, 1.800.753.6488, <http://www.meritsoftware.com>

Editorial Projects in Education has debuted its on-line education job search engine, *AgentK-12.org*. According to the company, AgentK-12.org is a blend of online and print resources that matches jobs to qualified candidates and provides career news, up-to-date job listings, as well as career coaching. Free to job seekers, the tool enables users to view job listings confidentially, request an alert each time a new opportunity meets their requirements, and post resumes. Employers can review and rank candidates online, automatically post jobs from their own Web sites, and integrate candidates into their application systems. The service attracts teachers, principals, superintendents, and others in education for positions in public, private, parochial, and independent schools.

MORE INFO: Editorial Projects in Education Inc., 1.301.280.3100, <http://www.AgentK-12.org>



The Sea Turtle Restoration Project is making its documentary *Last Journey for the Leatherback?* freely available with a teacher's kit to teachers and non-profit educational organizations in exchange for a copy of the classroom activity. Appropriate for students ages 12 and up, the video documents the largest species of sea turtle and the threat industrial fishing poses to their survival. School libraries may order a copy at the member's price of \$15 plus postage. The teacher's kit PDF can be downloaded

from the Web site at no cost.

MORE INFO: Sea Turtle Restoration Project, 1.415.488.0370, ext. 106, <http://www.seaturtles.org>

Arts4All Ltd. has launched *ArtsPass* to deliver the arts online to people of all ages. ArtsPass works with leading artists, educators, and institutions to create downloadable streaming video files and core curriculum resources, teaching materials, and images of the visual and performance arts. The Web site uses digital media technology to connect subscribers to daily updates, teaching modules, performances and interviews, new and archived streaming media, and content appropriate for all K–12 students. Subscriptions are \$9.95 per month.

MORE INFO: ArtsPass, 1.212.391.4007, <http://www.artspass.com>



visit www.iste.org/LL