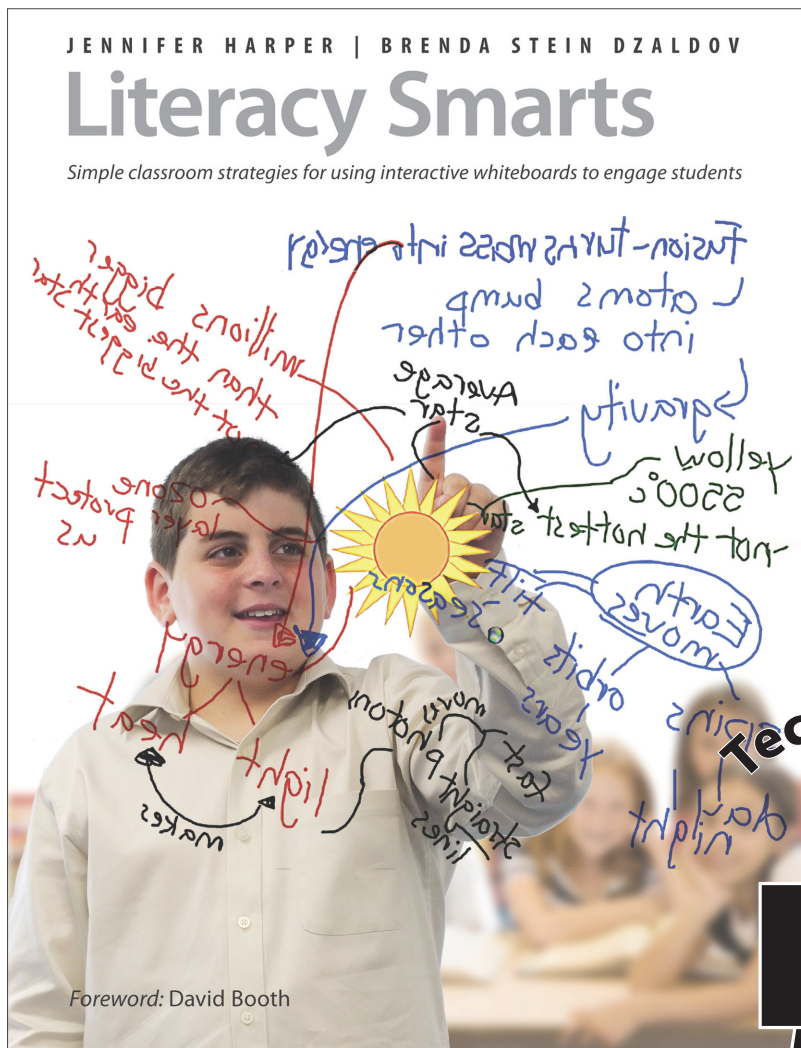


# Teaching Websites

## Pembroke's Friday Freebie



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### Teaching with Websites/Pages

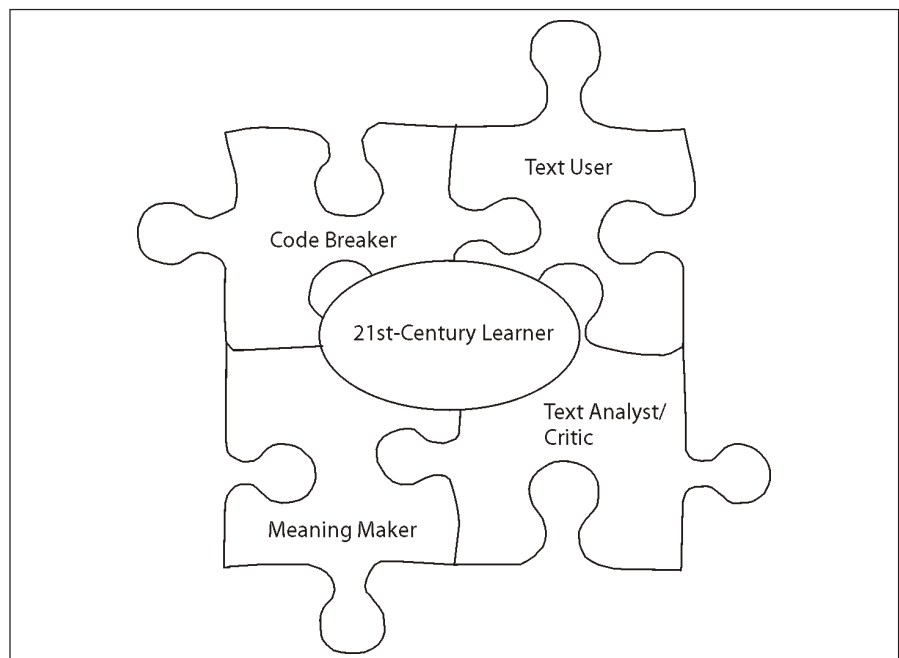
When teaching with websites, begin with what you already know. How do you teach a picture book or a novel? Do you start with a preview: show the front and back cover, read the summary aloud, skim the pages together? Do you carefully introduce the book, referring to the visuals, decoding difficult words together, referring to the elements of the story (setting, characters)? Do you stop at key moments, recall it together, and then foreshadow the next moment? Do you end the book study with a summary, gathering opinions, sharing alternate endings? You already know how to introduce text to students. You just need to transfer these skills to the graphic visuals in today’s digital texts.

For some types of websites and Web 2.0 tools, see Chapter 5.

When selecting a website, begin with a preview. Put yourself in the shoes of a student and visit the site your students will be visiting. Once you have navigated through the various tabs and menu options and feel confident, model this process for students. The IWB is the ideal tool to showcase a website for students. You can directly model your expectations, step by step, and they can follow along. You can anticipate that students might need to see instructions again by recording your steps on the IWB. Rather than repeating the steps again, just hit Play and your steps will be displayed again.

Once you have determined and previewed the site that will best suit your students, the opportunity for teaching begins. You know that your students are on websites at home. You know they can navigate to meet some of their needs. But, just as you teach students solid reading strategies to help them digest, comprehend, and evaluate books, you also need to give them strategies to understand websites and web pages. Teaching using integrated texts, such as web pages and websites, means that teachers must consider many different aspects of literacy learning.

### Using the Four Resources Model



To help guide this section, we use this framework (from Luke & Freebody, 1999). We find this model comprehensive and inclusive of the critical components of how to read media for interactive learning. The model defines the four roles of a literate learner as code breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text analyzer. Teachers can address each role in a balanced way with all the other roles.

It is the complex interaction of the four roles that supports literacy learning. Literacy learning involves more than a single skill, and is an interaction of skills and resources that the literate learner draws upon to make meaning from texts of many types. Just as we would teach a text in a book thoroughly, we must explicitly teach digital media in order for students to effectively deal with digital literacy learning.

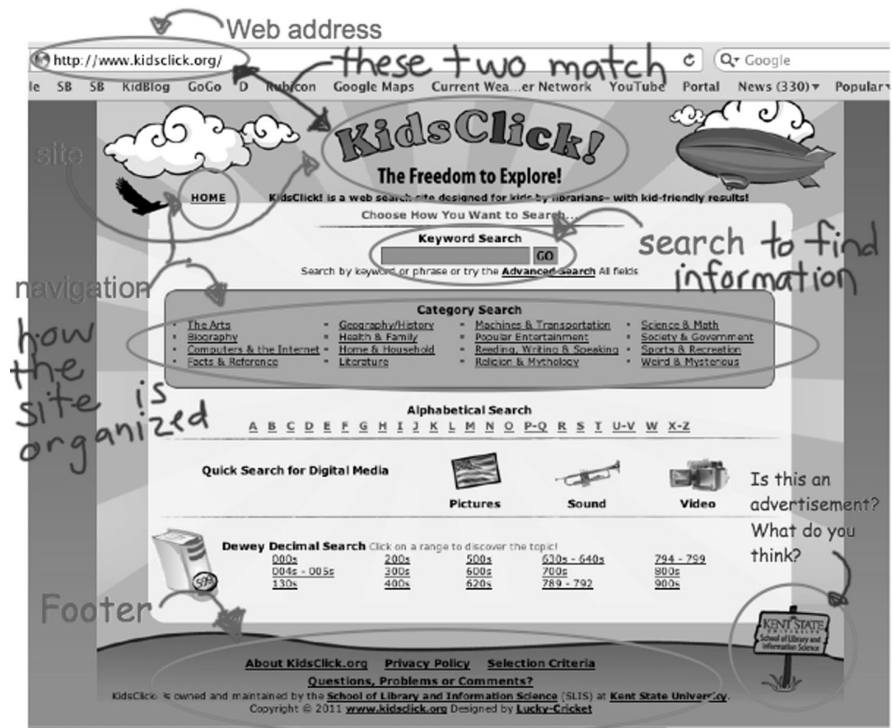
As students communicate using digital technology, they read, write, and use a wide variety of texts. They view videos and graphics, preview web pages, and play on websites. They think about the texts in their lives, how they will use them, their purposes and their messages. It is our role as educators to make sure that the definition of communication is one that will help prepare our students for the challenges they will encounter in the wide world that stands before them.

### ***Breaking the Code***

The role of code breaker is important: students are taught to recognize and use the features and structures of texts, including breaking down words, sentence structure, text organization, graphics, and other visuals to break the “code” of text. This can be as basic as using phonics to teach letter–sound correspondence when reading. It can be as complex as interpreting a web page and decoding the words, organization, and images to determine the meaning. Using the IWB, you can model, teach, and have your students

- Identify the parts of the web page in an interactive manner. Highlight the address and show how it often connects to the title (e.g., the title for the URL [www.kidsclick.org](http://www.kidsclick.org) is *KidsClick*). The title is also known as the site ID and often answers the question “What site is this?”
- Take screenshots of a few popular websites and identify the parts that are similar or different (consider using a graphic organizer).
- Navigate through various linking pages. Often a website has layers of navigation, with a menu that links to the various pages in the site. Highlight the top tabs that link to other pages and shine a spotlight on the side menu bar that links to sections on the page you are currently on.
- Find the page name and identify where you are on the website using the menu bar.
- Use the pens to identify the footer at the bottom of the page and talk about why it exists.
- Create a fishbone graphic organizer to lay out the various parts of the website, placing the main topic at the head and following with the subtopics. The subtopics are then supported by details.
- Debug the web page: take a screenshot and use it to record the steps in understanding the web page and navigating through the various links. Play back this lesson at a learning centre to model for the students.

This screenshot shows the parts of a typical web page labeled. In this lesson, the teacher and students *debugged* the text genre of the web page.



**Making Meaning**

Taking the role of meaning maker empowers students to use prior knowledge and experience to construct and communicate meaning when reading, writing, and speaking. Using the IWB, our students can

- Predict what visuals would complement the website they will be visiting.
- Predict what advertisements would support the visiting website.
- Answer literal comprehension questions about the text; for example, “How many eyes do spiders have?”

**Using Texts**

Teaching students to be text users supports their understanding that the purpose and audience help to determine the way a text is structured. Elements such as the formality, sequence of components, and placement of graphics or text are important, and this knowledge helps students read and write text pragmatically, applying their knowledge in the real world of reading the web. Using the IWB as both a visual and interactive tool, you can demonstrate how to navigate the Internet:

- Bring students to a fake website. Ask critical questions: *What can we learn from this website? Do we have any questions about this topic? How can we verify if this website is legitimate?*
- Complete a search together on a topic. Model the various tools: web, images, video, news, books, and maps. Have students determine what exactly they are looking for and decide together which type of information will best answer the question (e.g. Are all bulldozers yellow? This can be answered using the images).

Fake websites are created for the purpose of educating students about thinking critically; e.g., saving the tree octopus from extinction (<http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>) or buy dehydrated water ([www.buydehydratedwater.com](http://www.buydehydratedwater.com)).

- Refer back to the web address (URL) on the webpage. Complete a search and teach students to navigate using web addresses and synopses to select the best website.
- Create a blank research page and have the students fill it in with facts that they have learned while surfing the Internet.
- Provide students with a piece of paper and pencil crayons. Have them research a topic using images. Ask them to draw an accurate diagram or picture using the information from the other visuals.

### ***Traditional***

Teachers often have students do research using nonfiction texts found in the school library or classroom. They help students do research online, bookmarking websites that are appropriate for research or pairing up students to read websites together. Introducing websites or the digital text genre of web pages is often done by projecting a web page on a screen and pointing out different features, reading parts of the text out to students, or doing shared readings of the text, and having them consider the validity of certain statements on the web, perhaps jotting down valid/invalid statements in a notebook.

### ***IWB Advantage***

Using the interactivity of the IWB, students and teachers can write directly on web pages to highlight features of the text. Text can be retyped using the keyboard function and moved to a blank notebook page to be further examined. Teachers can take screenshots of advertisements or questionable content and copy it to other blank notebook pages, creating a library of information that students need to be cautious about. Students can revisit pages created within this lesson when using web pages in the future, to discuss and activate prior knowledge about the genre. As students gain confidence and awareness about how to navigate digital text, they can bank their favourite web pages or pages that might be useful to peers by simply clicking on the screen to bookmark the page.

**An Interactive Idea for Text Using**

In 2005, Yahoo indexed 18.2 billion websites. Searching for the information your students want can be a daunting task.

**Objective**

You can teach your students how to use search engines and to think critically when searching for information.

**Hook**

Using the IWB as a model, perform a search for a common topic using a common search engine. Show students that, as they begin to type the word, a variety of options are presented. If they cannot find their topic, they might have misspelled the word (spelling does have a purpose). Walk them through the text features of a web page, highlighting various tabs that change the format of information (i.e., Web, Images, Movie, Map, Research). Use the IWB pens or Highlight option to have students interact with the text by circling or underlining different text features. Model how to read the summaries of the websites and the URL address to determine if the site is worth visiting. Model multiple times how to use images, videos, and various web addresses. Copy parts of the information and paste it on another slide or blank document to highlight questionable information found on websites.

**Lesson**

Assign your students the task of answering a question using a search engine. Would text, an image, or a movie answer their question best? What should be entered as the topic to best find the answer?

**Closure**

Once students gain comfort searching for information, they can record a question that they are wondering about and find the answer. Using the IWB, you can store the questions and answers for later activities. This newly found information can be digitally shared as a class or in their portfolios.