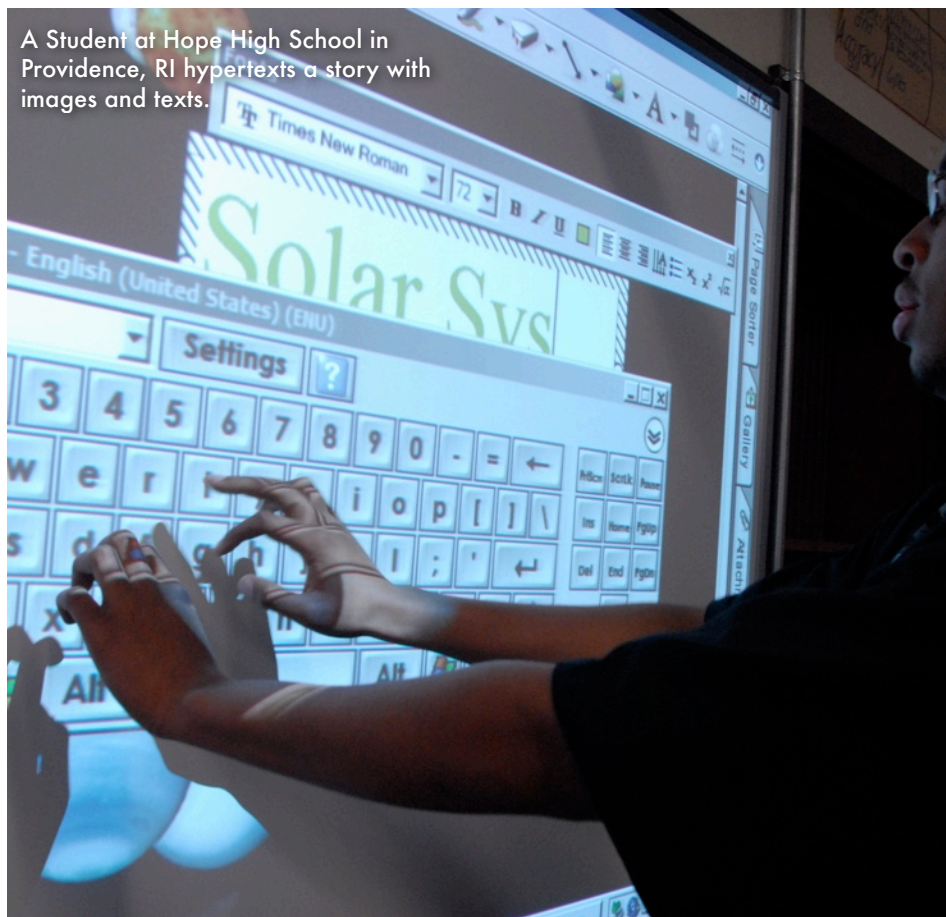


hypertexting literature

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A Student at Hope High School in Providence, RI hypertexts a story with images and texts.



Imagine the possibilities between the lines of a story

Hypertext is now a common way of navigating text on the Internet. By clicking on a word or phrase, more definitions, explanations, and images are revealed. One literacy strategy employed by teachers is called the "read aloud." This activity assumes that reading is an invisible process: the reader pictures movies inside her head; she makes connections to other texts and events in her life. The read-aloud asks the reader to share these connections, images, and emotions publicly in order to make the reading

process visible. Generally for a read aloud, the teacher places the text in front of the students, on an overhead or interactive digital projector, and then marks-up the text as he reads it, describing his own reading process. This read aloud then serve a model for struggling readers to see how a fluent reader recovers meaning from and makes sense of text.

Hypertexting literature builds on this idea by asking the reader to imagine what the possibilities are within the

words and between the lines of a text. Students write stories from their lives connecting the text to their world, or they imagine new possibilities within the text, inventing characters and dialogues.

If the technology is available, students might create a hypertext on computers in the classroom or at home. If not, old fashioned notecards will work just fine.

Habla in Mexico City

Habla directors Kurt Wootton and Maria del Mar Patron Vazquez piloted this idea in Chalco, a barrio outside of Mexico City. Teachers, artists, and students read the story "The King in his Labyrinth" by Jorge Luis Borges and created stories inside of the story. They wrote stories about one of the king's soldiers leaving his family to go fight a war, a visionary architect working for a despotic ruler, a king finding his way out of an endless desert. The text expanded from a one page story by Borges, to a thirty-five page compendium of stories within stories.

Process

1. Choose a short portion of text.

To compare responses across the class, it will be important for you, the teacher, to choose an essential section of text the students can all respond to. By selecting the same text, the students can document their own reactions and share them across the classroom, building an interpretive community. If the students are reading a novel, choose a one or two page essential section of the book. Hypertexting is particularly useful for exploring the range of possible interpretations of poetry.

2. Model. Using a different portion of text, model identifying words, phrases, and moments. For each word or phrase, write it on a notecard (or use the Insert/Comment tab on a program like Word), then write a response. Demonstrate a range of possible interpretive responses that might include:

- Personal connections: portions of text that evoke a moment or story from you life.
- Textual connections: words or phrases that remind you of

another text, perhaps a text by the same author.

- Interpretive possibilities: often a difficult area of text might lend itself to a range of different interpretations. Explore the possibilities in a stream of consciousness hypertext.
 - Stories within the text: another possibility (described in the sidebar above) is to stay in the world of the text. Choose a moment and expand that portion of text, adding dialogue, or perhaps telling the side story of a minor character. Another possibility is to tell a story before or after the text, adding a new ending, or offering background possibilities for the opening.
3. Practice. The students will work on their own set of hypertext notecards for the text.
4. Exploring connections and interpretations. Ask the students in the room to stand with their set of notecards (or printed document) ask them to find a partner and discuss two of their hypertext responses with each other. Switch partners. Continue

to mix up the room, sharing their responses to the literature, until students have talked to several people about the text.

5. Expand. Students can select a notecard and write a complete story for that moment in the text.

5. Reflect. As an entire class reflect on the activity. What were some of the interpretations they heard from others that were particularly interesting? What did they learn about the text? Was this approach useful to explore interpretation? What is the difference between this and having a class discussion or examining the text in small groups?

If the technology is available, create an actual hypertext of the story by inputting the original text, the students' responses, and the students' stories into a word or design program and linking them all together. Make available on-line for the larger community.

Hypertexting literature might also move beyond print texts. Photographs, images, films, and audio clips might expand stories with infinite possibilities.



HABLA is an educational center and lab school based in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, dedicated to fostering school environments that promote the success of all students from multiple cultural backgrounds. HABLA offers cultural and language experiences for teachers and school leaders in an ideal space in Mexico and provides direct support on-site in schools throughout Mexico and the United States. For more information visit www.habla.org.