

## New Louisiana Teacher Puts Early Learners on Path to Meeting State Learning Goals, Building Love of Learning With Kidspiration®

At Fairview Elementary School in Lake Charles, La., first-grade teacher Jennifer Frederick is dedicated to helping her students achieve in the face of the obstacles before them: 73 percent of the students in this Title I school are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and many come from families still recovering from the destruction caused by Hurricane Rita. Because engaging her students in learning is key to their success, Frederick makes daily use of Kidspiration®, the visual way to explore and understand words, numbers and concepts, from Inspiration® Software, Inc., to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

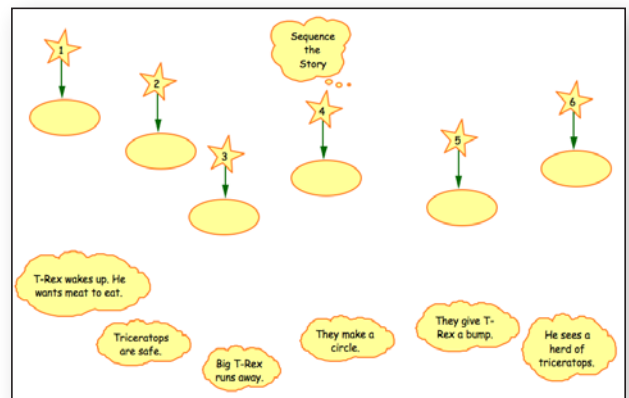
Now in her third year as a teacher, Frederick began using Kidspiration with the kindergarten class she taught last year and today can scarcely imagine a classroom without it. "I know there are other ways I could teach, but my students wouldn't be nearly as enthusiastic about learning," she said.

Designed specifically for early learners in kindergarten through fifth grade, Kidspiration develops thinking, literacy and numeracy skills using proven visual learning techniques. In reading and writing, Kidspiration strengthens word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension and written expression. With Kidspiration's visual math tools, students build reasoning and problem-solving skills.

With a sharp focus on boosting literacy skills, teachers at Fairview Elementary School conduct a school-wide 90-minute reading block each day, followed by 60 minutes of small-group reading. During some of this allotted time, Frederick uses Kidspiration to teach phonetic sounds. Each week, she focuses on one sound, such as "ch" or "wh," and her students create "bubble diagrams" displaying at least five pictures that begin with the sound. Next, they use Kidspiration's Record tool to record themselves saying the names of the pictures, making valuable literacy connections. After Frederick models what to do, every one of the 22 students completes the exercise, which is available on

two classroom computers, by week's end. "They just take off with it," she said. "They're definitely learning to read better with Kidspiration because they're having so much fun with it."

With Kidspiration's Listen tool, students can hear words read aloud, strengthening word recognition and comprehension. Frederick said her students are always captivated by the tool. "They love hearing the computer voice speak the words, and it reinforces what they're learning," she said.



Teachers can use Kidspiration to create their own activity, as in this "Sequencing the Story" exercise from Frederick's classroom.

When teaching writing skills, Frederick starts by helping students create a main idea in Kidspiration, after which they break down the sequence of ideas into boxes. Soon, they are writing sentences and piecing them together to create a story. She has put this writing exercise to work both as a whole class and with individual students. "All of my students enjoy using Kidspiration, and they can use it no matter what their skill level is," she said. "Some take it to high levels and create their own stories. They are all gaining valuable skills and learning new concepts with it."

In teaching math this year to first graders, Frederick noticed that it's sometimes difficult for them to grasp subtraction. "They like to put it all together, not take

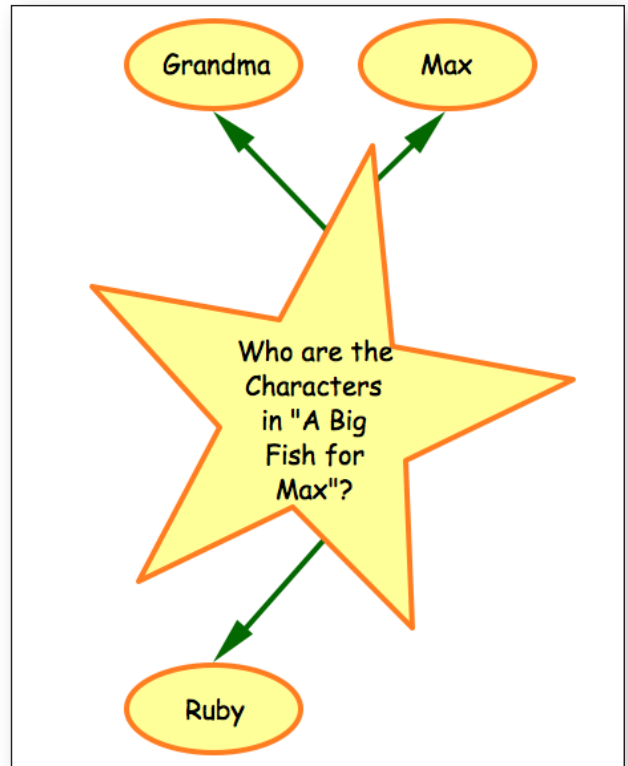
it apart," she said. She foresees using Kidspiration with them for learning everything from how to solve word problems in math to telling time. "They're very visual, and Kidspiration has great manipulatives that will help them see the math and begin to develop an understanding of how it works."

As part of a social studies unit examining other cultures, Frederick invited her sister, who had done missionary work in the Ukraine, to cook cuisine native to the region and share her knowledge of the culture. Incorporating Kidspiration into the lesson, Frederick guided the class in creating a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the various aspects of life in the Ukraine. "With Kidspiration, they could really visualize the similarities and differences," she said. "It was all there for them to see."

No matter the subject area, Frederick is committed to providing her students with a visual learning environment to help them meet state learning goals. With the wide variety of ready-to-use templates available in Kidspiration, Frederick said it's "as easy as pulling them up and saving them—I don't have to create them myself," she said. "The possibilities are almost endless."

Frederick was recently recognized as one of 12 Silver Star winners worldwide in Inspiration Software's Inspired Learning Awards, for her creative use of Kidspiration. Since then, many of her colleagues at Fairview Elementary "are really looking at Kidspiration," she said. "People are seeing its benefits, and I'm sure others will want it for their classrooms, too."

With the school year just under way, Frederick has not been able to collect official data on her students' progress, but she has seen higher levels of achievement and greater enthusiasm for learning since she started using Kidspiration. "I can tell you what I'm seeing—my students love Kidspiration, and they're definitely learning better with it," she said.



*Frederick had her students use Kidspiration to help them identify a story's main characters.*