



Webspiration Classroom case study
Warren Township Public Schools
Faye Brady, Ed.D., director of Special Services
Cathy Lazas & Donna Bardy, teachers, Warren Middle School
Mary Ellen Roberts, technology coordinator
Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D., assistive technology consultant

**New Jersey Special-Education Students Build 21st Century Skills
With Webspiration Classroom**

***Successful Pilot of Web-Based Writing and Visual Thinking Tool Leads to
Schoolwide Adoption***

In Cathy Lazas' special-education classes, many of her students are reluctant learners, and writing, more than any other subject, is often "very, very challenging," said the Warren Middle School teacher from Warren Township Public Schools in New Jersey. "The way we traditionally ask students to write can feel like torture to them."

Last year, the district participated in a pilot of Inspiration Software's latest offering, Webspiration Classroom™, the online writing, visual thinking and collaboration tool for students and teachers. Webspiration Classroom provides anytime, anywhere access to a learning environment where students brainstorm ideas, gather and organize information, build understanding, and develop written essays, papers and reports – increasing student achievement in language arts and across the curriculum.

"We had great success with Webspiration Classroom – it ties into students' strengths and learning styles," said Lazas, who teaches sixth- and eighth-grade language arts and social studies in both pullout-replacement and general-education classes. One student who was particularly apprehensive about writing created a complete, organized book report using Webspiration Classroom. "It was probably more than I've seen him write in all the time he's been at our school."

Faye Brady, Ed.D., the district's director of Special Services, spearheaded the pilot of Webspiration Classroom, because she saw the potential for students with the support from assistive technology. "Many of our students have good thoughts, but they can't organize them. Webspiration Classroom enables them to put order to their ideas. The work I've read from them is vastly different from what I've seen them do with paper and pencil," she said.

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Consultant Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D., who worked with the district's Assistive Technology Team on the Webspiration Classroom pilot, said it was an unmitigated success. "Everyone was invigorated, to see how it could be applied to kids with a wide range of abilities," he said.

After a short training with teachers and work with the district's Assistive Technology Team, Friedlander modeled working with Webspiration Classroom with students in the classroom. Beforehand, the teachers prepared him for some of the classroom dynamics he could anticipate. "But those things didn't happen, and students were engaged and on task, which took the teachers by surprise. It changed their perspective about their students," he said.

Brady said, across the board, the educators and students involved in the pilot were positive about the experience. "Webspiration Classroom is a wonderful tool for building 21st century skills – creativity, collaboration and communication. And the results we've seen are particularly impressive since we only piloted it near the end of the school year." Since the pilot, excitement built about its success and how quickly it can impact student performance, which led to a schoolwide adoption at Warren Middle School beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

Brady said bringing the visual learning solution into the classroom – rather than into a computer lab – with teachers as the key facilitators contributed to the successful pilot. She sees the teacher-student interaction via the online collaboration tools as key to successful learning and believes it will help teachers integrate subjects across the curriculum. "Webspiration Classroom is connecting teachers and students. We have lots of hopes and dreams for it," she said.

In Lazas' classroom, she has seen how the visual learning tool has improved both effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and learning. When leading a discussion about the plot of a book, she had her students use Webspiration Classroom to map the sequence of events. Some students constructed a timeline, while others plotted with triangles. "They were able to visualize the storyline, which vastly improved their comprehension," she said.

When preparing her students for an upcoming state assessment, she used it to illustrate what topics may be covered. "It was a great way to show them samples of the types of questions that may be on the test," she said.

While using Webspiration Classroom's collaboration tools for peer review, students are gaining thinking and writing skills, as well as seeing the benefits of working in pairs and in groups, she said. "They have a great time working together, submitting their documents back and forth, and helping each other organize their work. It's very motivating."

Like Brady, Lazas has seen a striking difference in the quality of work she receives from students when they're learning with Webspiration Classroom. "I know that if I gave my students the same assignment with paper and pencil, the end product would be significantly less. With Webspiration Classroom, they're inspired to do more," she said.

Lazas' colleague, seventh-grade language arts teacher Donna Bardy, used Webspiration Classroom to teach vocabulary and to help her students brainstorm writing ideas, organize and write book reports and create study guides. "The possibilities are endless," she said.

Webspiration Classroom helped her students find success in writing, in a much more pleasant way than with paper and pencil, she said. “They absolutely love it – they don’t feel like they’re working when they’re using it.”

As many of her students have poor handwriting, they take pride in the neat, legible work they can create with Webspiration Classroom, she said. When they create a study guide, they have a clear, clean reference tool that they can print, which clarifies the information they are learning and improves their ability to understand and recall it.

Bardy, too, found that her students were more engaged and put in more effort than they would have without Webspiration Classroom. “Some were very creative,” she said. “They went home and applied what they had learned on their own.”

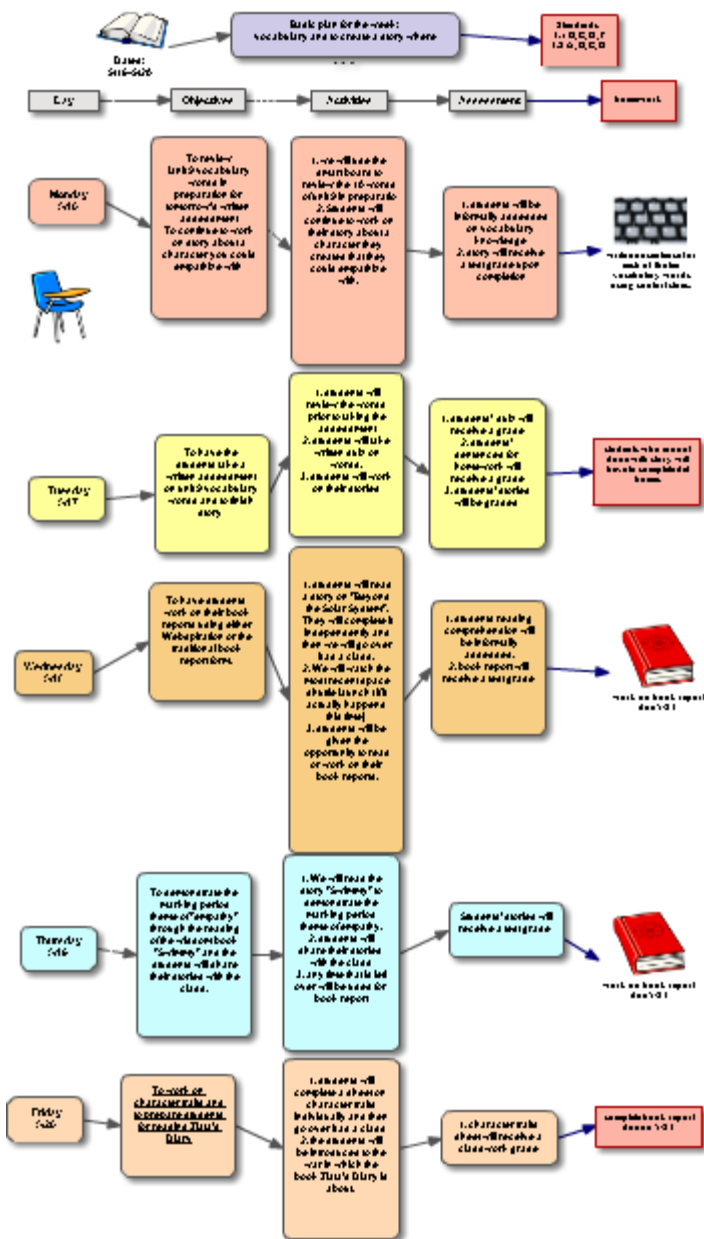
Because Webspiration Classroom is accessible from anywhere, Bardy also assigned her students homework with it – which they found much more appealing than traditional homework. When questions arose, they sent her notes. “I was able to give them feedback before they completed their projects, which helped continue the learning process after school,” she said.

District technology coordinator Mary Ellen Roberts said implementing Webspiration Classroom was a snap. “The fact that this is web-based is very appealing, because we do not have the resources to bring in more tech people to spend hours and hours loading software or updates,” she said. “Implementation was straightforward and fast.”

Consultant Friedlander concluded, “Webspiration Classroom made a huge difference in engagement, as well as retention of the material they learned. It’s amazing to see what students can accomplish with the right tool,” he said.

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Mrs. Bardy's Language Arts



Mrs. Bardy's Language Arts

A. Dates:

5/16-5/20

1. Basic plan for the week:

vocabulary and to create a story where you empathized with someone else. Book reports will be worked on for those who finish early.

a. Standards:

3.1 B, C, D, F

3.2 A, B, C, D

A. Day

1. Objectives

a. Activities

(1) Assessment

(a) homework

A. Monday

5/16

1. To review

Unit 9 vocabulary words in preparation for tomorrow's written assessment

To continue to work on story about a character you could empathize with

a. 1. we will use the smart board to review the 10 words of unit 9 in preparation for tomorrow's written assessment.

2. Students will continue to work on their story about a character they created that they could empathize with.

(1) 1. students will be informally assessed on vocabulary knowledge

2. story will receive a test grade upon completion

(a) write one sentence for each of the ten vocabulary words using context clues.

A. Tuesday

5/17

1. To have the students take a written assessment on unit 9 vocabulary words and to finish story

a. 1. students will review the words prior to taking the assessment

2. students will take written quiz on words.

3. students will work on their stories

(1) 1. students' quiz will receive a grade

2. students' sentences for homework will receive a grade

3. students' stories will be graded

(a) students who are not done with story will have to complete it at home.

A. Wednesday

5/18

1. To have students work on their book reports using either Webspiration or the traditional book report form.

a. 1. students will read a story on "Beyond the Solar System".

They will complete it independently and then we will go over it as a class.

2. We will watch the most recent space shuttle launch (if it actually happens this time)

3. students will be given the opportunity to read or work on their book reports.

(1) 1. students reading comprehension will be informally assessed.

2. book report will receive a test grade

(a) work on book report

due 5/23

A. Thursday

5/19

1. To demonstrate the marking period theme of "empathy" through the reading of the wisdom book "Swimmy" and the students will share their stories with the class.

a. 1. We will read the story "Swimmy" to demonstrate the marking period theme of empathy.

2. students will share their stories with the class

3. any time that is left over will be used for book report

(1) Students' stories will receive a test grade

(a) work on book report due 5/23

A. Friday

5/20

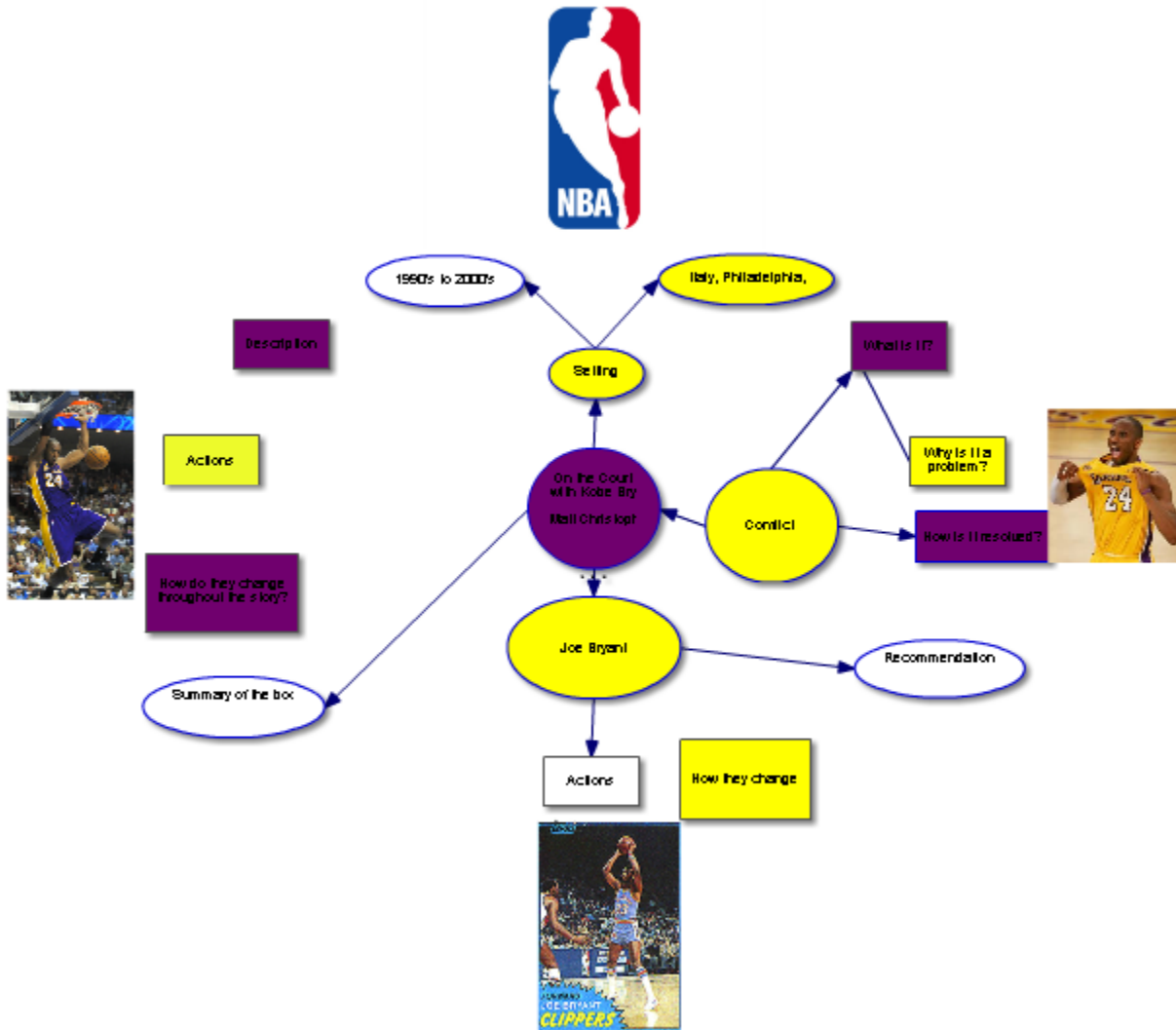
1. To work on character traits and to prepare students for reading Zlata's Diary

a. 1. students will complete a sheet on character traits individually and then go over it as a class

2. the students will be introduced to the war in which the book Zlata's Diary is about.

(1) 1. character traits sheet will receive a classwork grade

(a) complete book report due on 5/23



Why is it a problem?

It is a problem because Kobe is good enough to go to the NBA. However he does not know if it is a smart move, because you are more likely to get injured in the NBA than in college because the players are bigger, when he is still a teenager.

I. What is it?

Kobe was not sure if he should go to college to play basketball or go straight to the NBA.

How they change

Joe Bryant went from being a great player at LaSalle university, to a decent NBA player to an Italy club team player. Although Joe Bryant was just an okay Professional basketball player in Italy and the U.S. it did not stop him from helping his son, Kobe achieve his goal he has wanted since he picked up a basketball. To play in the NBA.

Conflict

Kobe was not sure if he should go to college to play basketball or go straight to the NBA.

I. On the Court with Kobe Bryant

Matt Christopher

A. Joe Bryant

1. Recommendation

I recommend this book to anyone who likes sports or appreciates a great athlete. It is very interesting, this is because of, all the battles he's went through to play in the NBA. If you love a little suspense, I highly recommend this book. This is because, there are a lot of close games in his basketball career that come down to the end.

1. Actions

NBA player who supported his son Kobe's decisions throughout his life. Joe was an okay player in the NBA, but once he left Pro Basketball, he focused on Kobe's dream.

A. Setting

1. 1990's to 2000's

1. Italy, Philadelphia,

A. Summary of the book

This book is about the life of Kobe Bryant, an incredible basketball player. He started out playing in a club team in Italy for middle schoolers. When he moved to Philadelphia he ran into a boy in the school lunch room. He arrogantly said, I hear your pretty good at basketball. Kobe nodded. The boy said how 'bout we play some one on one. Kobe went into the game a little nervous and went off to a slow start. But then Kobe started hitting threes and slashing to the hoop. And to top the game off he got the eleventh and final point, with a soaring SLAM DUNK!!!! That was when Kobe realized he wouldn't back down from anyone. Kobe went on to win the Pennsylvania State Championship of high school basketball in his senior year. Kobe declared for the NBA draft. He was wishing he would get drafted by the Lakers, but the 13th pick of the 1st round the Charlotte Hornets were on the clock, and drafted this high school superstar. Luckily the only reason Charlotte drafted him because they wanted to trade him to the Lakers for Center Vlade Divac, who became a future bust in the NBA. Kobe finally got his chance

in L.A. and obviously General Manager Jerry West made the right move. Kobe won his first NBA Finals in 2000.

I. How is it resolved?

Kobe finally declares for the NBA draft. He's probably happy with choice he made.

How do they change throughout the story?

Kobe changed immensely throughout his life. He went from just working on his fundamentals of basketball. Then becoming one of the best players of High School Basketball across the country. Then becoming an NBA rookie superstar winning the slam dunk contest of his rookie year and winning the rookie all star game MVP. Lastly Kobe Bryant is one of the best players to ever play the game, and arguably the best player in LA Lakers basketball history. He has one FIVE NBA championships for the Los Angeles Lakers, and has one several league and Finals MVP's.

Description

Kobe Bryant is a very talented basketball player. He is greatly determined to practice his most loved passion. Kobe will do anything to be in a gym. He plays for the Los Angeles Lakers and is one of the only players to go to the NBA straight from High School.

Actions

Bryant was able to dribble and shoot when he was just 6 years old. He moved from Italy to the United States.