

HyperCard and the One Computer Classrooms

HyperCard can be an especially valuable tool in the one computer classroom for a variety of projects. The basic idea is to develop a project idea which involves each student contributing something to a stack. They can do part of the stacking themselves even if only writing part of a story or doing a little art. The teacher can complete the stack or turn it over to a small committee of students if they know how. The project examples done below could be done as individual projects or group projects by older students in a lab situation to be shared with younger classrooms.

The intention can be to create a stack which could be printed as a book or embellished and used as a reference or story on the computer. The standard screen sized HyperCard prints into nice half-page books. However, HyperCard 2.0 and later allows creation of cards the size of a full page for full page books.

Illustration can be a real challenge, especially with younger children or students who don't have access to enough computer time to develop computer art skills. This problem can be met with extensive use of clip art, doing yourself, or if your intention is to create a book which the students can take with them, just leave a space for them to draw their own art. Another solution, if you have access to a scanner, is to have students draw their graphics and then scan them to include in stacks.

If you don't have a scanner and don't want your students spending the amount of time needed to illustrate each page of a book, have each student do a pencil drawing (provide a paper cut to the size to get appropriate size drawings) for a different page of the book. Print your stack, paste the drawings in the appropriate places, then copy it for each student in the class. Then add color if you wish. In that process, some students spend an hour on each page, coloring every little detail. Suggest they use one or two colors per page or just color some objects to add highlight. Some students get frustrated over an inability to draw. The object is to finish the project, to create a book, not to produce polished art. Be sure to encourage every effort.

If you wish to embellish the stack to make a stack, possible embellishments are some sound, hidden buttons or visible buttons with sounds, humorous messages, etc. and simple animation. Remember that sound takes a lot of memory. You will also need navigation arrows, etc. When I print these stacks, I prefer the navigation aides be hidden, so I either hide them before printing (use the message box or make a button to do the trick) or make two copies of the stack, one to print and one to embellish.

A printing note: The first version of HyperCard 2.0 contained a bug which prevented it from printing a complete stack. If you have trouble printing your stack, check your version.

Project suggestions include making a class cookbook, a map of the school, a class biography, local history, a tree identification stack, stories, map of the town, a current event,..... your imagination is the only limit.

I like to use HyperCard to cap a whole language lesson and produce a book to send home with students. Each student could write portions, or the story could be developed in oral discussion. If you use reading groups, each group could produce one.

I've included two examples of my Chapter I reading students' work. These were first graders. The two stacks are "Are You Sarah" and "Ten First Graders" written to the pattern of "Are You a Ladybug" and "Ten Sailors" respectively. The first book contains simple clip art illustration and the second has blank spaces for students to draw their own. These were both printed using HyperCard and made great half-page books which the students practiced reading, then took home. The stories were developed in oral discussion and the fact that students contributed the language made it easier for them to read the books.

The steps involved were:

1. I selected a book with a good pattern for duplication. Since my students were first graders, I selected very basic ones.
2. I introduced the book to them, using whole language techniques.
3. We read the book several times over a period of days. I read it to them first, we discussed various elements of the book.
 - a. I had them read selected words to me (oral cloze procedure)
 - b. and eventually read after me (echo reading).
 - c. If the group was doing well enough, i.e., the book wasn't too hard, I had them read it to me after extensive practice. However, that last isn't necessary to the creation of a book or benefit from the experience.
4. We discussed the elements of the book, the pattern we were going to try to duplicate. I tried to help them see the pattern on their own, without telling them outright, but told them when I had to.

The plot of *Are You a Ladybug* involved a little ladybug asking various critters if they were a ladybug and the critter saying something like "No, because I have feathers" or whatever characteristic worked. So in our discussion, we picked a student we were looking for and had each student say one thing that made them different from the selected student.

Ten Sailors is basically a counting and rhyming book. So each student had to come up with a word that rhymed with one of the numbers one through ten, then put it in a sentence. For example, one rhymes with gum, so one student said, "Student one chewed some gum." Some of these were very cute and creative and some weren't, but again the object was to get every student to produce some language.

5. With my guidance, each student contributed the words for a page and I wrote them down.
6. I had some students type the words into the stack form I had created in advance. If the students were too young or there wasn't time, I did it for them.
7. I also illustrated the one book using simple clip art. The other one was illustrated by pasting one drawing from each student into the book.
8. A copy of the book was made for each student.
9. We added color to the books.
10. We practiced the books for several days and sent them home. I added an explanatory note to the parents, telling them what we were doing and asking them to be sure to have their student read the book to them and to provide help as needed. I include some suggestions.

Give it a try. The stacking involved is relatively simple and the results are gratifying!

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