Seven Paths to Literacy

A web-based bank of language arts units for instruction, independent learning,
And school-based assessment

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Ofek (Horizon) is a web-based bank of educational units designed to meet curricular demands and standards in several disciplines, including Literacy for 3rd-6th grade students. Units stored in the bank can be assigned by the teacher for the whole class, or for a group of students, using the LMS (Learning Management System) behind Ofek. In order to support a genre-based Literacy curriculum, seven types of units were developed, and will be demonstrated in the presentation. The web-based bank contains: media rich independent learning units; assessment units that include on-line teacher's assessment tools; an essay generator using 14 language structures and genres (summary, comparison, informational, opinion, interview, formal letter, etc.); a book report generator (two versions); a comics creator; units that offer a 'cloze' reading comprehension game (two versions – one for independent learning and one for assessment); and read and listen units, followed by non-computerized classroom activities. Teacher's feedback, and all files created by students can be stored and displayed through the personalized student environment in Ofek (Horizon).

We are now at the stage of implementation and integration of Ofek (Horizon) in 400 primary schools. Before we continue with our development, we feel that the following questions should be addressed: what types of units do teachers find most useful? What impact will Ofek's assessment information will have on teachers' lesson plans? How to support collaborative learning while using well structured content intended for individual learners? How to integrate Web 2.0 tools (Blogs, Wikies, etc.)?

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1 The Ofek (horizon) instruction, learning and assessment ICT platform is developed by The Center for Educational Technology, in Tel - Aviv. CET is the largest educational NGO in Israel.