

ED 308 lesson critique

The lesson we implemented was, for the most part, a valuable experience. I'm not sure whether I felt this way due to the technology element or the fact that I was doing a teaching activity for the first time rather than observing. I would suggest in the future that students were guaranteed a little student teaching time before taking this program. That way we would be experienced enough to A) handle the lesson better and B) get a better feel for whether or not it was valuable.

The creation of the lesson took an extremely long time. I feel that the group element hampered us in this regard. It's a lot of trouble to coordinate what are, in effect, four separate projects. However, it was invaluable for those who weren't yet very comfortable with the technology we were using. Overall, I suppose it was a good idea, and we were given enough time to do everything.

We implemented the lesson with two different classes. I got varying results, which I thought were interesting. For the most part, I tried not to intercede so I could see how well I designed the webquest. I told the students I'd be there if they needed help or had any questions, then sat back and observed.

The first class did very effective work, mostly as a team. The group of six or seven was using two computers, and completing the given objectives simultaneously. There was one girl who seemed a bit of a loner, but she was pulled in to some extent because one of my specifications was that all group members were to participate in the presentation. I overheard some interested discussion of what they were learning, which was nice: "Oh, so he [Woody Guthrie] actually lived through it [the Dust Bowl]!"

The second group was a bit less successful. It was definitely divided between girls and boys. The girls learned about one part, the boys another, and they pooled their knowledge at the end before the presentation. There was hardly any inter-talking between them as they went through the webquest. I'm not sure what caused such a big difference from the previous class. Physically, they were using more computers than the first group was, and were in a line at the desks as opposed to a more huddled configuration. Temporally, it was right after lunch and at the end of the day, which may account for things. Of course, perhaps the first time I just happened to get a good mix of students who acted cohesively because of their personality types.

I did get some feedback when there was a little spare time in the first class. I told them frankly that we were trying to design a lesson that was informative and hopefully fun, and asked if they thought it was interesting, stupid, boring, or anything. The consensus seemed to be that they liked being able to use computers to learn things directly, and found that refreshing. But, they said that they are constantly giving presentations, and that was getting a little old.

So all in all I think it was a valuable experience. I gather that what the reader is interested in is whether or not the technology aspect in particular was a good idea. I would say yes, but the novelty of it was probably a large factor in the students' opinions. Somehow I can't see frequently implemented webquests in the classroom being a great idea.