

My project was implemented with Mr. Moff's fifth grade class at DJ Montague Elementary, and the actual implementation took place in the computer lab, not the classroom. The students were very comfortable working with the technology, and there were no management problems during the lesson. The students had studied vertebrates with Mr. Moff already, so we did not have to give them much background information at all. The teacher had asked us to create this online "zoo" of unusual vertebrates to further extend the previous lessons, and he is going to be adding more animals to our zoo over time.

The objectives in this activity were to have students learn about other vertebrates that they had not studied with Mr. Moff, for students to successfully navigate the website, and for students to complete the scavenger hunt activity sheet using the information found on the website.

The materials needed for the activity were access to the website we created, a computer for each student, and the scavenger hunt activity sheet.

The lesson itself was more of an inquiry activity, with very little direct instruction on our part.

*Students each sat at a computer in the lab, and we introduced the topic of the lesson.

*Each student then opened the website, and we had the site projected onto the board. We showed students the basic format and how to navigate through the site.

*Students were given the scavenger hunt sheets to complete and we walked around the room, assisting students as needed, and checking their progress.

The assessment was in the form of the scavenger hunt, comprised of twelve questions. The questions ranged from ones taken straight from the text on the site, such

as “How does the parrotfish make sand?” to questions that made the student pull together information from several of the pages, such as “Which animals on this site are endangered?” and “Which two vertebrates are distant relatives of the elephant?”. Also, the final question on the worksheet allowed students to write about the most interesting vertebrate that they learned about from the website.

The students really enjoyed this activity. We implemented it at three in the afternoon, so they were excited to have a fun activity at the end of their day. Many of the animals on the website were new to the students, as intended, so this made the activity intriguing and more interesting. Mr. Moff agreed that the project was a success, and all of the students were able to finish the scavenger hunt in the time allotted, which we did not anticipate because of the limited time we had in the lab. We checked the students’ sheets as they finished, and if they had a question wrong or were missing some information, we had them go back and find the correct answer. Thus we took the “mastery” approach to assessment, and allowed the student’s to keep trying until they got all of the questions correct. The lesson ran smoothly and the kids were eager to do the scavenger hunt, and the only assistance they needed were clarification on a few of the questions.

Overall, I feel that the lesson was a success. It was difficult to make the actual website though, first, because none of us knew how to make a webpage in Publisher, so we had to learn that on our own. Another problem that we ran into was that once we each did our separate parts of the webpage on our individual home computers, we could not find an easy way to combine them, because the files were too large to fit on a disk or to be emailed. We tried using a USB flash drive, but to no avail. We finally decided to post

the parts on the Blackboard site, and combine them from there. The last problem was trying to get the file to DJ Montague and onto their network. Uploading the site from Blackboard was not working, and we ended up having to borrow an external zip drive and zip disk from DJ Montague. The last problem that arose was that only 27 pages out of 30 total pages of the website would upload onto the network for no apparent reason. Thus, the students could not access three of the pages about birds. Luckily, we had not asked any questions that directly pertained to these pages, but it was still disappointing that there were errors in our site.

After all these preliminary problems were worked through, the lesson itself went very well, and the problems with the site did not affect the activity at all. The project will eventually be linked to Mr. Moff's classroom website, and meaning that other students in subsequent years will be able to learn from our project as well, and add more information about other vertebrates. I feel that this project is something that I could use when I am a teacher someday, and I plan to link it to my own classroom's website so that even more people can learn about these interesting vertebrates that we researched.