

ED 401 Evaluation Report
4/17/04

Over the course of this semester I worked in Nancy Tatum's kindergarten class. Our project was to work with the students to create a talking alphabet book out of a PowerPoint presentation. Honestly, I don't feel like this project really "fit into" a specific place in the curriculum, the alphabet is just a pretty basic topic for kindergartners. They can always use more practice working with letters and the sounds that those letters make. Our activity worked well for this, because not only did each student concentrate on a specific letter, but when we presented the slide show to the class, all of the letters and corresponding sounds were reinforced.

The objectives of the activity were first of all for each child to identify a word that began with "their" letter of the alphabet. Our group made up a short list of words for each letter, just in case students needed a little extra help coming up with an idea. The goal, however, was for each student to identify their own word, and there were a lot of creative original words from students! After identifying a word that they could easily illustrate, students then drew a short sketch of the picture they would later draw using the computer.

Group members went to school on the day that the computer work was scheduled, and we worked individually with students on Microsoft Paint to illustrate their picture. They were responsible for drawing the actual object, and we helped them put text on the page, spelling out the letter,

their word, and the name. After all this was completed, we then used the recorder to record each child saying the name of their letter and what it stood for. Surprisingly, all this work with the students took only about half the time that we had originally planned for!

When all of these files were completed and saved, we then copied them all into a PowerPoint presentation. We then went back to the classroom one Friday afternoon to show the presentation to the class. It had to be played twice, because the students were so excited about seeing their work on the screen that they talked and giggled and couldn't hear most of the dialogue.

Overall, I would have to say that student response was extremely positive. They seemed to really enjoy creating the slides, and it was obvious that they really enjoyed watching the show at the end. One of the nice things about this project is that students were able to receive such individualized time with either their teacher or a member of the group. I'm sure that this really helped to eliminate any frustration that would have otherwise occurred when trying to work with technology that was relatively new to most of them. It was also interesting for me to see how different students were on their ability levels. Some were able to create pretty impressive pictures relatively easily, while others had more trouble working with the mouse to draw what they wanted to. Again, this is another reason why I feel the individualized instruction on the computer was very

helpful, and actually rather necessary for a project like this with students of this age.

Our teacher also seemed very happy with the activity. She mentioned that she has been wanting to do something similar to this for years, but never had enough people to help her actually do it. As far as the technology component, none of it seemed very advanced or challenging to me, but it seemed appropriate for the level of students we were working with. There was no formal assessment; it was just an activity done for the fun of it with some educational "side effects." Honestly, I don't know how I would really improve this activity in the future. I think it's an okay thing for there to be fun events in the classroom every once in a while, so I would definitely not add any kind of formal evaluation component. Other than that, it might have been nice if the kids had been exposed to Microsoft Paint a little before we worked with them. That would have reduced the need for one-to-one work, however I felt that was one of the real strengths of this activity. My final evaluation would have to be that this was a very successful activity; everyone participating seemed very positive about it!