

Drew & Metcalf PBI Project Written Report
EDU 546 602

Compelling Question: Will the use of the app, Scribble My Story, help students be more engaged and enthusiastic in the informational writing process?

Lesson Rationale

Our PBI lessons addressed creating enthusiasm and engagement in the informational writing process for kindergarten and first grade students. That being said, I am reminded of Denise Johnson as she states, “Just as teachers use their expertise to carefully and intentionally select the best and most effective instructional strategies to meet students’ literacy needs, so should they select technology tools and resources” (Thomas, p 19). Realizing the need for preparation we utilized the TPACK framework in our planning. How did this lesson connect with TPACK? First, we had to decide the content for our instruction. We wanted to teach students about spiders and bats, use this knowledge to integrate informational writing skills, and learn how to use a new and exciting writing tool to showcase our research. Our goal was to integrate all of these studies with the focus on students becoming more excited about writing. Next, we addressed Pedagogy. We wanted to provide instruction by using a variety of methods. We started lessons with a graphic organizer, the KWHL chart. By using this, students were able to see how their knowledge of each topic grew and changed. Direct instruction was used in our units daily. During our first unit about bats, we read traditional books. We then advanced in our second unit about spiders to ebooks and YouTube videos to guide our direct instruction. Modeling was used throughout our lessons to teach writing skills. The app, Scribble My Story, was also modeled so that students would feel comfortable using it as a writing tool. We also

used group discussions as students shared ideas for writing. Then we focused on technology by using the Bright Links, Plickers, ebooks, YouTube videos, ipads, and the app, Scribble My Story.

During our lessons, students were involved in utilizing the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy: Remembering- Facts were presented that would be used in daily writing activities,

Understanding- Our KWHL chart monitored understanding of knowledge learned about spiders and bats. Students also had to understand how to use the writing app in order to create their written stories.

Applying- Daily knowledge was applied to writing lessons. For example, one of our writing prompts included: Bats can Students were encouraged to apply what they learned to create informational writing products that would tell others about what bats can do..

Analysing- Our daily review of the KWHL chart helped students understand prior misconceptions of the content as well as it also provided documentation of new knowledge presented throughout instruction. Evaluating- We evaluated our writing programs when we used Plickers to judge how students felt about our two writing approaches. Creating- Two different types of writing products were produced to show what students learned about bats and spiders. The first using paper, pencil, and crayons a more traditional approach and the second using the app, Scribble My Story.

The Schema Theory was used in our approach of instruction. As discussed in the article, *Schema Theory*, we first needed to explore, "...how knowledge is represented and how it is used" (Schema Theory, p 1). Given the students' backgrounds we addressed this theory in two ways. First, knowledge was addressed in the content of our units. We explored to find out what

students already knew about spiders and bats? How might this affect their enthusiasm towards writing? How might their writing change as new modes of information are exposed to them? Secondly, the Schema Theory was addressed as we wanted to know how students excitement towards writing might change when they created a book in a new way using technology as their format. Would students perception of writing change if they were given a new way to write?

The tool we selected for our writing project was Scribble My Story. This is a writing app that is available on our school ipads. This program allows students to create an online book. They are given topics to select from as well as the option to create original texts. They have access to various tools that will assist them with creating engaging books. Students may choose to type their pages or they can select markers to write their sentences themselves. They can draw pictures or they can select a picture to include as an illustration. We encouraged students to try both methods. The program is student friendly in that it has an eraser for students to use if they want to edit their writing. Students may also record their voices reading each page. The final product is a completed book that includes colorful illustrations, text, and they can also hear their own voice reading each page.

The students did learn a lot about spiders and bats. They also learned how to create informational writing pieces. Students learned how to write using a technological format using a variety of research tools. It appears that students gained a new appreciation of writing. They were truly excited to use the writing app. They were engaged as they explored their options for creating each page of the book. The students really enjoyed recording their voices. This was probably the feature that created the most excitement. Students at this stage of writing development use invented spelling when writing. The recording feature helped the children to be

more relaxed in that they knew when their stories were shared all would be able to understand what their story said. As I sat on the floor one of the kindergarten students gave me a big smile and said with much excitement in his voice, “This is awesome.” I did not hear that type of response when students were creating the paper and pencil version of the books. When we read our books with one another you could also tell a difference in the way the students responded to the different way of presentation. They were more attentive and eager when using the Scribble My Story books. They even clapped louder during these presentations. Overall, I think the students students enjoyed learning about informational writing, more so when technology was integrated into the unit. When asked if they wanted to create another book using this app they responded with excitement and seemed pleased to use Scribble My Story again.

Lesson Implementation

For our PBI project we decided to have students create two different products in two different ways. We wanted to be able to compare their enthusiasm and engagement in the informational writing process, so we had students create a paper/pencil bat book for week one and a spider book using the iPad app, Scribble My Story, for week two.

We started by teaching the students about bats since it was October and bats fall into the Kindergarten and First Grade Essential Standards for Science. We wanted to try and limit technology during our bat book writing so we shared only traditional print information with the students. Before we started our bat lessons we created a KWL chart with the students, so we could see how much background knowledge they had about bats. Then each day we read a different informational text about bats and the students focused on a specific sentence starter. We used three different sentence starters; bats can, bats have and bats are. After reading the story we would discuss what we had learned about bats and we would update our KWL chart. Then we would go back to our sentence starter and have the students share with their “shoulder buddy” what they had learned that day and what they wanted to write about. We completed a class chart with the students ideas so they would have a reference when it was time for them to write. Next, Mrs. Drew or I would model our sentence starter for the students and then they were sent back to their tables to write. Each table had 2 or 3 bat books in case students wanted to go back and look for information. After they finished their written section, students were allowed to illustrate their page. We followed this format for the next two days of our paper bat book writing to create the pages for; bats have and bats are.

The next week we taught a spider unit but we used all digital resources. We also had the students create their own informational text using their new tool, the iPad app, Scribble My Story. We followed a very similar format for our spider lessons. We started our unit by creating a KWHL chart with the students, so we could find out what they knew and what they wanted to learn about spiders. Our first spider day we let the students know what our sentence starter would be for the day. We used the same three sentence starters; spiders can, spiders have and spiders are. For our first lesson we shared information with the students using an ebook. After reading we went back to our KWHL and filled in our new knowledge. Students then shared with their “shoulder buddy” what piece of information they wanted to write about that day. We created a class chart with the sentence starter of the day for student reference. Next, students were able to get their iPad and create their own spider books, working on one page each day. We taught the students how to find the app, open it and create their own pages. Some students were able to use the predictable text feature and some used inventive spelling, it was their choice. Once we started using the app students noticed the microphone feature so they also recorded themselves reading their book. Students also had the option of drawing their own spiders and settings or using stickers provided in the app. Just like with the bat books, students had to complete their writing before moving to the illustrations. We followed the same format each day, changing the way information was shared with the students and the sentence starters. We used a Scholastic News about spiders and also a Youtube video filled with spider information. After students completed their spider books, they shared them with our classmates.

Challenges & Success

As with any project we have a few challenges but also successes, you will find them listed below.

Challenges

Hurricane Matthew took a major toll on our city. We had 65 roads washed out and hundreds of people with flooded out homes, living in temporary shelters created at schools all around our county. For many days our county was literally divided because of the cresting of the Neuse River. The devastating aftermath of Hurricane Matthew caused schools to shut down for 8 and a half days, which in turn caused us to lose 8 days of PBI instruction. We felt the pressure of completing our PBI project when school started back and we did our best. The students enjoyed both parts of the project and we were able to implement and collect all the data we needed.

We also ran into a few snags with our iPad carts at school. Our Media Specialist was going through the process of reconfiguring all of the iPads before we started our project. Unfortunately the app that we had planned to use with our students was no longer going to be available when she completed the process. However, our school has 4 iPad carts and we were able to talk with the Media Specialist and she held off on the reconfiguration process for our cart. Another issue that we had with the iPads was the battery life. Our school started a new schedule this year and students have special area classes every six days. One day is a morning filled with specials and the next day is an afternoon filled with specials. Our unique schedule made scheduling somewhat of an issue. We were able to schedule our time with the iPads in the afternoon but many classes had already used them by that point. On some occasions we had iPads that had no battery life left when they got to us. Of course we did not know this until we started passing out iPads and heard the cries of, “my iPad isn’t working, “my iPad is dead”, etc.

Luckily we had 2 chargers so we could rotate students to a temporary “charging station” so that they could continue to work on their books.

Success

In spite of our challenges we did prevail and the students were successful. The students enjoyed using the app and being able to create their own book. They enjoyed recording themselves and being able to share their creation with the class. Every student successfully created a book with no tears! The writing process for a Kindergarten student sometimes ends in frustration and tears, thankfully this one did not. Students have since asked to use the app again, hopefully we will be able on to replace it, that will remain free.

Another success of our project was our collaboration. It was so nice to plan with another professional using technology as our goal.

Collaboration

Miss Metcalf

Mrs. Drew and I met to decide what we wanted to focus on for our PBI project. We decided to use my Multiage Kindergarten/First Grade class since she is a Title I Instructional Coach. Since it was October we chose to continue with units that were already planned and added our PBI project to them. We wanted to see if using the iPad app Scribble My Story would engage students more in the informational text writing process about spiders. We decided to make our project two fold and have the students create a traditional, paper/pencil style book about bats. We shared the responsibilities of finding resources to use with the students and securing the iPad cart. We both taught lessons during each part; bats and spiders and we shared the creation of this PBI report. Mrs. Drew and I have collaborated on different things in the past and I have said many times that we make a great team! I feel that I learned that having a collaborator that you know and trust makes the process much easier. I felt at ease releasing the teaching of different lessons to Mrs. Drew and I knew they were in good hands.

Mrs. Drew

I learned that collaboration is truly a team effort. During this process, I was able to lean on Miss Metcalf's strengths. She is amazing when using technology and this really helped me through all the kinks that occurred such as the Ipad reconfigurations. I am so thankful that she shared her class with me and I really enjoyed being in the classroom and working with her children. We share similar teaching styles, so that helps with the instruction of our lessons. Miss Metcalf has taught me so much about technology and I truly enjoy working with her.

References

Johnson, D. (2014). *Reading, writing, and literacy 2.0: Teaching with online texts, tools, and resources, K-8*.

Schema Theory - Sacramento State. (n.d.). Retrieved November 11, 2016, from <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/g/gipej/teaparty.pdf>