

**The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
2002-2003**

**FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

Integrative Science Web Quest Design

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The goal of our project was to create a web quest that would support the new elementary science curriculum, incorporate ELA skills, and introduce students to using the Internet to obtain data. We were able to accomplish this goal, although it required a lot of trial and error and assistance from Computer Services. We had to make several changes in our design as we discovered the limitations of the topic we had selected, the intricacies of actually getting the web quest to work the way it was supposed to, and finally, the process of actually implementing it with the students.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We began by meeting with the fourth grade team and finding out in what content area they were most interested in receiving extra help. The matter unit was selected, with properties of matter being the focus. Next we reviewed existing web quests and found that there did not seem to be an existing one on this topic. We also looked at the design of various web quests and were unhappy with the format of many of them. The next step then was to come up with an original design that we felt would be most effective with fourth graders. We decided on a matter search in which teams of two researched different specific facts about a matter sample and then created a postcard in which they combined the results of each one's quest into two related summary paragraphs. The postcards could then be printed out in color and mailed to their teacher through our school-wide Wee Deliver program. We used MicrosoftWord documents to create the pages of the web quest. Then we began looking for links.

The topic that we had selected turned out to be a very difficult one to find information on that was at the reading level of our students. Our initial list of 12 matter samples had to be revised many times before all the pages were finished. This also meant that the correlated hands-on portion of the quest could not use the exact same samples of matter, which was a major disappointment. We also discovered that the links did not work on our computers. This required Computer Services to reimage all the computers in the Computer lab and eventually in the whole school. Then we had to learn how to post the quest in shared folders for the students to access. We also had to change our original plan of having the students e-mail their postcards to their teachers as the computer server would not allow this. In addition to the web quest itself, we designed a student work folder that contained the rubric and the fact sheets. A coordinating matter Olympics inquiry science lesson was also created. Once the quest was posted and the links functioning we presented it to the fourth grade teachers and set up a schedule for the classes to come in rotations of four days to carry out the quest. Once the students were using the quest we continued to make adjustments

particularly in the writing process.

What methods were used to evaluate your original intended results?

After the presentation to the fourth grade teachers we asked them for feedback. They were, in general, very pleased with the quest. They liked the fact that the students were working in teams. They also like the student use of jot notes as a method of recording the facts. They were concerned about the amount of time the quest would take in light of state test preparation, and we had some difficulty setting up the class schedules.

Based on the rubric most students who have participated have been successful in completing the tasks. The students liked doing the search and expressed excitement about the quest process, which was new to them.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

- What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?
- What evidence is there that teaching practices have changed?
- What evidence is there that student achievement is improving?

1. Evidence of goals met:

- a. Web quest was created
- b. Web quest is in the fourth grade shared folder
- c. The fourth grade classes have completed or are scheduled for the web quest

2. Evidence of changes in teaching practices:

The web quest format is a new one for our school. The quest we created provides a high level model for teachers who wish to create one of their own. The quest also created an opportunity where the technology curriculum of the library could intersect with that of the science program in a new way. The quest introduces the students to using the Internet through a controlled search environment.

3. Evidence that student achievement is improving?

Although there has been no formal student assessment at this time, the web quest is intended to provide an opportunity for students to write descriptively about the properties of a matter sample. This is the same type of task found on the NY State ESPET test. As such it is direct practice of the skills required for the test and should thereby improve students performance. Scores on the quest-writing rubric indicate a high level of student success.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

The Study Group format worked well for this project. We met weekly to work on the quest and to collaborate. This kept us focused and on task. Making a progress chart as part of our reporting process was exceptionally helpful, first in breaking what seemed to be an overwhelming task into manageable bites, and secondly, in helping us keep track of what had been done. Most importantly the process worked well for us since both of us have complex schedules that preclude us from ever meeting together during regular school hours.

