**Unit Plan: Skyping with Authors**

**By Katie Douglas**

**Students’ Academic and Technology Background:**

Hurlock Elementary Schoolis located in Hurlock, a small town with a population of approximately 1800 people in rural Dorchester County, Maryland.  It was opened in 1982 to consolidate Hurlock Primary and Hurlock Intermediate Schools.   It has been enlarged twice by additions in 1990 and in 1996 to accommodate the increasing enrollment and special needs population.  The current enrollment is 490 students in grades Pre-K through 5. We are a Title I school that has over 50% of our students receiving free and reduced lunch. This is my fourth year at Hurlock Elementary School as the media specialist. This unit will be taught to all 3rd grade students. Students are heterogeneously mixed in approximately a 20 student class. This unit will take approximately three months. I have students in weekly rotations for 50 minutes. There are four classes of 3rd grade students so each month I will have them for approximately one week. The teachers in this grade level have a strong appreciation for literature and will be helping me by doing read-alouds with the chapter books. Approximately, 60 percent are reading on or above grade level. Inclusion is practiced so there are several alternative MSA students but they are working one-on-one with assistants. Students have a good background in researching skills. During the second term of this school year I introduced students to the research process. Through this research unit they learned how to evaluated web resources, use databases, and follow copyright guidelines. At the end of the unit they created their first PowerPoint™ presentation.

**Topic Descriptions and Goals:**

As the Media/Technology Specialist my goal is to promote reading while following the Technology Literacy Standards. In the 3rd grade core curriculum my goals are to promote literacy and to begin the research process. Through check out data I have discovered that 3rd grade students have the lowest number of check outs in the past three years. Also, when completing the school-wide reading program data these students are very reluctant to read. This group needs to be inspired to read. I feel through sharing a lot of different books and then meeting famous authors they hopefully with be encouraged to read. The objectives of this unit are for students to read books by different authors, create a book display about that book, research the author, and then meet with the author online through SKYPE. Through this unit I will be able to meet the student’s need of using different technology tools by focusing on research. My main goal is for students to develop a love for reading.

**Technology Integration:**

In the beginning of my unit my pre-survey integrates the technology software of Turning Point®. Turning Point® allows students to participate in presentations by submitting responses using a ResponseCard™ keypad. You can take these responses and save the data to analyze or record it. After reading different authors books students will then be creating two projects. They will be creating “Book Floats” and researching the authors. Each author that I have contacted has specific website that describes their books and give background information about them. While researching their author students will be using SAILOR Maryland Public Library Resources to gather the majority of their information. The search engine that we will be using is Sweet search. Sweet search is developed for students and is one of the safest search engines that I have found. It only shares sites that have been evaluated by a group of teachers and librarians. Students will be using Powerpoint® to share our research and these will be posted on our media center website and will be shared with the author.

As a class we will be using Jaycut® to create digital slideshows of pictures of our “Book Floats”. Jaycut® is an online video/picture editing tool which allows you to store your pictures online and embed the presentation in websites. These also will be posted on the library website and will be shared with the author.

SKYPE® will be used to video chat with the author. SKYPE® is a software application that allows you to make voice calls or chat over the internet. Due to the restraints of our school internet system we will be going across the street to the town hall to meet with our authors. For this project we are using my personal laptop and with author permission we are going to use CallBurner® which allows us to record the call. This saves the call in a MP3 format for students to revisit.

Throughout all of the units I will be using a FlipMino™ to record the students creating their activities. FlipMino™ is a mini-video camcorder that allows you to download the videos and turn it into movies or use frames for pictures. Through this software I will create pictures for the Jaycut® slideshow and movies to share our lessons. With author permission I will be recording the SKYPE® visits for students to view.

**Learning Goals/Objectives:**

School Library Media Maryland State Objectives: (2010)

* 1b2a. With guidance, use criteria to determine the scope of an information need.
* 2a1a. With guidance, explore and identify human, print, online, and multimedia resources.
* 2b1c. With guidance, apply knowledge of search strategies to locate relevant sources.
* 2b1d. With guidance, select print, online, and multimedia sources.
* 2b2b. With guidance, evaluate sources based on currency, authority, and relevance to select sources that best meet the information need.
* 3b1c. With guidance, exhibit ethical behavior in generating information.
* 3c1b. Express different ways to organize information. (Categorize)
* 3c1d. With guidance, use keywords to identify relevant information.
* 4b1c. Reflect and decide on the order in which to organize or present the recorded data/information.
* 5a1a. With guidance, organize and display findings/conclusions in a variety of formats, including the use of technology.
* 5a1b. With guidance, design layouts that communicate content effectively for intended audiences.
* 5a1e. With guidance edit/review/revise/practice the presentation of the information product.
* 5a2a. Contribute to a learning community.
* 5a2b. With guidance, practice digital etiquette when sharing findings and conclusions.
* 6a1a. With guidance, read, listen to, view, and discuss literature that reflects personal interests, provides imagined experiences, and validates individual concerns and real experiences.
* 6a1b. Make literature –to-self, literature-to-literature, and literature-to-multimedia connections, and, with guidance make literature-to-world connections.
* 6b1d. With guidance, contribute to a learning community.
* 6b1e. With guidance, adopt new technology or methodology to expand personal and academic pursuits/endeavors.

**Assessment Plan:**

At the beginning of the unit students will be given a pre-survey to determine their attitudes towards reading. This will be done through Turning Point™ and will be analyzed by grade level to determine how they feel about reading. This will allow me to identify the 3rd grade group’s perspective on reading and help them develop better reading habits. At the end of the unit this same survey will be given to see if they have developed more of an appreciation of reading after creating the projects and visiting with the authors. I also will use library check out data to see if their book check out increased during this unit and after.

Student’s summative evaluation will be based on their two projects. A rubric has been created for each project for students to follow. Students will be given the rubrics before each project begins and it will be discussed so students are aware of the expectations. Although, I do not give media grade the classroom teachers have agreed to use these grade for reading.

**Part I: Introduction to Unit**

**Objectives:**

**Cue Set:**

Explain to students that they will be completing a special unit on “Famous Authors”. Ask students to raise their hands if they have ever met a famous author?

**Teaching Strategies:**

1. Using Turning Point™ have students complete the pre-survey about their reading attitudes. Explain to students that this is completely anonymous and will just be used for my personal data collection.
2. Explain that their teachers and myself will be sharing with them different books by authors that they are going to meet on SKYPE®.
3. Share with students the PowerPoint presentation that introduces them to the activities they will be doing over the next couple months.
4. Allow students time to explore the different author’s websites so they can understand what books that they have written.

**Closure:**

What are your thoughts about the unit that we are getting ready to complete during library time? Are any of the books familiar to you?

**Assessment:**

Pre-survey will be given to get a base line data on their attitudes towards reading.

**Part II: Book Floats**

**Objectives:**

* 6a1a. With guidance, read, listen to, view, and discuss literature that reflects personal interests, provides imagined experiences, and validates individual concerns and real experiences.
* 6a1b. Make literature –to-self, literature-to-literature, and literature-to-multimedia connections, and, with guidance make literature-to-world connections.
* 6b1d. With guidance, contribute to a learning community.

**Cue Set:**

How many of you have ever been to a parade? Imagine that you are going to create a float in a parade about a book? What would it look like?

Teaching Strategies:

1. Explain to students that they will be working in a group to design a "book float" based on the book that they been assigned. Decorate the shoe box to go with the book and it will be like a float in a parade.
2. Share with students the introduction PowerPoint that gives the procedures about the book float.
3. Remind students of the directions.
   1. All advertisement on the shoe box should be covered.
   2. The title of the book should be neatly displayed on one side of the "float". This title should be written in correct form with the proper words capitalized and the whole title underlined (for example:  Little House on the Prairie). The author's name should also be written after the title.
   3. A neat and brief summary of the book should be on the other side of the "float".
   4. The student's name should be written neatly on the back of the "float".
   5. Natural materials or student-made decorations should be used to build the scene on the shoe box, not purchased materials like little cars, Indians, etc.
4. Review the rubric of expectations and how they will be graded on this assignment. This will be used as a reading grade.
5. Allow students to work on their project. While students are working use the FlipMino™ to take videos of their projects.
6. When students are complete have them share their project and put them on display in the library.

Closure:

When students walk by the library and see your “Book Float” do you think it will encourage them to read the book?

Assessment:

Using the rubric that was discussed and shared in class I will evaluate the “Book Floats” to see if students meet their objectives. This will be a summative grade that will be used in the classroom for reading.

**Part III: Author Biographies**

**Objectives:**

* 2a1a. With guidance, explore and identify human, print, online, and multimedia resources.
* 2b1c. With guidance, apply knowledge of search strategies to locate relevant sources.
* 2b1d. With guidance, select print, online, and multimedia sources.
* 2b2b. With guidance, evaluate sources based on currency, authority, and relevance to select sources that best meet the information need.
* 3b1c. With guidance, exhibit ethical behavior in generating information.
* 3c1b. Express different ways to organize information. (Categorize)
* 3c1d. With guidance, use keywords to identify relevant information.
* 4b1c. Reflect and decide on the order in which to organize or present the recorded data/information.
* 5a1a. With guidance, organize and display findings/conclusions in a variety of formats, including the use of technology.
* 5a1b. With guidance, design layouts that communicate content effectively for intended audiences.
* 5a1e. With guidance edit/review/revise/practice the presentation of the information product.
* 5a2a. Contribute to a learning community.
* 5a2b. With guidance, practice digital etiquette when sharing findings and conclusions.

**Assessment:**

Using the rubric that was discussed and shared in class I will evaluate the PowerPoint’s to see if students meet their objectives. This will be a summative grade that will be used in the classroom for reading.

**Part IV: SKYPE visits with Authors**

**Objectives:**

* 6b1e. With guidance, adopt new technology or methodology to expand personal and academic pursuits/endeavors.
* 1b2a. With guidance, use criteria to determine the scope of an information need.

**Cue Set:**

How do you feel about meeting a famous author? What are you expecting to discover?

**Teaching Strategies:**

1. Discuss with students “SKYPE Ettiquette”. Share with them the document and go into details about how to behave.
2. Walk with students over to the Town Hall and have them sit on the floor so they can see the projector.
3. Make sure students are aware of where the microphone is if they would like to ask a question.
4. Call the author and make proper introductions.
5. While talking with the author make sure CallBurner® is on to record if I have permission from the author.
6. Have a student use the FlipMino™ to record the presentation from the author.
7. Make sure students properly thank the author and follow up with a thank you email and personal thank you note from one of the students.
8. Students will walk back to the school.

**Closure:**

What did you think of the conversation with the author? Do you plan on reading more of their books?

**Assessment:**

After this part of the unit students will then take the reading attitude survey again. Using the data collected from the survey and book check out I will see if reading has increased and if students have developed a better attitude.

**Analysis and Instructional Decision Making:**

Student Attitude Survey:

At the beginning of the unit students will be given a pre-survey to determine their attitudes towards reading. This will be done through Turning Point™ and will be analyzed by grade level to determine how they feel about reading. This will allow me to identify the 3rd grade group’s perspective on reading and help them develop better reading habits. At the end of the unit this same survey will be given to see if they have developed more of an appreciation of reading after creating the projects and visiting with the authors.

Questions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I read in my spare time. | Before Unit | After Unit |
| Always | 15% | 22% |
| Sometimes | 11% | 44% |
| Rarely | 60% | 14% |
| Never | 14% | 20% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I enjoy starting a new book. | Before Unit | After Unit |
| Always | 34% | 45% |
| Sometimes | 44% | 50% |
| Rarely | 2% | 0% |
| Never | 20% | 5% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I learn from books. | Before Unit | After Unit |
| Always | 82% | 77% |
| Sometimes | 11% | 3% |
| Rarely | 0% | 11% |
| Never | 7% | 9% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I enjoy checking books out from the library. | Before Unit | After Unit |
| Always | 77% | 100% |
| Sometimes | 11% | 0% |
| Rarely | 9% | 0% |
| Never | 3% | 0% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I have met a famous author before. | Before Unit | After Unit |
| Yes | 0% | % |
| No | 100% | 0% |

**Monthly Checkout-Data:**

Number of Books that 3rd grade student’s checked-out

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | January | February | March (unit begins) | April (unit continues) |
| 3rd grade | 655 | 607 | 782 | 899 |