Evaluation Document

I was able to present my entire unit to my class. I have taught this unit for four years now, but this year was the best. I revised and changed up what had not been working, and was able to be a more effective teacher, and my students retained more information and their habitats should be pretty good, they are due in a few days.

Introduce and explain your project and the processes, materials, and lessons learned

1. Unit: Utah environments, the learning standard for this unit is that students will understand the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts and identify common organisms for each environment.

This thematic unit was designed in a way for the students to understand the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts and identify common organisms for each environment. The fourth grade students were introduced and taught how to describe the physical characteristics of Utah's wetlands, forests, and deserts. The fourth grade students were introduced to and were able to properly describe the common plants and animals found in Utah environments and how these organisms have adapted to the environment in which they live. This thematic unit taught the fourth grade student to use a simple scheme to classify Utah plants and animals. The thematic unit also taught the fourth graders to observe and record the behavior of Utah animals and have an explanation for why they behave that way.

         Learner reaction

o   What was the learners’ reaction to your thematic unit?

  What did they like? My students really like all the visuals that I used for introducing new information throughout the thematic unit. The students liked the habitat posters and loved to refer to them when we reviewed what we had learned from the previous lessons. The students also enjoyed the jigsaw activity at the beginning of the lesson. They enjoyed becoming the expert on an environment and teaching other peers information on that environment.

  What didn’t they like? Honestly, my students did not like the fact that I reminded them to bring their shoebox at the end of each lesson. They would say, “Miss Eastmond, we know.” Or, “Miss Eastmond, I already brought my shoebox.” I think the reason they responded this way was because I put a lot of responsibility on them during science, because there was content that needed to be taught and concepts that needed to be mastered, that there was no time to slack. They knew what was expected and the students seemed to really accept the learning responsibility. All but 3 of my students had their shoeboxes to class by the third day!

  Results of your reaction survey—See information above.

         Meeting objectives

o   How well did the learners meet the objectives of this thematic unit? My students did so well. They loved to know what they were learning, how they were going to learn it and checking in at the end of the lesson to see if they met their objectives. Defining my objectives and having my students orally state what they were going to be learning, and being aware of how they were going to learn it, and then checking off if they learned was empowering to them. It helped my fourth graders know what they were going to be learning that day. Stating my objectives, having students orally restate the objective, and put it into their own words, and checking in at the end of the lesson made a world of difference. My students were able to successfully meet all stated objectives.

  The students did write in their science journals, but I did not score these. They were able to use information from their science journal for their summative assessment at the end of the lesson, their habitat diorama.

         Evaluation from the perspective of the facilitator

* From the instructor’s perspective, what worked and what didn’t? The pacing of this unit was on and the fact that the students were held accountable for their learning by the posting, restating, and checking off of objectives worked very well. The fact that I sent home the parent note about the habitat diorama (the summative assessment for the unit) at the first of the unit allowed time for the students and their parents to ask questions well in advance before the diorama was due. One thing that nor go as well was the starting of the habitat diorama in class. I thought this would be great, the students would be able to refer to the posters we had in class and collaborate with peers, this was going great until students starting over comparing their dioramas and started arguing about what animas were better to put in their and why. Maybe this would have been better to do at home, just with their own knowledge, and not the entire classes input.
* What would you change? I would allow my students to be involved in the rubric making process. This would just give the students one more thing to be involved in their learning.

         Evaluation of the materials or technology

* Were the materials or technologies effective and appropriate?
  + The use of the white board and document camera and projector were effective. The use of my computer was effective to show the Power Points on environments. The YouTube video was effective. At the end of the unit, I did try to incorporate too much technology by writing the objectives in the notability app, and this threw my students off, they were so used to seeing the objectives posted in the same place, and referring to it, when we went to check off to see if the objectives were met, my students were thrown off.

o   What worked and what didn’t? The jigsaw activity worked really well. The students also liked all the visuals that were up in the room (posters) to refer to during the unit. Starting our habitat dioramas in class and then taking them hoe did not work well. There was too much arguing amongst the students about the best animals to put in the specific habitats.

* What would you change?
  + I would just assign the habitat diorama as a take home assignment and give the summative assessment that I have in the past, and use that for the assessment score of the unit. The Utah environments assessment has worked as an informative grade in the past.

         Evaluation of the environment (room size, arrangement)

* Could the teaching space be modified in any way to improve instruction?
  + I currently have my students arranged in three rows. I would have preferred to have them arranged into tables of three students. This way when we did the jigsaw activity and came back from becoming the expert the students could have gone back to their seats and shared with the students at their table about their habitat.
* What would you change?
  + I would have sat my students at tables with students with different ability levels. This way the higher students could guide the discussions and prompt the lower students on what should be covered and said while the lower students were presenting their information about what they had learned.

         Continuity and conformity of implementation with the design plan

* What changes would you make to the design plan to make this unit more effective?
  + I would have some sort of fast finisher activity with each lesson in case a student finishes early. An activity that the student could do that coincides with the lesson that is either and extension on an enrichment activity. I would also give a pre-assessment before the unit so that I could see what the students already knew, and what needed to be covered in depth. I would also use this same pre-assessment for my post/summative assessment to see the growth that my students made. I would also use this data to drive my instruction for the next time I taught the unit to know what I would need to focus on when teaching the unit.