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GRIT 654

My school district has much technology to offer the students. I am currently utilizing Dell laptops in collaboration with Microsoft Word to engage my students and train them to create basic websites. During the school day, my school has a “teacher special” where I have my homeroom students for a 45-minute block every day to engage them in a different learning experience.

Since this is not an academic subject, the students were allowed to choose their topics and decide what they wanted to put on their web pages. Many students are choosing to incorporate things that they have learned into their web page, such as their whale song recordings.

During the first week of my lessons, I talked to the students about what a basic website would or could have. I had the students brainstorm what they wanted to put on their individual pages. They were given the freedom to create something outside of an academic class that could educate their peers on something important to them. Many students chose to work in groups. Based on my observations, the students wanted to take their work, record it, or make it into a movie. There were also groups who wanted to post pictures on the site. After the students created a site map, I wanted to familiarize them with the program that they would be using. Since the students were already familiar with Microsoft Word and it was accessible on all of the district computers, this seemed the logical program to use.

On the overhead projector, I visually displayed how to create links, backgrounds, and creative text. Over the next couple of days, students became very involved in their sites. They had brought in their own digital cameras, created recordings to post on their site, and even did research on topics that interested them. The students were very excited to make something that was their own that they could share with the outside world.

As the students work collaboratively, I can see them bouncing ideas off of each other and asking group members questions rather than coming to me. It is amazing to see how quickly they are picking up on the technology and utilizing it to make their own recordings, and movies. Currently the students are still working on their sites, but are actively asking questions and making great strides in creating their own sites. In the future, I would like to use this idea in my math classes to help the students create pages that will help them to study or understand the topics at hand. What I am finding with this experience is that the students are very responsive since they are interested in technology. They don't feel forced to do it because they want to do it. I can already see their understanding flowing into other subjects. They are asking and coming up with their own ideas to learn topics. They want to make movies out of their research projects or record their new writing pieces as pod casts.