

Oregon Coast STEM Center PBL Project Overview Section 2

Name of Project: 3rd Grade Salmon Studies: Teaching 1st Grade Reading Buddies What we Learned

Name of Teacher(s): Susan Roebber

School & District: Taft Elementary, Lincoln County School District

In addition to the online PBL Project Overview, please describe the following in no more than 3 paragraphs per section.

1) How the Project was Conceived and Planned

The project grew out of working to develop a cross-curricular thematic unit to address the river- identified as the 3rd grade habitat focus in the Lincoln County School District Ocean Literacy Document. This included interest in “ including investigation the life cycles of plants and animals and characteristics of organisms and their offspring,” as described in the overview in the 3rd graded CCSS for Science. The focus on a project based learning approach helped to organize the content knowledge and skills students would need to apply their learning and then use it, with purpose, to teach their first grade reading buddies about what they had learned.

2) How the Project was Managed

Students each had Salmon Life Cycle Studies folders in which they collected instructional materials, work they produced, and documents and drafts related to their projects. As a teacher, I mapped out general concepts I wanted to cover and collected resources such as books, maps, posters, web resources, and information regarding potential field experiences. As the unit evolved, student interests also helped to drive activities and materials used.

3) Your (or your team’s) Reflection on the project after completion. Include what went well, what might be improved or changed if you were to do this project again, and what the most important student learning was.

The student’s (and I) were very engaged in learning about the salmon through the activities we engaged in. The process of raising steelhead in the classroom, learning about salmon life cycles, and of working to find release sites with the optimal conditions during our stream exploration experience made the work meaningful for the students. Students were invested in the learning. They also took great care and interest in the work they did to produce a tool for teaching their first grade reading buddy about what they had learned. They had a real sense of purpose and commitment.

To improve this project, I will map out a year that spreads the learning out in a manner that allows for deeper exploration of topics and for the addition of new concepts. I will also look for ways to integrate more mathematics and engineering into this work. The most difficult aspect of implementing this unit with my students was reliable and available

access to technology. We struggled with finding computers that allowed children to reliably get on the internet, to research their topics and collect/store information, to be able to get back to- access the work they had done previously without losing it, and to prepare and present presentations. I do not have a single working student computer in my classroom, the computer lab in my building is available during very limited windows of time, and the mobile lab is not functional-especially for third grade students.

4) Attach any student work samples, products, photos (that you have permission for), or additional documents you would like posted on the website with your Project Overview.

I will email a pdf of my Power Point related to this unit to Ruth.

Email your Project Overview as a PDF, this document and any attachments you'd like to include to Ruth.mcdonald@lincoln.k12.or.us.

Your final \$750 pay will be processed as soon as it is received.