

Learning Activity: KWHL : Mammals Research Techniques

Learning Behaviours: *Encourage independent learning. More student directed research. Provide opportunity for choice – students to work out part of content*

Teacher: MWJ **DATE:** 07/10/05 **Class:** eg. 7D science

*An idea adapted from teacher.scholastic.com
Students choose a mammal to research.*

Part 1

KWHL

Using the K(what do you **know**) W(what do you **w**ant to know) H(**H**ow will you find out) L(what have you **learnt**) technique, get students to write down what they already know about their mammal.

As a group, list the things that they would like to know about their mammal.

From this list, I made up Research Information Sheets. These only required short answers to the questions they had posed in the **W** part. The idea was to direct their research rather than “find out information about.....” in order to refine notes taken by students, so that they would be only picking out specific information, not writing down whole paragraphs. Students completed these sheets in the library.

Students also needed to collect a minimum of 5 photos/drawings of their mammal that illustrate its life.

Part 2

Mammal family photo album

Students had to present a family photo album of their mammal. Photos could be photocopied, colour, B&W or drawings. Each photo was only to have a one or two line caption, which could be written in the first person, to highlight some of the information they had collected through research. They could be as creative as they liked and I encouraged them to use some of the techniques of “Scrapbooking” in their presentations.

Part 3

Class Album powerpoint

Each class member had to design one page for a class Powerpoint. They needed to include - one photo and 4 lines of dialogue.

Part 4

Who Am I?

By using the 4 lines of dialogue from Part 3, students wrote a “Who Am I?” giving clues to the identity of their mammal. These were compiled into the one document.

They then viewed the class Powerpoint and attempted to solve the “Who am I?”

Discussion Tool: *Journal Writing*

Students completed answers to guide questions in their journals

What was your favourite part of this assignment?

I didn't like it when.....

The activity I learnt most from (and why)was.....

Something I am going to improve on in my next unit of work is.....

Any other comments or improvements you would like to suggest.....

Student Comments

My favourite part of this project was –

“doing the album – I could be really creative with it”

“doing the album – it was really fun finding the pictures”

“getting the pictures”

“Getting the information and finding out something I didn't know”

The activity I think I learnt most from –

“filling in the sheets. I found a lot of interesting things”

“I learnt a lot from both sections but more from research”

“the internet”

“finding the info for myself”

“the photo album because it was fun and interesting”

Other comments

“The photo album was great because you have fun but you're still learning”

“I liked doing the project in a different setout – I have never done o project like that before.
I liked the way we did the research better too.”

“I liked it because it was different to what I'm used to”

Teacher Journal

What is my intention? What do I want to achieve?

In the past, Mammals Research has involved giving the students a number of subheadings (eg.diet, habitat, etc.) and getting them to gather the information about a mammal of their choice. The final product(a poster) often included large amounts of irrelevant information. Some students will see the word “diet” for example and then copy down that whole paragraph without picking out the relevant facts.

I wanted students to research information about a mammal directed by their interest.

Wanted to improve their research skills by getting them to be more specific about what they wanted to know and be able to pick out specific pieces of information and not just copy down “slabs” of text.

Wanted students to be able to take this information and transform/use it in a number of other formats.

I hoped that this would make it clear whether they had understood the information they had copied down.

Students were aware of the 4 parts to the project and had to be organised and have an overall picture of what they needed to do.

What feelings and senses surround the event?

There was a feeling of “busyness” among the class. Everyone was on task and involved, even though many were working on different parts.

All the class was very interested in the work presented by other students.

They appeared to enjoy the tasks.

What was I thinking? What was I feeling?

I was a little apprehensive to start, whether all students would be able to cope with the organisation needed to complete all sections. I did need to remind them, reinforce at the start of each lesson, what needed to be completed.

What were the important elements of the event?

Students worked out what they wanted to find out.

It was divided into smaller tasks so students found it easier to complete.

Varied activities.

What was the outcome?

I think dividing the project into smaller tasks makes it easier for junior students. There was 100% completion rate which is unusual. This was never the case with the old style project, which was spread over about 3 weeks and some tended to lose interest or lose the poster altogether!

Students found it easier to get information if they were focused on more specific questions. They enjoyed it – particularly the photo album/scrapbooking.

Easy for me as teacher to assess where they were up to – checklist of completed tasks.

They particularly liked the final powerpoint – Their individual work became part of a “whole”

And they did present it to my other Yr 7 class, who then completed the “who am I?”

and seemed a bit disappointed that they hadn’t completed their research in the same way.

What might I change next time around?

Next time I might give them the option of presenting their album as a powerpoint presentation. This might suit some of the boys better.

I would like to work out how to do voiceover dialogue for the powerpoint.