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**EDT 598 Inquiry Plan Outline**

**Summer 2010**

The name of the study that I chose to use as a reference is *Integrating Student Learning with Practitioner Experiences via virtual field trips.* The study was explaining how virtual field trips are designed to allow learners to explore, see, and hear people, places, and things that they normally would not be able to. The study was making a point of providing rationale for using virtual field trips for a public speaking course, it was discussing content and design of virtual field trips, and it was discussing what was learned and discovered about virtual field trips over three years. Virtual field trips are fantastic for giving the learner freedom in learning. The learner has the opportunity to explore, to go at his or her own pace, to interact with the environment, and more. The study seemed to find out and conclude that while virtual field trips seemed to help with factual recall, the posttest results did not seem to be affected much. In other words, there was not really a difference in the posttest results between those who used virtual field trips and those who did not. The main reason that I want to use this in my class is because I want students to be able to travel to and see things they normally would not be able to. I want students to be able to explore and visit and learn things that we could not because we are not able to take actual field trips there. I think it would be great to have students interacting with their environment and exploring at their own pace and with things they are interested in etc. I think that virtual field trips would be a really great addition to my class and would provide that meaningful, “little extra,” that makes the lesson better than it would have been otherwise. It definitely gives more options and fewer restrictions than a class without virtual field trips!

From what I’ve researched, most of the findings about virtual field trips have been similar to one another. A lot of the research was congruent with the research article that we read in class. In general, research seems to conclude that virtual field trips enhance learning but cannot replace it altogether. Using virtual field trips seems to enhance learning. Students seem to be able to recall facts better and answer more questions correctly. Virtual field trips seem to be great additions to lessons and a welcome new technology to add to our teaching!

My students are not able to explore and interact with environments that are far away or that we are not allowed to take field trips to. There are many things that can be learned and enjoyed from interacting with and exploring these environments and lack of time, money, and availability prevent this from occurring.

The activity that I am creating is a virtual field trip. The virtual trip will take students through a factory/cafeteria where different foods are made. Throughout the trip, they will see the machinery, the ingredients, how they are mixed, how the food is made, and how it is packaged etc. Details will go into what ingredients go into the food because the focus of the virtual field trip will be what is in the food that we eat and why foods are healthy or not healthy. The virtual field trip will follow several different discussions about what makes foods “good” or “bad” for us and why we need to choose carefully what foods we eat. I will have pictures and/or videos of the different foods, the factory/cafeteria, and people talking about nutrition (both adult and peer aged). The virtual field trip will allow the students to interact with an environment and information that they would not normally be able to interact with.

My audience will consist of students in grades kindergarten, first, and second. These students typically range in age from four years old to eight years old. There is a fairly even mix of males and females with certain classes having a few more males and certain classes having a few more females. These students have learned letters, numbers, and basic etiquette. They have used computers and are familiar with their basic functions. All of the students speak English. We do have some second language learners whose first language is Spanish. We do not currently have recent transferees from another state, but we occasionally do get them.

The students will be able to use the computer to navigate through the virtual field trip and explore other places, people, and things at their own pace.

The following is a list of materials that I will need to complete this project:

* Camera
* Computer with software (Mac with photo capabilities etc.)
* Internet capability
* Nutrition & physiology books
* Gathering information (see chart under data collection)

I will use a variety of techniques in order to gather data. I plan to contact a factory to see how certain foods are made and what goes into them. I plan to contact a nutritionist in order to verify the accuracy of my information and make sure I have all of the information that I need in order to accurately complete the virtual field trip. I also plan to try to take a trip to a factory or cafeteria in order to take pictures and/or video and/or to research online and use books etc. to gather graphic content. See the chart below for some more details:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Needed** | **What to Do** | **Details/Notes** |
| 2 weeks | Contact factory | Find out how food is made and what ingredients go in |
| 1 week | Contact nutritionist | Verification of how much of what foods are necessary and the best way to get those nutrients etc. |
| 2 weeks | Gather photo/video content | From visiting factory and/or from online resources and books |

My main evaluation will be done through class discussion. I want to have a discussion about which foods are healthy to eat, why certain foods are not healthy to eat, and the reasons behind all of it. I also plan to have a picture quiz of some healthy foods and some not healthy foods and have students circle the healthy ones. These two evaluation methods will demonstrate the effectiveness of my efforts/the virtual field trip.

My approximate start date is September 5 and my approximate end date is October 9. This is the end date for gathering information. After all the information is gathered, I will need two more weeks to put together the information and make sure the virtual field trip is set up and ready to go. The final approximate end date is October 24th. Please see the chart below for information gathering details:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Needed** | **What to Do** | **Details/Notes** |
| 2 weeks  9/5-9/18 | Contact factory | Find out how food is made and what ingredients go in |
| 1 week  9/20-9/24 | Contact nutritionist | Verification of how much of what foods are necessary and the best way to get those nutrients etc. |
| 2 weeks  9/27-10/9 | Gather photo/video content | From visiting factory and/or from online resources and books |

In order to spread the word about my work, I will do a couple of things. First, I plan to show my principal and the computer person at my school the project. I also plan to share the program with the other physical educators in the district so that they can use it as well. I also plan to post a link to my teacher website so that parents and the community can see the virtual field trip as well. These methods are not huge, but they will get the word out and at least get me some “credit” for the work I have done.