

Upper Arlington City Schools		
Wickliffe Alternative Elementary School		
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Titles: “Staff Development: Promoting Information Literacy Through Collaboration” and “Information Literacy Instructional Program: Life Science – Plants and Animals”		

ILILE Grant Opportunity Follow-Up Report  
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Wickliffe Alternative Elementary School

Planning: We worked during the summer to plan a collaborative life science study for students in grades one through four. We met on four separate occasions to brainstorm project ideas, find resources, and make contacts. During the early fall, we met to order materials and plan the specifics of the study. Specifically, we planned three field trips, and ordered live specimens and support materials (books, models, etc.). In addition to the funds provided by the grant, we purchased approximately \$400 worth of resources through school library monies. Throughout the course of the study, we reevaluated and adjusted our plans as needed.

Implementation: We went to Alley Park, which is part of the Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department, to observe the changing seasons and various plant and animal life cycles. This served as a kickoff for the study. Two weeks later we went to the Columbus Zoological Park, where we focused on animals and animal adaptations. Docents provided four separate interactive presentations for the students, who also participated in a scavenger hunt that was part of their field trip booklet throughout the zoo. Our third trip to the Franklin Park Conservatory shifted the focus from animals to plants and their habitats. Again, docents led the students in an interactive tour.

In addition to these field trips, each class worked closely with the librarian to extend their classroom curriculum. The 1st/2nd grade students individually studied one insect and created a model. They wrote reports based on the facts they found. They hatched mealworms and recorded their growth in an observation journal.

The 3rd/4th grade students worked together to create a class book entitled Butterflies Are... This book, inspired by visiting author Louise Borden, is a collection of information gathered from student research. Each partnership of students took notes, wrote paragraphs, and illustrated one page of the book. To enhance this study, students hatched butterflies in

the classroom, recording growth and changes in their observation journals.

Both classes visited the library regularly to observe the life cycle of ladybugs. The librarian read books about ladybugs to the students, and led them in these observations. We will extend this study after the holiday break with ant farms and silkworm observations. We will watch for plant and animal life cycles as spring approaches, applying what we learned during this study.

We provided many information literacy instructional interventions throughout the study.

\* We planned for intervention when purchasing materials and resources to accommodate students in grades one through four, from prereaders to advanced readers. The range of resources available to students was wide.

\* As 3rd/4th grade partners struggled to find information about their subtopics, they worked directly with either the classroom teacher, the librarian, or an intervention specialist to locate appropriate resources.

\* When 1st/2nd grade students had difficulty finding appropriate reading level research, the class used both computer lab and classroom computers to explore websites that were geared toward younger students. The main site used was [www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com). This provided students with diagrams, coloring activities, and information that was more accessible and extended their understanding.

\* Toward the end of the research phase for 3rd/4th grade students, several partnerships still had unanswered questions. The class worked together to solve these issues by utilizing various books and websites simultaneously. As a result, all questions were answered, and unexpected information was discovered along the way.

During a December staff meeting, we presented our collaborative work to our staff. After telling about our experiences at the summer workshop and our implementation of the grant proposal, we took questions from the staff. We predict that our integration of information literacy objectives into our studies will motivate other teachers to do the same.

#### Results:

Students gained much understanding of life science and information literacy concepts as a result of these studies. The field trips were an integral part, creating firsthand experiences for the kids in the "real world." The hatching of live specimens provided authentic learning experiences, giving the students real reasons to read, write, measure, and make scientific

observations.

We found that collaboration takes more time and effort than individual classroom teaching. However, the benefits were greater, as well. Though the classroom teachers have collaborated with the librarian in past studies, this took things to a new level. Rather than merely sharing resources, we intentionally planned co-teaching lessons and experiences. The students now see the librarian as a teacher, as well as the librarian.

Because of schedule conflicts and unexpected life situations, we were not able to implement our proposal exactly as it was written. Rather, we adapted our plans as we went and allowed curriculum to emerge. We now know that a life science study is best planned for the spring or early fall, when live specimens can be released safely into the environment.

Overall, we felt the collaborative efforts of three educators was highly successful and worthwhile. We look forward to continuing and deepening our professional relationship in future studies.

Final Budget:

\* Field Trips \$398.00

\* Materials \$598.00

Books

Live Specimens

Models

Posters

TOTAL \$996.00

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