Classroom Collections: Resources for the K-4 Classroom

An Honors Thesis (HONORS 499)

by

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Abstract

*Classroom Collections: Resources for the K-4 Classroom* is the culmination of the knowledge and experiences gained through the elementary education program at Ball State University. The resources within *Classroom Collections* were designed to increase student learning, motivation, and creativity. Furthermore, the resources demonstrate knowledge of academic standards, child development, and educational materials already in use in classrooms. *Classroom Collections* is meant to serve as a resource for beginning teachers.

Two critical components in the creation of *Classroom Collections* were the development of student-centered materials and the integration of Indiana State Standards. *Classroom Collections* consists of twelve resources for use in the elementary classroom. Included with each resource is a rationale documenting the resource’s purpose, extensions, and assessment opportunities. A list of additional resources relating to the Indiana indicator addressed is included with each rationale.

**Internet Showcase:**  [www.bsu.edu/web/clfultz](http://www.bsu.edu/web/clfultz)
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Animal Prop Box

**Discipline:** English/Language Arts

**Content Area:** Listening and Speaking

**Indicators:**

- **K.7.5** Tell an experience or creative story in a logical sequence.
- **1.7.7** Retell stories using basic story grammar and relating the sequence of story events by answering who, what, when, where, why, and how questions.
- **2.7.10** Recount experiences or present stories that:
  - move through a logical sequence of events.
  - describe story elements, including characters, plot, and setting.
- **3.7.13** Plan and present dramatic interpretations of experiences, stories, poems, or plays.

**Description:**

The listening and speaking resource is a dramatic-play prop box. The theme of the box is animals, and it includes a variety of items necessary for story-play. The box includes books about animals (*The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* and *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, both by Child’s Play). The box also contains animal hand-puppets, stuffed animals, and a few clothing items. All items are kept in a plastic container with an easy-open lid.

Dramatic play prop boxes have several educational uses. Students can use this resource during indoor playtime. In this way, the prop boxes provide teachers with ways to make recess educational. However, students can also use prop boxes during structured learning. Teachers can create several boxes with different themes and allow groups of students to create presentations for the class on their topic. The presentation requires
Animal Prop Box

students to comprehend the books in order to act them out. Additionally, the students can create their own stories or plays based on a similar theme.

Prop boxes are easily extended. As teachers add new items and books to the existing prop box, the teachers provide students with new information about the selected topic. This allows students to study one subject more in-depth. Or, teachers can choose to regularly rotate the themes of the prop boxes to introduce new topics. Finally, the students could also collectively decide on a topic to study, brainstorm items needed, and then help collect those items for a new prop box.

Teachers can use prop boxes for informal assessment of their students. Prop boxes provide students with opportunities to demonstrate oral-speaking skills, comprehension, creativity, print concepts, and story-grammar.

Additional Resources:


The Big Book of Letters

** Discipline:** English/Language Arts

** Content Area:** Reading

** Indicators:**
- K.1.6 Recognize and name all capital and lowercase letters of the alphabet.
- K.1.14 Match all consonant sounds (mad, red, pin, top, sun) to appropriate letters.

** Description:**

The reading resource is titled “The Big Book of Letters.” This book is targeted toward preschool or kindergarten students. The book contains two sets of letters. One set is upper case, and one set is lower case. The upper case letters are made from four colors of fine sand. The lower case letters are made from four colors of felt. Both sets are mounted on cardstock. A page of colorful pictures for each letter is also included. All of the pages are bound in a three-ring binder.

“The Big Book of Letters” has several educational uses during self-initiated learning. This resource can be used to help students learn both the order of the alphabet and the shape of the letters. Students could simply turn the pages and trace over the letters with their fingers and then look at the pictures associated with that letter to begin learning the sounds. As the students’ skills increase, they could take all of the pages out of the binder, mix them up, and then practice putting the letters in order. Students could also name the pictures and then put the pictures behind the correct letter. Additionally, some students might choose to make simple words with the letters.

“The Big Book of Letters” can be expanded in several ways. The students could draw their own pictures for each letter and include those in the binder as well. Or, students could make their own letters out of different classroom materials (such as cotton
The Big Book of Letters

balls, feathers, or buttons). The students' letters could then be added to the book, be used
to make another class book, or even be bound individually for the students to use at
home.

Opportunities for evaluation also exist. After a student has completed ordering
the letters and placing them in the binder, the teacher could sit down and flip through the
book with the student. The student could sing the alphabet to the teacher as they turn the
pages to check the work. The student could also check his picture pages by naming the
pictures aloud, identifying the beginning sound, and checking to be sure that the page was
placed behind the correct letter.

Additional Resources:

Cooper, C. (1996). *ABC books and activities: From preschool to highschool.* Lanham,
MD: Scarecrow Press.

Coudron, J. (1983). *Alphabet activities: Original ideas and worksheets for teaching the
alphabet.* Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids.

recognition and sounds.* Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids.

Nyack, NY: Center for Applied Research in Education.


Web site: http://teach.fcps.net/trt4/K.ECE.htm

TotCity (2000). *Interactive alphabet song.* Retrieved October 14, 2003 from Web site:
http://www.totcity.com/totplaces/Activities/school005/school005.html

activities program for beginning readers & writers.* West Nyack, NY: Center for
Applied Research in Education.

**Mini-dictionaries**

**Discipline:** English/Language Arts

**Content Area:** Writing

**Indicators:**

1.6.8 Spell correctly three- and four-letter words (can, will) and grade-level-appropriate sight words (red, fish).

2.6.8 Spell correctly words like was, were, says, said, who, what, and why, which are used frequently but do not fit common spelling patterns.

2.6.9 Spell correctly words with short and long vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u), r-controlled vowels (ar, er, ir, or, ur), and consonant-blend patterns (bl, dr, st).

3.6.8 Spell correctly one-syllable words that have blends (walk, play, blend), contractions (isn’t, can’t), compounds, common spelling patterns (qu-; changing win to winning; changing the ending of a word from -y to -ies to make a plural, such as cherry/cherries), and common homophones (words that sound the same but have different spellings, such as hair/hare).

4.6.8 Spell correctly roots (bases of words, such as unnecessary, cowardly), inflections (words like care/careful/caring), words with more than one acceptable spelling (like advisor/ adviser), suffixes and prefixes (-ly, -ness, mis-, un-), and syllables (word parts each containing a vowel sound, such as sur-prise or e-col-o-gy).

**Description:**

The writing resource is a set of mini-dictionaries. This resource is appropriate for all grade levels because the provided words vary in difficulty. The mini-dictionaries are made up of 8 1/2” x 11” pieces of paper labeled with the letters of the alphabet. Vowels are printed on yellow paper, and consonants are printed on green paper. Behind each letter is a list of frequently used words and pictures that coincide with the letter. Room is also included for the children to add their own words. This set would be hung on removable plastic hooks along the bottom of the chalkboard.
Mini-dictionaries

The mini-dictionaries can be used in multiple ways in the classroom. Students can refer to the mini-dictionaries during independent-writing time. When a word is not listed, a student can ask his teacher for help. The teacher and the student would then work together to correctly spell the word. Then, the student would add his word to the mini-dictionary behind the appropriate letter. This resource can also be used to keep track of weekly vocabulary words, similar to the word wall many teachers already use in their classrooms.

The mini-dictionaries are constantly expanding as students develop their vocabulary. Multiple pages can be added behind each letter as the students learn to spell more words. Teachers can also expand this resource by having each student make his own mini-dictionary to keep at his desk or use at home. Each student's individual dictionary would include words that the student needs to learn. For example, as the student reads a book, he could add words to his dictionary that he is unfamiliar with or wants to learn how to spell.

While this resource does not lend itself well to direct evaluation, teachers can use the mini-dictionaries to encourage accurate spelling. When teachers return journals or other writing assignments, they can circle the words students have spelled incorrectly. The students can then correct their own work using the mini-dictionaries. The goal is to eventually have students initiate using the mini-dictionaries to lookup unfamiliar words before submitting their work.

Additional Resources:

Mini-dictionaries

IL: Scott Foresman Addison Wesley.


Finish the Pattern

**Discipline:** Mathematics

**Content Area:** Algebra and Functions

**Indicators:**

K.3.2 Identify, copy, and make simple patterns with numbers and shapes.

1.3.4 Create and extend number patterns using addition.

2.3.4 Create, describe, and extend number patterns using addition and subtraction.

3.3.5 Create, describe, and extend number patterns using multiplication.

4.3.5 Continue number patterns using multiplication and division.

**Description:**

The algebra and functions resource is a pattern flip-book titled “Finish the Pattern.” This book is for use with kindergarten through fourth-grade students. The book contains twelve different patterns, beginning at the kindergarten level and becoming increasingly more difficult. The patterns begin with shapes and end with number sequences. Each pattern has six places to continue the sequence. There are fourteen options for each position in the pattern.

Students can use “Finish the Pattern” for practice during self-initiated learning. This resource is designed to grow with the students as they get older. The first three patterns are at the kindergarten level, and with every three patterns, the grade level increases. Each student will work through the patterns at his own pace.

The pattern flip-book can be expanded to work with any grade level of students. More patterns can be added at the appropriate grade level to provide students with more practice. If students are in a higher grade, additional patterns can be added to the end of
Finish the Pattern

the book. The difficulty could also be increased by making each pattern longer. Students can also generate their own patterns and create their own flip-books.

"Finish the Pattern" can be used for evaluation. Teachers can have their students use the flip-book and then write the completed patterns on notebook paper. Students could extend these patterns out more places, and then turn their work in for grading. Teachers could also sit down and work through the book with their students.

Additional Resources:


Math Activity Book

**Discipline:** Mathematics

**Content Area:** Computation

**Indicators:**

2.2.1 Model addition of numbers less than 100 with objects and pictures.

2.2.2 Add two whole numbers less than 100 with and without regrouping.

2.2.3 Subtract two whole numbers less than 100 without regrouping.

2.2.4 Understand and use the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction.

2.2.5 Use estimation to decide whether answers are reasonable in addition problems.

**Description:**

The computation resource is an activity book for second-grade students. The book has eight pages with addition, subtraction and estimation problems. Aside from basic computation problems, there are story problems. For some problems, students are required to show their work by regrouping. There are solutions to attach with Velcro for each problem, but a dry-erase pen is also attached so that students can work the problems out by hand as well. The last page instructs the student to make his or her own problems for a friend to solve.

Students can use the activity book at their desks if they complete their work early. Additionally, the activity book could be included in learning bins and used during math center times. Finally, an activity book could be sent home with students who need extra practice with their math skills.
Math Activity Book

The activity book can be expanded in numerous ways. Additional pages could be added by either the students or the teacher. Likewise, an entire activity book could be made exclusively targeting skills the students need additional practice with; there could be an addition book, a subtraction book, a word problem book, and an estimation book. In this example, the teacher could compile a book with the most-missed problems of the week.

The activity book can also be used to evaluate the students’ progress. When students complete the book, they could turn it in to the teacher, who could visually check to see that the problems were completed correctly. The students could also exchange books with a friend before turning the book in to the teacher, which would provide the students with extra practice and problem-solving skills.

Additional Resources:


Dewitt (n.d.). *King’s list of online math activities*. Retrieved June 18, 2004 from Web site: http://www.k111.k12.il.us/king/math.htm#-----.


Math Activity Book

Go Counting!

**Discipline:** Mathematics

**Content Area:** Number Sense

**Indicators:**

- K.1.1 Match sets of objects one-to-one.
- K.1.9 Record and organize information using objects and pictures.
- 1.1.1 Count, read, and write whole numbers up to 100.

**Description:**

The number sense resource is titled “Go Counting!” This resource is very simple to make and use. It is appropriate for kindergarten and first grade classrooms. The numbers one through twenty are printed on individual index cards. Then, the students illustrate matching index cards with objects in the same amount. For example, an index card may have three balls or six hats drawn on it. Then, students have a deck of playing cards to use in two different games. The first game is similar to “Go Fish” and students follow the same rules, except play with the number deck. When a match is not made, the student is told to “go counting.” The second game is similar to memory. The students position all cards face-down and take turns turning over pairs of cards in an attempt to make a match.

“Go Counting!” is most appropriate for use during self-initiated activities or free time. However, several decks of cards could be made and a class tournament could be held. The results could be kept in a table and then graphed pictorially. Each student could also make his or her own deck of cards to use at home for additional practice.

“Go Counting!” can be extended by creating new games with the existing cards. The students could brainstorm game ideas and develop rules for playing. To make “Go
Go Counting!

Counting!” applicable for older students, additional numbers could be added. Furthermore, new number sense concepts (such as fractions, decimals, or graphs) could also be added to the deck.

While the primary purpose of “Go Counting!” is to provide students with additional practice with numbers, this resource could also be used to evaluate students’ progress. Students could keep score cards of games played and matches made. These score cards could then be collected by the teacher to check the students’ progress. The teacher could also visually check the matches made by the students to ensure accuracy.

Additional Resources:


Butterfly Bag-a-Book

**Discipline:** Science

**Content Area:** The Living Environment

**Indicators:** 2.4.1 Observe and identify different external features of plants and animals and describe how these features help them live in different environments.

**Description:**

The living environment resource is titled “Butterfly Bag-a-Book.” This activity is made for second-grade students, but the concept can easily be used with other grades. “Butterfly Bag-a-Book” is a science investigation with literature connections. All of the materials a student needs to complete the investigation are included in the bag. This resource includes the book, *Butterflies in the Garden* by Carol Lerner, a box of crayons, and two sheets of blank paper. Samples from a completed investigation are also included.

“Butterfly Bag-a-Book” can be used at school or at home. Several bag-a-books could be made and used during center time. The students could also work in groups to read the books and complete the investigations. Because the bags are small and all of the materials are easily contained, students could take a bag home to use for homework or additional practice.

Students could select their own science books and create bags for the classroom. Teacher might also use bag-a-books to expose their students to a variety of science topics at the beginning of the school year. Teachers could then determine the students’ interests and decide which topics to pursue in depth later.
Butterfly Bag-a-Book

All bag-a-book investigations can be used for evaluation. The investigations require students to create artifacts. A rubric can be created to assess these artifacts. Because bag-a-books involve literature, teachers can also use these resources to assess the students’ reading ability as well as science understanding.

Additional Resources:


The mathematical world resource is titled “They Were How Big?” and it is a dinosaur discovery center. This activity is made for all elementary students and has a wide variety of activities. The main part of the resource is a tri-fold display board with information about the sizes of various dinosaurs. There are five activities that can be done with this resource. In the first activity, students must figure out how many small dinosaurs it would take to equal their own height. Then, students figure out how many of themselves it would take to equal the length of a big dinosaur. In the second activity, students compare the lengths of dinosaurs to cars and buses. In the third activity, students compare their weight per inch to that of several dinosaurs. In the fourth activity,
Dinosaur Discovery Center

students graph the lengths of various dinosaurs along with their own height. Finally, in
the fifth activity, students complete dinosaur color-by-numbers using addition facts. In
order to complete these activities, several other materials are required. These include
construction strips to represent the dinosaurs’ lengths as well as small cars and buses
scaled down by the same ratio; cardstock dinosaur cutouts in the actual size of small
dinosaurs; grid paper; weight-ratio worksheets; calculators; rulers; crayons; and butcher-
block paper in the length of a big dinosaur.

The dinosaur discovery center can be used in numerous ways. This activity
could be used as one of the learning centers on a science discovery day, or it could be
used with the whole class during structured learning time. Because all of the activities
are hands-on and include detailed instructions with examples, students could also choose
to work with this center during self-initiated activity time. Finally, this board would
make a great addition to family education nights or open houses.

The discovery center can be extended in numerous ways. Additional activities
were added after using the center with a sample group of students. More dinosaurs could
be added for additional practice with the existing problems. Likewise, new problems
could be created to explore fractions or decimals. Furthermore, multiplication and
division concepts could be taught using the center (instead of repeated addition, etc.).

All of the activities can be used for evaluation. Formula forms are included for
the weight activity, and students simply input their information. The completed graphs
result in a finished product as well. A log or student journal could be created for all of
the activities. Any of these items could be collected and scored.
Dinosaur Discovery Center

Additional Resources:


Puzzle Day

**Discipline:** Science

**Content Area:** The Nature of Science and Technology

**Indicators:** 3.1.5 Demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively while respecting the ideas of others and communicating one’s own conclusions about finding.

**Description:**

The nature of science and technology resource is an activity called “Puzzle Day.” It was adapted from the May 2002 issue of *Science and Children* (a publication of the National Science Teachers Association). For this sample of the activity, six logic puzzles were created and each puzzle was placed in a numbered brown bag. Links to puzzle sources are included in the reference section.

“Puzzle Day” can be taught as a structured activity. A lesson outline is included with the resource. However, these puzzles can also be made available to students during self-initiated learning time.

“Puzzle Day” can be expanded as the students grow older by including more complicated puzzles. Some students may even enjoy creating puzzles for their peers to solve.

While teachers can formally evaluate their students’ success in solving the puzzles, informal evaluations are suggested. Teachers should focus on the processes students use to solve the problem. Teachers can also assess students’ social skills. Finally, if teachers want to use “Puzzle Day” as a source for formal evaluation, teachers could have their students write reports communicating their findings.
Additional Resources:


Community Leaders

**Discipline:** Social Studies

**Content Area:** Economics

**Indicators:**

K.4.2 Identify different kinds of jobs that people do.

K.4.3 Explain why people in a community have different jobs.

1.4.3 Compare and contrast different jobs people do to earn income.

2.4.2 Identify community workers who provide goods and services for the rest of the community and explain how their jobs benefit people in the community.

**Description:**

The economics resource is a community leader activity board. It was initially designed for political and/or government jobs, but was then extended to other occupations as well. Each occupation is represented by an 8 1/2” x 11” image, which was hand colored. There are matching titles and short written descriptions. Each piece can be attached with Velcro to a bulletin board set up by the classroom teacher. The bulletin board should have three columns with the headings, “Occupation,” “Picture,” and “Description.”

This puzzle can be used during self-initiated activities, learning centers, and free time. The pieces will be kept in a folder attached to the bottom of the board. It will be the students’ job to take the pieces out and correctly assemble them on the board. This activity would work best within the context of a larger unit of study on occupations and community roles.

“Community Leaders” can be extended and adjusted to work in a variety of classrooms. For primary classrooms, extra images could be printed and the students
Community Leaders

could color the pictures during transitions or free time. For intermediate classrooms, the
description pieces would be added (they would not be appropriate for beginning readers).
Additionally, older students could begin researching more about these occupations or
selecting other roles to study.

When students complete the activity board, as individuals or as groups, the
teacher could visually check to see that all of the pieces were in the correct columns and
rows. Additionally, a worksheet could be made with blanks in various columns, and
students could complete the missing portions.

Additional Resources:


Publications.


Associates.

Associates.

Associates.

Associates.

Associates.


Community Leaders


United States Puzzle

**Discipline:** Social Studies

**Content Area:** Geography

**Indicators:**

K.3.2 Identify maps and globes as ways of representing Earth and identify map symbols for land and water.

1.3.2 Identify the cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) on maps and globes.

2.3.3 Locate the local community and the United States on maps and globes

**Description:**

The geography resource is a puzzle of the United States. It is made out of 2mm foam and mounted on a heavy poster board. Each state is a separate puzzle piece and labeled with its two-letter abbreviation. A reference sheet is included on the back of the puzzle that matches the abbreviation with the full name of each state. Oceans are colored-in and a cardinal direction legend is included. The puzzle pieces are kept in a Ziploc bag when not in use. The bag can be attached to the puzzle with Velcro for easy storage.

This puzzle can be used during self-initiated activities and free time. Because it is a puzzle, students will most likely enjoy working with it during their free time as well as during structured educational time.

Once students have become familiar with the layout of the United States and are able to complete the puzzle quickly, students may become interested in studying certain states more in-depth. The students may choose to make their own drawing or puzzle of their home state, or a state they want to know more about. Students may also become
United States Puzzle

interested in learning the state capitals. Finally, major bodies of water around the edge of
the puzzle may also draw the students' attention.

The most obvious way to evaluate student progress with this resource is their
completed puzzle. However, teachers could also quiz their students (verbally or written)
on abbreviations or the ability to identify local states by their shapes.

Additional Resources:

Geography Education Standards Project (1994). Geography for life: What every young
American should know and be able to do in geography. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Research and Exploration.

CN: Bowker, Greenwood.

Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder Productions.


President Hunt

**Discipline:** Social Studies

**Content Area:** History/ Civics and Government

**Indicators:**

2.2.4 Identify real people and fictional characters who were good leaders and good citizens, and explain the qualities that make them admirable, such as honesty and trustworthiness.

3.1.6 Read fiction and nonfiction stories to identify the qualities of leaders, such as community leaders, soldiers, presidents, teachers, and inventors.

3.2.7 Use a variety of information resources to gather information about community leaders and civic issues.

**Description:**

The history/civics and government resource is a presidential scavenger hunt titled "President Hunt." This activity utilizes the book, *Lives of the Presidents: Fame, Shame, and What the Neighbors Thought* by Kathleen Krull. This book highlights unique facts and stories about each president. This activity also uses the White House website (www.whitehouse.gov). Included in the activity bag are two activity sheets. The first is a scavenger hunt sheet with twenty questions about the presidents. The second is a short biography sheet to complete on one president of the student’s choice. Then, the students are required to go to the White House website and print a coloring page of their president to color on their own.

This scavenger hunt could be used to introduce a unit on presidents, government, or even important historical figures. Students could use this resource during silent reading time and social studies (or even reading) learning center time. Students could also take the bag home to complete as homework.
President Hunt

"President Hunt" can be extended by the students themselves. After the students read the book and complete the given questions, the students could write their own scavenger hunt questions. These questions could be added to the class list. The students could also trade questions with a friend. Questions could also be generated from the White House website. Finally, students could also write a short paragraph about their president using their biography sheet.

To evaluate the students’ progress, the teacher could collect and score the completed scavenger hunt sheets. Points could be given if the students write additional scavenger hunt questions. Finally, completion of the presidential biography would also warrant points. In this way, the teacher is able to evaluate the students’ knowledge of the presidents as well as the students’ research skills.

Additional Resources:


September 29, 2003

I met with Dean Ruebel at 3:00pm today to discuss my thesis. I wasn’t positive about what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to do something creative. I had thought about setting up a research-based classroom. I wasn’t totally clear on this idea, but thought that I would research the best ways to deal with learning centers, parent communication, etc. My EDEL classes had been amazing, but I felt like it would be more useful to have everything in one, succinct source. After discussing the idea with Dean Ruebel, we decided that I could do this project in paper form.

October 2, 2003

I met with Dr. Salsbury today. I had her for EDEL200 in the fall of my sophomore year and knew right away that I wanted to work with her on my thesis when it was time. I was fortune enough to also have Dr. Salsbury for EDEL300 that summer. I think having prior experience with Dr. Salsbury will be beneficial in this process because I already respect her so much.

During my meeting, I showed her a list of the topics I wanted to address. We agreed that I would research seating arrangements and their effect on classroom management. For our next meeting, I am going to have written a portion of my paper on this topic.

October 8, 2003

I’ve spent a lot of time reading educational journals and books by Dr. Fred Jones. I’ve written the first five pages of my thesis. I find the information interesting and helpful, but I don’t feel excited about this project. I’m not sure that I can be married to this process for the next year. I don’t feel like it is meaningful.

I’m taking EDEL252 as part of my kindergarten endorsement. The class is about creativity and play. I wonder if my professor, Dr. Huber, will have any other suggestions for my thesis. I really want to do some type of a creative project.

October 10, 2003

I met with Dr. Huber after class today. As part of EDEL252, I created a creative classroom resource for children to use in my future classroom. Dr. Huber thought this idea might make a good thesis. As we talked, I realized I could creative multiple resources based on Indiana’s academic standards. I left her office feeling excited about my thesis again.
October 14, 2003

I met with Dr. Salsbury again today. I told her about my meeting with Dr. Huber. Dr. Salsbury seemed really interested in my new idea and thought that it would make a great thesis. I told her that I would start a list of ideas for each standard and send it to her through email. We decided that I would start planning my thesis and decided exactly what I wanted to do before submitting my final proposal.

I came home from my meeting totally excited about my thesis. Now, I just have to decide what I want to do for my resources. I've narrowed the grade-range for my resources to kindergarten through fourth grade.

October 20, 2003

I have gotten so much work done! I spent time flipping through educational resources at Bracken. I used curriculum guides and the Internet to get ideas on what types of resources are already available. I also used the state standards to find out what students are expected to learn for each grade. Finally, I used all of that information to generate a tentative list of resources to create.

October 21, 2003

I met with Dr. Salsbury today. I showed her my list of ideas, and we decided that I should create three resources for each subject area (English, math, science, and social studies). We've also decided that I will present my thesis in a digital portfolio. Now that my ideas seem clearer, it is time to write and submit a proposal to the Honors College.

October 30, 2003

Dr. Salsbury and I have been conferring via email as I've written my proposal. It is in final form, and I am ready to present my ideas to Dr. Stedman. I'm really nervous because I already feel attached to this project. It seems meaningful and interesting. More importantly, it gives me the opportunity to be creative. My meeting is tomorrow at 11:30am.

October 31, 2003

I just got back from my meeting with Dr. Stedman. She approved my project!! Now, Classroom Collections is officially started. I already have some resources started from my classes, so I think I'm going to write descriptions for those first before I make any new projects.
November 5, 2003

I have made so much progress. I made an ABC book for my EDEL252 class, so that will work for my English/reading resource too. I made the letters out of sand and felt so young students can practice tracing the letters. I also included a page of pictures for each resource so students can begin learning the sounds of the letters as well. Finally, for older students, I put all of the pages in a binder so the students can practice ordering the alphabet.

For my SCI397 class, I made a bag-a-book about butterflies. This assignment can also work for my science/living environment resource. I got the idea from my science methods course. It has a children’s literature book for the students to read, and then I created science activities for the children to complete based on the information from the book. For this one, the students diagram the lifecycle and parts of a butterfly. I think bags like these would be great for learning centers.

November 9, 2003

I spent the rest of last week and this weekend working on my thesis. I decided to finish the English resources first. I found it easier to think of English resources, probably because English is my favorite subject.

I have been learning creative ways to implement English activities into primary classrooms in my EDEL252 class. We learned how to use dramatic play in the classroom to promote English skills. One of those ideas was a prop box. I was really impressed with how giving students props and a few children’s literature books could lead to better comprehension and listening/speaking skills. For my English/listening and speaking resource, I went to Danner’s Books and browsed their children’s collections. I decided to do an animal theme for my box. I picked up There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly and Old Macdonald Had a Farm, both by Child’s Play. Then, the really fun part came. I went shopping at the Dollar Tree for stuffed animals. I was able to get hand puppets and stuffed animals for five dollars. Then, I made a quick stop at Hobby Lobby to pick up bandannas. I thought the red bandanna might get the children in the farmer mood.

I also worked on my English/writing resource this week. I had Dr. McVicker for EDRDG400 last summer. Dr. McVicker emphasized whole language and meaningful literacy experiences. I wanted to create a writing resource that was an alternative to the word wall used in many classrooms. I began flipping through two of the books I purchased for my EDRDG400 class and decided to make mini-dictionaries for this resource. This resource came together quickly because I was able to word-process the pages. Each letter got its own page with sample words, and I left plenty of space for the children to add their own words, too. In the classroom, these dictionaries can be lined up below the chalk tray at the front of the room. I printed the vowels on yellow paper and
the consonants on green paper. I thought this would help the children recognize the different types of letters.

For my final project of this batch, I made a math/algebra and functions resource. I've been trying to make resources that will work for multiple ages and abilities. For English this was fairly easy because the words would just become more difficult as the students grew older. Initially, I wasn't sure how to make math work for a wider-range of abilities. I spent a lot of time looking at the Indiana standards to determine what types of patterns were appropriate for each grade. Then, I decided to make a resource that got increasingly harder with each page. This way, the students could start at the beginning and work until the problems were too difficult. I thought this would also be a great way for teachers to determine the math level of their students. To be honest, I have no idea where the idea came to create a flipbook. I have never seen anything like my resource before. I just didn't want the students to be given a worksheet or a pattern to complete on their own. Instead, I thought it would be more fun for the students to search through each stack to find the next item in the pattern. This presentation will also allow the students to explore different options and decide why each image works (or doesn't).

On a final note, I uploaded the interface for my website to the Ball State server today. I used Front Page to create it. I'm not sure that I am happy with its design, but I am going to live with it for a while and see how I feel about it later.

November 11, 2003

I met with Dr. Salsbury to show her my resources today. I think she was really impressed with the amount of work I have been able to get done. Before our meeting was over, she looked at me and told me something was missing. I started running through my "To Do" list in my head trying to think of what I had forgotten. Social studies! I had showed her resources for every subject area other than social studies. I hadn't been consciously working in any order, but she was right. I don't remember doing a lot of social studies in primary school, and I never really developed a love for this subject either. The math and English resources had come together easily, and the science had been relatively easy because of my SCI397 class.

I told Dr. Salsbury that I hadn't forgotten about social studies and would make an effort to work on it next. She gave me a great book (Geography for life: What every young American should know and be able to do in geography) to look at for inspiration.

November 29, 2003

The work on my thesis has really slowed down. I realized that I did the subjects I was most excited about first, so now I have to try harder to look for inspiration. I promised Dr. Salsbury that I would work on social studies, and I spent a lot of time
looking through her book. I’ve found a lot of good ideas for lessons, but I’m trying to focus more on tools students can use on their own.

I finally decided to make a United States puzzle map for the geography resource. I went to Hobby Lobby and picked out 2mm foam and heavy poster board. I picked up a poster of the United States and cut it. Then, I traced the outline onto the foam. Next, I cut out each state and traced the outline onto the foam. When I was done, I had a nice map. My dad helped me cut out the pieces (it’s hard to cut foam neatly!). Then, I glued the outline onto the poster board. However, when I went to place the states back into the outline, they didn’t fit! Impossible. I forgot to take the foam’s give into consideration, so some of the states had to be trimmed down to make the puzzle fit together. In the end, I think the puzzle looks really great though.

December 5, 2003

I need to catch up on my thesis. I have six of my twelve resources completed. I am way ahead of schedule, but I feel like I should keep up the pace. The semester is coming to a close, so my classes have been keeping me really busy. I also started working at the learning center, so I just haven’t had as much free time as I used to. So, I decided to stay in and catch up on writing my descriptions and begin making another resource.

I have decided to wait on social studies resources until next semester because I’m taking my social studies methods course then. I’m hoping that class will give me some useful starting points. For now, however, I have decided to focus on science and math.

For my science/nature of science and technology resource, I started to looking through Science and Children, a journal by the National Science Teachers Association. I found an article on puzzles from the May 2002 issue. Logic puzzles are really good for children because puzzles encourage divergent thinking and problem solving. I used the Internet to find several puzzles appropriate for various abilities.

I also worked on my math/computation resource. Students of all ages need practice with computation, but this often takes the form of worksheets. I wanted to create a resource that would give students practice (and teachers a form of assessment) without the drill routine. I decided to make an activity book for second-grade. I choose second grade because students at that age are getting into double-digit addition and subtraction. I also thought this was a good grade to begin working with story problems and regrouping/modeling. I used Indiana’s academic standards to write appropriate problems. Then, I used half sheets of card stock (8.5”x5.5”) to print the problems on. Next, I laminated the pages so that students could write and erase on them with dry erase pens. I also stuck velcro below each problem. Finally, I cutout numerous answers (all of the correct responses and a few incorrect responses) from cardstock. I put velcro on the back of these answers so the students can attach them to the correct problem.
February 24, 2004

I updated the online portion of my thesis today. I had previously designed and uploaded the framework, but I decided that I didn't like its design. I used the same color scheme, but updated the navigation and layout in general. I think the new version is much easier to navigate, and I am willing to sacrifice a little on aesthetics in favor of a more user-friendly version. Over the next few weeks, I intend to take digital pictures of my work and transfer those to the website also.

I have four more resources to make. I already have the supplies for my last math resource. I still think I'm going to make a memory game. I used this idea last summer for Math391 when I taught geometry and the students really enjoyed it. I thought I could make different sets for different topics (number sense, geometry, fractions, etc.). My materials delayed this process on my first attempt. I wanted to use foam so the students could trace the numbers, shapes, etc. with their fingers because I thought that might benefit the more hands-on learners more. However, I have found the foam to be extremely difficult to work with. It only comes out clean if I make the cards a lot bigger, which doesn't really serve a purpose or make them easy to use.

I am also disappointed with my social studies progress. I am currently taking my social studies methods course, and I thought I would be getting a lot of useful ideas and inspirations. That, however, has not been the case. I think I'm going to browse the teacher store in my home town over spring break and hope for inspiration there.

Finally, the last resource I have is the third science one. I am really interested in weather or magnets. Either of those would fit well into the standards. I thought about making an investigative magnet kit. I would put magnets of various strengths, sizes, and charges into empty film canisters and then set up guided questions. The students would make predictions about the magnets' qualities based on their interactions with each other. For example, does stronger always correlate with larger? I thought it would be really engaging and thought-provoking. Moreover, in my science methods experience, I found the students to be interested in how magnets work.

My classes are keeping me really busy, but I always keep my mind open for new ideas. Overall, I'm really excited with the progression of my project.

March 28, 2004

It is surprising that a whole month has gone by since I last wrote. I browsed through the teacher store while I was at home for spring break. I also picked up some magnets and began working with those for my last science resource. While it seemed like a good idea in theory, it has been harder to develop in practice. I had a hard time getting my hands on magnets that would fit into the canisters and also be strong enough to demonstrate the idea. In near desperation for quality ideas, I began going back through my files from previous classes. I came across a dinosaur learning center I had used for my math methods course. I used it for Family Math Night at the Minetrista Center when they had SUE the dinosaur on display. We ended up having severe weather and spent the
evening in the basement under a tornado warning, so I didn’t actually get to use the center, but I truly feel like it is an excellent resource. Even though the content is math-related, I recalled that there was a Mathematical World substandard in the science discipline. After browsing through the K-4 indicators, I decided my project could be a valuable resource. Therefore, I have decided to rework parts of this project and use it for my science resource as well.

Other than that, not much has been going on with my thesis. I taught at Burris for the last time Tuesday. Not having to teach and gather supplies for two lessons a week should leave me with more free time to work on this project. Just in the last week, I’ve already spent time scanning and uploading images into my website. In the future, I would definitely not recommend trying to take 20 credit hours as well as complete a thesis. Not if you like to sleep anyway. It looks like I may need to extend my project into this summer some as well.

April 20, 2004

I have been working on my thesis in short bursts between finishing projects and papers for my classes and studying for finals. I reworked my dinosaur project and am really pleased with how it turned out. I also began making the pieces for my second social studies resource. I am making cutouts of community leaders/important occupations (i.e. doctors, dentists, police officers, and teachers) and then writing descriptions of their roles. I found an online coloring book site that has wonderfully illustrated pictures, so I have been resizing and color those. I picture this resource as an interactive bulletin board/learning center for kindergarten or first grade students. I think it would be an excellent resource for kindergarten students to pair the picture with the title of the leader. Then, I could extend it for older students by having them read and place the descriptions. It would also help kindergarteners learn some simple sight words that they probably already know orally. When this one is finished, that just leaves me the math memory cards and another social studies resource to complete.

Digitalizing my resources and transferring them to my website has been fun. I enjoy working with the layout and making the site easy to navigate. I also think this could turn out to be an excellent resource to use in addition to my digital portfolio when interviewing for future teaching positions. Even though I have made significant progress on my thesis, I still think I will need time to complete it this summer.

May 19, 2004

Summer school is already in full-swing, and it just started two days ago! The digit portion of my thesis, however, is really starting to come together. I was way too busy last semester to be excited about the project, and I was starting to feel a little overwhelmed with it. But now, I am ready to work on it again and find that I actually have the time to devote to it. I just finished transferring my word documents into Microsoft FrontPage. That part has been a little frustrating because my files are opening differently on computers throughout campus. I had to go back in and reset some defaults
manually so that the files will (hopefully) open more uniformly for all users. I will be
testing that out later this week. Also, the pictures slow down the load time on my dial-up
connection, so I took them down until final publishing.

I just forwarded my URL to Dr. Salsbury so that she can take a look at where I am
at now. That’s the nice thing about publishing my work; it makes conferencing about it
so much easier. I also think I’m going to end up with a really nice project. In the end, I
envision having a CD with my complete thesis; the website with descriptions, pictures,
and additional resources; and then a hard copy of the website in a binder. Users will be
able to browse the website to access my ideas and links to outside sources. If a user
wanted to recreate a resource, he/she could use the descriptions to do so. However, my
CD will have all of the files and templates I used to make the resources as well. This
would be a useful resource for future colleagues, etc. I thought about uploading those
files to my website as well, but the university doesn’t student users enough bandwidth to
do that.

I still have a fair amount of work to do. I need to finish creating my memory
cards and community leader activity board. Then, I need to write descriptions for those,
as well as my math activity book, dinosaur learning center. Finally, I need to think of one
additional social studies resource to create. By my count, that leaves just five
descriptions to write and three resources to complete.

June 2, 2004

I have all of the pieces finished for my community leader board. I started to
color-fill them in Picture It! but then decided to color them by hand instead. Students
could also be given these sheets to color themselves during free time. I remember having
a color or activity sheet to do each morning in elementary school as my teachers took
role, lunch count, etc. My only concern with this resource is the gender-bias. I wanted
all of the images to look similar, so I picked them from the same collection. However, all
of the doctor images are male, and all of the nurse images are female. That’s just one
example. Some of the figures are represented by both genders though (teachers, business
people, and police officers). I still need to write descriptions for each occupation as the
extension for intermediate students.

Four descriptions and three resources to go!

June 18, 2004

I just finished my activity book resource. I published the description and finished
researching other resources to supplement computation instruction. I also wrote the
description for my dinosaur science project.

I have decided what to do for my last social studies resource! I read an excellent
children’s book called The Lives of the Presidents and instantly bought a copy for myself
because I thought it would be a great book to use in the classroom. The book could work
with second through fourth grade civics and government standards. I’m not totally sure what I want to do with the book. I thought the book would be a great way to introduce a unit on presidents or influential historical figures. The book might also be good to use during an election year with a unit on elections and voting. I might create some type of activity bag or scavenger hunt based on the book.

Just three resources and two descriptions to go!

June 24, 2004
I just finished my last description! However, upon closer inspection of my previous work, I realized that I haven’t been entirely consistent with my formatting. I began to notice the problem when I published my descriptions, but thought that I had everything corrected. Because I did the work over such a long period of time, and in the interim wrote a paper in MLA style, my citations for additional resources are also in both styles. I am in the process of going through all the written work and formatting everything to APA. I was hoping I wouldn’t have to republish everything, but it looks like I will. Republishing tends to also reformat my spacing sometimes, so I am going to have to watch for that.

I finished my math memory cards, so that leaves only my leaders bulletin board descriptions and my final social studies resource. I have ordered the Lives of the Presidents book, so as soon as that comes in I should be able to pull together an activity bag for that.

Just two more resources and republishing to go!

June 27, 2004
I have republished my entire digital portfolio. English, Math, and Science are all completely finished now. Some of the true text was reformatted in the process, but I went in and manually fixed the HTML by hand. It feels nice to see all the work I have done coming together. I decided to thumbnail the images because they were all different lengths, widths, etc. I tried to resize the pictures to be the same, but some of the items are much wider than others. Overall, to keep the uniformity, I just decided that thumbnails worked best. The user can still click them and see the full image. It also helps increase the page load time, which makes my portfolio more user-friendly.

My president book arrived in the mail yesterday, and I plan to work on it during some free time at work tomorrow. I am also taking my community leader list to write job descriptions on those.

Dr. Salsbury looked at my portfolio and is pleased with it. I still need to write my abstract, but I was waiting until I was entirely finished with my thesis to do that. I thought I could more accurately describe my project and my feelings about it once I had completed it.
I also need to write my acknowledgements, which are going to be tricky, I think. Aside from the obvious contributors (like Dr. Salsbury and my parents), there have been those professors who inspired me to complete this project. If it wasn’t for Linda Huber, I’m not sure that I would be doing this at all. I knew I wanted to, but after my first meeting with the Honors College, I left feeling like I had to write a paper. But after meeting with Dr. Huber, I realized that this was my project, my work, and I should do something that fully represented the gains I have made at Ball State. And even Dr. Carlson, my first EDEL professor. He gave me the opportunity to work in an amazing volunteer placement, and truly confirmed my belief that I could, and would, be an excellent teacher.

June 28, 2004
My acknowledgements didn’t prove to be as tricky as I thought they might. Once I started writing, it was really easy! I also had time to finish my community leaders resource while at work today. I’m almost there!

July 1, 2004
I finished my president resource today. I let some of my coworkers look at the scavenger hunt I created and they thought it was fun. They also found it informative and thought children would it as well. I also proofread and republished my descriptions. I picked up pressboard binders and dividers while I was at home this weekend. It is starting to feel pretty final.

I intend to write the leader descriptions and abstract this week.

July 6, 2004
I finished my abstract and president resources today. I also corrected and republished my entire digital portfolio. I sent a copy to my parents to proofread one final time before I submit the final version to Dr. Salsbury. I still need to write descriptions for my leader descriptions, but I wanted to base that one research as well and I just haven’t had much luck finding age-appropriate descriptions. Once that is finished, I need to photograph my Social Studies resources and upload those images. Then that’s honestly it. My thesis will be finished.

August 9, 2004
I just finished printing and binding my thesis. I’m turning it in to Dr. Salsbury once school starts again.