First Grade Skill Assessment

Senior Honors Creative Project (HONRS 499)

by

Rachael McKibben

Thesis Advisor
Hans Kellogg

Ball State University
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Abstract

The purpose of this creative project is to create a packet, using the Adobe Suite, designed for the first grade level to test their knowledge of letters, numbers, number words, phonics, colors, sequences and graphs during the first few weeks of school to determine what the students already know and where they may need additional assistance. Upon completion of the design I will hard bind the book, exploring a process that Hans Kellogg, my advisor has been interested in for some time and I thought would be a good way to finish the packet. This project will allow me to learn what it is like to fulfill the needs of a customer and delve further into the Adobe products. I will gain more knowledge of the programs that I will be using upon graduation and be able to show possible employers some of the skills that I have.

Acknowledgements

- I want to thank Professor Hans Kellogg for advising me on this project. He helped to take it from just a stapled group of papers to a hardbound book.

- I would like to thank Allison Gamble for her assistance in providing the material necessary for this project to be useful to assessing the children’s knowledge.
Rationale

My interest in the prepress area of graphic arts led my desire to make a project using computer programs that are typical in this area such as the Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign-page layout, Illustrator-vector art, and Photoshop-raster art). Creating a project that would be useful to someone was a very important motivating factor for deciding what I was going to create. My cousin, Allison Gamble, teaches first grade at Geist Elementary School and I decided to make a packet that she would be able to use with her students.

The original idea I had was to create a journal type booklet that could be used over the whole year. After discussing with Allison what would be most useful for her, we modified the project to include material that test the students' skill knowledge during the first few weeks of school to help her determine where to begin with her lessons and which students might have trouble in certain areas.

Creation

The process began with a meeting with Allison to determine what kind of material she would like to have included in the packet. Having already taught for a few years, she had leaflets created that she had used before, my project combined them all and created a theme throughout. The topics that we decide to include were letters, numbers, number words, phonics, colors, sequences and graphs.

My first task was to locate fonts that would be easy for first graders to read as well as a font that included the lines that the students could use to practice writing on. Both major fonts used in this project, Primer Print and Penmanship Print, were found at The Teachers' Parking Lot website. Primer Print was used for all the directions and some other text throughout the packet.
The Penmanship Print font contained lines which allowed me to type normally and have the writing lines included so I would not have to add them later. All the clip art used in the packet was found through Microsoft Clipart, and then copied into Adobe Illustrator to clean the images up and remove stray and unnecessary points.

While determining how to present the content that Allison requested I include, I looked over the notes from the pages that she had been using up until now and then brainstorming ways that I could give the material to the students. I began designing and sent the pages to Allison to get her input and through that process I was able to develop the completed book for her to use. She incorporated it into the first few weeks of her first grade class in August and after using it, found a few things that needed to be modified to make it easier for the students to use, such as putting the numbers and number words closer to one another on the page where they need to connect them so that they did not have to draw long lines.

While talking with my advisor, we decided to hard bind the packet so we can better understand the process and have the knowledge to incorporate it into a Graphic Arts Management course if students are interested. We can use it as a way to show a possible option that students have if they want to make a book.
To: Whom It May Concern

From: Ally Gamble, First Grade Teacher

RE: Assessment Packet

I had the opportunity to utilize the skills packet that was made by Rachael McKibben for her thesis project. As a first grade teacher, I spend the first few weeks of school getting to know my students and assessing each skill area. There are many building blocks that contribute to a child’s success in academic areas such as language and math. The packet that was made by Rachael was a compilation of these skills put together in a fun and colorful way.

My students this year thoroughly enjoyed completing the packet. We found the directions to be clear and easy to follow. Rachael used a good variety of pictures, text, and symbols to maintain the students’ attention. The material contained in the packet was very age appropriate. It was an excellent tool used by my first grade team to assess our students’ skill sets.

This packet has many uses and I will continue to use it with my students in years to come.

Thank you,
Ally Gamble
First Grade Teacher

GO GEIST GATORS!