

Hypothesis:

For our reaction device, we are embracing their love of rap music we learned they had in the first visit and using it to spark some sort of interest out of the children. We are going to be splitting up into two groups, one making “beats” with this noise and color moving program on the laptop, and the others making a rap. After the two groups are done making their separate parts they will come back and put the two together. We will be doing short raps, around 4 lines each. We are hoping that by doing short raps we will have time to switch the groups so that they both have the opportunity to do both of the components, the rap and the beat. I believe the kids will really enjoy our reaction device because almost every single kid talked about their passion for rap music during our first visit to the school. I believe that they will enjoy making the beats much more than the actual words but that it is crucial for us to incorporate the words for what we are trying to teach them later on.

Second Visit:

The goal of the second visit was much different from the first. On the second visit we were trying to get much more out of the kids so that we can further develop a product for them. My group and I went to the 5th grade again, so we recognized all the kids already and it was easier for us to talk to them and for them to open up to us. I could tell they were excited to see us and couldn't wait to see what we had brought them to play with.

The first part of our reaction device was a computer software we found online through an open source website. It takes your webcam and shows a video of yourself on the screen. It also has a color sensor that allows you to make different noises with the different colors. For class, we used two different colored gloves and put them on our hands. Once it recognized the colors, we could move around and make different sounds when we moved our hands. We wanted to have the children experiment with this to see if they had any interest in it. For the most part, it appeared like the children liked it. Drew was the one leading the children in this and whenever I looked over they were jumping around and looked like they were having a lot of fun. When the kids came back to the table I asked them what they thought. They all told me it was really cool. One specific response I got was that it would be fun if we created a game like the virtual color game that allowed them to move around and dance to play an actual rhythm beat. I think that if we change up the software to relate more to rap music the kids will react better to it and like it more.

When the kids weren't working on the computer they were sitting at their desks with Johnny and I. Our goal was to have them write raps. We want to show them the complexity of rap music so that they will have a greater appreciation for it

and learn that it is not just cool music, but that it takes time and dedication to write. We wanted them to learn that rappers are intelligent people that especially succeed in English and Language Arts. We were testing out a few methods for writing these raps so we experimented with doing different things in each group. Changing it up wasn't a part of the original plan but based off the children's reactions to it we decided to change things in each group.

For the first group, we tried to get them to write similes and metaphors and then use them in writing a rap. Since rap is also considered a poem, we thought this would be an important thing to teach. However, they haven't learned about similes and metaphors yet in school and were having a hard time understanding what we were trying to teach them. A few of them came up with decent similes but almost all of them had trouble with metaphors or just came up with sentences that weren't exactly right. I think that although this is an important thing for them to know, they just didn't want to learn from us. I think they are all so excited for us to be there and they think they are just going to do fun things with them that we bored them when we were trying to teach to them.

For the next group we decided to stop using the simile and metaphor idea. We asked them if they knew about syllables and practiced a few words by counting how many syllables were in each word. We then had them draw out fill-in-the-blank lines on their pieces of paper and fill the words in on each line. We had them write four lines with four syllables in each line. An example of a rap they came up with was "I love to rap. I love to eat. I love to sleep. I love to Sing." Although they followed directions and filled in the lines, this wasn't exactly what we were aiming for because it doesn't flow together like it should. We decided we needed to make more guidelines.

For the third group, we found a rhyming words book in the classroom. We talked to them about making their poem or rap flow and a good way to do this was to use a rhyming word at the end of each line. I think that the kids liked looking through the book and finding words to rhyme with the ones they had chosen. I think that having the rhyming word at the end improved their raps but they still had a hard time coming up with things to write about.

For the last group, we had them choose a topic to write about. They all seemed interested in Halloween so we chose that. At first they were individually writing their raps but then they began writing one together. This showed they really like working in teams.

We realized some important things that we want to change for future iterations. I still believe we want to stick with music but need to find a better way to get them to learn something at the same time. For the future, I believe that they shouldn't be writing on paper but also inputting it onto the computer or some sort of electronic device that we programmed.