

Our group had two plans for the second class visit: we wanted to gauge and observe student reaction to a software program we may try to use additionally in future designs and we want to observe students after we teach a short ELA lesson and try to incorporate what they learn into building a rap. In the first part, we were going to set the students up to explore a software program that uses our webcam to track a certain color. We were able to set up which color and what object we would like the webcam to track. Additionally, we were able to explore different pitches and sounds which can be programmed to play through the speakers when the specified color is tracked along an area through the webcam. My group worked with the kids to initially set up the tracking feature using colored gloves which were given to the kids. Then my group helped the kids choose sounds to set up in different areas of the webcam zone using the colors. Once the program was trained, the kids were free to explore sound creation by moving the colored item around in the webcam.

My hypothesis was that the children would be excited by the “magic” of the technology, where their movement of the colored item is visually tracked on the webcam image. Additionally, I thought they would be very interested in how their movement of the colored item corresponds to different sound creation. I was thinking that the students would be willing to work together and share the webcam space. I also thought that the students would be excited about using the computer and seeing themselves in the webcam. The goal of this exercise was to provide us background in whether or not this software and variations could be used in future applications. I believed there would be a positive response and the students would be interested in future products combining the webcam and variable sound outputs.

For the second part, our group planned to teach a lesson plan on similes and metaphors then help the students create a rap using similes and metaphors. I hypothesized that the students would get a little bored/restless during the quick lesson, but would enjoy making the rap and will have an appreciation for how English language arts is used to create raps. The hope was that this exercise could help motivate the students to study or at least better appreciate the English language and the use of similes and metaphors. I thought the students would work well together when it came to building a rap and would have fun exploring different metaphors and smiles.

I was not able to join my group on the second visit to the Ark Center, but I was able to speak with all of them after and read their individual ethnographies. From these conversations and readings, I was able to make several conclusions of my own and produce an analysis of their field work.

From reading all the papers of my group members, I was able to find some similarities and thus create general conclusions for the trip. It seemed that everyone agreed on the fact that the children enjoy working with one another, and when students were singled out to work individually with the Wekinator software, they were more reserved and less willing to explore and play with the software. The students did not appreciate the technology and software as I had anticipated, and were more concerned with a interesting output then a complex and opportunistic software. Thinking about this post-trip, it makes sense to me that the children do not really care how a device works as long as it

produces a fun activity or cool end product. This was an important lesson to learn early on in the design process, as we should focus more on having a product which is fun for the students to work with that errors on the simple side rather than a product which the students somewhat enjoy but has very complex coding or moving parts which require a lot of our design time.

Additionally, from talking with my group members, it was evident that our attempt to teach the children about similes and metaphors was a semi-failure. My group had tried to divide up the time with each student group in half, where about ten minutes was spent on a simile and metaphor lesson and then ten minutes was spent on building a rap with the students. It turns out that the ten minutes was not a long enough time for the students to grasp the concept of similes and metaphors. Each group was able to get a vague understanding, but they were not that interested in learning a lesson and much more excited about creating a rap. My group members did have success in teaching the kids about fitting syllables into a simple four count of music, which we had initially thought might be a hard concept for the children to grasp.

Through reading my members ethnographies and talking with them, I was able to see that my group had success in improvising and learning on the spot. My group members felt that the simile and metaphor lesson was not going over very well with the children, so with the later groups they changed their lesson to incorporate the concept of rhyming. My group found a rhyming dictionary and was able to help with the kids create more complex and interesting rhymes by using the rhyming dictionary. This created better raps with more substance, and helped with kids use more vocabulary and get an understanding for suffixes.

In future applications, I think it would be wise for use to create a device where the students can all work together or compete against each other. When my group singled kids out, they felt uncomfortable and were much less willing to work with us and our reaction devices. Additionally, I think we need to move in a different direction when it comes to teaching the children about English language arts. Although I would like to continue with a theme of teaching ELA, I think we should explore other options besides similes and metaphors. The children enjoyed rapping and the music side of our presentation, so these concepts could be used in future designs.

This was a good analysis despite getting the data second-hand. I thought you could have provided more information about the technology – what exactly were the sound parameters for example, which ones did kids like the best, etc. Otherwise good write-up. Grade = A-

P.S. – the word “opportunistic” is not used in the way you have used it here.