

Exploring Life Year 2 Phone Interviews

Nine Year 2 pilot testing teachers were arbitrarily selected for follow-up phone interviews. Interviewed participants had completed at least two chapters of the materials and were participants that were to be available and willing to participate in a phone interview. The intent of the phone interviews was to acquire additional information that was not reported on the survey responses. Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted by Gina Sanzenbacher. The following questions were used in the interviews:

(I first introduced myself as a classroom teacher that was trying to get honest classroom experience responses)

- Did you encounter anything that you wished you would have known about in advance? Hurdles, problems, time issues, material issues, etc.
- Did you have any “A-Ha ” experiences? Something worked better than you thought it would or worked in a different way?
- Did you observe any improvement /disinterest in the learning disabled students?(I would ask them to elaborate, most would do so without encouragement)
- Did you have any problems with the Internet? With students not being able to navigate or access? Blocks on computer?
- What was your overall impression of the program—good and bad?
- Would you encourage your administration to purchase the EL program? Why or why not?

Below is a summary report of each phone interview.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 12-17-02

Teacher: Frances Grant

EL Materials used: Chapters 7 and 8

Computer related:

Only technical problems were with printing. The labs would print blank pages with the address at the bottom.

Student feedback:

Students didn't like the reading. They were not sure what to do and tried to go too fast. They were not use to working on their own. Had trouble with some of the instructions—too much reading. Some kids liked the program and some did not .

Teacher comments:

Would like a way to monitor their responses. Did not like the fact that students could type in anything and it was accepted. Special Ed (504, ADD) kids did better than traditional way of teaching because of visuals and teacher help.

Other:

Frances was not committed on whether she would purchase the program. She stated "I could see using in the future."

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 12-17-02

Teacher: Mary-Lee Westberry

School: Private girls school

EL Materials used: Chapters 7

Computer related:

If students had any problems they would use as excuse to not continue. They were to complete many assignments at home. Teacher constantly checked website and did not encounter any major problems. "How do you combat student that says 'I could not get on at home'?"

Student feedback:

ADD students tended to do better. Took the same amount of time as everybody else. Kids loved lecture first and then the website.

Teacher comments:

Mary-lee shared the website with faculty. Even teachers resistant to computers loved the Biome demo on the smartboard. Teacher has her own chat room and students could ask questions about EL through the computer.

One student that was out for 3 months did not get behind because they could use the Internet. Mary-lee sent home some guiding materials for EL. EL definitely helped with homeschool.

Other:

Mary-lee was extremely happy with the program and would purchase. Faculty loved the move to paperless classroom.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 1-2-02

Teacher: Linda Lentz

School: Wando High School

City and State: Mount Pleasant , SC

EL Materials used: Ch.36,7,and 8

Computer related: Computers froze now and then. District check server not a problem there. Called Michelle said it was not a problem at that end????

Student feedback: Students were distracted by too much going on in some parts. Students really like the simulations. Students found teacher resource with the answers.

Teacher comments: Made up worksheets to help guide through reading. Even Honors used. Some questions from program some from the teacher. Time consuming for the teacher but worthwhile for accountability. Good review questions. Did not have time to do many physical labs because of time constraint.

Other: Linda is on a 4 by 4 schedule. She has to cover a whole year in one semester. She did the worksheet to help guide the students through some of the more difficult/wordy sections.

Interviewer comments: Linda was very happy with the curriculum and is very excited about seeing the text completed. Would definitely use. Liked the student folder through email idea.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 1-02-02

Interviewer: Sanzenbacher

Teacher: Kim Roundy

EL Materials used: Chapters 7 and 8

Computer related:

Download flash every time.

Went in before class, then reserved computers.

Tech was too busy to deal with.

Some computers saved settings some did not.

Student feedback:

Scantrons were NOT liked by students. Some classes had to do post test and then pre test back to back.

Syringe lab was frustrating at first, disc would not sink.

Reading on larval stages of butterflies' too high level.

ADHD students got bored with long reading on computer. Liked change of pace program offered.

Teacher comments:

Loved this program. Builds on previous topic.

Prep for labs using projector could walk students through.

Print off readings for students to take home and finish.

Would purchase this program if money were available.

Other:

Email responses to individual student folder is an excellent idea!

Interviewer comments:

Kim seemed pleased with the overall program. Frustration only with the computer problems at school. Liked the idea of walking through lab on screen before students actually did it.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 1-3-02

Teacher: Patricia Glynn

EL Materials used: Ch 36

Computer related: Problems with district server and website later in day. System not running or not able to get on. DID NOT like relying on Internet.

Travel time to and from computer lab could be a factor in lesson time allotment.

Student feedback: Kids liked the computer aspect.

Teacher comments: Teacher generated own worksheets so students were accountable on some parts of the online activities. Did not observe any ability differences with students so far. Not sure about student folder idea. Activity where students alter sunlight/water/temperature was too lengthy. Deep-sea vent site was not working properly. May be using wireless computers in the future, could create a new computer problem glitch.

Other:

Interviewer comments: Pat seemed mediocre on the unit so far. She could see using parts of the program if the district could afford to purchase it. Has only ch. 36 to base most of her comments on.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 1-10-02

Teacher: Karla Walker

EL Materials used: Chapters 7 and 8

Computer related:

Supportive media guy. No major problems. Some times students are banned from computer school wide, but Karla didn't have any of these students.

Student feedback:

Students like the chromatography lab and peanut lab. On line walk-throughs on labs were very helpful. Slower kids liked because not a big deal if they got behind, could work at their own pace. Pace for everyone.

Teacher comments:

Alternative assignments, usually from the regular biology book, had to be created for students that did not bring permission slips or parents said no. The second year is easier because she is familiar with the program. Would like to see school purchase program.

Other:

Karla seemed genuinely pleased with the project. She had no real criticisms. Felt more comfortable and in control the second year of using the program. This is true of any new program/curriculum.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 2-19-02

Teacher: Gena Barnhardt

EL Materials used: Chapters 7,8, and 36

Computer related:

Website /system was down many times. CD would work in cases like this.

Student feedback:

Students love the change of pace. They figured out how to type in garbage and then get the right answer. They had to write their answers on teacher created worksheets.

Teacher comments:

Teacher created worksheets for all on line questions for accountability. Only completed one wet lab (Syringe lab) due to time constraints. NC has a tough state curriculum. May do the "raddish seed" lab, if the seeds germinate. She has done many of the online activities/labs. Gena loved the program and would like to see her school purchasing it in the future. She would like to see more ancillary materials. CD's would cut down on the website/system problems.

Other:

Gena suggested online quizzes/activities that gave scores to the student and teacher immediately. Webassign.net is a program that she has used. Gena could not be more positive. She really did "love" the program. She was enthusiastic and motivated.

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 2-25-02

Teacher: Judy Cassani

EL Materials used: Ch 7 and 8

Computer related:

Media guy did not know what he was doing. Said they had 5.0 on computers but had 4.8

Student feedback:

Students remembered photosynthesis/respiration because of graphics and interactivities. LD students really got stuck on the burping boy. This is distracting. Students liked this new way of presenting material. Graphics, layout, and reading level were enjoyable.

Teacher comments:

Take out the burping boy. Students like to do this over and over. LD and ADD students did very well. Did reading portion in classroom for 1 and 1/2 days then went to the computer lab to do interactivities for 1 and 1/2 days. Used the computer lab as reinforcement for the reading material. Did not do any wet labs due to time constraints—4 X 4 block. Cover one year in one semester. Almost every student improved from pre and posttest. Made up worksheets to walk students through the website.

Other:

Interviewer comments:

Judy really liked this project and would like to purchase, except for the concern of computers and availability. She has mostly 10th graders and this is her first year on the project. She plans to use next year

Teacher Phone Interview

Date of Call 3-5-02

Teacher: Deon Branch

City and State: South Carolina

EL Materials used: Ch7 and 8

Computer related:

Older computers—had problems with viewing many aspects. Scheduled 45min blocks at a time. Didn't have time to work through all information.

Student feedback:

Students are below average readers in a college prep class. They did not like all the reading and the level was too high. Overwhelmed. Teacher had to work through many of the sections with them. They do not like to read. They figured out they could type anything in textbox and get correct answers.

Teacher comments:

Teacher had to make up "quiz bowl" to go along with computer activities, so students would pay attention and be accountable. Deon has to give 20 min of reading time per 1 1/2 teaching blocks. She will soon have to dedicate some of the class time to math. This is district/state wide! Did not use program with applied class – they are too low level for the project. This is where most of the ADD and LD kids are. The wet labs would take up too much time so only did the leaf disc lab.

Other:

The concept of having the program grade the on-line quizzes or activities was mentioned by Deon.

Interviewer comments:

Deon would have to think twice about purchasing program because the reading level was way beyond her students. She has 9th, 10th, and 11th graders in a college prep class, but they are below average readers. She was not enthralled with the project.