

MONTHLY JOURNAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FELLOWS AND PARTNER TEACHERS

Each month, the Fellow will complete a journal entry pertaining to one unit that s/he has organized and presented during that month. This journal has no particular format, but should be approximately 1-2 pages and answer some basic questions (below). The Fellow will forward this journal entry to the Partner Teacher at the end of each month via email (cc: fytask@uaf.edu).

The Partner Teacher should give constructive feedback comment on the journal entry and return to the Fellow via email (cc: fytask@uaf.edu) no later than the 10th of each month.

Fellows: Please answer the following questions in your journal entry:

- What happened? Summarize how teaching the unit went. (1-2 paragraphs)
- Why did these things happen? Analyze the outcome. (1-2 paragraphs)
- What did I learn? Reflect on the outcome and/or ideas for improvement. (1-2 paragraphs)

Teachers: Please provide constructive and timely feedback on the subject unit.

***Please be sure to copy the TASK Program Administrator
on all journal correspondence!***

EXAMPLE

February Monthly TASK Journal **Fellow Katie Villano**

I would like to focus on the Motion Unit for my February log. The unit went very well. I put a lot of time into preparation and coming up with original activities for the students to do to explore force, motion and gravity. The Motion Machine inventions were a great way to get them to think about how things move, what makes things move farther and what forces aid and inhibit movement. We turned our inventions into a great science fair project that did well at both the school and district science fairs.

After teaching a lesson on the laws of motion, doing a hands-on demonstration of one of the laws, and having students watch videos on motion and friction, I had the students build motion machines with the knowledge they had gained. I brought in scraps of cardboard, dowels, wooden spools and all sorts of scrounged junk to for the students to build machine with. I really love giving them the freedom to think and create. I think it was a good move that I had them come up with a plan for building their machines and a hypothesis for what kind of machine they thought would travel the farthest. The drawback of this activity was that many of the kids needed adult help for the taping of their machines. Thank goodness we had a parent helper on all days of the activity!

Once the machines were created, we tested them on a ramp, weighed them with balances, and quantified the surface area of the machines that would be subjected to friction from the floor. These activities every student was capable of doing. I was worried that the surface area activity might be too hard for some of the students, but I think most of them understood why we were doing it. Some students needed a little help tracing their machines on the graph paper.

Once we had the activities completed, we made bar graphs and discussed them on the overhead. Hinzman was an excellent guide for many of the practical parts of this unit. I would not have thought to utilize the overhead, but it made it accessible to the whole class. She also guided me on keeping the project child-driven; students did all the typing and drawing for the project. Reviewing the project with small groups was an excellent post-assessment. The students were able to express whether or not they understood what we did, what further inferences they could make from what we learned, as well as articulate what further things they wondered about. The transition between our motion explorations and Copernicus lessons (one of the curriculum scientists for the second grade) also went smoothly after they had gained some knowledge about gravity and motion.

I learned many things from the experience of putting together and teaching this unit. I probably learned the most in the area of developing strategies to deal with behavior issues and keeping students on task. Melanie was really helpful in modeling for me ways to deal with student behavior problems while simultaneously maintaining their respect. I feel like I am steadily improving in the area. I have a very energetic and informal personality, which I think makes the students amped up and ready to test the limits.

Teacher Melanie Hinzman's Response

This unit would not have happened without Katie's efforts, energy, and creativity. Our students absolutely enjoyed learning the concept of motion and friction by building their own vehicles. Katie worked with the children to create a science fair project. This project did well at our school's science fair and was selected for the district science fair. One important component of this science project was the selection of children whom spoke to the judges at the science fairs. This was a random selection of students, because any child interested in representing our class put their name in a "hat". The children's names were then picked and they were to speak about our project. This implies that any child had enough understanding of this unit to express their knowledge. This is a great feeling!