

For Teachers New to the Monster Project 2015

Meet with other teachers on our private Global Monster Project Facebook Group

This project can be implemented as simply or extended as best fits the teacher's experiences and curriculum. Here is how I blended the project with my 4th grade class of very mixed ability students. Insert assignments as you proceed: writing, research, math, foreign language, geography, culture and so forth. I found that content associated with this project was retained by students much longer than content learned in traditional ways.

(1) **Announce** to your students that they will be joining classrooms around the world in a challenging and fun project to create a big friendly Monster.

(2) **Display** the Monster web site and take students on a tour showing them the other classrooms, noting the locations of countries and states, the various age groups, and pointing out the differences and the similarities between our new friends and ourselves.

[Assignment suggestion – After the overview/debriefing of the project partners and locations, I would do a 90-90-Focus exercise. Put kids in groups 3-4, give each a notecard. Ask them to write down 3 important things a student might learn from working with kids around the world – they have 90 seconds. Next ask each group to talk/share with each other what they have written AND to select the number one important idea from all of their group cards, one idea per group – they have 90 seconds to do this.

Finally each group reveals their number one idea, and the teacher writes these all on the board or on a large sheet of poster paper. The teacher reads through the ideas aloud. The teacher announces that as project proceeds, we will watch to see if these ideas come true OR if other great learning situations might happen that we did not think of.]

(3) **After confirming your class Monster part** – explain the process of brainstorming ideas to describe the part – for example the Tail. Guide kids toward specific measurements, known shapes (hexagon, trapezoid, and rectangle), colors, textures ...things that might make up a monster (scales, bumps, worms, spiders, etc.). Remind kids that the size is important because it must work with parts designed all over the world – not too tiny, not so large that it won't fit in a room. Write down about 25 brainstormed adjectives on the board, then systematically discuss which ones need to be removed so that only 12 remain. Send those to the Monster Project.

(4) **Teacher guides a group writing exercise** – creating the class bio and respond to the statements asked on the project announcement. What STEM methods would your Monster use to improve a situation in your community? Point out the latitude and longitude of your class on a world map. Take a class photo including the teacher and send all to the Monster project so kids can see who is in the project.

(5) **Over the next couple of weeks**, periodically check the Monster site to see how the description chart is filling up, giving volunteers opportunities to read the new descriptions aloud, and noting the locations of your Monster project friends in other locations. This is also a good time to integrate "monster" books on literacy topics, math, science, & engineering.

(6) As soon as the **chart is filled** with descriptions, an announcement will be sent out to all schools! Teachers will have acquired the supplies needed to build the monster: large paper rolls, construction paper, aluminum foil, pipe cleaners, ribbon, cotton, cardboard, cereal boxes, toilet tissue tubes, craft sticks, cloth scraps, paint, glue, etc. Kids can bring things from home also.

(8) **Distribute the Monster descriptions** among the students in your class, pairing kids as needed. Discuss the level of cooperation to make these parts come together. Ask for suggestions and ideas from the students about how they will be able to solve the problems of building this Monster.

(9) **Choose a day (days)** when you have a reasonable chunk of time – Monster building Day. Some classes work with the art teacher for this part. Arrange the room with the supplies; check for understanding, then set the kids free to begin their work. This is a highly energized time requiring lots of patience and guidance by the teacher as he/she circulates among the workers. This will be very messy, very noisy, and a time when kids have a chance to try and try again until success is attained. Some will be done early as always and can assist with other parts of the monster or help with the excess paper and scraps. (Take photos/videos of this part!).

See Students on Building Day video: <http://tinyurl.com/monster10-building>

(10) **Displaying the Monster** – I always used a large paper rectangle roughly 5 feet wide by 8 feet long. The parts of the monster would be placed and arranged on the paper, but not glued until it was determined that the part was ready to go – complete. Sometimes, we put the Monster in the cafeteria, in the main entrance hallway to the school, or on the wall in our classroom. Next to the Monster, we had a chart with all the parts labeling their origins: NOSE from England, TAIL from Australia, ARMS from California and so forth. Also – the class needs to Name their Monster.

OPTIONAL Activities: Padlet, Monster STEM/science ideas, blogging, Animoto videos, SmileBox videos, Monster poetry, Monster story writing, Monster recipes, Monster biographies, Monster Math, How-to writing, podcasts, stop-action animation, Skyping with other classes...virtually any creative activity that exercises students abilities in critical thinking, problem solving, technology skills, collaboration, creativity, and global awareness – all 21st century skills.

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