

I worked with a child that was 7 years old and in the 1st grade. This child is very creative and enjoys activities where she is involved. She has a love for animals that is astounding.

This student is an only child. She lives with her mom and dad; both parents work full-time jobs. They are very active in her action, mom more because of dad's work schedule. The parents try to encourage this child to be involved in extracurricular activities, but do not force her. She has recently participated in children's activities at church, Talent Show at school, and is interested in cheerleading.

When beginning working with this child, I told her I needed her to help me with some of my schoolwork; she was excited that I needed her help to do my school work. I told her we were going to use the computer and look at a website, but before that we had to do a short test together. She said okay as long as she was able to use the computer. I did the San Diego Reading Assessment with this child. Again, she is in the 1st grade and was able to get through half of the words on the first grade level. As a result, I moved to the words on the Primer level and she was able to successfully read all of the words within that category.

As I logged into the website I showed her the different categories to choose from in the Reading Voyages website. I told her I know she would want to visit the zoo, but told her let's look at one of the other choices first as this would give her more time to look at the section with the zoo later. This child picked the Phonics Voyage. As we started this program she was able to go through with a breeze as it revolved around the letters of the alphabet. She thought the ABC Song done by the Pirates was funny. She made the comment that she had never heard the ABC's song like that before. She also enjoyed the games. She liked the section with the vowels and said that she thought it would help in school because her teacher had tried helping her and sometimes she did not understand. She said the videos and games were great. She actually got a lot of the answers right, I think because the video is at the children's level and has examples. Also, the fact that there are different levels of games for each section is helpful.

She did the short vowels, long vowels, combination vowels, sing-a-long, and the coloring activity. She enjoys singing and knew some of the songs so she eagerly joined in the singing. She worked along through the different exercises. As she worked through the exercises, she smiled as she answered them right. She made the comment that she was happy she was getting them right. After working through the Phonics Voyage she wanted to move on to the Zoo Voyage. She got very excited when the screen came up with all the pictures of the different animals. She enjoyed the birds and sea animals the most. She said she had never seen some of the pictures of the sea animals like that before. She liked that the pictures were in the real-life format instead of a cartoon version. Her favorite birds were the Hummingbird, Parrot, and Toucan. She liked that after seeing a picture of the animal there was information about the animal. It

appeared that she enjoyed being able to see the text and hear the words. I think on a personal note that this in itself is helpful for improving reading and writing as it taps into two senses; hearing and seeing. She did not like the reptile section at all. After seeing a snake, she was ready to leave that section as she is scared of snakes. I reassured it that it was only on the screen, but she did not want to watch the rest of that section. I told her it was okay to be scared of snakes and that I too was scared of them.

When looking at the mammals section she said she had never heard of some of the names of the animals before. She said this was the first time she had heard of some of the animals. Some of the animals she did not know were bison, caribou, lemur, lynx, meerkat, ocelet, and a titi monkey. She liked the ocelet. She said she wished she had a stuffed animal of it because it was really cute. She wanted to know where oceleets lived and what they ate. I told her we could do some research after I finished my work if she wanted to. She said the lynx had long pointy ears like an elf. She also said she never heard of a tree kangaroo. She asked if it was real I said I guess so, but that I never heard of it or seen one. She said she would ask her mom to help her look on the internet about it later. She wrote the name of it down and said if she found it she would let me know.

After looking at the animals she was eager to stop working with this website and wanted to do some research of her own. I allowed her supervised time on the internet to do some further research on the animals. I think this is a great program to use with children as it gets them excited about reading. Pictures are a great way to get children excited about reading. If children simply have to read pages of text without pictures it is boring. Even as adults, we like to look at pictures as it relates to what we are reading or studying. I think this is a great way to get children engaged and interested in reading and literacy. If children are having a fun time and are actively involved in the task it is helpful. It is also helpful when children feel they are in control and do not know that they are learning; the children simply think they are playing games on the computer or are looking at pictures of animals, but in reality they are learning and strengthening their vocabulary and reading skills.

I was very pleased with this product and would recommend it to fellow teachers. I think this would also be a great product to use with ESL students. Learning the English alphabet and how to pronounce the letters can be a hard task for students that are learning English as a second language. For example, the I in English is pronounced as the E in Spanish. This can be very difficult for students to understand. Repetition of the alphabet through visual cues and songs is a great way for students to pick-up on the differences. I also liked how there were two different levels of difficulty-level 1 and level 2 and that it was available in English and Spanish. This is great when there are children with different levels of development.