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Sidebar:Apes, Adaptation and Anthropology

Connecting Students to Field Experts through Technology

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By Wendy Fry, First Grade Teacher, Green Woods Charter School

We are always looking for new ways to use technology at Green Woods, not just to keep kids busy, but to provide unique learning experiences. Through a collaborative partnership with Stevie Carnation ("Miss Stevie"), Turkana Basin Institute Graduate Fellow and PhD Candidate in Anthropological Science at Stony Brook University, and utilizing available technology, my first grade students were able to experience the excitement of interacting with a scientific expert.

Miss Stevie made herself available to Skype with our students while doing her PhD research. Prior to our sessions, students posted questions on our class blog (Kidblog.org). Via Skype, students learned about her experiences, expertise, and what her daily research entails. The first graders were most interested in the tools she uses (especially the bone saw) and the variety of scientists with whom she collaborates.

In our second session, Miss Stevie became our remote teacher through screen-sharing technology (WebEx.com) and Skype. She took over control of a projector screen to teach our first graders about exciting primate adaptations. On a second computer, students directly interacted with Miss Stevie via Skype while she was doing research at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History. In addition to her Power Point presentation, Miss Stevie showed students a variety of primate skulls, bones, and skins to showcase some of the adaptations she had described. Our first grade students were completely engaged in the interesting and unique adaptations of these animals.

It is weeks later and our conversation continues on our class blog, where Miss Stevie makes herself available to answer additional questions the students pose about primates and her research. Using technological resources, we have created an exciting unit of study focusing on apes and their adaptations where students have direct interaction with an expert in the field of anthropology.

Blog Interactions with Miss Stevie:

(You can see them all at <http://kidblog.org/MrsFrysClass-GreenWoodsCharterSchool/>)

URL:
http://www.montgomerynews.com/articles/2013/02/22/roxborough_review/news/doc5126810a19efd762058200.prt

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