

T. S. Cooper Elementary School
NASA Youth Computer Camp
“Off To A Flying Start”

Summary

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As a new experience for the students at T.S. Cooper Elementary School, the NASA Summer Youth Computer Camp was very accessible in the knowledge of the use of computer technology. The camp was in correlation with the Standard Course of Study of the K-5 Keyboard familiar Computer/Technology Skills Curriculum with the main focus points as follows: learning the basic parts of the computer, keyboard familiarity, using database to find information, building basic word processing tools, exploring multimedia (graphs, sounds, text) locating information on the internet, using various search items, and a host of other strategies that help promote to the growth in the knowledge of computer literacy. The camp theme “Off To A Flying Start” helped to integrate math, science, writing, and literature.

The first week of camp, July 1-5, which consisted of kindergarten, first, and second graders, began with the learning of the basic steps in using a computer. The instructor carried the students on step-by-step procedures of word processing, drawing with various drawing tools and Internet searching. As a result, the students were able to create a coversheet for their journals in which they kept daily, and also created a T-shirt transfer design. The students seemed very enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoyed all activities that were done during the week. Some activities done by the students were spacey math, story writing, space coversheet, creating a falcon flyer and a space workbook, along with other activities.

The students were overwhelmed by the creativity, which was used by their peers. Each child had the opportunity to use the digital camera to take pictures of their peers flying and measuring their falcon flyer flight. They were excited to see their pictures shown up on the screen. The parents were excited about seeing what their child had created and learned at the camp.

Assessment is also an important part of the camp. Instructors need lots of information for the decisions they have to make. As they begin teaching, they need

to find out what students already know and understand related to the goals and objectives. This is basic to a strong instructional program. Students were given a quiz by using an internet site called Funbrain. The quizzes checked their basic knowledge of the computer. Journals were also another means of assessing the students, along with teacher observation.

During the week of July 8-12, much of the time was repetitious as what had been done with the previous week, with the exception of change in grade levels. The second week was for grades third, fourth and fifth. The NASA site was very exciting to the students, and of course, the Exploring Aeronautics, and Space Shuttle, grasped the majority's attention. The students enjoyed the Virginia Air and Space Center site. They had a chance to take a virtual tour of the site. Students were divided into groups during session breaks by grade levels. There were lunches given to the students and snacks were provided during breaks. The students enjoyed the recess time that was spent with the workers playing various games to keep them motivated, even though it was a short period of time. Students visited the following sites:

- [learning planet.com](http://learning.planet.com)
- [off to a flying start.com](http://off.to.a.flying.start.com)
- space.com
- earth.nasa.gov.
- funbrain.com
- ncsu.edu/science/junction/station/gameroom/spacetrak/index.html

Students used such programs as: ClarisWorks for kids, The Graph Club, Appleworks, and Kidworks.

We also feel that a community resource person is very important to any program. Mr. Murphy from the Family Care Center came to speak to the students. He explained the lift off of planes. He talked to the students about the Virginia Air and Space Center. He informed them of the many wonderful and exciting things that will be awaiting them there. He also brought a rocket to demonstrate to the students. At the end of the demonstration, one child was given the rocket in each group. The students truly enjoyed the demonstration.

Parents are an important part of our camp. The parents enjoyed meeting each other to celebrate their child's learning. This camp gave the parents a chance to meet and know each other, allowing them to interact with one another within the school community and the community at large. This enables them to appreciate each other's experiences and backgrounds. The materials used during the camp activities were taken home for further use with their family members. Parents became more aware of the "importance of cherishing time with their child." We had 90% of our parents to go on the trip with their child. At the end of the camp, we had a "Camp Celebration." Everyone was invited to attend. This included, parents, administrators, and community. A special group from the NASA site at Elizabeth City State University also gave a short presentation using high school students.

As a whole, the T. S. Cooper NASA Computer Camp, "Off To A Flying Start" was definitely a successful program. The camp staff, principal, and secretarial staff made this camp session a learning experience along with being fun and exciting. We are looking forward to doing it all over again next summer.