The Amazon Rain Forest Ecosystem

This third grade unit is based upon the characters, the animals and the setting in the book, *The Great Kapok Tree*, by Lynn Cherry. It integrates information literacy, science, language arts and social studies.

The unit begins with the students reading the story independently and then meeting as a class to discuss the characters, animals and setting of the story. I will then lead the class in a KWL activity to formulate questions they would like to answer about the ecosystem of the rain forest, the animals of the story, the plants of the rain forest, the conflicts and needs of the populations causing the destruction of the rain forest, the effects of the destruction on the plants, animals, and people of the rain forest and the strategies the students can use to preserve the ecosystem.

The students will work in cooperative groups to research the answers to these questions. They will participate in activities and view modeling to learn cooperative learning skills. Following these activities, the class will work together to create t-charts, which both the teacher and the students will utilize to assess and self assess their group skills. They will also receive lessons and opportunities to practice using the computer catalog to locate nonfiction books on their topics, on how to use an encyclopedia to access information on their topics and on how to utilize the internet to locate relevant information on their topic. Additional lessons will include those on how to evaluate nonfiction materials for relevance to their topic, how to organize and integrate information from a variety of sources to communicate their ideas and how to create and deliver an oral presentation using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.