



Lesson Plan 3: Being a Scientific Observer

Connections

Lesson Title: Being a Scientific Observer **Grade Level:** 3-5 **Date:** 2005/2006
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Subject Areas: Language Fine Arts Math Science PE/Health Personal Planning French Socials

***Previous Lesson:** Learning to Observe ***Next Lesson:** Preparation for mentoring about observation skills.

* Refers to lessons or excercises used by contributing teacher, not specifically to ones present yet in this manual

SETTING THE SCENE

Theme: Factual Observations
Goal (objective): To determine what are facts, to record factual observations and to introduce students to the animals in our Seaquarium.
Activity: Observing and recording the locations of the animals and plants in the Seaquarium.
Connecting to Experience: Drawing a connection to the daily care of the tank and the needs of the creatures.
Initial Question: Why is it important to record your observations in a factual way?

The Lesson

Materials Required:

- Seaquarium with animals & plants
- Laminated Intertidal ID charts
- data collection chart & seaquarium tank outline sketch – (available online February 2008)

Procedure:

- introduction: A review of "Learning to Observe" Lesson. In the previous lesson the children were given a small beanie baby to observe. They wrote facts about their creature and learned the difference between an assumption and a fact. For example, if their beanie baby was a cat, they couldn't say "It's a cat because I know". Rather, they were encouraged to describe it factually. They stated 10 facts, that included measurements and colours and then they sketched their creature to reflect their observations. They were only allowed to write what they knew or assumed about their creature on the back of their paper.
- body: Allow the students time to look at the ID chart. Then give the students the data collection sheet that has some of the creatures that are in your tank. Have them identify each creature from their ID chart and make an observation of it (e.g. Red Rock Crab has black-tipped pincers). This information is found on the ID sheet.
In pairs or groups, children spend time making observations at the tank. They record their name, date, time and the position of the creature they identified on their data collection sheet. Then they sketch the creatures in the relative location in the seaquarium tank outline on the back of the sheet.
- close: Repeat observations and data recording a second time to see if there has been movement. Students can then research more facts about individual creatures to share with the class.

Reflection

Student: (Discussion) related to goal, metacognitive or thinking about your thinking, new ideas.

Discussion was geared towards talking about the observation skills they had practiced in order to mentor a younger group of children from another school. A lot of the discussions revolved around areas of personal planning, such as learning to mentor and work with younger children, learning to work in groups, cooperation, and asking for assistance, when needed.

What do you think now? It piqued their interest in learning more about the creatures in the seaquarium and taking responsibility for taking care of the tank.

Teacher: Where do we want to go from here? Future Directions and Strategies to get there. Variations, lead up.

This was the springboard into classroom and field activities involving the Seaquarium:
continuing mentoring lessons (personal planning)
teaching the students to independently care for the tank
mentoring younger students in caring for the tank