



Teacher's Corner Lesson Plans

*Helping Teachers and Students Make the Most of
their Outdoor Classroom*

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Seeing Eye “Buddies”^{*†}

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Grade level: Grade 3.

Provincial curriculum links: Ontario.

Subject: Language.

Keywords: Sights.

Description

Students observe a variety of sights which can be observed within their schoolyard habitat by sitting quietly back-to-back with a partner and describing something unusual. The partner will sketch the observations. Students will then change places and repeat the observation and sketching.

Curriculum Framework

Topic: Language

Strand: Oral and Visual Communication 3e50 3e56

Specific Lesson Goals:

- Students will observe a natural phenomenon in their schoolyard habitat, describing it in accurate and interesting detail so that a partner can sketch the scene without seeing it.
- Students will compose a digital photo of their chosen phenomenon to present to the class with their sketch.
- Students will share their work with the class.

^{*}This exercise is adapted from Lott, Steven *Patterns, Plants and Playgrounds, Educational Activities for School Grounds, Intermediate Grades 4 to 7*. Evergreen, 2000.

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Preparation

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Length of lesson: 40 minutes

Resources required:

- outdoor habitat locations where students can sit undisturbed for a short period of time
- clip boards
- postcard-sized sheets of paper
- pencils
- pencil crayons
- digital camera

Procedure

1. To encourage students to describe similarities and differences seen in an outdoor environment and to provide an opportunity for students to practice the skill of direct observation, be prepared to deliver the activity from the “Sound Portraits” lesson plan (Procedure, part 1 #3) from the Teacher’s Corner. This activity encourages participants to “look” in a broad sense of the word - seeing, touching, listening, and smelling.
2. Now, divide the class into groups of two. Each group will need pencils, paper, a clip board and access to the school’s digital camera or a regular camera. Students will compose a “postcard” of a piece of their habitat.
3. Select a portion of the schoolyard habitat area that has trees or other interesting items to look at. Students are instructed to look for something unusual which they have not noticed before, such as the shape of a branch, a collection of plants, or the shape of a flower that they can describe to their partner. This will become their “postcard” .
4. Partners sit back to back. One partner chooses their postcard view and proceeds to describe it in great detail while the other partner begins to sketch it without being able to see it (no peeking permitted!).
5. After five minutes, partners exchange roles. The sketching partner now becomes the observer, choosing a different view for a “postcard” .

6. After five minutes, the two partners share their drawings and find their “postcards” in the schoolyard habitat.
7. Students use the digital camera to record their postcard to share with the class.

Discussion and Questions

- What did you communicate best to your partner?
- Were you able to describe your postcard adequately?
- Why might it be important to develop your skills of actively “looking” ?

Student Evaluation

With the students, develop a rating scale for student participation. Use the rating scale as a self-evaluation tool.

Enrichment and Extension Activities

- Visit an aquatic area and use your new observation skills to create a postcard which will describe what you see. Write the description on one side of the postcard, and illustrate the front of the card.
- Use the digital photos to develop a slide show of the schoolyard habitat area. Combine the slide show with appropriate sound (see “Sound Portraits” lesson plan from Teacher’s Corner) to produce a multi-media show.

Connections to the Outdoor Environment

Questions to ask:

- How important is it for us to be able to “see” the sights of nature, even if we live in the middle of the city?
- How can we help to prevent eye pollution in our homes, neighbourhoods, and schools? Sensing more in our surroundings can help us detect changes in our environment, and to become more curious and better aware of these changes. Awareness leads to better decisions being made.

References

Wild Education - Project Wild. <http://www.wildeducation.org>.