

Sketching and Learning

When children take sketchbooks out into “the real world”, they become more serious students and careful observers of nature and the world around them. Sketchbooks reinforce a child's natural curiosity, inclination for discovery, investigation of ideas and encourage them from an early age to function as researchers and naturalists. It is amazing to watch the calm, inner focus and introspection that emerges in a form of learning not often seen in the classroom. Student self-esteem is enhanced, and they truly love working in their sketchbooks!

Curriculum/State Standard

Writing: use of descriptive language, write brief expository description of a real object using sensory detail.

Geometry & Measurement: identify and describe the characteristics of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional solids.

Science - Investigation & Experimentation: Record observations and date with pictures, numbers and/or written statements. Study of marine life, rocks and sand, plants and animals, properties of objects.

Art: Development of aesthetic awareness, powers of observation and expression of creativity.

Overview

Using an interdisciplinary approach to our study of science, we like to take our team of three first grade classes on field trips to local beaches, tidepools, parks, creeks and lagoons. We teach the children to observe carefully and to become naturalists in the field. When we have sketchbooks and drawing pencils, we can take them along to record our observations and reflections which can take the form of realistic scientific drawings or creative impressions and poetry.

Continued on the back...

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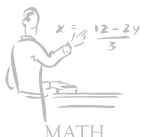
GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



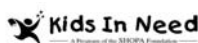
SOCIAL STUDIES

6-9

MONTHS

\$500

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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“Sketching and Learning” project continued...

Objectives

- The student will increase his/her powers of observation of the natural world as they are encouraged to look closely and sketch what they see.
- The student will be inspired to write about observations and sketches in the form of labeling, prose, and poetry and to use reflection as an avenue to increase learning.
- The student will be more focused on field trips as the sketchbooks provide a means to record experiences and to become naturalists.

Materials

Sketchbooks and colored pencils

Readiness Activity

The teachers read the book, *Sketch-books: Explore and Store* by Gillian Robinson for some professional guidance on using sketchbooks with children.

We introduce this project by asking and discussing the question, “What is a sketchbook?” Teachers then share their own sketchbook with the class and tell students they will have one to work in this year. We model proper use and care of the sketchbooks and pencils, such as keeping the cover closed to protect work and making sure all pencils are accounted for when finished. We discuss the difference between looking and observing and stress careful noticing and using of all their senses. Some basic art and drawing techniques are taught and some contour drawings are done in the classroom prior to going out into the field. Sharing books such as *A Desert Scrapbook* by Virginia Wright-Frierson provides some examples of sketching. We set our standards for behavior while sketching and insist

on quiet and commitment to staying settled in one place for a reasonable period of time. We then go out and find some place to sketch on our own school grounds to practice the “sketching attitude” before going on field trips.

Strategies/Activities

The readiness activity is crucial for setting the stage for successful sketching experiences.

The day of the field trip students may either carry their own sketchbooks and pencils with them in their backpacks or the teacher can take them in a box for distribution at the appropriate time.

We usually have our sketching time at the end of the field trip after they have had exposure to the area.

Teachers and chaperones are encouraged to sketch along with the children in order to validate the experience, model the behavior and be learners along with the students.

Depending on the space and the group, it is often recommended to break up into small groups.

Provide adequate time to sketch. We find children really get involved with their sketching, and it is not unusual for first graders to sketch for 45-60 minutes.

Make time for sharing their sketches, either right on the spot or soon after returning to the classroom. This is part of the reflection process which is the key to experiential learning.

Culminating Activity

Working in sketchbooks is a process oriented activity, so there is really no big culminating activity. However, since students take such pride in their sketchbooks, we make sure to have them on display at our end-of-the-year open house. Students also have the opportunity to enter a piece of artwork in our county fair and often choose to exhibit one of their sketches.

Evaluation

Evaluation is mainly anecdotal and observation. Teachers always take time to look at the work the children did in their sketchbooks. We often take photographs of the students while they are sketching. The photographs and their sketches are filed in their portfolios. Having children reflect on and write about their sketching experiences gives us further insight into the value of this activity. Their enthusiasm for sketching, eagerness to share their work, and accomplishment of many standards is proof of the success of this project.