

Birds of a Feather

This project, envisioned as turning an ordinary courtyard of grass into a thriving community of plants and animals, turned into far more than that. Many community members who use the building stopped by to comment on the progress of the project and offer suggestions, ideas, or assistance. This project promoted community involvement along with student learning regarding planning, budgeting and proper choices pertaining to plant and animal life.

Curriculum/State Standard

This project relates to both the New York State and National science standards for middle level science. Specific standards are linked to the New York State Core curriculum for the Living Environment (standard 4). This project encompasses performance indicator 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, and 7.2 .

Overview

The project consists of turning a commonly found courtyard within the confines of a school into a thriving ecosystem of plants, animals and pond life

Objectives

- The student will identify various species of birds using field guides.
- The student will create a food web, chain, and pyramid using the organisms observed over a period of time.
- The student will design an experiment to test a hypothesis.
- The student will explain the relationship between plants, animals, and the non-living environment.
- The student will compare and contrast the parts of plants and animals.
- The student will describe and illustrate the genetic variations in the area.
- The student will have a better awareness and understanding of the local bird population, habits, and food choices.

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6

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

3-6

WEEKS

\$770

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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“Birds of a Feather” project continued...

Materials

Plants, pond, pump for pond, fish, bird food, bird houses, lights to surround the pond

Readiness Activity

Students brainstorm what they know about birds in the area including habitat, food sources, and species readily found in the area. Students then identify what they would like to learn from this experience.

Strategies/Activities

After the environmental study club completed the installation of the pond and bird houses in conjunction with the maintenance department and parent volunteers, the first class activity was to observe the courtyard area for ten minutes each day for 2 weeks using a journal to record observations. Students used the data to make more focused observations about the location of the birds, types of birds, food sources, use of the pond area, and preference to type of seeds offered. Students then used the field guides available to identify common names of the birds observed and its species name. Students drew and colored each bird identified and then described its habitat, including a food web, chain, and pyramid.

The next area of study is the interconnectedness of the plants, animals, and the non-living organisms in the courtyard. Students use their long-term observations to make comparisons of the different organism and how they differ in structure and function. As part of this activity, students describe genetic variations of the organisms.

The last major activity is the opportunity for the students to design and conduct an experiment associated with the courtyard. The experiment does not in any way harm the living organism but would answer questions about the preferences of the living organisms.

Culminating Activity

Students continue their observations through the different seasons noting any changes in the birds habits specifically linked to the lack of pond availability in the winter months.

Evaluation

Students were evaluated through one to one and group discussions, journal writing, written descriptions, lab write up, oral presentations, posters and a traditional assessment of a test encompassing all the areas of study included with the project and the state and national standards for ecology and animals.