

Dynamic Learning Experiences in the Garden

Provide a learning experience that is active, engaging, and responsive to unique student needs, honors failure as a part of learning, and adapts to the ever-changing world

1. Identify the NC State Standard to be explored.

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/science/scos/support-tools/#unpacking>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/north-carolina-essential-standards/id920898324?mt=8>

Ex: 4th Grade Ecosystems: Understand the effects of environmental changes, adaptations and behaviors that enable animals (including humans) to survive in changing habitats.

4.L.1.2: Explain how animals meet their needs by using behaviors in response to information received from the environment.

2. Turn the State Standard into an explorable question.

Ex: How does a particular animal meet its needs in the garden by using behaviors in response to information received from the environment?

3. Make certain students have prior knowledge necessary and understand the vocabulary in the question.

Ex. Students should have prior experience working in and exploring the garden so they know what animals can be found in the garden and where to look for them – insects, worms, birds, frogs, toads, lizards, etc.

Also, Spend some time reviewing the vocabulary in the task– *animal, needs, behaviors, response, information received, environment*. It is vital that students understand the task.

4. Ahead of time, thoughtfully put your students in groups of 2 to 4 students. Use mixed abilities and students who get along/complement each other.

5. Set the stage with the students that they will be doing an investigation to answer the question and record their observations and ideas in science journals or on recording sheets.

6. Take the groups into the garden to investigate, observe and interact. Be prepared to prompt and guide student learning with key questions.

Ex: Where did you find that animal? What is it? What was the animal doing? What in the garden meets that animal's needs? How did the animal react? What made that reaction happen? What information did the animal receive from its environment that caused it to react? Why is that important?

7. After gathering information in the garden, students should return to their classrooms to check their observations and ideas with other researchers/experts

Use interviews, books, magazines and/or the internet in their classrooms. (You as the teacher or garden volunteer can be the expert too!)

8. After researching, students should share their information with each other and/or others outside of the classroom. There are endless options for this depending on the time available.

Ex: Create a video, write a report, create a pamphlet, make a PowerPoint, create a cartoon, make a poster, do an oral report, create a glog etc.