



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume IV: Asking Questions in Biology: Discovery versus Knowledge

Fiction, Non-Fiction and Query to Engage Young Learners

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.04.05
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Our goal as educators in the 21st century is to empower students to become critical thinkers. Despite ongoing efforts to enhance pedagogical practices through the use of Common Core standards, we continue to find ourselves caught prepping students for state-and-district-mandated exams, leaving limited room for creative, engaging classroom instruction across disciplines to help achieve our desired objective. As a result, many students lose out on being encouraged or inspired to use their metacognitive know-how to its fullest capacity. How do we counter this trend? Collaborative, inquiry-based learning undergirded by topics of interest to young learners serve as an empowering solution. My curriculum unit embraces this approach. Targeted at students in third grade, the unit serves as a collaborative inquiry adventure, taking an up-close look at predacious insects and more. Through small and whole-group brainstorming sessions, hands-on investigation, field trips, related reading, and research activities, students will work as a collaborative community directing their course of instruction. Together, they will develop, explore, discover, and enthusiastically embrace fascinating information regarding select arthropods. Fully immersed in the student-focused learning experience, "blossoming entomologists" will make text-to-world connections, embracing themselves as valued, empowered members of a welcoming learning community.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, Social Development, and Science, grades 2-5)

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